



Carmelite Newsletter

Australia, New Zealand & Oceania

28 July 2026

Feast of Blessed John Soreth



The OCDS World Encounter was held in Avila, Spain from July 23rd to the 26th of 2026. Almost 1,000 people from all over the world participated. The theme of the Encounter was:

Witnesses of the Experience of God: Identity and Mission

The objectives of the encounter were to:

- i. Go deeper into the spirituality and charism of Secular Carmel.
- ii. Strengthen communion among OCDS communities in the different regions of the world.
- iii. Share experiences and formation.
- iv. Do homage to St. John of the Cross in the celebration of the 3rd centenary of his canonization and the 1st centenary of his declaration as a Doctor of the Church.
- v. Remember with gratitude the spiritual heritage of Discalced Carmel.
- vi. Contribute to the cultural and religious life of Avila.

The event offered a unique opportunity for Discalced Secular Carmelites to know one another, share their faith, renewal of the Carmelite charism and to strengthen the fraternal bonds that unite them. Inspired by the rich spirituality of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross, attendees went deeper into their journey towards union with God through prayer and fraternal life.





Thursday, 23 July 2026

11:00 Opening Ceremony with Civil and Religious Authorities
12:00 Opening Mass and welcome: Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle OCD
13:00 "Identity of the Secular Carmelite" Fr. P. Miguel Márquez Calle OCD, Superior General.
16:00 "Sense of belonging and co-responsibility". Linda Levi OCDS from Italy
17:30 - 18:30 "Initial and Ongoing Formation" Angela Vel OCDS from the USA
18:30 - 19:15 "Moment of guided prayer and Eucharistic adoration" - Fr. Luis Jorge Gonzalez, OCD from Mexico.

The first day of the World OCDS Encounter in Ávila was marked by an atmosphere of joy, fraternity and communion among participants from more than 80 nationalities. Civil and religious authorities welcomed the assembly, highlighting the importance of the Teresian charism for the Church and the world. Fr. Miguel Márquez, Superior General of the Disalced Carmelites, officially opened the Encounter, reminding everyone that the Order is one family composed of friars, nuns and seculars.



During the Opening Mass, Fr. Miguel invited participants to renew their passion for Christ and allow themselves to be transformed by His love. In his keynote address on the identity of the Secular Carmelite, he emphasized that this identity is dynamic and continually renewed through prayer, formation, discernment, friendship and service. He encouraged stronger communication, teamwork and co-responsibility, reminding everyone that the heart of Carmelite spirituality is to "let yourself be loved" by God.

In the afternoon, Linda Levi reflected on the sense of belonging and co-responsibility as essential pillars of community life, while Angela Vel presented initial and ongoing formation as a lifelong journey of transformation in Christ, grounded in prayer and the Teresian charism. The day concluded with a period of profound Eucharistic Adoration led by Fr. Luis Jorge González, who invited all participants to live Saint Teresa's experience: "Look at Him looking at you."

Opening Eucharist (12:00 hours)

Fr. Miguel Márquez was the principal celebrant of the Holy Mass, with concelebrants Fr. Ramiro Casale and Fr. Francisco Sánchez Oreja (Provincial OCD of the Iberian Province). The musical accompaniment was provided by Paqui Alonso and José Manuel Montesinos, OCDS, members from the community of Seville, Spain. In his homily, Fr. Miguel challenged the assembly regarding the passion that ignites and moves their lives, encouraging everyone

to ask what place Jesus occupies in their affections. He highlighted the phrase: "Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord, contemplate Him and you will be radiant. How good is the Lord!", indicating these were the defining words for this encounter.

After the opening Mass, there was a very brief presentation of the "Huellas de Santa Teresa de Jesús" (Footsteps of Saint Teresa of Jesus) Network. All information can be found at their official website: www.huellasdeteresa.com.

