CONCLUSION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY
Letter from the Chair of the General Commission

Peace and blessings from our General Curia!

Hope and joy, as we get ready to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ!

We are quite pleased to bring to you the latest E-Bulletin for the Carmelite Laity around the world.

The main highlight of the new issue is the conclusion of the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy featuring two excellent articles. The first one is about the official celebrations at the end of this special year, and the second one tells about the Pilgrimage that both the General Council of the Carmelites (O.Carm.) and the General Definitory of the Discalced Carmelitas (O.C.D.) celebrated together at St. Peter’s Basilica.

The past few months were rich in activities by different groups of the Carmelite Laity in different parts of the planet. In the Philippines one TOC community organized a fantastic meal with nearly 600 parishioners on occasion of their anniversary of canonical foundation, while the fast growing TOC group at the Catholic University of St. Thomas celebrated the simply profession of one seminarian and the reception into the novitiate of a second one. Our brothers and sisters in Australia were also busy as they gathered at the National Assembly, where they discussed different themes in order to develop the Order in their country and elected a new council. The Carmelite Family in Australia also shared the happiness of one of its members, as he received an honorary recognition from the Holy See for his dedication and work after WWII in Europe and later in Australia. In Puerto Rico one of the oldest TOC communities in the Caribbean welcomed the Archbishop of San Juan, who crowned the beautiful statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel that has been venerated for over two centuries in that island.

As the Carmelite Family keeps growing, it does too in Africa, where nearly 40 representatives from different African countries gathered to share their initiatives and projects for the future.

Finally, World Youth Day was celebrated in Poland, and many members of our Carmelite Youth had the opportunity to be there. This issue features a nice article on the experiences they lived in Cracow listening to Pope Francis and sharing with so many other young people during the Carmelite WYD.

Thank you very much for reading and sharing the Lay Carmelites E-Bulletin with family and friends!

Fr. Raúl Maraví, O.Carm.

Please send submissions to the editor at:
lay@ocarm.org
Sunday August 14th, 2016

Mons. Roberto González Nieves, Archibishop of San Juan (Puerto Rico), crown the restored image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel that was venerated by the old Carmelite Confraternity and later by the Venerable Third Order Community of San Juan, Puerto Rico, seated in the Cathedral, next to the Carmelite Nuns, the oldest Carmelite Contemplative community in the New World. Solemn Profession of the some members of the Third Order also were took place in this Mass.

This Confraternity became Third Order in 1877, upon request of brother Ferrer y Mas, approved by fr. Angelo Torrents O.Carm., and confirmed by bishop Puig i Monserrat. The TOC died out in 1918, and was restored in 1948 upon request of the Carmelite Nuns.

A letter of our Father General Fernando Millán Romeral addressed to the National Moderator of the TOC, and the whole Carmelite Family of Puerto Rico was read during the ceremony.

It was a day of grace for the whole Carmelite family of Puerto Rico.
Conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy

With the closure of the Holy Door in Saint Peter’s Basilica, the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy has concluded. To understand the significance it has had in the life of the Church, the goals proposed for it, and its continuing effects for Christian communities, it is necessary to have its two programmatic documents in hand: the Bull of Indiction for the Holy Year, Misericordiae vultus, and the Apostolic Letter Misericordia et misera, signed yesterday by Pope Francis on the sagrato in front of Saint Peter’s.

In the first document, one reads: “At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives. For this reason I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church, a time when the witness of believers might grow stronger and more effective” (Mv 3). Pope Francis’ express desire was to give believers the experience of mercy so that they could become instruments of mercy. That is, to make mercy become once again an extraordinary and efficacious propulsive force in the life of the Church. One cannot make a secret of the situation that mercy, beginning with the very use of the term, had fallen into
disuse, being relegated mostly to popular piety, without having a true value in the lifestyle of Christians. With this Jubilee, one thing is certain: mercy became the protagonist, at least for a year, in the daily lives of Christians. Entrusting the coordination of this Jubilee to the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization also had the goal of making this theme, which constitutes the essence of the Gospel, the path of evangelization in our times, to strengthen faith, overcome indifference, and elicit a coherent way of living.

