



Carmelite Newsletter

Australia, New Zealand & Oceania

1 January 2026

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Visit of Father General Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD

In August, Fr. Miguel visited the Australian, New Zealand the Oceania communities of the Discalced Carmelites. He met with the friars and the secular members of the Order at Varroville and then travelled to Ormiston to visit the Council of the nuns' Association of Our Lady of the Southern Cross. Fr. Miguel of Mary (Márquez Calle) was accompanied by Fr. Christianus (Surinono) of the Sacred Heart, the General Definitor for Asia/Pacific and Fr. Jim Noonan, Provincial of the Anglo-Irish Province.

Report on meeting with the friars



On 26 August 2025, the rather auspicious day of the Feast of the Transverberation of the Heart of Our Holy Mother, St Teresa, the friars residing and ministering in Australia met with Father General. It was an historic day for the friars' Region because it was the first time that the friars from the three houses of the Australian Vicariate came together with the friars from the three Indian provinces ministering in Coffs Harbour (Lismore diocese), Mundingburra (Townsville diocese) and Mandurah (Bunbury diocese).

The following friars from the Australian Vicariate were present (in order of date of profession) Desmond Williams, Greg Burke, Gerard Moran, Paul Maunder, Sunny Peackal, Aloysius Rego, Shane Kelleher, Gregory Chee, John Pallipadan, Bernard Hancock, Ransom Rapirap, Ferdinand De La Cruz, and Adalbert Imperial. The following Indian friars were present: Shemil Vallavanattu and Albin Odippattil from Mandurah, WA (Manjummel Province); Joshy John, Lijo Thanippilly from Cranbrook, QLD (Malabar Province); Joe D'Souza, Joy Agnel D'Souza, and Peter Rebello from Coffs Harbour (Karnataka-Goa Province). Fr Jim Noonan, Provincial of the Anglo-Irish Province, as

well as Fr Christianus Surinono, General Definitor. By special invitation, Greg Homeming, OCD, Bishop of Lismore Diocese, also attended.

The day before the meeting, the friars of the Australian Vicariate met with Father General to hear Fr Christianus presented his visitation report. It gave the friars time to talk to Fr Miguel about the challenges as well as their hopes for the future. There was an air of openness and fraternity led by the warmth of Father General who was in good spirits despite having only landed in Sydney a few hours before the meeting. With support from Fr Christianus, Fr Miguel spoke about his vision for the Order that was more collaborative and grounded in Sacred Scripture, Tradition and the Teresian Charism. The meeting was another step towards formalising the transition of the Australian Vicariate from the jurisdiction of the Anglo-Irish Province to the Philippines Province.

The following day, the discussion about the Carmelite presence in Australia and the Oceania Region was further enriched by hearing from the Indian friars. Once again, there was an air of fraternity as the Indian friars shared their hopes, challenges, and dreams for the future. It truly was a wonderful experience being able to come together and learn from each other.



Fr. Chris & Bishop Greg Homeming

Throughout the meeting, Father General, in the spirit of synodality, thanked and encouraged the friars in our mission, vocation and service to the Australian people. Great hope was expressed that a gathering of all the friars would become an annual event to foster greater collaboration among the friars in the Teresian virtues of humility, detachment and love of neighbour.





Meeting with Discalced Carmelite Seculars

On 26 August 2025, twenty-one (21) Discalced Carmelite Seculars meet with Father General at the friary at Varroville. There were representatives from all OCDS communities, apart from the Townsville community. It was a joyous and lively meeting that ranged across a wide variety of topics. It was a great time to meet and get to know our Father General whose joy and enthusiasm was infectious.



Fr. Miguel shared with us the beginnings of his Carmelite vocation as an altar server at the monastery of the Discalced Carmelite nuns in his hometown in Spain. He was curious and fascinated by the nuns' joy and happiness amidst their lack of possessions and he wanted to know how such poverty and joy could exist together.



Our Father General also spoke about the Carmelite vocation being about living the Teresian charism and not being merely about knowledge. As it was with St. Teresa, we must walk in the truth and grow sincerely in truth, in friendship, in fraternity and in authenticity, discovering who we are without illusions. Friendship, fraternity and authenticity are not about feelings because we can have good feelings but still be deceiving ourselves. Feeling happy and peaceful doesn't mean you're walking in the truth. Truth for St. Teresa meant encountering difficulties and grappling with them. St. Teresa learnt every day and so must we. It is

important not to compare ourselves with others or to envy them. Thinking about our gifts and capabilities or our lack of them is not God's way of thinking. We must offer our gifts whatever they are. God can do miracles with humble people.



