

Flos Carmeli



From the Provincial Delegate: Elections, Provincial Council vacancies and Vocations

Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD

It's New Year's Day as I begin this report. So, though it will come to you belatedly, I can still wish each of you a most blessed, healthy, happy, and holy year. Mary, Star of the Sea, pray for us . . .



It will be a year of changes for your communities as well as for the province as a whole. You will conduct your community elections this spring,

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and by May we should know who the new councilors and other officers will be in each community for the coming three years. We friars will begin our own election process, for the election of the provincial, this very month of January. In a couple weeks we'll have a first consultation ballot and, then, in February a second. In March we conduct the election itself. If all goes as recent history suggests, we should know by mid-March who the provincial will be for the coming three years. Fr. Luis Castañeda, our current provincial, is eligible for re-election to a second term.

Whoever is elected provincial, he will not take office until the first day of our coming provincial chapter, which will open the last Monday in May. It is at our provincial chapter, then, that we elect a provincial council of friars, consisting of four friars and the provincial. At the



end of the chapter, which runs for two weeks, the newly elected council makes the assignments for the coming triennium—that is, who will be superior of which house, who will be pastor in each of the three parishes we serve, who will act as our formation directors, who will be the OCDS provincial delegate, etc.

[In the photo on the left you'll notice the current OCDS Provincial Delegate departing for his new assignment following the chapter.]

In making these assignments, the provincial council of friars also determines the “conventuality” of each friar. This term “conventuality” refers to where—that is, in which community—a friar resides. Since we are so few, and yet have a full slate of offices and communities to fill, it is always a delicate process trying to come up with all these assignments. We call it “building a house of cards.”

The OCDS Provincial Council

During our provincial chapter your own Provincial Council will be meeting in order, in its own right, to plan for the coming triennium and provide its new members with an orientation in the Council's duties and procedures. The term of two members—namely, Mary Kay Daniels and Chris Wood—will continue automatically from this past triennium into the new one. Kathryn Ney, presently serving on the Council, can be assigned for another three years. Thus, these three provincial councilors will comprise the council elders as the new triennium begins. It is

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up to them to share their wisdom with the new members. Indeed, we need two new members to join them on the Council.

Which brings me to the big, lingering question—where are the nominations for the Provincial Council that are supposed to be coming from the communities? There are over 900 Seculars in the province, among at least 35 communities, at last count. We need only 2 new members for the Provincial Council. The math suggests it should not be difficult. And, what is more, the vocation implies great generosity among you, with a strong spirit of community-mindedness and a ready desire to serve. Furthermore, surely everyone recognizes the important role the Provincial Council plays in the life of the province and considers the Council, by virtue of his or her own experience, a blessing to the province.

So, where are the nominations? Am I missing something? If so—if there's some issue or problem constituting an obstacle to service on the Provincial Council—please let me know.

[As pictured on the right, the Provincial Council has even succeeded at getting the lion to lie down with the, well, deer of our province—a major accomplishment.]



It has been nine years since the Provincial Council officially rolled into action. Your Provincial Statutes, composed—as per your Constitutions n.57—by the first Provincial Council, are nearly as old. The Statutes, for their part, should probably be reviewed over the coming triennium. The way the Provincial Council conducts its business needs also to be reviewed. Changes could be made to both. Thus, this coming triennium promises to be an exciting, creative time for the Council. If for no other reason, we will need a full and diverse Council going forward.

Which brings me once again to the lingering question—where are the nominations?

Speaking to the local presidents and councils, we have two months—and, probably by the time you get this issue of the Flos, only one month—January, February, and March at the outside, to discuss this question in your communities and come through with a

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nomination. If the Seculars of the province want to elect for themselves the members of the Provincial Council, we need candidates. Otherwise, the friars will have to act by fiat and seek out volunteers and appoint them from above.

The 2014 OCDS Regional Congress

As you are aware, the 2014 Congress is being prepared and hosted by the four OCDS communities of Georgia—that is by the three communities in the Atlanta area and by the community of Savannah, GA. The Congress itself will be held in Atlanta this coming August 21-24. By the way, if you were not aware of this fact until only just now, then please do try to stay better informed. Even if you are not planning to attend the Congress, you should be aware of it and willing to participate in it through your prayers. A regional congress is an important event in life of a province. And all of you need to remember that you belong not just to a community, but to a province.

Here, by the way, is the prayer that those planning the Congress have prepared for themselves, asking the Spirit's help with this endeavor. I've modified it slightly. You might recite it from time to time.

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the blessing of the 2014 Congress.

With zeal and gratitude we pray for those who carry out this task

our province has entrusted to them on our behalf, their brothers and sisters in Carmel.

Pour forth Your Spirit upon their endeavors,

guide them in their decisions, and strengthen them in their labors.

May they find You in the "pots and pans," as our Holy Mother Teresa did.