One should not forget, in addition, that the Jubilee is essentially a religious and spiritual experience. The pathway that was set up from Castel Sant’Angelo to the Holy Door had the purpose of showing, in the midst of the city and its tourists, that one could create a special space for pilgrimage, reflection, and prayer. The millions of pilgrims who traversed the pathway wanted to give this witness, which was well understood by all those walking along Via della Conciliazione. The concretization of the signs of mercy, carried out above all in the “Fridays of Mercy”, struck public opinion, presenting not only new kinds of poverty in our world, but also the simple and operational response of the Church. Even if there were some who thought that the Jubilee was mainly a source of revenue, especially in a time of crisis such as the present, they misunderstood its more profound meaning. I am sorry, but everything has its raison d’être; to try to compromise an event like the Jubilee by instrumentalizing it for different ends does not merit a reply.

21,292,926 pilgrims participated in the Jubilee here in Rome. The greatest part of these were pilgrims from Italy, followed by German speakers, followed by those from the USA, Poland Spain...all the way to Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, Venezuela, Chad, Rwanda, Angola, the Cook Islands, Nepal...in short, pilgrims from 156 countries from around the world were present in Rome. You can truly say that the world visited, and that Rome was truly at the center of these pilgrims’ interest.

As is known, for the first time in the history of the Jubilee years, this Holy Year was universal in character. Doors of Mercy were opened around the whole world as a witness that the love of God knows no limits. We have studies as much as possible the data we have received. From this emerged an extremely interesting analysis. In the countries in which Catholicism is more deeply rooted, the percentage of faithful who crossed through a Holy Door was more than 80% of the total number of Catholics.

To understand whether this Jubilee has had the efficacy hoped for, it is necessary to turn to the Apostolic Letter Misericordia et misera which states explicitly: “Mercy cannot become a mere parenthesis in the life of the Church; it constitutes her very existence, through which the profound truths of the Gospel are made manifest and tangible. Everything is revealed in mercy; everything is resolved in the merciful love of the Father” (Mm 1).
On the morning of 11 June, the members of the two Councils, O. Carm. and OCD, assembled at the start of Via della Conciliazione to begin their Pilgrimage towards the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica. They were accompanied by the former Secretary General and Bishop-elect Francisco de Sales Alencar Batista, O. Carm., who led them in five moments of prayer along the way, concluding with a prayer as the group reached St. Peter’s Basilica. At the end of the pilgrimage, the members of the two councils came together at Santa Maria in Traspontina and sang the “Flos Carmeli” in front of the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
In response to Pope Francis’s Jubilee Year of Mercy, the KBI and the Kino Teens brought together students from four southern Arizona high schools for a Walking in Mercy Youth Summit. On that Saturday afternoon in early February, Bishop Gerald Kicanas greeted the 25 participants and introduced the summit’s focus—journeying with migrants—followed by opening prayers led by the students.

For the rest of the afternoon, the students (all of whom have visited the KBI in the past) engaged in theater improvisations, a quilting project, and various workshops and discussions about the migrant experience, advocacy, and community involvement. The goal? A better understanding of what migrants face and the critical need for more humane immigration policies, and identifying ways to share that knowledge and compassion by becoming agents of change in their schools, neighborhoods and churches.

To close the summit, Father Pete Neeley celebrated Mass with the participants and facilitators. The colorful quilt of migrant stories and responses adorned the altar, the music ministers led everyone in song, and new summit friendships and commitments lifted spirits and promised encouragement and support in the work ahead.

Muchísimas gracias a todos: Participating schools included Kino Teens from Lourdes Catholic School in Nogales, St. Augustine Catholic High School, and Salpointe Catholic High School, and El Otro Lado students from San Miguel High School in Tucson. Thanks to Bishop Gerald Kicanas, Father Pete Neeley, and workshop facilitators Kenenna Amuzie, Perry Petrich, Tere Scully and Joanna Williams; Cathy Meyer and St. Augustine’s for hosting; and Kate McGarey-Vasey, Marci Harrington, and the students of Salpointe for providing lunch and organizing the quilting project.
The Third Order of Carmelites (TOC), Our Lady of Mount Carmel (OLMC) Community in Project 6, Quezon City was canonically erected on July 8, 2011. With just five members in the initial period of its establishment, the TOC community has continued to grow in number over a span of five years. To date, it has 24 dedicated and vibrant members and two observers.

Living in the spirit of the Order’s charism, that is, to be contemplative committed to prayer, community and service, all activities...
carried out by the Community have been anchored on these three key elements.

To strengthen its community prayer life, the TOC has been actively participating in the liturgical services of the OLMC Parish as it leads the parishioners in the Liturgy of the Hours: Morning Prayer (Lauds) recited daily, except Sunday after the 6:00 am mass and the Evening Prayer (Vespers) read every Saturday at 5:45 pm. Relatedly, the Community devotes itself to the Eucharist, Lectio Divina, praying the Rosary and Gospel reflection, among others.

