

Flos Carmeli



Our Lady of Mt. Carmel



St. Teresa of Avila



St. John of the Cross



St. Joseph

Western Canada OCDS
of the Karnataka-Goa Province

Newsletter - April 2020

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**The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCDS)
Western Canada OCDS
of the Karnataka-Goa Province**

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A time to be born anew!

“There is a season for everything, and a time for every happening under heaven: A time for giving birth, a time for dying...” (Eccl 3.1-2) The Scripture is so meaningful in its enumeration of the value of time. The time is one of the greatest gifts of God to the universe. We all have a moment of our birth as well as the moment of our death. Both of these moments are very important to us and so we as believers take both life and death as celebration sharing the life of God who is the source and summit of our living.

Time has a great value in the economy of salvation of the humankind. According to the first creation story mentioned in the book of Genesis, God created human person on the sixth day. (cf. Gen 1.27, 31) Gradually the plan of salvation evolves as the chosen people are led to the Promised Land through the instrumentality of judges, kings and prophets called to live in a particular time of history. It is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ who was sent by the Father in the fullness of time to save us all. (cf. Gal 4.4) He is born in time and dies in time.

We are in the Easter time of the liturgical year. The church gives us this particular time to contemplate on the Mystery of our Lord’s Resurrection, which is the foundation of our faith. The plan of human salvation reaches its climax in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Jesus died and rose to a new life on the third day. The time of Lent has enabled us to go deeper into ourselves in our union with him and the time of Easter which reaches its completion in the event of the Pentecost, is so valuable to know the purpose of our human living walking in the path of divinity. The celebration of Easter so well coincides with the time in the nature. The spring time that we are in, is a great reminder of new life. A mere thought of this time brings such a joy in us. We like to get out of our houses and enjoy the greenery around us. Hope invades our hearts and minds as we pass on from winter into spring and then long awaited summer.

The whole world is experiencing today the critical time of Covid-19. Each and every one of us is made so aware of this pandemic daily and is cautious about putting an end to the spread of this deadly virus. We stay at home unless there is any essential thing to do and we keep physical or social distance. In some of the countries like India there is complete lock down. Nobody can get out of their houses unless there is absolute necessity. The world has come to a stillness.

How wonderful it is to be a Carmelite! In this time of calm and quiet, we as Carmelites do not lose hope for we are primarily called to a life of Contemplation. The Psalmist says, “Be still and know that I am God”. (Ps 46.10). According to the rule of St. Albert, we are called ‘to ponder the Lord’s law day and night’ staying in one’s own cell. (cf. The Primitive Rule, no. 10) As social beings, we might miss each other and feel we are idle at home but as spiritual seekers we could make use of this opportune time to relate ourselves with our God who speaks to us in an absolute silence. In the midst of all the challenges, Prophet Elijah could only listen to God in sheer silence. In the time of sufferings, St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross were able to know that it was the best time to be united to God. As we share in the same charism of our Holy Parents, we take this time to be born anew in our relationship with God.

May God’s Mercy and Protection be upon us.

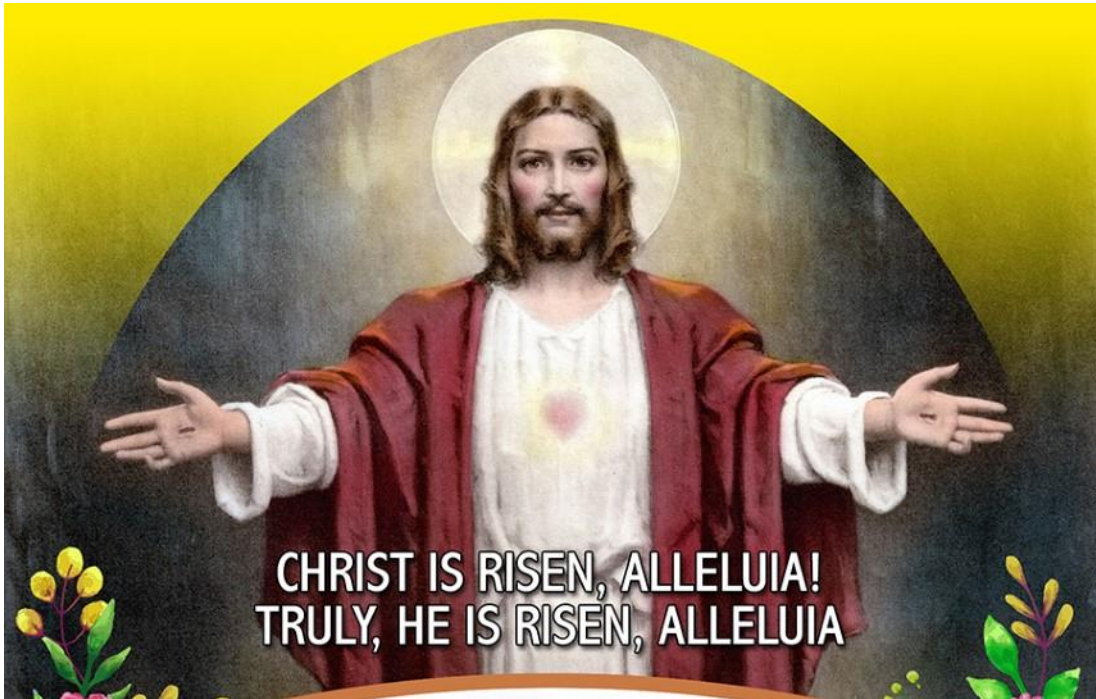
Rev. Roshan D’Souza, OCD



He has been raised.

— *Mark 16:6*

REJOICE!



**CHRIST IS RISEN, ALLELUIA!
TRULY, HE IS RISEN, ALLELUIA**

*Welcome back dear Jesus
Risen from the dead!
Away from powers of darkness
Your people You have led!
Welcome back dear Jesus
You are our Life and Light
You make our days resplendent
Without You all is night.
Now we can see each other
In light that from You flows
And now Your Holy Spirit
New love on us bestows.*

Wishing you a new, bright and joyful beginning in the Risen Lord,

Fr Charles Serrao OCD (Provincial Superior)

THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS

KARNATAKA – GOA PROVINCE

2020

Holy Father's 'Urbi et Orbi' Blessing This Easter From Inside an Empty Vatican Basilica



‘May Christ, who has already defeated death and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, dispel the darkness of our suffering humanity and lead us into the light of his glorious day, a day that knows no end’

April 12, 2020 12:53 [ZENIT Staff Catholic Church](#), [Pope and Holy See](#)

Pope Francis after his Easter Mass, gave his message “Urbi et Orbi” from inside the Vatican Basilica. In light of the worldwide coronavirus epidemic, no pilgrims were present. Only present in St. Peter’s Square were police, journalists and seagulls.

Dear brothers and sisters, Happy Easter!

Today the Church’s proclamation echoes throughout the world: “Jesus Christ is risen!” – “He is truly risen!”.

Like a new flame this Good News springs up in the night: the night of a world already faced with epochal challenges and now oppressed by a pandemic severely testing our whole human family. In this night, the Church’s voice rings out: “Christ, my hope, is risen!” (Easter Sequence).

This is a different “contagion”, a message transmitted from heart to heart – for every human heart awaits this Good News. It is the contagion of hope: “Christ, my hope, is risen!”. This is no magic formula that makes problems vanish. No, the resurrection of Christ is not that. Instead, it is the

victory of love over the root of evil, a victory that does not “by-pass” suffering and death, but passes through them, opening a path in the abyss, transforming evil into good: this is the unique hallmark of the power of God.

The Risen Lord is also the Crucified One, not someone else. In his glorious body he bears indelible wounds: wounds that have become windows of hope. Let us turn our gaze to him that he may heal the wounds of an afflicted humanity.

Today my thoughts turn in the first place to the many who have been directly affected by the coronavirus: the sick, those who have died and family members who mourn the loss of their loved ones, to whom, in some cases, they were unable even to bid a final farewell. May the Lord of life welcome the departed into his kingdom and grant comfort and hope to those still suffering, especially the elderly and those who are alone. May he never withdraw his consolation and help from those who are especially vulnerable, such as persons who work in nursing homes, or live in barracks and prisons. For many, this is an Easter of solitude lived amid the sorrow and hardship that the pandemic is causing, from physical suffering to economic difficulties.

This disease has not only deprived us of human closeness, but also of the possibility of receiving in person the consolation that flows from the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and Reconciliation. In many countries, it has not been possible to approach them, but the Lord has not left us alone! United in our prayer, we are convinced that he has laid his hand upon us (cf. *Ps* 138:5), firmly reassuring us: Do not be afraid, “I have risen and I am with you still!” (cf. *Roman Missal*, Entrance Antiphon, Mass of Easter Sunday).

May Jesus, our Passover, grant strength and hope to doctors and nurses, who everywhere offer a witness of care and love for our neighbours, to the point of exhaustion and not infrequently at the expense of their own health. Our gratitude and affection go to them, to all who work diligently to guarantee the essential services necessary for civil society, and to the law enforcement and military personnel who in many countries have helped ease people’s difficulties and sufferings.

In these weeks, the lives of millions of people have suddenly changed. For many, remaining at home has been an opportunity to reflect, to withdraw from the frenetic pace of life, stay with loved ones and enjoy their company. For many, though, this is also a time of worry about an uncertain future, about jobs that are at risk and about other consequences of the current crisis. I encourage political leaders to work actively for the common good, to provide the means and resources needed to enable everyone to lead a dignified life and, when circumstances allow, to assist them in resuming their normal daily activities.

This is not a time for indifference, because the whole world is suffering and needs to be united in facing the pandemic. May the risen Jesus grant hope to all the poor, to those living on the peripheries, to refugees and the homeless. May these, the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters living in the cities and peripheries of every part of the world, not be abandoned. Let us ensure that they do not lack basic necessities (all the more difficult to find now that many businesses are closed) such as medicine and especially the possibility of adequate health care. In light of the present circumstances, may international sanctions be relaxed, since these make it difficult for countries on

which they have been imposed to provide adequate support to their citizens, and may all nations be put in a position to meet the greatest needs of the moment through the reduction, if not the forgiveness, of the debt burdening the balance sheets of the poorest nations.

This is not a time for self-centredness, because the challenge we are facing is shared by all, without distinguishing between persons. Among the many areas of the world affected by the coronavirus, I think in a special way of Europe. After the Second World War, this beloved continent was able to rise again, thanks to a concrete spirit of solidarity that enabled it to overcome the rivalries of the past. It is more urgent than ever, especially in the present circumstances, that these rivalries do not regain force, but that all recognize themselves as part of a single family and support one another. The European Union is presently facing an epochal challenge, on which will depend not only its future but that of the whole world. Let us not lose the opportunity to give further proof of solidarity, also by turning to innovative solutions. The only alternative is the selfishness of particular interests and the temptation of a return to the past, at the risk of severely damaging the peaceful coexistence and development of future generations.