Keynote Address: "The Dynamic Identity of the Secular Carmelite" - Fr. Miguel Márquez, Superior General

The presentation began with a moment of silence and prayer, an invitation to take off our shoes before God and listen attentively, like Mary. After extending a warm welcome, the Superior General developed his address around the following points:

1. Ávila, land of birth, land of Encounter.
2. Dynamic identity. Creative fidelity.
3. Challenges and hopes of the OCDS. Proposal for work and discernment.

In the final section, he left us with six practical points as a proposal for work within local communities:

- 4.1. Communication
- 4.2. Discernment and realism
- 4.3. Teamwork. Friendship
- 4.4. Governance, collaboration and service
- 4.5. Formation for life, docility and learning
- 4.6. Falling in love. "Let yourself be loved."

The fourth and final core topic was titled "What I find in Carmel as I travel the world," where he listed the qualities he encounters regarding the secular branch globally: hospitality, joy and enthusiasm, a sense of family, a hunger and thirst for spiritual depth, a sense of belonging, hard work and dedication and care for the weakest.



Summary of the Address by Fr. Agustí Borrell, OCD

Fr. Agustí Borrell provided a synthesis of the fundamental ideas presented by our Superior General:

Dear brothers and sisters: We have just heard a profound reflection from our Father General, Miguel Márquez, which, rather than a theoretical lecture, has been an invitation to pray together, to take off our shoes and to let ourselves be challenged by the Spirit.

To begin, he reminded us that our identity is not static, nor is it a set of established rules. It is an 'identity in formation,' a living and dynamic flame that needs constant updating in the face of the signs of the times. To keep this fire burning, we must not lose ourselves in worry about the future; what sustains us is always returning to the 'hidden source' of our hearts, where we keep the experience of our first encounter and our calling. Being here today in Ávila is a return to the 'land of birth,' where the flame of the Teresian charism was lit in the first group of laypeople. Therefore, this is not a study congress, but an Encounter - a fraternal space to meet one another and let ourselves be surprised by Jesus.

One of the key points left by our Father General is a paradigm shift in our identity. The Teresian Carmel is a single Order with three branches - nuns, friars, and seculars - equal in dignity and complementary in mission. He firmly invited us to overcome any type of clericalism, elitism or sense of inferiority, in order to assume maturely our full belonging to the Order: a belonging that laypeople live from their secular reality, cultivating sincere friendship, mature fidelity to the Church and a deep intimacy with Mary.

Looking ahead, Father General courageously raised several practical challenges for our communities:

- i. **Communication.** He reminded us that half of our problems stem from not truly listening to one another or not speaking to each other with an open heart.
- ii. **Discernment and humility.** We cannot fall into the self-deception of believing we own the truth. The wisest person is the one who listens best and allows themselves to be helped and corrected.
- iii. **Teamwork and Teresian friendship.** We are called to rebuild bonds and assume shared responsibilities where everyone feels valued. We do not come to Carmel to confirm our private devotions but to learn to grow together.
- iv. **Governance as service.** Any office must be lived from selflessness and listening, with the elegance and freedom to know when to step down when the time comes.
- v. **Maintaining a continuous learning attitude.** To be a Carmelite is to be a novice for life, a docile apprentice to the Spirit.

Above all, the great secret left to us by the mysticism of our saints is to 'let yourself be loved'. In a world full of rush and the search for efficiency, the greatest benefit does not come from doing many things but from disarming ourselves before God, surrendering and letting ourselves be looked upon by Him.

Father General concluded by thanking the immense and silent work of so many laypeople across the world who bring this spirituality to life. He invited us to be masters of the 'mysticism of the everyday': that mysticism that does not stop at grand speeches but translates into silence at a patient's bedside, affectionately preparing the morning coffee, knowing how to ask for forgiveness or smiling in the midst of precariousness.

May the image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, whom Saint Teresa saw sheltering the entire Order under her white mantle, accompany us during these days and help us be born anew to what God wants from us.