Bless and protect all those who will be traveling to attend the Congress

and may their hearts be aflame with Your love.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

You will notice in this issue of the Flos that registration for the Congress has opened. You can register online, of course, through the Congress website. Or you can register by old-fashioned

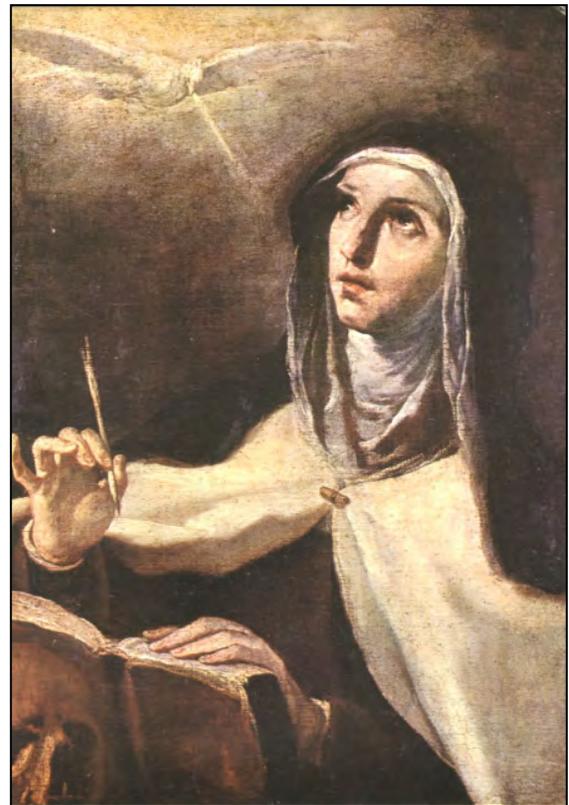
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mail. You can also make your room registration, through the hotel, at your convenience. Moreover, please bookmark the Congress website at www.2014ocdscongress.net. Hopefully you've already visited the site. It's growing and will be updated regularly in the future. So, keep tabs on it. Thus, you can know how things are going and what pieces of news there are about the Congress.

The event does promise to be a congress worthy of our province, which is saying a lot. A high bar has been set. There will be four presenters, including Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, whose writings some of you may be familiar with. There will also be much else—possibly as many as 10 workshops to choose from, for example, with each addressing some very practical concern in the life of a Secular. And the Provincial Council will lead a panel presentation and discussion on that most crucial of all questions, namely, “Are we being transformed by the vocation?” Indeed, when all else is said and done, that's the question that remains.

So, you can see the Congress promises much in the way of content. But there is also, as always, the opportunity a congress affords those who attend simply to be together with as many as 400-500 other Seculars, to meet new people, to renew past acquaintances, to worship together, and pray together, and, in the spirit of our Holy Mother, to have a jolly good time together. I don't know anyone who has ever attended a congress who has not experienced this aspect of a congress—the fellowship, the communion in Carmel—as anything but a blessing and a grace.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel,
our holy mother Teresa,
and St. John of the Cross:
we thank you
for your humble endearing way
of embracing your sons and daughters
in Carmel.
We pray for the grace
to keep our Promises
in faithfulness to our vocation.
Please draw more men and women
to vocations in the
Discalced Carmelite Order
throughout the world, particularly
in the Oklahoma Province.
Pray for our Friars, Nuns and Seculars
a holy sufficiency, perseverance, and Joy.
We pray too for the Bishop,
Priests and Religious of our own Diocese,
according to their needs.
Pray that, as Secular members of
the Order of Carmel,
we may collaborate wholeheartedly
in building the Kingdom of God
on earth,
through prayer at the heart of the Church.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.



Fifth Centenary

This year marks the final year of our preparation for the Fifth Centenary of the Birth of Holy Mother. The centenary year itself officially opens October 15 of this year, 2014, and goes through October 15, 2015, which date marks the main event, the culminating celebration of this most special occasion in the life our religious family.

During this last year of preparation the Order has asked us to acquaint ourselves, as best we can, with the letters, poetry, and minor works of St. Teresa—this last category representing most notably her Meditations on the Song of Songs and what is called her Spiritual Testimonies. You have all received the reading list sent out from the General House. It is meant to help you find your way through this overabundance of material. But the list is not a reading assignment. You're not bound to it in detail. Rather, you can put your emphasis elsewhere and follow another path..

For example, you may wish to spend less time on the letters and more with the Spiritual Testimonies. Or you may wish to focus at greater length on the Meditations on the Song of Songs, spending much of the year reading through that work thoughtfully. Or if a member of your community takes a shine to the poetry of Teresa and wishes to read through all her poems, this member might then make a presentation to the community highlighting this or that favorite stanza or two or three. Indeed, that might be enough to cover Teresa's poetry.

Of course, working through the letters is a major project. The reading list issued by the Order spends most of its space suggesting letters for your study. If your community were to want to look at Teresa's letters more fully, though, you might divvy them up among yourselves and then ask each member to speak briefly on this or that letter or passage from a letter such as most interested him or her. In all these ways, you have my permission, and the permission of the Order, to be as creative as you wish. All that is asked is that you, in some way or another, at more or less depth, spend time as a community, however briefly, over Holy Mother's letters, poetry, and minor works.

In fact, your primary attention and interest during this final year leading up to the centenary itself needs to be directed towards what you as a community might choose to do to celebrate this once-in-a-lifetime event. I hope every community will strive to do something, no matter how simple. And now, of course, is the time to begin a discussion of this question.

Finally on this topic—as I hope you know Carmel in the US—that is, the nuns, friars, and Seculars of all three provinces—has sponsored an official centenary website. It is meant to serve as a single site where someone can go to see what's being done by the Order throughout the US to mark this special occasion.

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The address of the site is www.teresa-5th-centenary.org.

Please keep tabs on it, if only to see who's planning what and where. The site will also showcase commemorative items, which might be of interest to you or your community.

And please as you plan any event in celebration of the centenary, or if you prepare any commemorative item, send me word. Let me know who is doing what, where, and when—even if your plans are as yet only provisional. I will see that the item gets posted on the website.



This pelican just may have a vocation~

~



2014 OCDS Congress Update

Hotel reservations are now being accepted for the 2014 Congress in Atlanta.