This is not a time for division. May Christ our peace enlighten all who have responsibility in conflicts, that they may have the courage to support the appeal for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. This is not a time for continuing to manufacture and deal in arms, spending vast amounts of money that ought to be used to care for others and save lives. Rather, may this be a time for finally ending the long war that has caused such great bloodshed in Syria, the conflict in Yemen and the hostilities in Iraq and in Lebanon. May this be the time when Israelis and Palestinians resume dialogue in order to find a stable and lasting solution that will allow both to live in peace. May the sufferings of the people who live in the eastern regions of Ukraine come to an end. May the terrorist attacks carried out against so many innocent people in different African countries come to an end.

This is not a time for forgetfulness. The crisis we are facing should not make us forget the many other crises that bring suffering to so many people. May the Lord of life be close to all those in Asia and Africa who are experiencing grave humanitarian crises, as in the Province of Cabo Delgado in the north of Mozambique. May he warm the hearts of the many refugees displaced because of wars, drought and famine. May he grant protection to migrants and refugees, many of them children, who are living in unbearable conditions, especially in Libya and on the border between Greece and Turkey. In Venezuela, may he enable concrete and immediate solutions to be reached that can permit international assistance to a population suffering from the grave political, socio-economic and health situation.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Indifference, self-centredness, division and forgetfulness are not words we want to hear at this time. We want to ban these words for ever! They seem to prevail when fear and death overwhelm us, that is, when we do not let the Lord Jesus triumph in our hearts and lives. May Christ, who has already defeated death and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, dispel the darkness of our suffering humanity and lead us into the light of his glorious day, a day that knows no end.



CASA GENERALIZIA CARMELITANI SCALZI
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A Wish in Time of Tribulation

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel,

What we've been experiencing, more or less, all over the world for a few weeks can certainly be called a trial. In the New Testament there is a word, *thlipsis*, generally translated as "tribulation", which perhaps helps us name what we are experiencing. I mean not only a scientific name (like COVID-19 pandemic), or a name that expresses our immediate reaction (like emergency, war, calamity), but a name that brings us back to salvation history, to the truth of a God who has spoken to humanity, who became man and continues to walk with the children of men.

The danger, in fact, is to face this time, so serious and important, either by leaving faith out completely or, vice versa, by resorting to a religiosity that has little to do with the God revealed in Jesus Christ. Pope Francis warned us: "Do not waste these difficult days!" It is normal that each one of us - like every responsible citizen - scrupulously follows the rules to avoid the spread of contagion, generously accepts the small sacrifices this entails and does what is in our power to help our neighbor and to create a climate of peace and humanity around us. It is equally normal that, as believers, we turn to God and pray for the sick, for those who care for them, for the many deceased, for the scientists involved in the search for a vaccine, and for all those who are destitute due to the economic crisis. And yet, there is a deeper level which has to do with the reading history with faith, with the presence of God in the midst of humanity's tribulations and trials. It is a level to which we perhaps prefer not to enter, remaining in silence. Silence is golden when it is a space for reflection, for an interior search, for listening in depth. Silence is not golden when it is the result of spiritual inertia and a blockage of thought, when we limit ourselves to swallowing massive doses of information without assimilating, evaluating, and processing it. Information which does not form us, but rather invades and weighs us down.

It is right to ask ourselves: do we have a word that comes from silent meditation and that can serve us at this time? A believing and praying word that can orient us, that is "a lamp for our steps and light on our path"? I confess that questions of this kind would be spontaneously and simply answered: no; at least for now we do not. The admission of this poverty would in any case be truer and appreciable than many easy and sometimes misleading speeches. But we cannot remain calm and inoperative when we lack this light and it is our duty to walk and accompany other people along the way. If we only worry about the health emergency and the consequent economic crisis, "What are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do the same?" (Mt 5,47). We are asked something more: to "search groaning" as Pascal said, to beg, to knock without tiring until a ray of light, a glimmer of heaven opens up for us and allows us to *andar en verdad*, to walk in truth.

In this spirit, I return to that word of the New Testament: *thlipsis*, tribulation. To begin with, tribulation is not a good thing; it is not a grace. Its synonyms are *anguish*, *persecution*, *hunger*, *nudity*, *danger* (Rom 8:35). There is a power of death that is at work in every form of tribulation and this

power puts us to the test, leads us into temptation by standing between us and Christ, between our weak and wounded humanity and the power of his resurrected life. The shadow of death that the power of tribulation casts on each of us is such that it obscures the sight of him who is beyond it. We would remain separated from light and life if in that same shadow, in that same death, there was not a trace, a presence of life. For the Christian, tribulation is always the place through which Christ has passed, indeed through which Christ continues to pass and leads us towards the light of Easter. When we say that we are saved, that we believe in salvation, we concretely believe that evil and death are already definitively defeated. But we also say something more difficult to accept, and above all to live and bear witness to, that the encounter with risen life is always in the crossing of evil and death. Tribulation continues to be what it is: the experience of pain and anguish, of bewilderment and affliction, but the force that pushes down, crushing and oppressing, is contrasted by a force that pushes forward and upwards attracting and raising. All the negative, humiliating, and annihilating force of tribulation consists in the temptation to separate us from Christ. And to this temptation we would certainly yield if the tribulation were not the tribulation of the body of Christ. If it were not a wound of his crucified and risen body, we would not be saved, nor could we emerge victorious from the struggle. Even if tomorrow, as if by magic, the pandemic were to end, even if everything were to begin again magically as if nothing had happened, we would not be saved.

In the *thlipsis* there is a forward movement, as if at a certain point history could make a leap, an acceleration towards the future. I think that one of the elements of consolation in tribulation (cf. 2 Cor 1:4) is precisely this: being able to perceive the shortness of time, the coming of the Kingdom. Can we hear, in the silence of this crisis, the "shepherd's whistle" which is almost imperceptible and yet has the strength to lead us back to him and to ourselves in him (cf. *Interior Castle*, 4M 3,2)?

Right now, we are confined at home, we have no freedom of movement. It is particularly hard not to be able to celebrate the Eucharist with the faithful, to hear confessions, to impart the anointing of the sick, to celebrate funerals for the many deceased, and to accompany families. If in the epidemics of the past men and women religious, priests and bishops, were in the front line alongside the suffering, today this is not possible. We are called to take a step back and make room for doctors, nurses, and volunteers who are the true heroes of this pandemic of the Third Millennium. To them, as is right, go the applause, gratitude, and admiration of the people. Should that worry us? Is the Church losing visibility and perhaps even credibility? There are those who think and speak of the levelling and subordination of the Church to civil authorities. I understand the bitterness, I understand the discomfort, but why do we constantly forget that the ways of the Lord are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts? "Without doubt it is a great grace to receive the Sacraments, but when the good Lord does not allow it, it is all the same, everything is a grace," (St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, *Carnet jaune*, 5.6.4). Why do we continue to think that the Church must impose herself on the world with the strength and wisdom of the world? If today we are given to live a time of kenosis, a time of concealment and loss, why refuse it? I am reminded of the prophetic words the theologian Joseph Ratzinger said 50 years ago on the radio about the future of the Church:

From the crisis of today the Church of tomorrow will emerge — a Church that has lost much. She will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning. She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so it will lose many of her social privileges. [...] But in all of the changes at which one might guess, the Church will find her essence afresh and with full conviction in that which was always at her center:

faith in the triune God, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, in the presence of the Spirit until the end of the world. In faith and prayer she will again recognize the sacraments as the worship of God and not as a subject for liturgical scholarship. The Church will be a more spiritual Church, not presuming upon a political mandate, flirting as little with the Left as with the Right. It will be hard going for the Church, for the process of crystallization and clarification will cost her much valuable energy. It will make her poor and cause her to become the Church of the meek. The process will be all the more arduous, for sectarian narrow-mindedness as well as pompous self-will will have to be shed.

It will take time for this transformation, Ratzinger said, and I would add, it will take tribulations to broaden our views and bend our obstinacy. Perhaps part of this process is also the tribulation that today besieges us and imprisons us in the face of which we feel totally powerless.

Restrictions on freedom of movement are the aspect that strikes us most, forcing us to radically change our habits. But, when you think about it, it is not so much the space that we lack, especially for us, friars and nuns, who generally live in large buildings, perhaps even with a large garden. What we lack is rather time. We realize this now precisely because we have too much of it. The time we have makes us discover that we do not know how-to live-in time, that we have lost the dimension of time and therefore we must find it again. Today there is a superabundance of runners, joggers, hikers, trekkers ... significantly all terms of a global language, a *koiné*, that probably not even English speakers can recognize as their mother tongue. Instead there is a shortage of *viatores*, wayfarers and pilgrims in time. The eyes of the pilgrim are not fixed on the way, but on the destination; the pilgrim is not interested in the kilometres travelled, but in those that are missing to reach the place towards which his whole being is stretched. Because this is why he is on the way, because he is attracted by something that is not here, but beyond, something that he does not see, but for which he yearns.

The limitation of movement in no way prevents this movement towards the future; on the contrary, it could promote and stimulate it. We realize today that for us not to move means to sit in the present as on an empty and fragile box, which in order not to give in must be filled with things, with concrete, solid, and possessable objects. We have forgotten the sense of waiting; we cannot resist the emptiness and the tension of desire from which waiting springs. In fact, waiting is for those who love and not knowing how to wait means, after all, not knowing how to love. Waiting does not fill our empty space with objects, but with the subject we love. For this reason, waiting is also the time of memory, of retracing the plot of time in order to recognize the traces, signs, and parables of the one who has already come and who will come. Indeed, he is already coming "to make me certain / of his and my treasure". Without memory and without waiting, what would be left of us, little men and women?

Waiting for the Risen One, Happy Easter to all of you!

Rome, April 5, 2020



fr. Saverio Cannistrà
Fr. Saverio Cannistrà, OCD
Superior General



**ST. TERESA OF JESUS COMMUNITY
VANCOUVER BC**



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings and events were cancelled effective March 13, 2020 until further notice. However, all OCDS were mandated to continue formation by all possible means. Our community meets twice monthly through Microsoft Team whereby members receive their monthly formation talks with an additional presentation by a Definitely Promised member based on an assigned chapter from the Way of Transformation by Mark O'Keefe O.S.B. Members who do not have access to Microsoft Team are facilitated through their mobile phones or land lines. A distant member was able to join in the meeting having been unable to attend monthly meetings for several years. In addition a phone-tree-system has been initiated to facilitate a way for members to keep in touch during this time of self-isolation.

Members continue to pray for the frontline healthcare workers including members in their community who are serving; the families who have lost their loved ones and those who have been stricken with the virus. Members who have the means available offer their assistance to those in need within the capacity of physical distancing.