Presentation: "Sense of Belonging and Co-responsibility" Speaker: Linda Levi, OCDS (Italy)



Speaker Profile: Linda Levi lives in Rovigo, a city in the Veneto region. She is a retired teacher who taught philosophy and human sciences at a local high school. Her studies at the Catholic University of Milan and her membership in an association of Catholic teachers laid the foundations of her youth formation, which was not only cultural but also religious. For many years she was a catechist in her parish, and today she serves as an extraordinary minister of Holy

Communion and leads a weekly adoration service. She entered the Secular Carmelite Order in 1999 and made her Definitive



Promise in 2008. In 2014, she was elected Provincial President and served two three-year terms until 2021. In 2021, she was elected President of the Italian Interprovincial Coordination Committee and was re-elected for a second three-year term that will end in November 2026.

Core Ideas of the Presentation:

- i. Belonging to the OCDS means recognizing that our vocation is a gift received from God and entrusted to our freedom. It is a path that demands fidelity to prayer, to the Promise and to the Community, as well as the ability to safeguard the spark of our "first love". Co-responsibility grows from this belonging: it is not about taking centre stage but about service; not possession but collaboration; not individualism but communion.
- ii. The Community becomes a "theological place," a space where Christ is present and forms us through fraternity, obedience, dialogue and concrete charity.
- iii. Belonging and co-responsibility are, therefore, two inseparable pillars of OCDS identity. The community is born from the mutual responsibility of each brother and sister toward one another; our presence at meetings is not just an obligation but a gift to the rest.
- iv. Thanks to this co-responsibility, they have developed the entire formation itinerary for the OCDS in Italy. It consists of seven booklets, covering everything from the beginning of formation to the ongoing formation of the community. It has already been approved *ad experimentum* for five years.

Cause for Canonization Update: After the coffee break, an overview was provided regarding the progress of the cause of the Servant of God, Víctor Rodríguez, OCDS. A link was provided for those wishing to look deeper into it: blogspot.com.

"Initial and Ongoing Formation" - Angela Vel, OCDS (United States)

The summary of her presentation is as follows:

- i. Formation in the OCDS is not simply a process of acquiring knowledge but a lifelong journey of transformation in Christ.
- ii. Like the tiny mustard seed of the Gospel, a well-structured formation program begins with small steps but grows into a strong tree that nourishes the life of the community and serves the Church. The goal of formation is to integrate the human, Christian and Carmelite dimensions of our vocation, helping each member become a mature disciple and a faithful witness of Christ.
- iii. At the heart of this journey stands the Carmelite charism of prayer: a living relationship with God that leads to contemplation, interior silence, and attentive listening to His Word. From this encounter with God flows every apostolic commitment, confirming that prayer and apostolate are inseparable in the life of the OCDS.
- iv. The study of Scripture, the writings of the Carmelite Saints, the Constitutions and the history of the Order forms us not merely to know Carmel better but to live Carmel more deeply in everyday life. Formation does not end with the Definitive Promise: it continues throughout life as a path of purification, growth in love and deeper union with God.
- v. For the OCDS, the challenge is clear: to cultivate communities where formation is intentional, faithful, and ongoing, so that every Secular Carmelite may become a living expression of the Teresian charism in the family, the workplace, society and the Church. In this way, the small mustard seed entrusted to us will continue to bear abundant fruit for Carmel and for the world.



The day concluded with a profound Eucharistic Adoration led by Fr. Luis Jorge González, inviting all participants to live Saint Teresa's experience: "Look at Him looking at you."



Friday, 24 July 2026

10:00 -11.00 Mass (English)

11:30 -12:30 "Pastoral Ministry to the OCDS" Alzinir Debastiani OCD from Brazil.

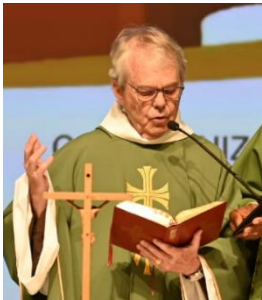
13:00 "Forming together the Teresian community" Manuel Vasquez OCDS from Ecuador.