For online reservations go to

https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_gi_new&groupID=20195479

Each room can have up to four individuals at the one room rate.

Only one person should make the reservation, though. Otherwise four rooms will be reserved.

Should someone not have internet access, they may call the hotel at 1-866-469-5475, which is the number for reservations.

They should mention that they are with “Discalced Carmelites” and give the dates.

The Congress Website is at: <http://2014ocdscongress.net/>

New information is being added regularly. So, check it out.

Email regarding the Congress can be sent to: 2014OCDSCongress@gmail.com



Sponsor an OCD Friar or Brother

Part of coming together at a congress as a Carmelite family is to meet our Carmelite friars, brothers, and speakers. However, it is up to us to help pay for their Congress registration fees and hotel rooms and your assistance would be appreciated. Communities can submit a donation directly to the 2014 Congress Community by check, sending it to:

2014 Congress/Sponsor a Friar or Brother

Attn: Mary Agnes Larson

6393 Wedgeview Court

Tucker, GA 30084

In addition, individuals can contribute when submitting their conference registration. Please consider sponsoring an OCD religious for the full registration fee, or whatever amount you can provide. It will be a joy to see so many brown habits moving among all the seculars during the Congress, and it is very satisfying to know that a particular priest or brother is there because of your generosity. This was done in the past, most recently at the 2013 Portland Congress, with great success. In all cases, we will be sure to let the friar know which community and/or individual has sponsored them, unless instructed otherwise. When you meet him at the Congress, perhaps you can arrange to have a meal together.

Thoughts for the new year

By Dorothy Mansen, OCDS, president, Provincial Council

“I have an attic at my house.” Well, you might wonder, what that has to being a Carmelite secular serving on the Provincial Council....?

It means that since years of secular records were not to be stored at the Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas any longer, a new storage place had to be obtained. Thanks to my attic I became the keeper of the records. When I received the 2 large dried out cardboard cartons it was agreed that I would look through them and determine what was of historical value and what had just been filed in the boxes perhaps for sentimental reasons.

There was quite a collection of odds and ends from years past. Programs from Congress' almost 20 years ago, many greeting cards and thank you notes, old bank receipts and statements and isolate records were all religiously filed away and occupying a lot of space. I found a file that contained some of the talks given by various brothers and friars years ago. Those I thought would be interesting to keep. Today OCDS records are kept in our database at the Central Office. Someday I imagine some soul looking to do some penance, will scan some of the articles and other things and we won't have to worry about someone not having an attic.

At the time I did all this however, I had other Provincial Council things to do and so I didn't stop to read everything in detail. As it turned out, I was able to condense the two cartons into one neat plastic container, and promptly put that back in the attic I was so blessed to have. I hoped that this bit of housecleaning would make it easier for the next person to store the records, just in case they were not blessed as I had been and didn't have an attic! Now all that took place almost two years ago and until a couple weeks ago the box remained gathering dust in the attic.

A couple months ago I was asked if I would give a conference during a visitation. I looked back at some of the topics I had already given. There was one on Leadership and another on Vocation. These subjects pretty much cover a lot of the aspects of being a secular. Since I was asked to touch on some of the points that were in those previous talks I began to wonder why that was. Could it be because in the last 2 and 3 years new people had become members of the community/study group, or maybe I had not been very good at saying what I had wanted to share? The thought also came to my mind that many members had progressed beyond those basic talks and were now seeking more input. As a result I decided perhaps to not only revisit some subjects, but really analyze where seculars stand today after having made their Promises.

Then I remembered the file that contained the talks that others had given that were in the attic box. When I took it out and started looking at the titles, what struck me most was the fact that the topics of the talks seemed to be almost the same just by different peo-

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ple. Why was this, what happens to seculars as years pass that we need to hear over and over about our vocation.

What happens to the vocation to Carmel?

Once the vocation to Carmel is discerned to be present, and the Promises are made what happens? Do we lose something and need constantly to be reminded of what and who we are?

As a member of the Provincial Council, I have the privilege of reading the letters and council interviews that are sent in from our study groups when a person in formation having completed the required study and has faithfully attended meetings is now requesting permission to make their Promise. The outpouring of the love of God that these candidates express sometimes overwhelms me. Not long ago after reading a letter that beautifully related their experience and growth while they were in formation, it made me wonder what it was that I had written many years ago in my letter. Was I as fired up for the Lord as they seem to be? So my search to find out began.

At the time that I was ready to make my First Promise, the Provincial Council didn't exist and candidates were actually interviewed by a friar. A letter was not necessarily required. When the time came for me to ask to make my Definitive Promise the new Constitutions were in place and candidates were required to write a letter. If they were members of a canonical community, they were interviewed by the local council and a friar was not present.

So it was that I looked through all my mementos from my early years as a secular searching for that letter. Luckily I did not have to go in to the attic to find it. There it was in a notebook I had made up that depicted the events of my journey in Carmel. How long had it been since I had looked in that notebook? There I was in one photo, all smiles and holding a bouquet of roses my husband had given me on the day of making my Definitive Promise. Almost immediately the emotions of that day years ago rushed in to my heart and tears rolled down my face.

I am sure that if any of you would go back and think about your Promise day you too would find yourself overwhelmed and filled with joy. You were ever so clear about your vocation to Carmel and probably like me the thought of what all that would mean in the future was not foremost in your mind. I see that joy and anticipation in the letters from the candidates for Promises. It is a joy that like other precious events in our lives we would like to bottle up so that we could take out on a day when things

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are not going so good and we would again gain strength and comfort from it.