**ST. JOSEPH COMMUNITY
CALGARY, AB**



Our community held its last meeting on March 15, 2020, the day before all Masses were cancelled in the Diocese of Calgary. Our April meeting would have taken place on April 19, 2020 Divine Mercy Sunday when we would have renewed our Promises together which was rather sad.

However, God always provides a way. Through Zoom media technology members who have the capability pray the Liturgy of the Hours every evening and renewed their Promises. We have settled into a comfortable routine and have even managed to share stories and a few laughs. Other members are drawn into participation by telephone and emails. Rather than separate us, this situation has brought about the opportunity to bring our members closer.

We have concluded when the situation returns to the “new” normal we will continue the practice of praying every evening through Zoom media.

Let us all remember to trust in Our Risen Lord, who continues to love us unconditionally and bring us closer together as a family in Carmel.



ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS COMMUNITY NORTH VANCOUVER, BC

The COVID-19 Virus outbreak has affected us universally bringing about uncertainty and changes to our normal way of living. During this unprecedented time, Pope Francis reminds us that this doesn't mean that the Proclamation of the Gospel stops.

Due to the enforcement of self-isolation rules, our meetings and events were cancelled. Provincial Delegate Fr. Roshan D'Souza communicated that formation must continue and what better way than conducting formation in the comfort of our homes!

To overcome the challenge, we established different ways for the Word of God to be a continued source of spiritual nourishment for our members. Our Formation Director emails monthly formation material to all members. We have resorted to the use of Zoom media technology to connect with our members and conduct formation. Definitely Promised members pair up to discuss ongoing formation assignments by telephone.

This time of self-isolation has also been an opportunity for members to do corporal and spiritual works of mercy such as volunteering to feed the poor through various charitable organizations and supporting the homeless by providing masks, gloves, clothes and toiletries. Another member prepares and sends home-catechism lessons to the children preparing for their First Communion, while others are involved in assisting their parish programs and needs as best as they could under the circumstances. Others diligently take care of their elderly parents to protect their health and some are currently recuperating on medical leave.

We may be isolated from one another, but we are together in spirit! In spite of difficulties that we may encounter, "Everything is grace" as St. Thérèse of Little Flower, beautifully puts it.





**ST. TERESA OF JESUS OF THE ANDES GROUP
VERNON BC**

Due to the pandemic and governmental requirements to self isolate and practice physical distancing and under the direction of our Provincial Delegate Fr. Roshan D'Souza, as of March 16th 2020 all OCDS meetings and events were suspended.

In compliance formation material is being distributed to members by email. Members make good use of their time reading the Gospel with more prayer and meditation time, participation in online Masses and retreats. Some are very fortunate to have drive-through reconciliation and daily stay-in-car adoration. Others continue to support the parishes administratively via phone and emails and to outreach families in various ways.

May the Risen Lord bless us and keep us all safe and healthy.

Rejoice He is Risen



**ST. THERESE OF THE CHILD JESUS AND THE HOLY FACE GROUP
EDMONTON, AB**

The establishment of the Carmelite Spirituality Centre in Parkland County, Alberta drew a lot of attention in the neighbouring areas and attracted some of the lay faithful to “Come and See” the Secular Order of the Discalced Carmelites. As a result St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face Group was established in September 2018.

The Group comprising of thirteen members meet at the Carmelite spirituality Centre, Parkland County, Alberta every third Saturday of the month with Fr. Mario Fernandes as their Spiritual Director. As with all the OCDS communities and groups, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the Group and meetings have been suspended. However, Fr. Mario continues formation to the members by emailing and social media. Self isolation gives members more prayer time and the opportunity to get caught up on their Carmelite reading material.





CASA GENERALIZIA CARMELITANI SCALZI
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Rome, 28 March 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Secular Order,

On this day when we commemorate the 505th anniversary of the birth of our Holy Mother Saint Teresa, I greet you, using the words with which Teresa used to begin her letters: may *Jesus and the grace of the Holy Spirit be with you*.

This anniversary reminds us of the great gifts that the Lord gave to Holy Mother. We also remember this year the 50th anniversary of the Doctorate proclaimed by St. Paul VI on September 27, 1970. The Apostolic Letter *Multiformis sapientia Dei*, which I invite you to read and meditate on, recognizes that Teresa “has always been celebrated, both for the extraordinary facts of her life, for the rare virtues of her soul and for her spirit of good judgment”, and “a very sure guide and teacher of sacred sciences”. As Teresa herself wrote, to remember what “is a gift and that we possess it, we are compelled to love the giver.” (cf. *Life* 10:5). Therefore, in recognizing the gifts received from God’s goodness in the lives of our Saints, in the history of our Order, as well as in the personal history of each one of us, everything invites us to thank Him and to grasp the signs of His living, faithful, and active presence in the events of our time.

In this context I would like to recall this year another important event of 20 years ago: the 2nd International Congress of the OCDS held in San Juan de los Lagos (Mexico) from August 31 to September 7, 2000.

In commemorating this event, I would like, first of all, to thank all those who collaborated in the organization and in the organization of the Congress, in particular Fr. Aloysius Deeney OCD (General Delegate for OCDS), Irma Estrada Franco OCDS (General Secretary of the OCDS), and the members of the OCDS of Mexico.

Secondly, after a brief reminder of the Congress, I would like to enumerate some of its fruits, offering some reflections so that you may continue on your path of following Jesus according to the charism of the Teresian Carmel with that attitude dear to the Cardinal, and now Saint, John Henry Newman: “To live is to change, and to be perfect means to have changed many times”.

The 2nd International Congress

The Letter to the Congress participants (of 23 September 1999) stated that “the theme and purpose of the Congress will be the revision of the Rule of Life [of 1979], with particular attention to the responsibilities and gifts of the laity in the Order and in the Church, as expressed in *Christifideles laici*, *Vita Consecrata*, and other documents of the Church”.

This objective responded to the request of the 1st International Congress of the OCDS in 1996 (held in Rome) and the operative conclusions of the OCD General Chapter of 1997: “The Secular Order should be promoted and supported in the various Circumscriptions of the Order, according to the diversity of situations. Particular attention should be given to the revision of the *Rule of Life* from the laity’s point of view” (n. 107.a).

The 2nd Congress, in which about 250 lay and religious delegates participated, had as its motto: *A single Order with the same charism*. It emphasized that the one charism of the Order is lived

differently by the friars, the nuns, and the seculars, and that from a solid formation on the identity of the laity of the Order, based on the doctrine of our Holy Founding Parents, also springs the essence of their mission, that of witnessing to friendship with Christ and with their brothers and sisters in the midst of the world.

Some Fruits of the Congress

A first fruit of the 2nd Congress was the creation of an International Commission composed of 10 members of the OCDS of different nationalities. The objective was to continue the drafting of the new Constitutions. It was coordinated by the General Delegate and took into account the contributions of the 1st International Congress and the proposals of the working groups of the 2nd Congress, as well as other contributions sent by the Provinces. The editorial work was carried out in 3 years, thus in 2003 a draft of the new Constitutions of the OCDS was presented at the General Chapter of Avila. This draft was then revised by the General Definitory and finally sent to the Holy See, which approved it in June 2003.

The new Constitutions were enriched with the insertion of the text of the Rule of St. Albert. This was an important addition because the Rule is the primordial inspiration common to all: the friars, the nuns and the laity. This was confirmed with the insertion in the Constitutions of the affirmation that *the laity of the OCDS are members of the Order, like the friars and nuns* (cf. *Proemio* and Art. 1); Secular Carmelites live the charism of Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross in the world and enrich consecrated life (OCD friars and nuns) with their secular style of life.

A challenge that perhaps we must continue to face in the circumscriptions is that the experience of the charism of the Teresian Carmel for OCDS should be realized first of all in the family environment, work, and other commitments in the midst of the world. It is there that the witness of the living God, who desires to maintain a relationship of friendship with every human being created in His image and likeness, should take place and bear witness. Unfortunately, it is perceived that there are still members of OCDS who live their vocation only in the sacristies of monasteries or convents, without an effective “spreading” of the charism in the world around them.

Another fruit of the Congress was the clarification of the identity of the laity in the Order. Your vocation is both contemplative, lay and apostolic, which presupposes a daily commitment to integrate these three key elements. This identity brings with it the awareness of having common elements of the Teresian charism with the other branches, with which to collaborate in an interdependence that respects the differences, the right autonomies, and the vocational identity proper to each one.

The autonomy of the OCDS must be well understood. It concerns government according to its own Constitutions and Statutes, but also formation. The accompaniment of the friars, on whom for historical reasons the OCDS depends juridically (cf. Const. 41; Ratio 19; cf. Const. 2), should promote the maturity of lay identity in the Order and fraternal relationships of collaboration, with mutual respect for the autonomy of each one.

A third fruit of the Congress was the emphasis on the need to participate in the mission and apostolate of the Church and the Order as an integral part of the OCDS lay identity. The Church asks for this in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, in *Christifideles laici* (1988) and in *Vita Consecrata* (1996). This dimension was somewhat underestimated and hidden because of a reductive vision of contemplation. Instead, we know that the fruit of authentic contemplative prayer is service to others, striving to bring about “good works” (cf. St. Teresa, 5M 3,11; 7M 4,6) according to one’s own abilities and talents, for the good of the Church, the Order and society, as did Teresa and John of the Cross (cf. Const. 26).

Unfortunately, with regard to this, there are still misunderstandings and many people think that it is enough to attend community meetings for some practices of devotions, reflection or conferences, but without a real and concrete commitment of service in the activities of the Order or the Church in which one finds oneself. Perhaps this is due to weak formation which does not take into account what the Constitutions recommend: "In the last three years of initial formation there will be a deeper study of Scripture, the documents of the Church, the Saints of the Order, prayer, and how to participate in the apostolate of the Order..." (n. 36 d).

In the Congress, and as it appears in the Constitutions, the importance of the organization of *Provincial Councils* in the circumscriptions of the Order was highlighted (cf. Constitutions 57). Their specific mission is to prepare the Statutes of the circumscription and to coordinate the initiatives of the apostolate and formation in the communities. In this sense, many circumscriptions have organized and developed the OCDS with great commitment and have collaborated to increase awareness of the lay identity in the Order and a mature autonomy, growing in number, internal organization and formation, as well as developing communion among the communities. In other countries or circumscriptions, unfortunately and for various reasons, this has not been the case. The Provincial Council has not acted as a body of communion and animation both in the life of the communities and in relationship with the friars and nuns. And here, for all of us, we have a good way to go according to the principle of *synodality*, as I mentioned in last year's letter.