16:00 OCDS Cultural Interaction

18:30 - 19:15 "Moment of guided prayer and Eucharistic adoration" - M. Alexandra Triana, OCD of Spain.

The second day of the World Meeting of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites was marked by an atmosphere of growing fraternity, joy and communion among participants from every continent. The day began with the celebration of the Holy Mass, followed by two inspiring conferences: Fr. Alzinir Debastiani, OCD, reflected on pastoral care for the OCDS, while Manuel Vásquez, OCDS (Ecuador), highlighted the importance of building authentic Teresian communities centred on Christ, prayer, fraternity and mission.

The Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Puebla (Mexico) shared a heartfelt message of encouragement, assuring everyone of their constant prayers. Fraternal fellowship continued during lunch and the group photograph beside the Walls of Ávila, strengthening the bonds among participants from around the world.



The afternoon featured the OCDS Cultural Interaction, with traditional songs and dances from Poland, India, Brazil, the Philippines, and Mexico, interwoven with moments of contemplative dance that transformed celebration into prayer. The day concluded with a profound Holy Hour and Eucharistic Adoration, led by Sr. Alexandra Triana, OCD, in an atmosphere of deep silence and gratitude to God for the many graces received throughout this memorable day.

The principal celebrant of the mass was Fr. Daniel Chowning, OCD (United States) with Fr. Pius D'Souza, OCD (India) and Fr. Christianus Surinono, OCD (Indonesia) concelebrating beautifully accompanied by Cherry Chaparras, OCDS (United States), whose singing was truly angelic, together with an organist from Ávila.

Fr. Alzinir Debastiani, OCD (Brazil), entitled "Pastoral Care for the OCDS."

The pastoral care for the OCDS is not merely an organizational responsibility but an essential service aimed at safeguarding and promoting fidelity to the Teresian-Sanjuanist charism. From its very origins, the Order has recognized that the laity fully share in the same charism and mission, living them according to their secular vocation. The purpose of pastoral assistance is to strengthen communion with the Church, with the Order and among the communities, fostering sound formation, a clear vocational identity and a genuine sense of belonging. The friars, especially the Spiritual Assistants, are called to be witnesses of Carmelite spirituality, collaborators in formation and bridges of communion among the different branches of the Order.

The model for every pastoral activity is always Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd - close to His people, merciful, able to listen, accompany, discern and lay down His life for His flock. A pastoral ministry inspired by Him promotes fraternal relationships, avoids personalism and helps each member grow in his or her particular vocation. For the OCDS, today's challenge is to journey together in a synodal way, strengthening collaboration among friars, nuns and lay members, overcoming isolation and cultivating ongoing formation that ensures fidelity to the charism.

Ultimately, the future vitality of the OCDS will depend on communities that live deeply the life of prayer, fraternity and mission, bearing witness to the living presence of God in the world. Thus, remaining faithful to the spirit of Saint Teresa of Jesus and Saint John of the Cross, we will continue building one Carmelite family at the service of the Church and evangelization. Fr. Alzinir concluded his presentation with a light-hearted joke directed to our current General Delegate, Fr. Ramiro Casale, placing himself at his service - and at the service of all of us in the OCDS - for whatever might be needed.

Afterward, there was a presentation prepared by our Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Puebla, Mexico, who showed us photographs of the many OCDS communities, wished us a fruitful Meeting and reminded us that they are praying for us. At the end of the presentation, Fr. Ramiro Casale expressed his gratitude for the presence and spiritual accompaniment of the Carmelite Nuns (many communities do not have Carmelite friars nearby and the nuns accompany them spiritually); of the friars (it is not necessary to be ordained priests in order to provide pastoral care); of the OCDS priests; and of the religious from other Orders who also know the Carmelite charism well and generously carry out this ministry.