As a community strongly united in God’s love, the TOC celebrates together its Community Mass every Saturday morning, praying for each other and the intentions in the petition box, as well as sharing its devotion to Jesus and Mary. Monthly business meetings are likewise being held every 1st Saturday, deepening the spiritual camaraderie of the community. In pursuit of living in allegiance to Jesus Christ, ongoing formation is being conducted every 2nd Saturday of the month to grow in a deeper and more intense relationship with Him.

Further, the TOC has been engaged in candle-making once a week, which serves as a helping hand with the Parish since both the TOC and OLMC Parish benefit from the sales of the candles. For the TOC, candle-making also promotes stronger bond and unity in the community.

Part of journeying together in Carmel is the annual pilgrimage to various Carmelite convents and churches located within Metro Manila and nearby provinces, particularly Bulacan, Pampanga, Pangasinan and Baguio. Specifically this year which is celebrated as the Jubilee Year of Mercy, the TOC has visited the five designated pilgrim churches in the Archdiocese of Manila, namely: Manila Cathedral Basilica (Manila), National Shrine of the Sacred Heart (Makati), Archdiocese of the Divine Mercy (Mandaluyong), Sanctuario de Santo Cristo (San Juan), and Our Lady of Sorrows Parish (Pasay) last September 17, 2016.

Armed with an ardent desire to offer its service to the marginalized and underprivileged parishioners, the TOC has embarked on the Feeding Program as part of its outreach initiatives. Tirelessly serving and showing love and concern for others, the TOC has been sponsoring the snacks of the OLMC Parish clinic patients every 1st Sunday of the month for the past five years.

Inspired by its devotion to the Blessed Mother, the TOC has been zealously participating in the Parish Fiesta celebrated every July 16 of the year. The year 2016 marks a milestone for both the OLMC Parish and TOC: 55th Fiesta of the OLMC Parish and 5th canonical erection of the TOC. Gracing the special occasion were Carmelite priests, Rev. Fr. Billy M. Manguiap, O. Carm and
Rev. Fr. Sirenio T. Jaranilla, O.Carm, who concelebrated the morning Fiesta mass.

As has been done since its establishment, the TOC has been spearheading the recitation of the Morning and Evening Prayers as well as novena during the nine-day celebration. During the morning and evening mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, imposition of the scapulars to parishioners and Radio Veritas representatives has been practised wherein the TOC enthusiastically assisted the priests in this activity. The scapulars were provided by the TOC and generous benefactors/friends. Some scapulars were personally sewn by the community, finding joy in this commitment to spreading this devotion. Further, kissing the relics of Carmelite saints and blessed men and women was facilitated by the TOC. Following the mass is a breakfast dubbed as “Almusalang Parokya” which is sponsored annually by the TOC, who also joyously prepared the meals served to about 600 parishioners. Meanwhile, the TOC likewise joined the procession held last July 15, 2016 wherein the TOC-owned image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St. Simon Stock was included, having its first public appearance.

In the yearly celebration of the birthday of the Blessed Virgin, the heart-warming participation of the TOC has been evident in the Parish activities. It has joined in the recitation of the rosary inside the church and participated in the procession around the nearby streets of Project 6. Likewise, it has offered birthday cakes for Mama Mary during the Mass and shared in the simple breakfast salo-salo.

All of these activities are unwavering expressions of the TOC’s firm commitment to the Carmelite charism centered on prayer, community and service, remaining steadfast in its faith as well as having a more meaningful communion with Christ and one another. And as we continue to journey in Carmel together, the TOC OLMC Community, living in harmony, united in love, and inspired by Mama Mary’s virtues, will carry on sharing each other’s time, talent and treasure to ensure the success of all its endeavours.
On April 27, 2016, during the Solemn Vespers held at the Seminary Chapel of the Pontifical and Catholic University of Sto. Tomas in Manila.

Bro. Kervin Roldan of the Diocese of Kalibo made his Temporary Profession as a Carmelite Tertiary, while Fr. Rey Reyes of the Diocese of Pasig was received as a TOC Novice. It was witnessed by the Seminary Fathers and Seminarians with the Very Rev. Christian B. Buenafe, O.Carm., Prior Provincial, presiding the vespers and ceremony.
I was asked to write about my journey in Carmel a few days ago. This question posed to me was deeply rooted in my childhood. Since my childhood days, as I reflect, Carmel has been with me. I grew up in a historic parish in the Philip- pine Congress where the first Philippine Congress was inaugur- rated. The titular patron of this church is Our Lady of Mount Carmel which was constructed by the Augus- tinians during the Spanish regime.