Finally, as a further fruit of the Congress, in 2009 the *Ratio Institutionis* of the OCDS was published, which offers the guiding principles for the formation of the laity of the Teresian Carmel, reiterating the need for a solid formation that allows us undertake a vocational journey and service in the mission animated by the spirit of our Saints. More recently, the aspect of fraternal communion in the OCDS has been highlighted with the insertion of the chapter on fraternal communion (3 B) and the paragraph on St. Joseph (31 a). Thus, what is essential in the OCDS has been completed in the documents, defining your identity, objectives and goals as lay members of the Order.

Dear brothers and sisters of the OCDS,

With this commemoration of the Second International Congress of the OCDS, the signs of some of its fruits, as well as commemorating an important event in the history of the OCDS, I would like to thank the Lord with you for his gifts. At the same time, this urges us to grow spiritually, especially in living charity so that we may return love to the infinite Love of the Holy Trinity (cf. John of the Cross, *Song* 38, 2-4).

I urge you to know your documents more and more, especially the Constitutions, both in initial and ongoing formation. Always remember that a charism in the Church is a gift of the Holy Spirit; it is a living and dynamic reality which must be constantly cultivated and made to bear fruit, otherwise it rots. It is there, in the documents of the OCDS, that you find the essential elements of the charism of the Teresian Carmel adapted to your lay life. Faced with the many commitments and rapid changes in our post-modern world, many times we risk losing our roots and we forget who we are. Returning from time to time to the Constitutions and the writings of our Saints will confirm you in a solid doctrine that allows you to walk with firmness and enthusiasm on the streets of the world.

I ask the Lord to enlighten you so that you may continue to be faithful to the essential elements of your vocation as Secular Carmelites. May the light and strength which come from prayer as friendship with the Lord and fraternal relationship with your brothers and sisters enable you to respond to the challenges and needs of your personal, family and community realities.

I also entrust to your fraternal and filial prayer the last *Extraordinary Definitory* of this sexennium, which will take place in September in Mexico City, as well as the preparation work for the General Chapter to be held in May 2021.

I wish a Holy Easter of Resurrection to each of you, your families and communities. May the contemplation of the Risen Christ fill you with peace and joy (cf. *Way* 26:4). May Mary, Queen of Heaven, give you the joy of her Living Son forever.

Fraternally



Fr. Saverio Cannistrà
Fr Saverio Cannistrà OCD
Superior General

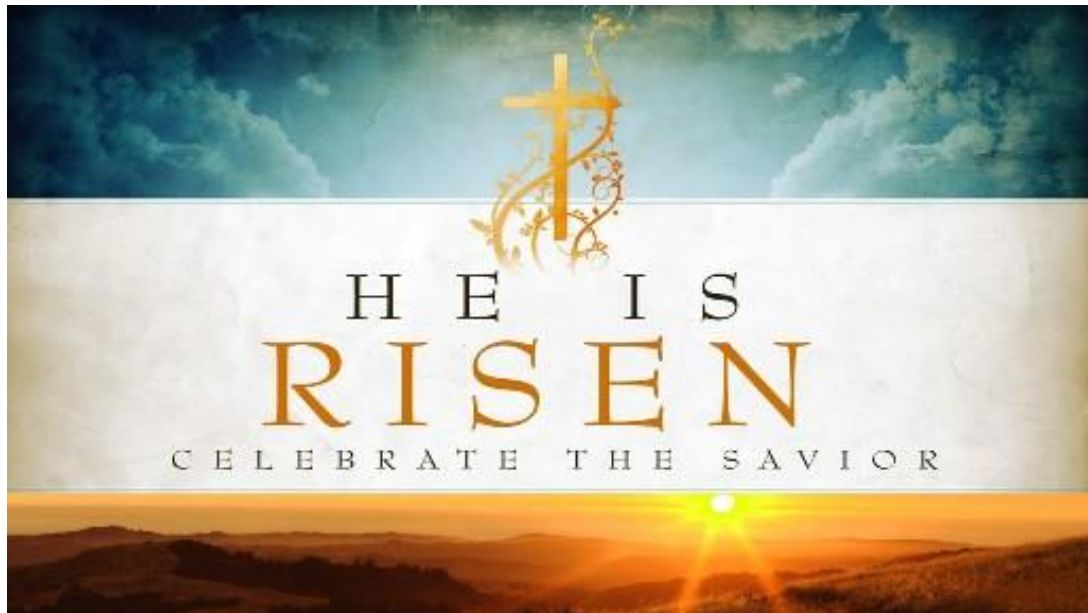
PS: I would like to add to you Secular Carmelite sisters and brothers, and to your loved ones, a word of closeness, comfort, and hope in these moments of trial due to the Covid-19. It is an unexpected, fast, and enveloping situation that makes us experience our human fragility and precariousness: physical, psychological, economic, and above all it leads us to reflect on our relationship with God, others, and nature.

Obviously, our first duty is to abide by the dispositions of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in order to avoid exposing ourselves to contagion and putting our own family and the people around us at risk.

I know that there are many challenges facing you, especially being unable to work to support the family. Those who have children and the elderly at home find themselves having to manage their own care and educational needs in confined spaces. Even this creates tension and requires sacrifices. Others, on the other hand, experience loneliness and isolation, locked up at home without the possibility of receiving visitors. These situations require a great deal of balance, great patience, and the daily commitment to live harmoniously and peacefully with others. Definitely, it is a propitious time to exercise the Teresian virtues.

Today we are rightly concerned to equip ourselves with devices to protect ourselves from contagion, but it is also important to wear the armor of which our Rule speaks to us, the "weapons of the virtues, living an intense life of faith, hope and charity" (CC 6 f), trusting in God, who allows trial, but does not abandon us in it. We constantly remember the words of Isaiah, quoted in our Rule: "In silence and hope will be your strength" (Is 35:15; *Rule of St Albert*, 21).

Let us take advantage of this time of apparent powerlessness to pray, read, form ourselves, strengthen family relationships, making virtue out of necessity, as our Holy Mother St. Teresa said (cf. *Way* 32:4; 5; M 3:7; 6 M 5:2). Let us intensify our prayer, asking the Lord's Mercy for an end to this pandemic and other evils; may He give strength to all those involved in the fight against the virus and assistance to the sick.



Easter Sunday : Year: A

Acts 10.34a, 36-43; Col 3.1-4 (Or 1 Cor 5.6b-8); Jn 20.1-18; in the afternoon Lk 24.13-35

He is Risen Indeed

Dr. George Sweeting tells of an incident in the early 1920s when Communist leader Nikolai Bukharin was sent from Moscow to Kiev to address an anti-God rally. For an hour he abused and ridiculed the Christian faith until it seemed as if the whole structure of belief was in ruins. Then questions were invited. An Orthodox church priest rose and asked to speak. He turned, faced the people, and gave the Easter greeting, "He is risen!" Instantly the assembly rose to its feet and the reply came back loud and clear, "He is risen indeed!"

Is there Life after Death?

Madonna the great singer, attempted to answer the question of, "Why am I here?" by becoming a diva, confessing, "There were many years when I thought fame, fortune, and public approval would bring me happiness. But one day you wake up and realize they don't... I still felt something was missing... I wanted to know the meaning of true and lasting happiness and how I could go about finding it." (The Oprah Magazine, "Oprah talks to Madonna," January, 2004, 120.)

Others have given up on finding meaning. Kurt Cobain, lead singer of the Seattle grunge band Nirvana, despaired of life at age 27 and committed suicide. Jazz-age cartoonist Ralph Barton also found life to be meaningless, leaving the following suicide note. "I have had few difficulties, many friends, great successes; I have gone from wife to wife, and from house to house, visited countries of the world, but I am fed up with inventing devices to fill up 24 hours of the day." Josh McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor* (San Bernardino, CA. Here's Life Publ., 1981).

Pascal, the great French philosopher believed this inner void we all experience can only be filled by God. He states, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which only Jesus Christ can fill." William R. Bright, *Jesus and the Intellectual* (San Bernardino, CA. Here's Life Publ., 1968), If Pascal is right, then we would expect Jesus to not only answer the question of our identity and meaning in this life, but also to give us hope for life after we die.

Can there be meaning, without God? Not according to atheist Bertrand Russell, who wrote, "Unless you assume a god, the question of life's purpose is meaningless." Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan, 2002). Russell resigned himself to ultimately "rot" in the grave. In his book, *Why I am not a Christian*, Russell dismissed everything Jesus said about life's meaning, including his promise of eternal life.

Jesus Triumphs

Jesus actually defeated death as eyewitnesses claim. He alone is able to tell us what life is all about, and answer, "Where am I going?" In order to understand how Jesus' words, life, and death can establish our identities, give us meaning in life, and provide hope for the future, we need to understand what he said about God, about us, and about himself.

Summing up, I use the words of Arthur Ashe, the legendary Wimbledon player as he was dying of AIDS, which he got due to infected blood he received during a heart surgery in 1983. From world over, he received letters from his fans, one of which conveyed. "Why does GOD have to select you for such a bad disease"?

To this Arthur Ashe replied. The world over 5 crore children start playing tennis, 50 lakh learn to play tennis, 5 lakh learn professional tennis, 50,000 come to the circuit, 5000 reach the grand slam, 50 reach Wimbledon, 4 to semi-final, 2 to the finals, When I was holding a cup I never asked GOD "Why me?".

And today in pain I should not be asking GOD "Why me?"

Life after death promise keeps us Sweet, Trials keep us Strong, Sorrow keeps us Human, Failure keeps us Humble, Success keeps us Glowing, But only GOD KEEPS US GOING..... EVER STRONG...

The Resurrection

The main sources which directly attest the fact of Christ's Resurrection are the Four Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. Easter morning is so rich in incident, and so crowded with interested persons, that its complete history presents a rather complicated tableau. It is not surprising, therefore, that the partial accounts contained in each of the Four Gospels appear at first sight hard to harmonize. But whatever exegetic view as to the visit to the sepulcher by the pious women and the appearance of the angels we may defend, we cannot deny the Evangelists' agreement as to the fact that the risen Christ appeared to one or more persons. According to St. Matthew, He appeared to the holy women, and again on a mountain in Galilee; according to St. Mark, He was seen by Mary Magdalene, by the two disciples at Emmaus, and the Eleven before his Ascension into heaven; according to St. Luke, He walked with the disciples to Emmaus, appeared to Peter and to the assembled disciples in Jerusalem; according to St. John, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the ten Apostles on Easter Sunday, to the Eleven a week later, and to the seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberius. St. Paul (1 Cor 15.3-8) enumerates another series of apparitions of Jesus after His Resurrection; he was seen by Cephas, by the Eleven, by more than 500 brethren, many of whom were still alive at the time of the Apostle's writing, by James, by all the Apostles, and lastly by Paul himself.

An Outline

Here is an outline of a possible harmony of the Evangelists' account concerning the principal events of Easter Sunday.

