

GENERAL CONGREGATION OF THE BROTHERS OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL 2022

Carmel: Passion for God, for the Fraternity and for Humanity

1. We, members of the General Congregation of the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, gathered at Villa Aurelia, Rome, 4-17 September 2022, praise and thank the Triune God for the opportunity to share fraternity, pray and reflect on our common vocation as consecrated Carmelite religious. We have joyfully shared, discussed and discerned how we are to credibly and coherently witness to our call to “live in allegiance to Jesus Christ in a contemplative attitude exercised in a life of prayer, fraternity and service in the midst of the people” [*Constitutions* 2019 ~ 14]. We are filled with joy and gratitude for this opportune time to greet and communicate with you what we have learnt, shared and committed ourselves to do.
2. The Prior General, Fr Míceál O’Neill, O.Carm, gave an overview of the situation of the Order since the General Chapter 2019. He pointed out that, in both the established and new realities of the Order, we need to witness to *who we say we are* by being *passionate* about our personal relationship with God, immersing ourselves in the Word of God and the Eucharist, being *passionate* about fostering fraternity within communities and discerning the signs of the times and responding to them through prophetic service in the Church and the world.
3. We were deeply touched by the reflections of our key speaker, Fr Timothy Radcliffe, OP, who reflected on three themes: the two vows of obedience, chastity and on leadership. Our methodology involved interaction and engagement in synodal-type conversations that participants acknowledged to have helped in deepening the sense of encounter and fraternity. We grew in our awareness of, and recognition of our need to deepen our *passion* for God, for the fraternity in all its complexity through patient and imaginative listening to our brothers in dialogue, and our *passion* for humanity as we accept collaborating in the mission of spreading the Good News to the people of God. We also realized the gaps between what we professed and what we live. To bridge the gaps we explored various possibilities chief among which will include the following: facilitating the study and engagement with the text of our *Constitutions 2019*, cultivating a vibrant Carmelite capitular culture, and recognition of our need for professional assistance.
4. From the reports on Commissions and Geographical Areas we learnt that there are challenges that we face together as Carmelite communities regarding the following areas:
 - a. *Community/fraternity*: To address gaps in this area we are convinced that priors need upskilling to build fraternity through interpersonal dialogue and regular community meetings.
 - b. *Formation*: We recognize that formation - initial and ongoing - is essential to the development of the Carmelite identity. We acknowledge that we need to create formative communities, stressing on human, psychological, and spiritual formation as religious, and respecting multiculturalism of the candidates.

- c. *Mutual collaboration*: We recognize our inadequacy in various levels and hence need to foster a keener sense of mutual collaboration in aspects of our life, especially internationally as we share resources – human and financial - that belong to all of us.
 - d. *Safeguarding*: We urge all of us to build a culture of life, by following best practices in safeguarding, implementing Church and state directives and accompanying survivors. We agreed to form an international Commission for Safeguarding in our Order.
 - e. *Ecology*: We recognize that a consumptive economic model has caused tremendous damage to ecological integrity and biodiversity. We therefore call for ecological conversion at personal and communal levels.
 - f. *Financial self-sustainability*: The coronavirus pandemic has worsened the financial viability of many entities. Following discussions on this issue, we agreed to establish a common fund for formation / missions in needy areas. The General Council was tasked to draw up the statutes for the establishment of a common fund for formation / missions to which every Province will contribute.
 - g. *Role of the Carmelite Family at the United Nations*: As a way of committing to Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, we agreed to continue supporting the presence of the Carmelite NGO at the United Nations. We also support the expected restructuring exercise of the Carmelite NGO.
5. Inspired by our brother, St Titus Brandsma, in the year of his canonization, whose relics will be kept among the contemporary martyrs at the Basilica of St Bartholomew dedicated to martyrs, we commit ourselves to bear witness with passion for God, for the fraternity and for humanity in the world of today. We invite all the brothers to join us in this commitment.

Villa Aurelia
16 September 2022