As I grow up, I started serving the parish when I was 12 years old. Together with my cousins, we served the parish by playing the organ during the Wednesday devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help and later on we were given a slot on the Saturday and Sunday Masses. Devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel grew as I served the parish. Later on, we were asked by the parish priest, Msgr. Moises Andrade, Jr., to join the Parish Commission on Youth and lead activities of the youth in the parish. At that time, I was already searching for Marian groups. I joined the Blue

RUEL SANTOS, TOC.
Army since it promotes the Brown Scapular and the Sabbatine Privilege. At that time, I was really concerned about the Scapular promise and nothing more.

However, when I turned 18, I got a leaflet entitled “The Three Days of Darkness” which was an apocalyptic leaflet describing what will happen when the end times come. In the leaflet, it was written that it was advisable for Catholics to join the Third Orders. It somewhat explained what is a Third Order and which Orders have tertiary members. However, what moved me to look for Third Orders is that when a tertiary member dies, the whole Order will pray for you even if you are forgotten by your own family. Thus, it made me search.

I inquired to various Third Order groups in Manila. I wrote a letter to the Dominicans in Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon City and to the Discalced Carmelite Monastery in Gilmore, Quezon City. From these two, I have received no response. Then I inquired to the Conventual Franciscans in Novaliches, Quezon City and still received no response. My search was in vain so I shelved this idea.

As I enter into college, I have encountered the Opus Dei and this has helped me in the spiritual life and I think it has prepared me to become a Carmelite Tertiary. The writings of St. Josemaria Escriva is sparse with Carmelite Spirituality. He quotes Therese and Teresa in his spiritual discourses. It is in one of the chapel of the study center managed by the Opus Dei that I encountered the deafening silence. This moved me to search again for the Third Order.

After graduating in college, there I encountered the original branch of the Order of Carmel. This happened in my parish. A seminarian donning the TOC ceremonial scapular was doing his apostolate in the parish. I asked him where he got the scapular. His response was, he belong to the Third Order.
of Carmelite. I asked where I could inquire and he directed me to visit the Carmelite Monastery in Guiguinto on July 16 and he will introduce me to the community there. So I went on the evening Mass of July 16 which is the Mass reserved for the Carmelite Third Order. There I met the community and the first time I met the Carmelite nuns. I was elated to see a familiar face in the TOC. It was my former high school classmate who was a seminarian then. He was a Third Order of Carmelite also!

After that meeting at the monastery, I started my journey in Carmel. I was already working in Manila when I was accepted as an aspirant to the Order on July 16, 1998. I travelled two hours from my work just to attend the monthly meetings at the monastery. But due to traffic, I sometimes missed the meetings thus it prolonged my aspirancy period.

During the 1st Philippine Visit of the Pilgrim Relics of St. Therese in 2000, I was still a postulant then. But a blessing came when I was privilege to be a volunteer during the visit of the relics. I am thankful with the Notre Dame de Vie Institute who have taken me in as a volunteer. Thus, I was with St. Therese throughout the Holy Week Triduum. During that time, I asked St. Therese to help me enter Carmel. This sister of mine did not forget and true to her promise of shower of roses, I entered the novitiate of the TOC on August 15, 2000. She is indeed my spiritual sister in my journey in Carmel.

After being accepted in the novitiate, my vocation progressed in a smooth line even though I encountered setbacks. I made my temporary profession on 5th December 2004 and later on my solemn profession on 14th June 2007.

Though already professed, my journey in Carmel still continues. Carmelite spirituality has enriched my life and my family. It has been a wellspring in my life. It is definitely true that when God calls you in this vocation, He will give you all the necessary grace to fulfill it. All we need is just to cooperate. Everything is a grace!
God shows mercy on those whom He wants to show mercy.” We are those whom God has blessed, and we will be forever proclaim His mercy. To be blessed is not just to be a receiver of God’s mercy but becoming a vessel of the same mercy that was received.

This year is indeed a great year of mercy. We thank God because He poured his merciful love by making our hearts so big and widely open to welcome and embrace our needy brothers and sisters.