The holy women carrying the spices previously prepared start out for the sepulcher before dawn, and reach it after sunrise; they are anxious about the heavy stone, but know nothing of the official guard of the sepulcher (Mt 28.1-3; Mr 16.1-3; Lk 24.1; Jn 20.1).

The angel frightened the guards by his brightness, put them to flight, rolled away the stone, and seated himself not upon (ep autou), but above (epano autou) the stone (Mt 28.2-4).

Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James, and Salome approach the sepulcher, and see the stone rolled back, whereupon Mary Magdalene immediately returns to inform the Apostles (Mk 16.4; Lk 24.2; Jn 20.1-2).

The other two holy women enter the sepulcher, find an angel seated in the vestibule, who shows them the empty sepulcher, announces the Resurrection, and commissions them to tell the disciples and Peter that they shall see Jesus in Galilee (Mt 28.5-7; Mk 16.5-7).

A second group of holy women, consisting of Joanna and her companions, arrive at the sepulcher, where they have probably agreed to meet the first group, enter the empty interior, and are admonished by two angels that Jesus has risen according to His prediction (Lk 24.10).

Not long after, Peter and John, who were notified by Mary Magdalene, arrive at the sepulchre and find the linen cloth in such a position as to exclude the supposition that the body was stolen; for they lay simply flat on the ground, showing that the sacred body had vanished out of them without touching them. When John notices this he believes (Jh 20.3-10).

Mary Magdalene returns to the sepulchre, sees first two angels within, and then Jesus Himself (Jn 20.11-16; Mk 16.9).

The two groups of pious women, who probably met on their return to the city, are favored with the sight of Christ arisen, who commissions them to tell His brethren that they will see him in Galilee (Mt 28.8-10; Mk 16.8).

The holy women relate their experiences to the Apostles, but find no belief (Mk 16.10-11; Lk 24.9-11).

Jesus appears to the disciples, at Emmaus, and they return to Jerusalem; the Apostles appear to waver between doubt and belief (Mk 16.12-13; Lk 24.13-35).

Christ appears to Peter, and therefore Peter and John firmly believe in the Resurrection (Luke 24.34; Jn 20.8).

After the return of the disciples from Emmaus, Jesus appears to all the Apostles excepting Thomas (Mk 16.14; Lk 24.36-43; Jn 20.19-25).

The Apparitions

The harmony of the other apparitions of Christ after His Resurrection presents no special difficulties. Briefly, therefore, the fact of Christ's Resurrection is attested by more than 500 eyewitnesses, whose experience, simplicity, and uprightness of life rendered them incapable of inventing such a fable, who lived at a time when any attempt to deceive could have been easily discovered, who had nothing in this

life to gain, but everything to lose by their testimony, whose moral courage exhibited in their apostolic life can be explained only by their intimate conviction of the objective truth of their message. Again the fact of Christ's Resurrection, which is attested by the eloquent silence of the Synagogue which had done everything to prevent could have easily discovered deception, if there had been any, which opposed only sleeping witnesses to the testimony of the Apostles, which did not punish the alleged carelessness of the official guard, and which could not answer the testimony of the Apostles except by threatening them "that they speak no more in this name to any man" (Acts 4.17). Finally the thousands and millions, both Jews and Gentiles, who believed the testimony of the Apostles in spite of all the disadvantages following from such a belief, in short the origin of the Church, requires for its explanation the reality of Christ's Resurrection, for the rise of the Church without the Resurrection would have been a greater miracle than the Resurrection itself.

Opposing Theories

By what means can the evidence for Christ's Resurrection be overthrown? Three theories of explanation have been advanced, though the first two have hardly any adherents in our day.

The Swoon Theory

There is the theory of those who assert that Christ did not really die upon the cross, that His supposed death was only a temporary swoon, and that His Resurrection was simply a return to consciousness. This was advocated by Paulus ("Exegetisches Handbuch", 1842, II, p. 929) and in a modified form by Hase ("Gesch. Jesu", n. 112), but it does not agree with the data furnished by the Gospels. The scourging and the crown of thorns, the carrying of the cross and the crucifixion, the three hours on the cross and the piercing of the Sufferer's side cannot have brought on a mere swoon. His real death is attested by the centurion and the soldiers, by the friends of Jesus and by his most bitter enemies. His stay in a sealed sepulchre for thirty-six hours, in an atmosphere poisoned by the exhalations of a hundred pounds of spices, which would have of itself sufficed to cause death. Moreover, if Jesus had merely returned from a swoon, the feelings of Easter morning would have been those of sympathy rather than those of joy and triumph, the Apostles would have been roused to the duties of a sick chamber rather than to apostolic work, the life of the powerful wonderworker would have ended in ignoble solitude and inglorious obscurity, and His vaunted sinlessness would have changed into His silent approval of a lie as the foundation stone of His Church. No wonder that later critics of the Resurrection, like Strauss, have heaped contempt on the old theory of a swoon.

The Imposition Theory

The disciples, it is said, stole the body of Jesus from the grave, and then proclaimed to men that their Lord had risen. This theory was anticipated by the Jews who "gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying, Say you, His disciples came by night, and stole him away when we were asleep" (Mt 28.12). The same was urged by Celsus (Orig., "Contra Cels.", II, 56) with some difference of detail. But to assume that the Apostles with a burden of this kind upon their consciences could have preached a kingdom of truth and righteousness as the one great effort of their lives, and that for the sake of that kingdom they could have suffered even unto death, is to assume one of those moral impossibilities which may pass for a moment in the heat of controversy, but must be dismissed without delay in the hour of good reflection.

The Vision Theory

This theory as generally understood by its advocates does not allow visions caused by a Divine intervention, but only such as are the product of human agencies. For if a Divine intervention be admitted, we may as well believe, as far as principles are concerned, that God raised Jesus from the dead. But where in the present instance are the human agencies which might cause these visions? The idea of a resurrection from the grave

was familiar to the disciples from their Jewish faith; they had also vague intimations in the prophecies of the Old Testament; finally, Jesus Himself had always associated His Resurrection with the predictions of his death. On the other hand, the disciples' state of mind was one of great excitement; they treasured the memory of Christ with a fondness which made it almost impossible for them to believe that He was gone. In short, their whole mental condition was such as needed only the application of a spark to kindle the flame. The spark was applied by Mary Magdalen, and the flame at once spread with the rapidity and force of a conflagration. What she believed that she had seen, others immediately believed that they must see. Their expectations were fulfilled, and the conviction seized the members of the early Church that the Lord had really risen from the dead.

Such is the vision theory commonly defended by recent critics of the Resurrection. But however ingeniously it may be devised, it is quite impossible from an historical point of view.

Criticism

It is incompatible with the state of mind of the Apostles; the theory presupposes faith and expectancy on the part of the Apostles, while in point of fact the disciples' faith and expectancy followed their vision of the risen Christ.

It is inconsistent with the nature of Christ's manifestations; they ought to have been connected with heavenly glory, or they should have continued the former intimate relations of Jesus with His disciples, while actually and consistently they presented quite a new phase that could not have been expected.

It does not agree with the conditions of the early Christian community; after the first excitement of Easter Sunday, the disciples as a body are noted for their cool deliberation rather than the exalted enthusiasm of a community of visionaries.

It is incompatible with the length of time during which the apparitions lasted; visions such as the critics suppose have never been known to last long, while some of Christ's manifestations lasted a considerable period.

It is not consistent with the fact that the manifestations were made to numbers at the same instant.

It does not agree with the place where most of the manifestations were made. visionary appearances would have been expected in Galilee, while most apparitions of Jesus occurred in Judea.

It is inconsistent with the fact that the visions came to a sudden end on the day of Ascension.

Keim admits that enthusiasm, nervousness, and mental excitement on the part of the disciples do not supply a rational explanation of the facts as related in the Gospels. According to him, the visions were directly granted by God and the glorified Christ; they may even include a "corporeal appearance" for those who fear that without this they would lose all. But Keim's theory satisfies neither the Church, since it abandons all the proofs of a bodily Resurrection of Jesus, nor the enemies of the Church, since it admits many of the Church's dogmas; nor again is it consistent with itself, since it grants God's special intervention in proof of the Church's faith, though it starts with the denial of the bodily Resurrection of Jesus, which is one of the principal objects of that faith.

Modernist View

The Holy Office describes and condemns in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh propositions of the Decree “Lamentabili”, the views advocated by a fourth class of opponents of the Resurrection. The former of these propositions reads. “The Resurrection of our Saviour is not properly a fact of the historical order, but a fact of the purely supernatural order neither proved nor provable, which Christian consciousness has little by little inferred from other facts.” This statement agrees with, and is further explained by the words of Loisy (“Autour d’un petit livre”, p. viii, 120-121, 169; “L’Evangile et l’Eglise”, pp. 74-78; 120-121; 171). According to Loisy, firstly, the entrance into life immortal of one risen from the dead is not subject to observation; it is a supernatural, hyper-historical fact, not capable of historical proof. The proofs alleged for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ are inadequate; the empty sepulchre is only an indirect argument, while the apparitions of the risen Christ are open to suspicion on a priori grounds, being sensible impressions of a supernatural reality; and they are doubtful evidence from a critical point of view, on account of the discrepancies in the various Scriptural narratives and the mixed character of the detail connected with the apparitions. Secondly, if one prescind from the faith of the Apostles, the testimony of the New Testament does not furnish a certain argument for the fact of the Resurrection. This faith of the Apostles is concerned not so much with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as with His immortal life; being based on the apparitions, which are unsatisfactory evidence from an historical point of view, its force is appreciated only by faith itself; being a development of the idea of an immortal Messiah, it is an evolution of Christian consciousness, though it is at the same time a corrective of the scandal of the Cross. The Holy Office rejects this view of the Resurrection when it condemns the thirty-seventh proposition in the Decree “Lamentabili”. “The faith in the Resurrection of Christ pointed at the beginning no so much to the fact of the Resurrection, as to the immortal life of Christ with God.”

Practical Conclusion

Besides the authoritative rejection of the foregoing view, we may submit the following three considerations which render it untenable. First, the contention that the Resurrection of Christ cannot be proved historically is not in accord with science. Science does not know enough about the limitations and the properties of a body raised from the dead to immortal life to warrant the assertion that such a body cannot be perceived by the senses; again in the case of Christ, the empty sepulchre with all its concrete circumstances cannot be explained except by a miraculous Divine intervention as supernatural in its character as the Resurrection of Jesus. Secondly, history does not allow us to regard the belief in the Resurrection as the result of a gradual evolution in Christian consciousness. The apparitions were not a mere projection of the disciples’ Messianic hope and expectation; their Messianic hope and expectations had to be revived by the apparitions. Again, the Apostles did not begin with preaching the immortal life of Christ with God, but they preached Christ’s Resurrection from the very beginning, they insisted on it as a fundamental fact and they described even some of the details connected with this fact. Acts 2.24,31; 3.15,26; 4.10; 5.30; 10. 39-40; 13.30,37; 17.31-2; Rm 1.4; 4.25; 6.4,9; 8.11,34; 10. etc. Thirdly, the denial of the historical certainty of Christ’s Resurrection involves several historical blunders. it questions the objective reality of the apparitions without any historical grounds for such a doubt; it denies the fact of the empty sepulchre in spite of solid historical evidence to the contrary; it questions even the fact of Christ’s burial in Joseph’s sepulchre, though this fact is based on the clear and simply unimpeachable testimony of history.