But like everything else in our lives, the newness wears off and the day to day struggles wash in. Where exactly does that leave us as seculars? How are we to live when life over shadows that initial joy we first had? As the years pile up and the day we make our First Promise becomes part of the past, what can keep us going? I think of some of the seculars that made their Promises many years ago and are still on their journey. How do they keep going?

We all had such fervor and zeal in the beginning and now perhaps find ourselves in a groove, going through the motions, but not in touch so much with the reality of what it is we are about as seculars. We all know that St. Teresa had a determination that enabled her with God's help, to accomplish astonishing things in her life. She loved the Carmelite Order and had great zeal for its welfare. There was no way that she was going to fail in her zeal for the honor of God.

The Promise that we made that made us members of the Secular Order distinguishes us from many, many other people who live and love Carmelite spirituality, but have not made any sort of commitment to the Order. The Church has recognized our commitment.

Let's look at what this difference implies between members at large and members of a religious order in a practical way that some of you have probably experienced. I bet you have known of have known of people that completed the formation program, made Definitive Promises, may even have made vows and then they are never seen again. When someone asks them about this they say, "well, I say my office every day, I make mental prayer every day, I read St. Teresa, I read St. John of the Cross, I study them", but it seems they have no idea of what it means to be a part of the Order.

Are we ourselves clear on what it means to be part of an Order? It is our structure. Did we receive enough instruction when we were in formation to understand what it means to be part of a community? The Promise that we made incorporated us into a community. We make up a community of people who share something very basic about our Catholic Christian identity, namely Carmel. It is in this identity that we live out our lives as seculars.

When we made our Promises we said that we "sincerely promise to the Superiors of the Order of the Teresian Carmel and to you, my brothers and sisters, to tend toward evangelical perfection in the spirit of the evangelical counsels of

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chastity, poverty, obedience, and of the Beatitudes, according to the Constitution of the Secular Order of discalced Carmelites for the rest of my life.” etc. By your promise to the community in the presence of the presider, you became a full member of the Secular Order. Our promise is an ecclesial act. We made a commitment to the Order and the Order made a commitment to us. At the end of 6 years that commitment was definitive. It then became our job to be there for others. Commitment is necessary.

How has our commitment deepened?

Has our commitment deepened in the years since our Promises were first made? Only by examining what the contents of the Promise are can we figure that **out**. Let us take the part of living the life of the Beatitudes. When we do this, it includes more than a personal evaluation of one’s own person, of one’s approach, attitude, living of life, the Beatitudes are a measure of relationship to the world. In 1716 of the Catholic Catechism it says, “*The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus preaching*” and in 1717 :*The Beatitudes depict of the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray His charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of His passion and resurrection. They shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life*”etc.

When we practice the Beatitudes in community, we are to support each other. We are not to be left wondering how, or to do it all on our own. The reason meetings are so important is we can’t do this alone. We need to be in touch with and be supported by our sisters and brother so while at the same time giving our support to them. It is not practical to set up a spiritual life and a solemn life, all alone.

Carmel is not a training ground for individualists. Matter of fact, the one thing we lose is our individualism, not our individuality of course, but our individualism. What should be growing in a person who makes the Promise, who tries to live the Beatitudes as an apostolate, is the need to have others and to understand what the right thing to do is, so that we can live this life of the Beatitudes. We need to have a certain human capacity for conversion. Without that we won’t be able to be part of other people, part of community.

An example of how we can learn what is the right thing to do is through our discussions. It is the responsibility of the council and the director of

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formation to see that time is being set aside for study, reflection and discussion. However the responsibility is not theirs alone, we as individuals have the responsibility to participate in them. Granted, not everyone has something to say all the time, but an honest effort should be made on the part of all to share something. If we have studied the assigned readings or to have listened attentively to a presentation, we should be able to offer a sentence or two at the very least that came to our mind, touched our hearts, and inspired us.

An ingredient that is necessary for constructive discussion to take place, is, love of our neighbor and in this case being our sisters and brothers in Carmel. This is the opportunity to practice patience as listeners and humility as speakers. We are expected to share with others in a loving way what we have learned and experienced.

Today more than ever the Church is asking all the laity to go out and evangelize our Catholicism. By sharing in our Carmelite communities our life of faith and living the Beatitudes we will be ready when the opportunity presents itself to share with other people what this gift of Carmelite Spirituality that God has so generously given us means to us.

“To know God so that God may be known”

We all basically know what Carmelite Spirituality is. It is to know God so that God may be known. God has his reasons for wanting us to know Him and for wanting us to have this relationship with Him. The Beatitudes, in a most concrete way drive us, to show us, where it is that we must show God, to the poor, the meek, the mourning and those who suffer that it is there that God wants to be.

Let us take the time in this New Year to refresh our memories, open our hearts and in our prayers ask God to recreate in us the joy, love and enthusiasm we had when we make our Promises, so that we can go forth in the Church and in the world spreading the Good News. We can ask God to grow in us the fervor of our vocation knowing that He will grant what we ask when it is his will.

So important to our vocation is our life in our community that a new chapter is being added to our Constitution. Number 24-c reads, “The local community of the Secular Order is a visible sign of the Church. The faithful

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Christian is inserted into this community through the promise made to the community in the presence of the Superior of the Order or his Delegate. Therefore, each member of Secular Carmel is called to a personal commitment to live in communion with the Church, with the Order, with the Province and especially with those whom they are close to, loving them and stimulating them in the practice of virtue. For this reason there needs to be assiduous and active participation in the life and meetings of the community.....”