The Carmelite monastery in Burgos is located in a poor place and surrounded by poor families. The members of Flos Carmeli Youth belong to these poor families. The Carmelite sisters are God’s instruments in calling us become part of the big Carmelite family. Through them we came to know that as a baptized person we are members of the Church. They help us deepen our faith through our catechism class. Their help also extends beyond spiritual needs. The Carmelite sisters in Burgos, although living in a life of poverty, are also helping us financially in our education.

Touched by the love, generosity, and compassion we have received, and continue to receive, we too wanted to share the blessings. We believe that when we give love the return is a bigger heart that is always ready to give more love. So last December 2015 we had a fund raising activity. We used the funds to organize a Christmas party for poor children. Also, in lieu with our 6th year anniversary last summer, we sold food and drinks with the help of some friends of the sisters. We wanted to extend the joy of our anniversary so we celebrated the occasion with the sick and the elderly. It was full of much joy, singing and dancing.

Our formation program this year 2016-2017 in focused on deepening our faith, more awareness of our baptismal vows through reading, studying and living the word of God. Last August, the Neo-catechumenal gave us a catechetical instruction on faith and salvation.

In all these, we thank our Carmelite sisters for helping us know and love the Lord and Our Lady. May God be blessed forever.
The Carmelite family in Africa gathered for an All Africa Carmelite Conference at St. Therese of Avila Spiritual Center in Boko Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania from 21st to 28th July 2016. The center which is under the Carmelite Sisters of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus offered a conducive and homely stay to the participants; thanks to the hospitality of the Carmelite sisters.

The conference brought together participants from seven countries; Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Kenya. The participants representing all branches of Carmel were 38 in total and these included the consecrated religious (10 Sisters, 4 Brothers, 9 Friars) and the laity (6 TOC and 9 friends of the Carmelites). Fr. Miceal O’Neill O.Carm helped in translation as participants came from English and French speaking countries. Sr. Sanny Bruijns O.Carm and Fr. Conrad Mutizamhepo O.Carm, the General Councilor for Africa were the main speakers.

The theme of this conference was: United, Heart and Soul (Acts 4:32): Being Carmelite in Africa – One Rule, Multiple Expressions.

Sr. Sanny Bruijns O.Carm, from Netherlands gave an in-depth reflection on the historical origins and the spirituality of the Carmelite rule where participants got an opportunity to internalise and together, pray with the rule. She also spoke on the rise
of women (nuns and laity) in the Carmelite tradition and its impact on Carmelite Spirituality today.

Fr. Conrad O.Carm gave a talk on what it means to be Carmelite in Africa. He highlighted on the history of Carmel in Africa and gave an in depth account on the modern challenges facing Africa in current times and the call for a contemplative attitude amidst the presenting realities.

The conference offered the participants an opportunity to meet, encounter and know one another, to experience the diverse yet rich expressions of Carmel and dream together about the future of Carmel in Africa. The participants gathered every day for morning and evening prayers and Mass. They also had moments for recreation each evening after dinner.

During the conference, the participants had a chance to visit the town of Bagamoyo. This town is historical for two reasons; firstly, it served as a center of slave trade in the 18th century and secondly, it was the first place of evangelization in East Africa because it is there that the first Catholic Mission was opened as a “Christian Freedom Village” for ransomed and liberated ex-slaves on 16th July, 1868 by the Spiritan Missionaries.

At the conclusion of the conference, the participants came up with a common vision of building a contemplative fraternity at the service of society through living lives of prayer, fraternity and service. The need to strengthen collaboration and co-operation was expressed and co-ordination teams for the religious and the laity were set up to facilitate the achievement of the common dream that the participants had dreamt together.
On the 25-28 July, the Assembly of Lay Carmelites from Australia and New Zealand was held in Jamberoo. The Assembly was an historic event in that, for the first time, Lay Carmelites were elected to the Council. Previously, these representatives were appointed by the Friars’ Provincial Council.

It was also the first time New Zealand was represented.

About 20 participants, representing the Communities of Melbourne, Coorparoo, Palmerston North (New Zealand), Wollongong, Adelaide, Central Coast (New South Wales), Wentworthville, Perth and Jamberoo, attended the Assembly.

The meeting was held at “The Abbey”, a community of about 25 Benedictine Nuns ranging in age from 30 to 90 years. They lead a life of ministry and prayer, particularly liturgical prayer.

The Assembly began each day with morning prayer and ended with evening prayer. During the day, the program included talks by Fr Paul Gurr exploring the themes of “transformation” as it applied to Mary Magdalen, the apostle Thomas, and the apostle Peter.