Fr. Rudolf V. D’Souza OCD

NEWS AROUND THE COMMUNITIES

In time of Self-Isolation

CORONA VIRUS – BITTER SWEET!!!

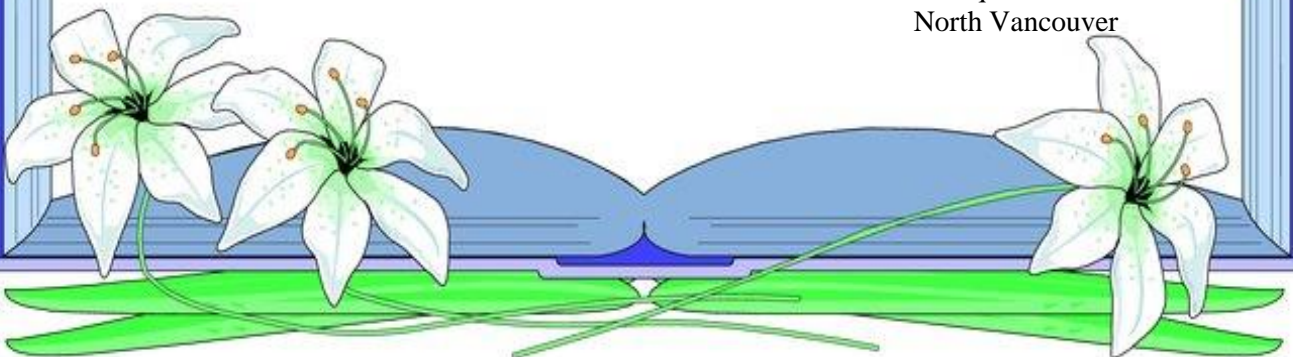
It is part of life to make plans and schedules but we do not have a crystal ball and ultimately we have no control over the future. A month before the COVID-19 virus was declared a pandemic, along with 5 others I had made plans to attend a parish sponsored retreat for PREP teachers in Nashville, USA. I was looking forward to this once in a life-time experience.

But the unexpected happened one day before Ash Wednesday. My father-in-law was rushed to the emergency with kidney, heart failure and other complications and was not expected to survive. For ten days, it was like being in agony with our Lord in the Garden, as family members watched and prayed for hours by his bedside. He went to God in the morning of March 6th, my departure date for Nashville.

Thankfully, I managed to organize funeral arrangements and made it to the midnight flight. The health concerns of getting on an airplane was the cause of added stress. We sanitized our seats, wore masks and gloves throughout the flight. In the end the Nashville trip helped to alleviate the grief of losing a loved one and compensated for the stress of the past days. It was a treasured trip with visits to the beautiful Motherhouse of St. Cecilia Dominican Sisters and Fathers of Mercy Convent in Kentucky, which was an hour drive from Nashville. Then we received the awful news that travellers must self-quarantine for 14 days upon their return to Canada!

The 14-day self-quarantine turned out to be a blessing! It was much-needed time need for rest, prayer, contemplation. It was unexpectedly enjoyable as I was served like a queen with no household chores to do. It was a “hermit-like” lifestyle in my little “prayer cell”. Without my normal busyness, the alone time allowed me to appreciate the goodness of those around me. I was permitted to come out of isolation to attend my father-in-law’s funeral. It was a simple Mass and interment attended only by family members on the Feast of St. Joseph. It was a source of comfort that he was laid to his rest on this day. Like St. Joseph, he was a man of few words and had a good heart. May Tatay Jesus rest in peace. Amen.

Remi Vasquez OCDS
North Vancouver

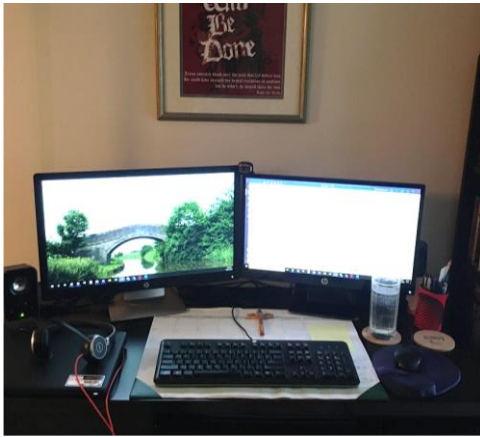


NEWS AROUND THE COMMUNITIES

In time of Self-Isolation

WORKING AT HOME DURING COVID-19

I am now in my 8th week of working at home under the COVID-19 restrictions, and there is a lot to be thankful for. Being able to do my work with a crucifix in the middle of my desk to centre me and a picture on the wall “Thy Will Be Done” is a blessing not possible at my usual place of work

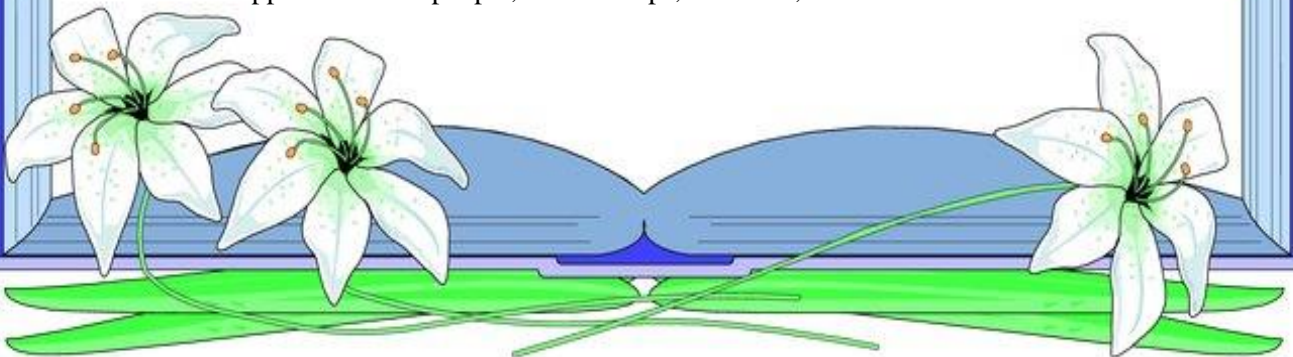


In our society, religious art, symbols, and sacramentals are unacceptable in most business environments. We are instructed to keep our religion on the inside and out of the office. We deal with that, respecting the rules imposed; But oh, so blessed it is to have a home office and visible reminders encouraging me to pause throughout the day bringing God more deeply into my work and every moment of my day.

Oh, how blessed to work at home where I can take frequent pauses to pray and talk with God. Oh, how blessed my company is, though they do not know it, but having visible reminders of my faith around me, helps me do better work and be more patient and more giving. Every circumstance no matter how horrible, has opportunity for a blessing if we are open to it.

OBSERVATION DURING COVID-19

It is interesting to observe the changes in people. Some not so good, evidencing the self-interest culture that has grown in our society. But refreshingly some wonderful new things happening. People walking, respecting the social distancing and moving aside as other approach and more frequently saying hello or thank you or wishing each other well, when before they would hurry by without a word. A man called to me while I was walking praying my rosary and asked me to “say one for him”, so I asked his name and he told me it was “Peter”, so I have prayed for him by name ever since. People checking in on each other when before they would not have bothered or been too busy. God is most certainly at work, and despite the terribly sad side of this virus crisis, hearts are also being changed. Only God can see the total picture, both now and our future. However, if you pause to observe you will see good things emerging from the isolation and the slower pace, an adjustment of priorities and an increased appreciation for people, relationships, eucharist, and freedom.



NEWS AROUND THE COMMUNITIES

In time of Self-Isolation

Easter Sunday 2020 was like one never experienced in our lifetime. With churches closed globally the faithful had to rely on various means of media for the Easter Sunday celebration. As a Celebrant at one of the Easter Celebrations reflected in his homily that it is easy to get the feeling of the first Easter Sunday 2000 years ago, “The Apostles were in the Upper Room with the doors closed because they feared the authorities and yet they began to realize that something special was happening.”

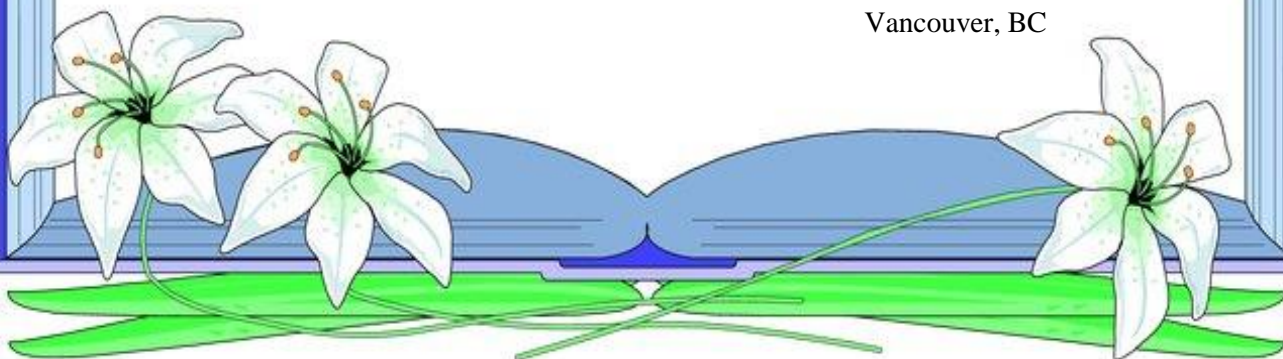
An Easter Sunday would typically begin with morning Mass followed by the usual Easter festivities and meals with all the fixings and ending with the tedious chore of washing up; all in all a full day of activity. This Easter Sunday was quite the contrary with little fanfare of which many may relate. Self-isolation kept us in our homes with no Sunday morning Masses; no outings or special dinners. Eager to compensate and make up for the inability to physically attend Mass and receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, we may have “attended” several live stream Masses. There was time like never before to experience in a deeper way what is written of the First Easter Sunday 2000 years ago.