"Forming the Teresian Community Together" - Manuel Vásquez, OCDS Ecuador

The greatest challenge - and at the same time the greatest hope - of the OCDS is to continue building Teresian communities in which the experience of God is a living and transforming reality. The vocation of the Secular Carmelite is not lived in isolation. God calls each one of us personally but He forms us and sends us forth in community. Therefore, the community is not merely a structure or a meeting place; it is the space where our vocation is discerned, matures and becomes mission.

An authentic Teresian community places Christ at its centre, lives by prayer, practices forgiveness, cultivates communion and remains open to mission. Wherever brothers and sisters listen to one another, accompany one another and help each other grow, God becomes visible and the charism bears abundant fruit. To form together means learning to walk in unity, welcoming our differences as a richness and growing together in prayer, formation and shared responsibility.



The Secular Order is called to be a true family without borders, united by the same Teresian spirit amid the diversity of cultures, languages and realities. In a world marked by loneliness, division and individualism, our communities can become a silent prophecy of communion and hope. If we live our vocation with authenticity, humility and concrete love, Saint Teresa's dream will continue to live on in today's Secular Order. Then our communities will not simply be prayer groups but true spiritual homes where God dwells, transforms hearts and sends witnesses of His love into the world.



After savouring the beauty and gift of community life - with both its lights and its shadows - our hearts were filled with hope for possible improvements and strengthened in confidence.

We have not yet spoken about our fraternal lunches - they have truly been a wonderful gift! They provide a more relaxed atmosphere, giving us the opportunity to converse with brothers and sisters from every corner of the world (often with the help of translation apps) and to share not only a meal but also our experience of Carmelite life.

After lunch, beside the Walls of Ávila, we gathered for a magnificent group photograph (which will be published). It was yet another opportunity to enjoy both the company of our brothers and sisters and the beauty of our surroundings.

At 4:00 p.m., we enjoyed what we called the "OCDS Cultural Interaction." During this time, different groups of OCDS members, together with Carmelite friars, delighted us with traditional songs and dances from their respective countries, encouraging everyone present to sing and dance along. It was a magnificent Carmelite "recreation" on a grand scale. We also had the opportunity to experience Contemplative Dance, led by María Victoria Hernández. Through simple yet deeply expressive movements, performed slowly and with an awareness of the Lord's presence, she invited us to pray with our whole body. It was an extraordinary moment in which nearly one thousand people danced together in search of God. There were two sessions of contemplative dance: the first after the performances from Poland and India, and the second between the performances from the Philippines and Mexico.

Below, we will attempt to describe some of the performances.

1. Poland

Before the performance began, a presentation introduced Venerable Kunegunda Siwiec, OCDS, showing the place where she lived and highlighting the characteristics of her holy life. Afterward, they delighted us with a Marian hymn entitled "You Are Queen, Mary."

Fr. Ramiro shared that he had visited the place where this Secular Carmelite, Kunegunda, had lived, and that he had been deeply impressed by the great devotion he encountered there. He concluded that it is not necessary to accomplish great things, but rather to do the little things with great love, remembering that: "The Lord does not look at the value of what we do, but at the love with which it is done."

2. India

Three couples came onto the stage to perform several traditional dances from different regions of India, dressed in beautiful regional costumes. The three men were Carmelite friars, and we assumed that the three women were Secular Carmelites. It was a joyful and delightful performance. At its conclusion, Fr. Ramiro reminded us that India is one of the countries with the largest number of Secular Carmelite communities in the world.

3. María Victoria Hernández – First Moment of Contemplative Dance

As mentioned earlier, this was our first experience of contemplative dance, during which we danced under the loving gaze of Mary. The title of this contemplative dance was "Our Lady of Mount Carmel."