At the business end of the Assembly were discussions on a change of name from the National Council to the Lay Carmelite Council and the relevant statutes that would require amending and, for the first time, the election of two new members to the Council.

Fr. Paul Cahill, in his new role as Provincial, attended and spoke to the Assembly.
and shared these thoughts. “I enjoyed the opportunity to visit the Lay Carmelite National Assembly at Jamberoo. I joined the Assembly on its last day, 28 July, for Eucharist and the elections of the other two members of the National Council.

Gwenda Gopperth and Angela Zakarias. After the celebration of the Eucharist, I was invited to address the Assembly and I spoke about the experience and the discussion of the Carmelite Family at the Provincial Chapter.

“I outlined that the recent Carmelite Chapter in Brisbane identified the Carmelite Family as people or groups who are identifiably aligned to the Carmelite tradition. The Chapter expressed the Vision of the Carmelite Family as being to facilitate the spiritual growth of groups of people and individuals who seek to be enriched by Carmelite Spirituality, with the Purpose of supporting all of the people who make up the Carmelite Family in their journey and to offer a wider invitation to the broader community to also seek enrichment in the Carmelite tradition.”

Frank Vnuk received a Papal Knighthood

Frank Vnuk, a member of the Adelaide Community has received a Papal Knighthood.

He is now a Knight Commander of the Order of St Gregory the Great, an honour bestowed upon Laity in recognition of their personal service to the Holy See and to the Roman Catholic Church, through their unusual labours, their support of the Holy See, and their excellent examples set forth in their communities and their countries. In Frank’s situation, it was given to him for his service to the Church in Slovakia before and after the collapse of communism in that country.

Frank came to Australia as a refugee in February 1950, initially residing in the Carmelite Parish of Pennington. He was received into the Lay Carmelites with the Port Adelaide Community. Upon his retirement as a lecturer in metallurgy at the Institute of Technology (now University of South Australia) in 1985, Frank made frequent trips to Rome where he worked for the Slovakian Church on Vatican Radio. He was asked by the Bishops in Slovakia to assist with the education of students for the priesthood and for some years taught modern Church history in the Archdiocesan Seminary in Bratislava. In this busy life, Frank met and married Anna (past Prior of the Adelaide Community) and they have 8 children. One of their sons, Joseph, is a member of the Dominican Order and was ordained in September 1994. Frank has now celebrated his 90th birthday (9 April) and both he and Anna, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary (19 May). Fr Joseph O.P., their son, came down from New Guinea to celebrate the Eucharist on their special day, which apart from the Mass, was highlighted with a celebratory luncheon with their large family and numerous friends.
Following the Lay Carmelite Assembly held in Jamberoo on 25-28 July, the newly elected/appointed members of the Lay Carmelite Council met for the first time. Fr Paul Gurr (Provincial Delegate), Paula Newcombe (Secretary), Gwenda Gopperth and Angela Zakarias were in attendance. Christine Wade, Moderator, wasn’t able to be present because of illness.

The first task was to attend to the matters given to the new council at the Assembly. A change of name from Lay Carmelite National Council of Australia [LCNCA] to Lay Carmelite Council [LCC]. The Council noted the changes to the Statutes suggested by the Assembly and the ‘new’ Statutes will be sent to the Provincial Council for approval at their October meeting.

Vera Cleary (Wollongong Community) has agreed to take responsibility for the Bookshop and Ron Taliana (Wollongong Community) has agreed to take on the responsibility of Treasurer, with the support of Ben Bekema (Melbourne Community) in the background. The Council asked Angela Zakarias to be a “Pastoral Person” for those who ask for prayer or who are celebrating significant anniversaries of Profession or birthdays.

The Council saw a need to establish a Formation Team to care of the on-going formation of all Carmelites. Although [at the time of writing] the make-up of that team is still to be finalised, we have been greatly encouraged by the willingness of people to step into the team.

There is always the pleasant task of addressing the applications for Professions and we are happy to tell you that Ben Bekema from the Melbourne Community and Mary Tom and Rossy Minata from the Coorparoo Community have applied to make Final Profession. Alicja Shaw and Margaret Stolke from the Melbourne Community have applied to make their First Profession.