I’d like to conclude with some lines from a poem that St. Teresa wrote for her nuns and take the liberty of substituting the word nuns with the word seculars. I think it sums up how we are to go about living our life of Beatitude in Carmel and would be helpful to us as we start another year as seculars. The poem is called:

LET US JOURNEY TO HEAVEN

Like Elias we must go

All his zeal and courage show

Conquering nature here below

Seculars of Carmel

With Elias may we say

“With zeal have I been zealous

For the Lord God of Hosts.”

Seculars of Carmel

Council election procedure for Study Groups

By Chris Wood, OCDS, Houston Study Group

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Article 50 of the Constitutions of the Secular Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Teresa of Jesus stipulate that “every three years, each local community of the Secular Order elects its President and three Councilors.” During the spring of 2014 our communities will once again elect their Councils for the upcoming Triennium. While the procedure for doing this is well documented in the Constitutions and Provincial Statutes this procedure is written for Canonical Communities and is not intended for Study Groups and therefore is not completely relevant to them.

Furthermore our Statutes state that the “Provincial Delegate reserves the right to appoint and replace all Councilors of Study Groups” (Statute XV 2.c). So does this mean that Study Groups should not conduct elections this spring? Actually no...the Provincial Council recommends that each Study Group convene elections during the same timeframe with the rest of the Order since this is good experience and developmental for them along the road to Canonical establishment. To aid Study Groups in conducting elections the Provincial Council is providing the following instructions.

For Study Groups the primary principle to keep in mind is that these elections are closed. This means that the completed ballots should be collected and sealed during the community meeting, and then forwarded to the Provincial Council via OCDS Central Office (address: c/o Barbara Tinervia, 9915 E. 99th St, Tulsa, OK 74133) where they will be opened and tallied. The results of the election will then be presented to the Provincial Delegate for his consideration in appointing the President and Council positions for the new Triennium. The Provincial Delegate will communicate these appointments to the outgoing President once his deliberations have been completed. During the time between the election and the Provincial Delegate appointments the outgoing President and Council shall remain in office.

Study Groups may refer to the election instructions listed below which should help in conducting this activity:

Use all elections procedures as outlined in the Provincial Statutes (Section III) except for the following differences as noted here.

The number of Councilors to be elected for an individual Study Group shall be determined by the Provincial Council after receiving the completed ballots. This will be based on the number of eligible professed members (i.e. Study Groups usually have only one or two Councilors in addition to the President and Formation Director).

No one from the Study Group should look at the completed ballots. At the time of the election the ballots should be collected by a member of the nominating committee and

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placed in an envelope which is sealed and mailed to the Saint Therese Province OCDS Central Office (address: c/o Barbara Tinervia, 9915 E. 99th St, Tulsa, OK 74133).

The Provincial Council will tally the ballots and forward the results to the Provincial Delegate for deliberation.

The Provincial Delegate will officially appoint the new President and Council members by communicating his decision to the outgoing President.

Once the new Council is appointed they may make recommendations of one or two names to the Provincial Delegate for the appointment of a Formation Director.

Likely there will be questions regarding this process so please do not hesitate to contact your Provincial Council Visitor or me directly. You can reach me via email at cbwood54@yahoo.com.

May the Holy Spirit guide us all in our Triennial elections!

The hunt for the elusive Perfect Roster Format

By Barbara Tinvervia, OCDS, Central Office Administrator

I'd like to thank everyone for their patience and determination in trying to comply with my idea last year of using an Excel spreadsheet for your community rosters. I'd also like to apologize for putting all of you through that little experiment! It turned out to be a much bigger challenge for many of you than I had thought that it would be. I also have realized that we can get by with a bit less information at the Central Office level and still be able to adequately fill out the census information that we turn in to the Generalate in Rome each year. So, I'm going to take us back to using a Word document. I'm going to list out the information that I do need, in an order that will help me in my tasks of pulling out data and organizing it. My goal this year is to make this as simple as I can for both you in the communities and me in the Central Office. St. Jude, pray for us!

Here is the information that I need, in the order that I would prefer it to be listed on the page:

- The name of your community, the city and state where you meet, the date of your community's establishment (when you held your first official meeting if you are a GID or Study Group; otherwise, the date that your community was canonically-erected), the status of your community (Canonical, Study Group, or GID).
- The name of your community's Spiritual Advisor and complete contact information (mailing address, phone number, email address). If your community does not have a Spiritual Advisor, please specify this.
- List your Council
 - Include name, mailing address, phone number, email address, formation level (Definitive Promise or First Promise), date that profession took place, year of birth
 - President
 - Director of Formation
 - Councilor
 - Councilor
 - Councilor
- List your Secretary and Treasurer
 - Include name, mailing address, phone number, email address, formation level (Definitive Promise, First Promise, Clothed, or Aspirant), date that profession or clothing took place, year of birth
- List your Definitive Promise members who are not on your Council
 - You can just list their names, date of profession, and year of birth
- List your First Promise members who are not on your Council