These months of self-isolation and quiet has allowed us to clear the cobwebs in our minds and leave our imagination to run with new thoughts and inspiration. One thought that comes to mind is that of our Spiritual Father, St. John of the Cross, in the confines of his dark, cold and cramped prison cell where he slept on the floor; was fed bread, water and sardines; and suffered from frostbite. Setting aside his discomfort and suffering, and out of his deep love of God he wrote most of his masterpiece, the Spiritual Canticle. “His greatest suffering during the imprisonment in Toledo was being deprived of the Eucharist. The Blessed Sacrament was ‘all his glory, all his happiness, and for him far surpassed all the things of the earth’”.

With less land activity and air pollution, we are witnessing nature at its best. The second thought is that of St. John in his favorite grotto overlooking a marvelous stretch of sky, river and landscape where he spent many hours in silence and prayer. He had a profound love of beauty and nature and in them he could feel God’s presence. *“Let us rejoice, O my Beloved, Let us go forth to see ourselves in Your beauty, To the mountain and the hill, Where the pure water flows: Let us enter into the heart of the thicket.”* (Spiritual Canticle, XXXVI The Bride)

These unprecedented times can be turned into positive times as we allow ourselves to reflect and bring about a deeper sense of God’s love.

M. Diaz OCDS
Vancouver, BC



NEWS AROUND THE COMMUNITIES

In time of Self-Isolation

Patient care for the treatment of the COVID-19 Virus in the Intensive Care Unit requires a dedicated team of doctors and front-line health care providers. The patients have ARDS (Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome). The internal organs and the spine compress the lungs when the patients are lying on their backs. To keep the lungs open they must lie face down. If they have severe ARDS, they are sedated and have to be turned over every six to eight hours. Because of their weight, intubation and IV lines it takes six people i.e. two RT's (respiratory therapists) to deal with the tubes, two nurses and two doctors to turn them over. Their heads have to be turned every two hours to avoid injuries and eye damage such as corneal abrasions caused by prolonged pressure to the face. Care of these critically ill patients has an emotional and physical impact on everyone involved.

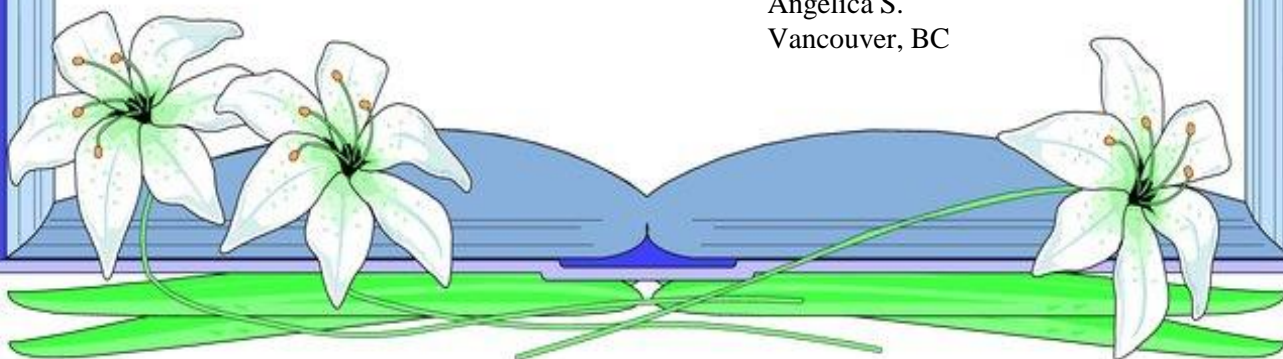
I work in the eye department where eye surgeries do not require general anesthesia. Due to the current situation, non-essential surgeries have been cancelled to assign staff where they are most needed. Our department now acts as screeners for staff members and emergency department patients, and recently also COVID testing on patients scheduled for surgery.

We have received tremendous outpouring of support from the community at large and organizations who have donated snacks, meals and beverages. This gesture of compassion, generosity and care bring stress relief and a ray of sunshine into our day. Our manager echoed our sentiments when she stated, "There are thousands of people who are not as fortunate and who are unable to earn a living to pay their bills and feed their families. We are fortunate and thankful for the outpouring of love and support from the business community even though they are also fighting to keep their workers employed and their companies afloat." Together with fellow managers, she organized a 'Virtual Food Drive' and urged us to give back and support the needy in our Province. This initiation has been well received and fully supported by everyone.

For patients and health care workers who have died of COVID infection - Eternal rest, grant unto them O Lord and let YOUR perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen. May their soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

For those already afflicted, we ask you, our loving Mother, to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust. Amen.

Angelica S.
Vancouver, BC



NEWS AROUND THE COMMUNITIES

In time of Self-Isolation



Jack and Leslie Blair welcomed their tenth grandchild, Andrew Wilfrid Blair, on Sunday, February 23rd. His arrival was a special blessing in the midst of Jack's recovery from open heart surgery in January. "Jack is doing well and we are grateful for your prayers. We are accustomed to a weekly date with our grandchildren and are looking forward to returning soon to that special family time. In the meantime, wee Andrew is well cared-for by his four brothers and five sisters who compete for baby time. With gratitude for God's blessings, Leslie Blair OCDS

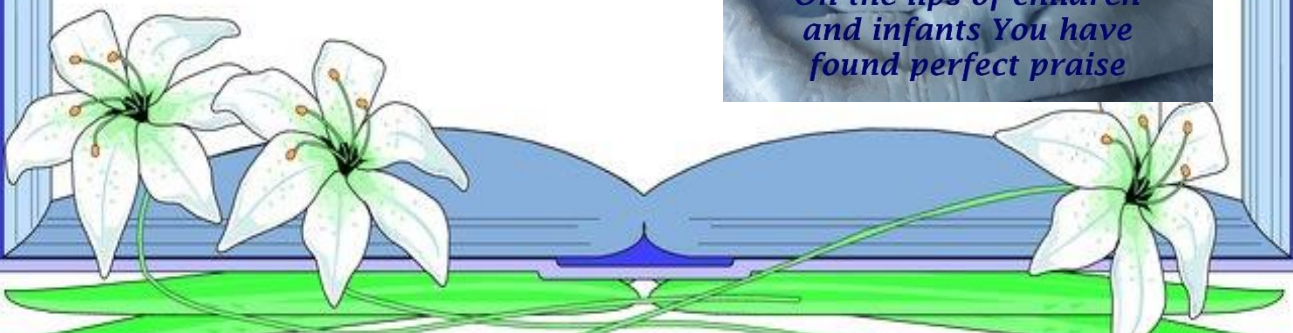
St. Joseph Community, Calgary

BUT JESUS CALLED THEM UNTO HIM, AND SAID, SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME, AND FORBID THEM NOT: FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD. LUKE 18:16

Congratulations to Jonathan & Norma Lo who welcomed their first grandson Tobias Matteo Luistro on 27th March 2020.
St. Teresa of Jesus Community, Vancouver



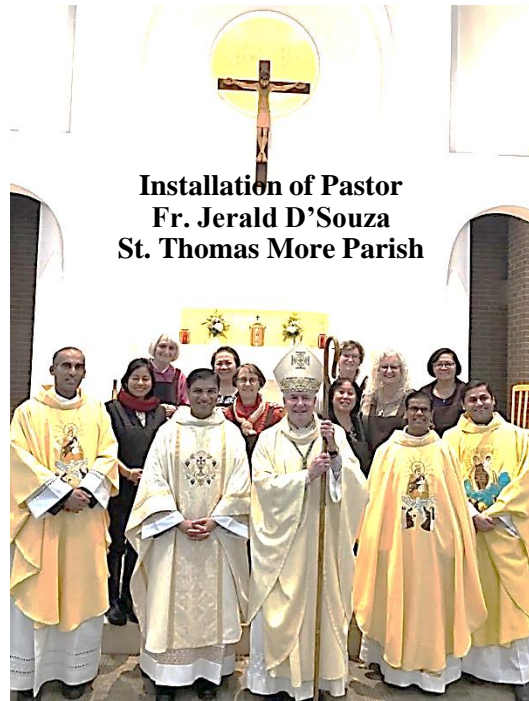
*On the lips of children
and infants You have
found perfect praise*



NEWS AROUND THE REGION



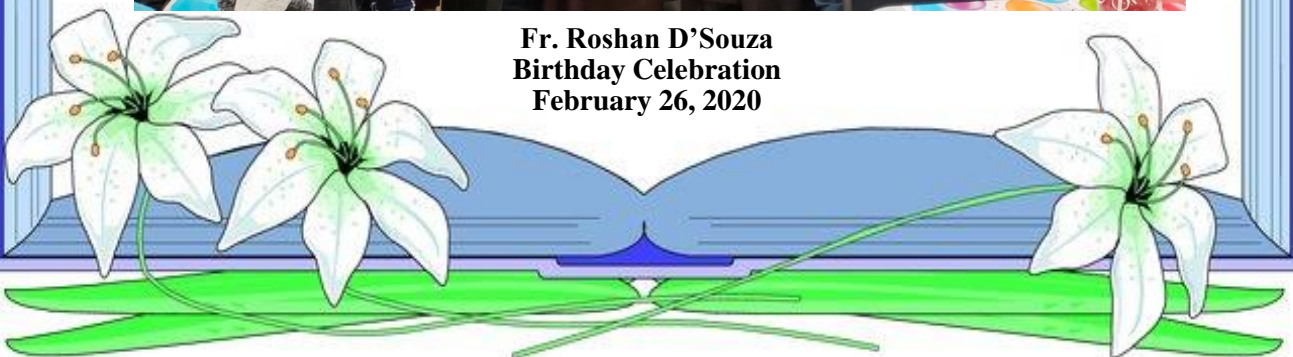
"Ecce Homo"
painting by Rev. Frank Sharma, O.C.D., Teresianum, Rome



**Installation of Pastor
Fr. Jerald D'Souza
St. Thomas More Parish**



**Fr. Roshan D'Souza
Birthday Celebration
February 26, 2020**



**TIAMPO HALL
CARMEL HILL, NORTH DEROCHE**



4th CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS IN MANGALURU

Carmelite Family of Mangaluru Region celebrated the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Carmelite Friars in India, on Sunday 3rd of November 2019 here at Carmel Hill, Infant Jesus Shrine. Rt. Rev. Dr. Aloysius De Souza, the Bishop Emeritus of Mangaluru celebrated the Thanksgiving Eucharist. Fr. Archibald Gonsalves OCD preached a meaningful homily highlighting the contribution of Carmelites to the local Church. After the Mass, a Music Dance Narrative followed on the open stage. The 8 Stages that led to the arrival



of Carmelites in Goa was depicted through beautiful music, dance and narratives. Fr. Alwyn Sequeira OCD wrote the narrative and composed the songs. Joel Pereira rendered the music and Cliyon D Souza prepared the audiovisuals. The students of St. Agnes CBSE School performed the dances. The contribution of Dhanraj a dance Teacher from St. Agnes School though a non-Christian and non-Konkani, was recognized and appreciated. Fr. Wilfred Rodrigues OCD who was the Convener and



MC of the programme said that Sir Dhanraj choreographed the dances so well that the expressions were so well synchronized with the music. Incidentally, most of the dancers too were non-Christians. The rendition of “Havem tuka apovn hadlam” by the Carmelite Scholastics in four parts was the highlight of the program. Earlier the President, Rev. Fr. Charles Serrao OCD, the Provincial of Karnataka Goa Province recalled how the Carmelites from Goa and Verapolly and the first 3 Bishops of Mangalore took care of Canara Christians for almost 300 years and the contributions of Affiliated Congregations such as Cloistered Sisters, Apostolic Carmelite Sisters, Sisters of St. Teresa, and the Secular Carmel in forming this Diocese. He also mentioned that the Carmelites were responsible for the starting of St. Joseph’s Seminary Jeppu for the formation of the local clergy and the first English Medium School in Mangaluru. Sr. Dr. Olivia AC thanked all those contributed to the program. Many religious priests and nuns and lay faithful participated in the programme.