The Council agreed to look into the possibility of holding next Council meeting by SKYPE. It will certainly be a big financial saving if those who are a bit digitally challenged can make it work.
In preparation for the official opening of the World Youth Day with Pope Francis in Krakow, Poland, young people from our Carmelite communities around the world gathered in the beautiful garden of our Carmelite community in the centre of the city on the 27th July. In all, around 350 took part in this special Carmelite gathering of young people, hosted by the Prior Provincial, Fr. Bogdan Meger, the Prior of Krakow, Fr. Zbigniew Czerwien, the main organizer Fr. Marcin Siemek, members of the Krakow community and a wonderful team of young people. Among those present were Carmelite young people from Malta, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Portugal, USA, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Venezuela and the largest group present were from the Italian Province with fifty-five young people. Most of the groups were led by Carmelite friars who were accompanying them to the World Youth Day.

As part of the day’s programme, the Prior General, Fr. Fernando Millán Romeral presented his letter entitled “Young Carmelites: sowers of mercy” for reflection and discussion. He also presided at the Eucharist in our Basilica with a liturgical celebration of two Carmelite martyrs, Blessed Titus Brandma and Blessed Hilary Januszewski. Short presentations were also given by Fr. John Keating, Councillor General for Europe and by the Polish Provincial. The day afforded the young people an opportunity to meet and to get to know each other and to build up Carmelite contacts. Each provincial group presented the youth ministry of their respective provinces and ended this by entertaining all those present with song and dance. Gratitude must be extended to the Provincial and members of the Polish Province for the work they put into the organization and hospitality of the Carmelite Youth Day 2016. Until Panama in 2019, thanks to everyone who helped plan the event and especially to all our young Carmelites from around the world.
Dear young Carmelites, from all over the world, who are taking part in this World Youth Day in Krakow, welcome! Make the best of these days of praying, sharing with others and enjoying faith.

In addition to being a wonderful city for its art and beauty, Krakow is a place that has very close links with our Carmelite history. At the shrine of “Our Lady of the Sands” (Na Piasku) that was in the care of Carmelites for many years there is an important image of the Virgin Mary, which under this same title is the object of great popular devotion. In this Carmelite house (that has seen many ups and downs in the course of its history) famous men and exemplary friars have lived, known for their piety and holiness. It is in this very place that, along with other confreres, Hilary Januszewski, the then prior of the community, was arrested in 1940. He would live out his last days, heroically in the Dachau concentration camp, which we will come back to in a moment.

Certainly, Krakow has many memories of our past, which is an invitation to us to recover some of our identity in a way that will be meaningful, attractive and even provocative for religious men and women, for nuns, apostolic sisters, lay...
people and young Carmelites of the 21st century.

This year, moreover, along with the whole Church we are meditating on the theme of mercy. Pope Francis has invited every one of us to turn our attention to this gospel value that is so fundamental to our faith. It may appear to be a thing of little importance, but this is one of the values that Pope Francis emphasizes most. Again and again he has asked us to turn to what is most essential, to what is most genuinely a part of the Gospel, and to put it into our lives, with great courage, joy and authenticity.

*****

To help you in your reflection, I would like to say a word about three important people in the history of Carmel, that in one way or another are very relevant to what is going on during these days:

1. St. Mary Magdalene de’ Pazzi (1566-1607)

As you know, this year we are celebrating the 450th anniversary of the birth of St. Mary Magdalene de’ Pazzi (1566-1607). This Carmelite saint followed her vocation intensely and came into union with God. Indeed, her spiritual experience and teaching is at the highest level. At times Mary Magdalene, just like other mystics, is unable to find words to express the profound mystery of the mercy of God:

And it seemed to me (…) that I could see in God the greatest goodness and mercy, and this mercy was so great, I would not be able to express it. (Quaranta giorni, 229-30)

In spite of this, Magdalene never ignored the problems of her own time. Her mystical experience did not put her at a distance from real life, or from the Church and the people of her time – quite the contrary. During her life, the young Carmelite nun distinguished herself for her ability to serve and her sensitivity towards the needs of others.

It is very interesting, and something for Carmelites of the 21st century to think about, to appreciate what the following equation means: deep union with God, prayer and contemplative life, etc., if these are to be authentic, they have to lead us to a greater sensitivity towards the men and women of our time and to greater solidarity with them. The
this is profoundly theological, and for that reason, profoundly human.

How do we live our faith today? Is it a faith that is alive and has passion, that leads us to an encounter with a personal and merciful God? How can we strengthen our experience of faith in a way that will make us more and more human and merciful?