OCDS National Council:
Seated: Sandra W & Fr. Miguel.
Standing: Sandra J; Brett D;
Lorraine M and Wendy R.

He spoke about the on-going issue of the irregularity of the professions of a large number of secular members, their temporary promises having expired before making their definitive promise. He pointed out that the *sanatio in radice* (curing of these irregularities) that is currently under way is not just a bureaucratic exercise. He underlined that belonging to the Secular Order is not just about joining an association - it is a vocation that the Church and the whole Order (friars, nuns and seculars) takes very seriously. The Teresian Carmelite charism is about spirituality not bureaucracy. Nonetheless, Fr. Ramiro (General Delegate for the OCDS) has stated that our records should be taken more seriously, because they concern the holy vocation to the Secular Order, which is not just a personal commitment but is for the benefit and building up of the whole Church and the Teresian Carmel.

Fr. Miguel answered many questions ranging from the Spanish language in which St. Teresa wrote, which he said is quite difficult even for modern Spaniards to understand, to the questions and investigations that the Dicastery of Bishops make when a Carmelite friar is proposed for ordination as a bishop. He also spoke about the OCDS International Congress to be held in Avila 23rd to 26th July 2026, which will have 1,000 attendees.

It was not just a great blessing to meet with Fr. Miguel but also to meet with OCDS members from other communities including those who travelled a long way, especially those from Samoa and Tonga, as well as from Tasmania, Victoria and Queensland.



Sydney Community (Mary Immaculate) -Maria Maciejewska, Liz Devlin, Fr. Miguel, Angela Finnigan, Brett Doyle, Jill Ditton.



Fr Miguel meets the Carmelite nuns at Ormiston



After the meetings with the friars and the secular members of the Order, Father Miguel and Fr Chris travelled to the Ormiston Carmel on Wednesday 30 August, where on the first day of this three day visit he with the Council on the nuns' Association of Our Lady of the Southern Cross. The Councilors had travelled from their monasteries elsewhere in Australia and New Zealand for those three days. On the second day a Zoom meeting was arranged for all the member monasteries of the Association of Our Lady of the Southern Cross Association.

Sadly, the sisters from the Wallis-Fortuna were unable to connect and the nuns from the Tonga Carmel stayed only briefly. It was the first time in history that all of the remaining nine communities were virtually present for a meeting: Toronto, Goonellabah, Ormiston, Nedlands, Gelorup, Auckland, Christchurch, Samoa, and Tonga. There were two sessions, with a 'lunch' break in the middle. We spanned time zones five hours from east to west.

Apart from formal meetings, Fr Miguel spent as much time as possible with the community, beginning

with Mass and his inspirational homilies, meals, recreations and a long walk around the grounds of the Ormiston monastery on the last afternoon, hoping to spot a koala but instead being fascinated by the kookaburras.

He had his first taste of Vegemite and downloaded a photo of a quokka for his home screen, saying that if he ever felt 'down' that face would make him smile. After Mass on his last day Fr Miguel personally handed out to the people scapulars made by our nuns in Haifa. He had seen the sisters there making them during the frightening time of the Israeli-Gaza war. Fr Miguel's wisdom, wit and playfulness reveals the depths of his truly Teresian spirit of prayer, which supports and strengths us in our own vocation.



The idea of Association for contemplative communities was first introduced by the Church in *Sponsa Christi* (1950), taken up by our Carmelite legislation - firstly in 1977 (Declarations) and in our definitive Constitutions which followed (1991). The Synod on Consecrated Life, (1994) strongly challenged contemplative communities to found Associations in their region, in order to foster better communion and mutual help among the various monasteries, without detriment, however, to each monastery's autonomy of government. See <https://www.associationolsc.org.au/>.

According to our Statutes, the purpose of the Association is to give ecclesial expression to the life of communion in Christ between the member-Monasteries. It fulfils this by:

- Encouraging each sister in our living of the Teresian charism as contemplative women in the service of the Church and the world;
- Promoting understanding, trust and friendship between the member Monasteries and with all our Carmelite Sisters and Brothers;
- Providing a means of communication for sharing ways we live our Teresian Carmelite life in the context of our times and particular cultures;
- Facilitating mutual assistance among the Monasteries in whatever way is needed, particularly formation; and
- Enabling an effective voice in communicating with the Holy See, our Carmelite Superiors and secular bodies.