Provincial Council Karnataka-Goa Province



Provincial Superior
Rev. Fr. Charles Serrao, OCD
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Sadbhavana, Carmelite Provincialate
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Dr. Rajkumar Road, Bangalore - 560 010
Tel : 080 - 23476402 / 22902678
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Mobile : +91 7760841578
E-mail : serraoocd@hotmail.com



Rev. Fr. Pius James D'Souza, OCD
First Councillor
*(Vocation Promotion, Spirituality and
Community Life)*



Rev. Fr. Ronald D'Souza, OCD
Second Councillor
*(Formation and On-going
Formation)*



Rev. Fr. Oswald Crasta, OCD
Third Councillor
(Mission and Apostolate)



Rev. Fr. Clifford D'Souza, OCD
Fourth Councillor
(Temporalities and Finances)



Rev. Fr. Silvestre D'Souza, OCD
(Provincial Council Secretary)

DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS
Canadian Community - Karnataka-Goa Province



Rev. Fr. Jerald D'Souza OCD
Regional Superior
St. Thomas More Parish, Calgary AB



Rev. Fr. Rudolf D'Souza OCD



Rev. Fr. John Alex Pinto OCD
Guardian Angels Parish, Vancouver BC



Rev. Fr. Mario Fernandes OCD
Mt. Carmel Spirituality Centre, Parkland County AB



Rev. Fr. Jerome Mascarenhas OCD
St. Patrick Parish, Caledonia ON



Rev. Fr. Ranjan D'Sa OCD
St. Dominic Parish, Oakville ON

DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS
Canadian Community - Karnataka-Goa Province



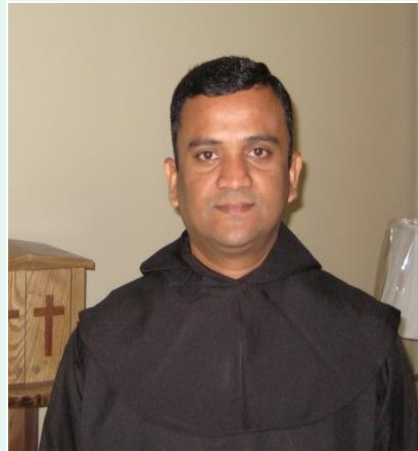
Rev. Fr. Melvin Pinto OCD
St. Aloysius Parish, Kitchener ON



Rev. Fr. Steny Mascarenhas OCD
St. Edmund's Parish, North Vancouver BC



Rev. Fr. Victor Angelo Fernandes OCD
Chaplain, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver BC



Rev. Fr. Vijay Martin OCD
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish
Kamloops BC



Rev. Fr. Alexander Braganza OCD
Little Flower Monastery, Carmel Hill
Deroche BC



Rev. Fr. Godwin Arun Pinto OCD
St. Patrick Parish, Burlington ON

DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS
Canadian Community - Karnataka-Goa Province



Rev. Fr. Rajesh Madtha OCD
Little Flower Monastery, Carmel Hill, Deroche BC



Rev. Fr. Jaison Tellis OCD
St. John Vianney Parish, Kamloops, BC



Rev. Fr. Roshan D'Souza OCD
Provincial Delegate for the OCDS
St. Thomas More Parish, Calgary AB



Rev. Fr. Vincent D'Souza OCD
St. Mary's and St. Ann's Parishes
Hagersville, ON



Rev. Fr. Ivan Leo Sanctis OCD
Mt. Carmel Spirituality Centre,
Parkland County AB



Rev. Fr. Venil D'Souza OCD
St. Aloysius Parish, Kitchener ON

DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS
Canadian Community - Karnataka-Goa Province



Rev. Fr. Cannio Remedio Cardozo OCD
St. Edmund's Parish
North Vancouver BC



Bro. Frank Sharma OCD

MONASTERIES



Discalced Carmelite Nuns **Armstrong, B.C.**

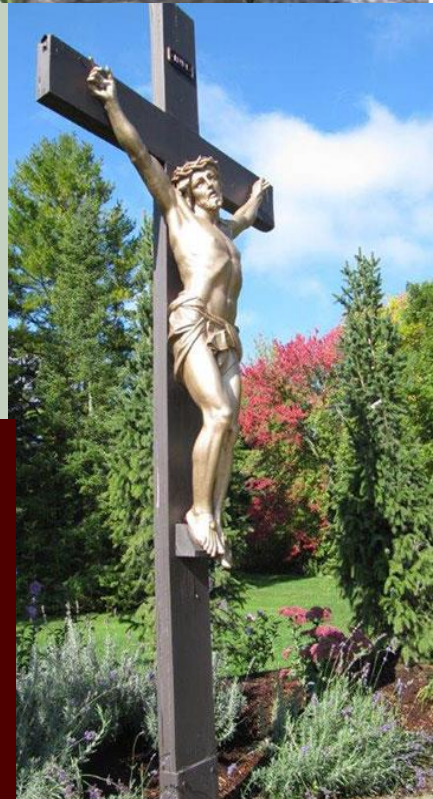
**The Carmel of St. Joseph - 4815 Salmon River Road
Armstrong, BC Canada V0E 1B4 Tel: 1-250-546-8801
Prioress: Mother Ann of Jesus OCD www.carmelspall.org**



The Carmel of St. Joseph
12, 51222 Rge Road 270
Spruce Grove, AB T7Y 1G7
Tel: 780-963-3380
Prioress: Mother Catherine of
Our Lady of Divine Providence OCD

The Carmel of St. Joseph
St. Agatha, Ontario, Canada

1127 Carmel-Koch Road
R.R. 1 St. Agatha, Ontario
N0B 2L0
Phone: 519-884-7563



OCDS COMMUNITIES

St. Joseph, Calgary AB

Meetings: Third Sunday of the Month
Place: St. Thomas More Church,
Calgary
Time: 1:00 p.m.
President: Carla Jane Romeo OCDS
Tel: 1.403.288.2296
Sp. Assistant: Fr. Roshan D'Souza OCD

St. Teresa of Jesus of the Andes, Group Vernon BC

Meetings: Fourth Sunday of the Month
Place: Our Lady of the Valley Church
Coldstream, BC
Time: 1:30 p.m.
President: Loretta Sharko OCDS
Tel: 1.250.448.5633
Sp. Assistant: Fr. Peter Nguyen

St. Teresa of Jesus, Vancouver BC

Meetings: Second Saturday of the Month
Place: Guardian Angels Church
Vancouver
Time: 9:00 a.m.
President: Assunta Tan OCDS
Tel: 1.604.264.7227
Sp. Assistant: Fr. Victor Fernandes OCD

St. John of the Cross, Coquitlam BC

Meetings: Third Saturday of the Month
Place: St. Edmund's Church,
N. Vancouver
Time: 8:15 a.m.
President: Marilyn Cunada OCDS
Tel: 1.604.931.1555
Sp. Assistant: Fr. Cannio Cardozo OCD

St. Therese of the Child Jesus & the Holy Face Group Edmonton AB

Meetings: Third Saturday of the Month
Place: Mt Carmel Spirituality Centre, Parkland County
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Tel: 1.780.963.0896
Sp. Director: Fr. Mario Fernandes OCD

Fr. Roshan D'Souza, OCD - Provincial Delegate
Molly Diaz OCDS - President, Regional Council
Leslie Blair OCDS - Central Director of Formation
Regional Council

Email: carmelrosh@gmail.com
Email: mdocds@hotmail.com
Email: lblairocds@gmail.com

Official Matters to Provincial Delegate & Regional Council Email: secretariatocdswest@gmail.com

OFFICE OF STATISTICS

Grace Aleong - Membership lists and formation status, forms, scapulars, Constitution & Ritual Booklets
Email: havenofgrace@hotmail.com

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Norma Lo - Special projects under the direction of the President, Regional Council and the Provincial Delegate.

EMAIL DISTRIBUTION

Carla Jane Romeo - Email: ocdswest@gmail.com

UPCOMING OCDS EVENTS 2020

- May 9** **Information Meeting – Postponed**
- May 16** **Information Meeting – Postponed**
- Jun 28-30** **To be determined**
Annual Meeting w/Provincial Delegate
Little Flower Monastery, Deroche BC
- July 16** **Solemnity of Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel – Venue TBN**
- Aug 4-6** **To be determined**
Annual Retreat, St. John of the Cross Community
Little Flower Monastery, Deroche BC
- Aug 7-9** **To be determined**
Annual Retreat, St. Teresa of Jesus Community
Little Flower Monastery, Deroche BC
- Aug 21-23** **To be determined**
Annual Retreat, St. Teresa of Jesus of the Andes Group
Seton House, Kelowna BC

DUE TO THE CURRENT PANDEMIC OF THE CO-VID 19 VIRUS, EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO POSTPONEMENT / CANCELLATION.

MASS REQUESTS

Masses can be requested by emailing the Monastery Superior of Little Flower Monastery, Carmel Hill at carmelhillod@gmail.com. The Masses are offered by our OCD Friars. Cheques are payable to **Discalced Carmelite Fathers** and mailed to 10789 N. Deroche Road, Deroche, BC V0M 1G0

GREETING CARDS

Jose Sepidoza – Responsible for formatting and emailing greeting cards.
Email: greetingsocdswest@gmail.com

WEB MASTER

Leslie Blair - Update and maintain OCDS website www.ocdswest.ca under the direction of the President, Regional Council & Provincial Delegate. Email: ocdswest@gmail.com

EVENT PICTURES - FLOS CARMELI & WEBSITE Submit event photographs with a short description through your respective presidents. Email Regional Council Office at ocdswest@gmail.com.

REGIONAL COUNCIL MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 43011, Richmond Centre P.O. , Richmond BC Canada V6Y 3Y3



St. Joseph

Patron Saint

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