2. Fr. Hilary Januszewski

He passed the last few years of his life in our house in Krakow. Pawel (Paul) – the name he received at Baptism – was born in Krajenki in 1907; on entering the Carmelite Order he took the name Hilary. Following his studies in Krakow and Rome he was appointment to the community in Krakow. He was the prior of the community when the war began in 1939. As the prior of the community he offered to be arrested instead of some of the members of the community who had been found preaching in Polish, and that was strictly forbidden during the nazi occupation. Moving from prison to prison he finally ended up in Dachau concentration camp. He remained a prisoner there for many years, almost to the end of the war. At a certain point a typhoid epidemic broke out in the camp. Some of the barracks were then reserved for the victims who were left to fend for themselves. Barracks 25 thus turned into a kind of morgue, indeed the inmates began to call it the coffin. History tells us that there were many priests held in Dachau, some 2500, many of whom died there. One day one of the camp guards was heard to say, somewhat sarcastically, that the priests would have to go and look after the sick. All could see that this was a macabre joke, but Fr. Hilary got up and offered to go down to them. Another Polish priest tried to dissuade him, but he had already made up his mind and so he answered, “I know where I am going….”

He died subsequently of typhoid, shortly before the camp was liberated. This Polish Carmelite found the strength to offer his life for the least of the least in that place of horror and death. He had led a relatively simple life. He was remembered as a rather silent man, but when the test came he showed that he was a true Christian, a martyr of love. Fr. Januszewski was beatified by Pope John Paul II in Warsaw in June 1999.

How do we practice today this closeness to the least of the least, to the victims of
injustice, violence, evil, or loneliness? Does our Carmelite identity mean that we are compassionate people and people of solidarity? Does it make us more human? How might we make this aspect of our charism more visible in our groups and in our daily lives?

3. Blessed Titus Brandsma

Lastly We notice that during our stay in Krakow the liturgical commemoration of Blessed Titus Brandsma will occur. You know that right now his cause of canonisation is progressing. Fr. Titus was a very active individual: a Carmelite expert in the history of spirituality, an educator and founder of Carmelite schools, a journalist and professor at the Nijmegan University, Rector of that university, defender of the language and culture of the Frisians, his native province, and a deeply pastoral man who got close to all kinds of people. Throughout his life Titus found himself called upon to mediate in difficult situations, to the point that he was given the name, the Reconciler. In 1940, when the Netherlands was invaded, Fr. Titus opposed the occupying government, especially in matters to do with education, refusing to expel Jewish children from Carmelite schools, and in the area of the press, refusing to allow nazi propaganda to be published in catholic newspapers. The result of all that was that he was arrested in January, 1942 and having moved through a number of prison camps, he died in Dachau on the 6th of July of that same year.

Fr. Titus, in the various concentration camps in which he stayed, always left an impression of serenity, cordiality, affection and understanding towards all, even towards his persecutors. These attitudes reached their climax in the conversations that he had with Tizia, the nurse who took his life with an injection of carbolic acid. The Dutch Carmelite, already gravely ill, gave her a present of a rosary beads made of little pieces of wood, that he used when he prayed in the camp, and he asked her to pray for peace. Many years later, that same nurse would be a witness in his process of beatification in Rome. Among the many interesting things that she said, she related that “the Servant of God (Titus) had great compassion for me ….” Here we can
see how this man, a victim of hatred and of a very inhuman system, held on to his dignity and Christian charity in the most heroic fashion – down to the very end. His witness to mercy, reconciliation and peace is of great relevance to the world of today.

As young Carmelites of the 21st century, how can we make a contribution to the work of peace and reconciliation in our family, in our social circle, in public life and politics? Are understanding and harmony what shape our attitudes in a world torn apart by divisions and conflicts?

*****

I hope that over these days you will have the chance to reflect on the witness given by these three exemplary Carmelites. You will perhaps do that in groups, or when you are alone, or, and this is the most important thing, when you are at prayer. As Pope Francis said recently, you, young people, are not only the future of Carmel, you are also its present:

In this sense, our young people have a critical role. They are not the future of our peoples; they are the present. Even now, with their dreams and their lives they are forging the spirit of Europe. We cannot look to the future without offering them the real possibility to be catalysts of change and transformation. We cannot envision Europe without letting them be participants and protagonists in this dream. (Pope Francis, receiving the 2016 Charlemagne Award)

Your reflection therefore will help the Carmelite family to move forward, as we question ourselves about our lives, and seek new ways and new paths to follow by which we will live in accordance with our charism in fidelity, creativity and generosity.

May Mary, our Mother and Sister, be with you to guide you along “this way that is good and holy” (Rule 20)

With deep affection,

Fernando Millán Romeral, O.Carm.
Prior General