General Chapter of Discalced Carmelite Fathers

From 30 August to 14 September 2021 the 92nd General Chapter of the Discalced Carmelites was held in Rome. There were 92 Fathers present, to which were added another 11 people including secretaries, translators, etc.

For the Casa Generalizia this was an important event because it entailed the resumption of activities and the welcoming of guests from all over the world.

During this time of assembly, the friars **elected a new Superior General**: Father Miguel Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD, from Spain. He was born in 1965 and entered the Order in 1983. In his Province he has been councillor, professor, formator and provincial. Also elected were the **Definitors:** Fathers Agustí Borrell (Iberian Province), Pius James D'Souza (Karnataka-Goa Province), Philbert Namphande (Malawi), Roberto-Maria Pirastu (Austrian Province), Chris Surinono (Indonesia), Martín Martínez Larios (Mexican Province), Christophe-Marie Baudouin (Paris Province), Jean-Baptiste Pagabeleguem (Ivory Coast).

"Among the most important moments of the Chapter", says Father José Pereira, Secretary for Information and Internet, "was the time of listening and dialogue with **9 young confreres**, around 40 years old (3 friars from Europe, 2 from Asia, 2 from Africa, 1 from North America and 1 from South America) who, in about 20 minutes each, shared challenges or problems proper to their geographical area, as well as possible suggestions for the renewal of the Order. Another important moment was the listening and dialogue with 4 of our religious friars, who shared the joy of their vocation".

"During the Chapter, we also had the **revision of the rules**, that is, the updating of a part of our legislation; and a **Declaration on the charism,** one document which aims to clarify some points of the charism, to give some guidelines, with a language adapted to today's world. The Order, in fact, being present in so many different cultures, needs to have an attitude of renewal and reform, so as not to be anachronistic," adds Father José.

"Unfortunately, the time of the pandemic prevented meetings or 'live' initiatives,

and also had an economic impact. All this has made it even more important to collaborate among Provinces of the same geographical areas to share strengths and gifts. One of our challenges is **interculturality**, living in communities where friars from different cultures and countries live and collaborate together. Another challenge is to collaborate with our sisters and seculars and all those with whom we share something.

Father José concludes: "The pandemic has reminded us, then, in often dramatic form, how much we must take care of one another, beginning with our homes and those closest to us".

Foundress and charism

The origin of our religious family and its vocation are closely connected to the spiritual life of St. Teresa of Jesus (1515-1582), born in Ávila, Spain. Her experience with Christ Jesus led her to reform Carmel, which was oriented toward prayer and contemplation of divine realities. To this end, she founded the first monastery of Discalced nuns, San José de Ávila. Subsequent mystical experiences caused Saint Teresa to live more deeply the life and challenges of the Church of her time, turning towards the missions, in order to unite prayer with apostolic activity. To realize this ideal, God placed St. John of the Cross alongside St. Teresa. He is the Father and model of the Discalced Carmelites.

Our Constitution defines our charism as follows: "*Our vocation is at its origin a divine grace, which unites us to our brothers in a communion of life and impels us to a mysterious communion with God in an existence in which contemplation and apostolic zeal merge reciprocally in the service of the Church. (…) It corresponds to the nature of our charism to animate with apostolic intention our whole life of prayer and consecration and to work in many forms for the good of the Church and of men.*"

Today there are about **4,000** Discalced Carmelites present on all continents.

Author: Father José Pereira, Secretary for Information
General Curia of the Discalced Carmelites, OCD – Rome
www.carmelitaniscalzi.com
Facebook: Curia Generalizia Carmelitani Scalzi

Twitter: @ocdcuria
Instagram: Ocdinform

Edited by Ilaria Iadeluca
Communication Director
Brothers of the Christian Schools – Rome