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- List their names, date of profession, and year of birth
- List your Clothed members who do not serve as either Secretary or Treasurer
 - List their names, date of clothing, and year of birth
- List your Aspirants
 - List their names and year of birth
- List any Isolates assigned to your Community
 - List their names, level of formation (Definitive Promise, First Promise, Clothed, or Aspirant), the date of profession or clothing, and year of birth
- List any members on Leave of Absence
 - List their names, level of formation (Definitive Promise, First Promise, Clothed, or Aspirant), the date of profession or clothing, if this is their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year on LOA (past three years requires approval of the Provincial Council), date of profession or clothing, year of birth
- List any members on Aged/Infirm status
 - List their names, level of formation (Definitive Promise, First Promise, Clothed, or Aspirant), the date of profession or clothing, and year of birth
- List any members who died this year
 - List their names, level of formation (Definitive Promise, First Promise, Clothed, or Aspirant), the date of profession or clothing, year of birth, date of death

Please note that the information that I am requesting does not give permission to do things that the Constitution or Statutes do not allow. For instance, the Statutes only give permission for LOA for Definitive Promise members. Although I am asking for the information of the formation level and have given other levels as examples, do not interpret this as permission to go beyond the Statutes. Your community would have to contact the Provincial Council if you wish to make an exception to the Statutes. Likewise, do not interpret the information that I have requested for Secretary or Treasurer as any sort of endorsement or requirement that these positions be filled by any particular formation level. That is totally at the discretion of your Local Council. I just need complete information.

I will send these instructions out again with the annual request for financial reports and rosters. If your community would like to get this part started, feel free to do so. Study Groups and GIDs will obviously have to wait to provide their information until the Provincial Council and Provincial Delegate have reviewed any elections and appointed a Council.

Again, I thank my brothers and sisters in Carmel for your patience with me as I continue the hunt for the elusive perfect roster form! Please feel free to send me any questions at btiner-via@yahoo.com.

The spiritual dimension of dementia

By Shawn Rain Chapman, OCDS, Austin Community

I am listening to the beautiful sound of heavy rainfall. The windows in my room are open and the sound of muffled thunder rolls around the distant sky. My 11 year old daughter, Roise, is singing to herself in the living room,

It sounds like my Fiancée, Bob, is playing "Petite Etude" on his guitar on the couch near her. Apparently a math homework break is in progress. Maire, my 15 year old, is reading, sitting barefoot on the floor in her room. I am still slightly wet from running out of the church after mass to get the car and bring it round for the girls. I offered up how cold the rain was on my skin as a sacrificial prayer for my mom.

I've been pondering Dementia all day. By this I don't mean spinning my mind's wheels obsessing on it or trying to think what else it could be that Mom might have, or whether I'm going to have it (or how anyone will be able to tell if I do), or anything like that—the way I was before. I've been wondering what dementia means spiritually. I think this is partly me trying to find a way to understand this that takes away some of the horror of my mom's dementia for me or at least gives me a way to think about it that I can stand. But I also think what's happening in my mind shows that God is giving me not only a little bit of serenity but maybe a glimpse of part of my role, part of my particular walk with Mom and with God and with my family through this. I don't know if it will make sense to anybody else. But it is beginning to give me a new point of reference that I think I will need, that maybe we will all need in this time ahead of us with Mom.

I remember after the death of my first husband, Blaze, in a car accident in 1998, being so afraid I would forget something about him. I would obsessively focus on remembering the curve of his cheek, the sound of his laugh, on and on. It was very painful to cling so tightly to each remembrance with such fear of losing it. Then one day it occurred to me that I really didn't have to worry about that because God remembers everything. God remembers every hair of Blaze's head. Even better, in God there is no time. Blaze's past, present, and future are all present to God. That thought applied to my mom gave me an image of her memory being released into God as the disease progresses.

I also thought about how the Church believes that even if my mom loses cognitive function so far as to have no idea who she is at some point—that her soul is still functioning within her. I'll take that further and say that there is a wisdom passing between her and God, a destiny being worked out and fulfilled, whatever we might see on the outside. She is of course more than her body, more than her intellect or personality or social identity. She has infinite value in Christ, and as long as she lives God has a purpose for her on earth. We all know that truth of our faith, but how much do we really believe it? I think those of us who love my mom are about to learn a lot about that. Maybe she is, too.

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It came to me that there are three ways the soul can be stripped down to the "nada nada nada" of St. John of the Cross until there is nothing left but itself stripped bare before God. Death is one way this happens. The practice of an apophatic spirituality, releasing all that is not God in order to find him in that "Cloud of Unknowing" where he dwells, is another way. Perhaps the progression of Dementia is another way the process of holy negation can happen. There might be more ways. Several times I have thought of my mom's interests—gardening, cooking, literature, etc.—being dropped behind her as she walks. These things so important in her life until now I imagine falling and then being left on her life's path like accoutrements and uniforms she doesn't need anymore. I am reminded of Blaze's shaving things in the bathroom after his death. I couldn't throw them away for a while. Then one day I thought of how much he hated shaving and how he didn't have to do it anymore now. I smiled and I threw them away for him.

For Blaze the loss of the world's and the soul's external trappings was instant and abrupt. For the mystic and for my mom it is a slow surrender. It is interesting that John of the Cross says the memory is purified by hope. I wonder how that applies here. Complex mystical theology aside, if I just saw that sentence, "memory is purified by hope", I would think about my mom in the slow loss of orientation and desires and memory and wonder where the hope is. The hope is Jesus. Maybe unlike Blaze, who was suddenly taken into God's presence, my mom is just going slowly—fading not into meaningless oblivion but into the Heart of Jesus, into the Kingdom of God where she belongs. I think of her common reaction, when she is irritated by some circumstance, of saying, "Well, maybe it will take time off my purgatory!" Maybe this is purgatory for her. Maybe she won't have to go there now. Purgatory means "purification" doesn't it? I don't know if any of this will help her deal with this or not. But it might sometime. She used to really like talking theology. Maybe someday I will talk to her about my thoughts if they turn out to be helpful and the moment is right.

What if someone went through this degenerative process of Dementia, as much as he or she was able to—with love? What if this person said, "OK, God, here is another part of me for you to keep—I can't." I wonder if anyone could do that at least for a while? Dementia is such a heavy cross. Does anyone accept it with love eventually—with faith hope and love—which are the only things that remain in the end? Do those remain even at the end in ways we don't begin to understand? These three things are not intellectual concepts of the mind. They are so eternal they're all that remains. As far as I know they are the only things that go with you when you leave this world and even after this world ends. What does that mean in this situation?

My brother, Mark, is preoccupied with my mom's apparent sense of isolation. He hates the thought of her being alone in her deteriorating mind. But she isn't. In the great gray silence of Dementia God is still there, maybe even more there. Who knows but that she will know this better than we do who stand by? If the connections I am making are true, then the mystic knows the answer to that. *That's exactly where God is.*

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Mom doesn't know about her diagnosis, and we won't have a definitive one for a few weeks when we will hear it at her next appointment. We will all be there with her. I am trusting, or trying to—that God will send each of us whatever grace we need that day. I suppose we each need a way to think of this that makes sense to us. Maybe I found mine.

Epilogue: My mom was diagnosed with Fronto-temporal Dementia, Lymphoma, and COPD in 2008, at the age of 59. On her own inspiration she offered her suffering and her life in union with Christ's for my brother, who was having very great difficulties, and for our family. She said she felt that God had accepted her offering. She died in October 2012. In the couple of months before her death she had not been able to speak or understand very much at all. Even yes/no answers had been hard for her to give. But she started talking a few weeks before she died. She talked a lot about God. She prayed aloud often and seemed to have conversations with the Lord. In one of these she said, "Yes, I'm ready, I'm ready to become a lamb."

Meditation on the Eucharist

In sacred silence we are one, He and I
The exchange of hearts begins.

The swoon of Love takes over.
Our temple is still.

In sacred silence we are one, He and I
Sharing what the human mind can scarcely comprehend.

*Olga of the Breath of God,
Austin Community (Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)
October 2013*

News from around the province

Compiled by Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD

News from around the Province

—compiled by Fr. Bonaventure, Sauer, OCD

1. Austin, TX— OCDS Community of Teresa Benedicta of the Cross

(a) Feast of St. Therese

On October 1 the Austin Community celebrated the feast of St. Therese of the Child Jesus by attending noon mass at St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic Church. After mass those present were given the opportunity to view and venerate a sliver of bone from St. Therese's remains. "It was such a special treat for all present," said Sandra (of the Sacred Heart of Jesus).

Following mass, the community met for lunch to celebrate the 90th birthday of one of our community members, George Wunderlick (of Jesus the Resurrection) [shown at right, with his wife seated beside him]. "I have been a member of the Secular Order for over fifty years and was a follower of Fr. Simon Stock, OCD, for years before the [Secular] Order was started in Dallas," George said.



Jo Ann Murphy (of the Bread of Life), our president, commented on this special occasion: "George continues to show the zeal of Elijah in spreading the Gospel by giving talks to young people and working to promote vocations at Texas A&M. His latest project was to visit the office of our Congressional representative to promote a bill to provide gym memberships for our veterans. And it appears George was successful in enlisting his aid for this cause! We are all inspired by George whose joy and love of life is contagious."



(b) Joan Gardner of the Holy Spirit, OCDS —an obituary

Mrs. Joan Schneider Gardner, May 2, 1936 – September 28, 2013, shown at left, a member of the Austin Community, was embraced by the Lord on Saturday, September 28, 2013, at the age of 77.

Joan was born to Albert and Gladiola Schneider on May 2, 1936 in Wapakoneta, Ohio. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Thomas Gardner and is survived by her five children and eleven grandchildren.

Joan was an active member of St. Louis King of France Catholic Church in Austin and made her profession in the Secular Order as Joan of the Holy Spirit on April 15, 1996.

Joan steadfastly lived out her Catholic faith in both word and deed. She served the OCDS Community of Teresa Benedicta of the Cross here in Austin in the roles of retreat coordinator, council member, and Infirmarian. She worked to promote Carmelite vocations. Many members of the OCDS community will forever cherish

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Joan as a beloved mentor, as she was always ready and willing to share her faith and spirituality with others.

“Joan’s earthly community life reflected a real participation in *living prayer* as a way that leads to Teresian transformation. It is endearing to recall how Joan would greet each of her Carmelite brothers and sisters with a warm hug and a glowing smile. Her self-giving love, often unspoken, allowed us to participate in God’s presence”—so said a community member, Louise Vance of the Eucharistic Love of Jesus and Mary, reminiscing about Joan.

Joan was truly a soul strengthened by the Holy Spirit. She will be remembered as a model of patience, endurance, and love in the face of long-term physical suffering and disappointment.

As community member Evandro Menezes of the Good Shepherd reflected: “After the Rosary service, when we prayed the Luminous Mysteries, it came to me how Joan had lived her life through them. As a daughter of God, she followed Him, meditated on His Word, contemplated His glory, and partook in His Body and Blood. All this not only sustained Joan during her earthly life, it sustains her now in eternal life.”

2. Little Rock, AR—submitted by Tricia Cromwell, OCDS

On October 12 the Little Rock OCDS community was blessed to have Pat Taylor make her First Promise and Bonnie Nied be clothed in a joyous ceremony at Marylake Monastery. Fr. Raphael Kitz, OCD, presided. A potluck luncheon followed with members, the friars at Marylake, and friends of the candidates attending.

Shown in the photo here are Joanie Goodwin, Formation Director, to the left; then, from left to right, Julie Breen Patrick, formator for First Promise; Pat Taylor, newly professed; Fr. Raphael Kitz, OCD; Bonnie Nied, newly clothed; and Nancy Lowry, Aspirancy formator.



On November 9, in preparation for the Fifth Centenary of the birth of St. Teresa of Jesus, the Discalced Carmelite Seculars of Little Rock held a Day of Recollection with Susan Muto, PhD. The day was open to the public and well attended.

On December 14, the Feast of St. John of the Cross, our Community held their annual Christmas luncheon with the Discalced Carmelite Nuns and Friars. Following the luncheon, as shown at the right, Fr. Raphael was

presented with a *giclee* print of St. Raphael in appreciation of his wonderful teaching and friendship.

3. New Orleans, LA, an obituary—submitted by Ada Jordan, OCDS

Our sister Jane Murphy Gitz went home to the Lord on September 23, 2013. At the time



of her death she was living in Slidell, east of New Orleans, at an assisted living facility there. In 2008 she became inactive with our community, being unable to attend meetings. She always kept in contact, though. And every time we talked she would let us know how much she missed our meetings.

Jane was clothed on February 16, 1964 and made her profession on February 21, 1966, with the community of Jackson, MS. She then transferred to our community twenty years later, in the summer of 1986. She loved not just Carmelites. She loved everyone—like a true Carmelite. She will be greatly missed. May she rest in peace.



4. Oklahoma City, OK—submitted by Barb Basgall, OCDS

We in Oklahoma City greatly enjoyed having with us our Provincial Councilor, Mary Kay Daniels. She made a visitation of our community on October 18-20.

The photo at the top of the next page was taken at the time, showing Mary Kay and Fr. Ralph with the council of our community. Pictured, from left to right, are Fr. Ralph Reyes, OCD, pastor and superior of Little Flower Church in Oklahoma City, which is where we meet as a community; Cindy Newby, councilor; Mary Kay Daniels, visitator; William Ginn, councilor; Katherine Payne, president; Barb Basgall, councilor; and Betty Sharp, councilor.

We thank Mary Kay for her service to our community and our province.



5. Austin, TX—submitted by Jo Ann Murphy, OCDS

I spent a little time with my daughter in Granada this past summer and, while the two of us were on a walking tour of the city, happened upon across this painting of St. Teresa. It is in a church that seems no longer in use. We found it in a small room attached to the church. I didn't have my camera with me. So my daughter Kathleen took this photo.

I have never seen this particular painting of Teresa and doubt many others have either. The church is in a hilly, elevated area of Granada that lies directly across from the Alhambra. The area seems pretty much abandoned. In fact, I can't remember seeing anyone in this area of town the whole time we were there.

Yet, there it was, this portrait of St. Teresa, a thrilling discovery. Yes, it's great to find a—for me—new portrait of our Holy Mother!



60 years a Carmelite

Rosemary Schell of the Dallas community observed 60 years as a Secular Carmelite at a community celebration Sept. 15, 2013. Rosemary writes, "I joined Carmel in 1952 and took my final promise September 8, 1953. My first introduction to Carmel was through my mother who was a 3rd Order Carmelite candidate. At that time in my life all I was looking for was a religious medal to wear. However, when I saw the Carmelite nuns and 3rd Order members at a meeting my impression was that maybe this is what was right for me. I entered and chose for my name in Carmel 'St. Michael of the Sacred Heart' because my family's parish was Sacred Heart Cathedral.

"Many changes have been made since then, especially in the Formation process. Back then formation required 1 year to complete and now it is about 6 years. Also the daily readings have been revised and updated many times. At the time I entered one could get an exemption for saying the Office by saying 25 Hail Mary's and 25 Our Fathers instead.

"I was an isolate member for many years, raising my 10 children, and in 1983 returned to going to the meetings. I was elected president in 1987 and served as Formation director after that.

"Each person has a unique experience coming into Carmel's way and that is to seek and strive for a deeper union and most of all friendship with Jesus. One of the many benefits and blessings I've received by being a member of the 3rd Order is all the many marvelous, varied, and precious people I've met, including the many priests for which I am most grateful. On this 60th year in Carmel, thanks to all!"

Rosemary was born on April 15, 1932 in Dallas, TX. She graduated from St. Edward academy, Dallas and was married on December 27, 1954 to Richard who died of cancer in 2007. She has 10 children: Mike, Diane, John, Eddie, David, Steven, Mary Ann, Joanne, Tommy, and Susie.



Betty Turicchi, president of the Dallas community , and Rosemary Schell, right, on her 60th anniversary.



Father Jerome Earley, OCD, celebrated with Rosemary Schell, OCDS, as she was honored Sept. 15.

Parting Words

Flos Carmeli provides information for the Secular members of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in the Oklahoma Province, which has jurisdiction over O.C.D.S. members living in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas. For subscription information contact Martha Hanley, editor, at tnmhanley@yahoo.com.

“A great favor it is just to begin to understand what little attention should be paid to a life that continually manifests itself as perishable, and to understand how much the life that never ends should be loved and sought.”

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Useful Web sites

teresa-5th-centenary.org

2014ocdscongress.net

thereseocds.org

carmelitaniscalzi.com

paravosnaci.com