4. Brazil

The Brazilian delegation first presented a video highlighting the life of faith in Brazil, including, among other places, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida. A group of OCDS members then entered the stage wearing regional costumes, surrounding a person carrying a banner of the Blessed Virgin. Holding ribbons attached to the banner, they danced while singing a beautiful Marian hymn. They then performed and sang a lively Brazilian samba, inviting the entire assembly to join them in dancing. At the end, Fr. Ramiro reminded us that recreation has always been an important part of Carmelite life.

5. Philippines

The Philippine delegation entered carrying a replica of the Santo Niño of Cebu, so deeply venerated throughout the country, while wearing beautifully colourful traditional costumes. They performed a ritual dance in honour of the Holy Child. They then presented a second dance in a different style of regional costume. Fr. Ramiro explained that many members of the OCDS in the Philippines live far away from their communities, yet remain in full communion with them. There are so many vocations to the Secular Carmel in the Philippines that many communities have grown so large they eventually need to divide in order to continue flourishing.

6. María Victoria Hernández – Second Moment of Contemplative Dance

This remarkable woman once again guided us into a deeper relationship with the One who loves us. This time we contemplated the Lord, offering ourselves entirely to Him through the words of our Holy Mother Saint Teresa: "I am Yours; for You I was born. What do You command of me?" As a charming anecdote, she asked for five volunteers, and more than fifty people came up onto the stage. At the conclusion of this dance, we encouraged our Fr. Miguel Márquez to lead us in the "Irish Blessing." This contemplative dance allows each participant to bless the brother or sister standing beside them, ending with the priest's blessing upon the entire assembly.

7. Mexico

The Mexican delegation also showed us a video featuring various places throughout Mexico, including the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. They then sang the world-famous song "México Lindo y Querido," and the entire assembly enthusiastically joined in. Their second performance was the beloved song "Guadalajara," which once again had everyone singing together. At the end of their presentation, they generously shared traditional Mexican sweets with everyone present. Several of the men participating in the dances were our own Carmelite friars. It was a wonderfully joyful moment, filled with laughter and genuine fraternal spirit.



We entered the Great Hour of Prayer and Eucharistic Adoration, led by Sr. Alexandra Triana, OCD (Spain).

After the joyful excitement of the cultural performances, it seemed almost unbelievable how naturally everyone entered into profound silence and Eucharistic adoration at around 6:30 p.m.

It became a time of deep silence, allowing God to speak and enabling us to respond to Him from the depths of our hearts. Sister Alexandra gently led us into the Mystery with brief prayers addressed to the Beloved, accompanied by a beautiful song.

We give thanks to God, Saint Joseph, and Our Blessed Lady for such a wonderful day. After the joyful excitement of the cultural performances, it seemed almost unbelievable how naturally everyone entered into profound silence and Eucharistic adoration. It became a time of deep silence, allowing God to speak and enabling us to respond to Him from the depths of our hearts. Sister Alexandra gently led us into the Mystery with brief prayers addressed to the Beloved, accompanied by a beautiful song.

We give thanks to God, Saint Joseph, and Our Blessed Lady for such a wonderful day.

Saturday, 25 July 2026

10:00 - 11:00 Eucharist (Italian)

11:30 - 12:30 "Prayer, fraternity and communion" Zinaha Voahanginiaina, OCDS of Madagascar

13:00 "Creative Fidelity: the mission of the OCDS in the Church, the Order and the world", Meg Ramos, OCDS of the Philippines.

16:00 "Walking together towards the future" - Fr. Ramiro Casale, OCD - General Delegate for the OCDS

17:30 - 18:30 Interaction with Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD, Fr. Ramiro Casale, OCD and Fr. Alzinir

Debastiani, OCD - Results from the survey, questions and answers.

18:30 - 19:15 "Moment of guided prayer and Eucharistic adoration" - Emilio Luis López and Marisa Camaró, OCDS, Spain.



Walking Together Toward the Future - Fr. Ramiro Casale, OCD

We are reminded that the OCDS is not simply preserving a beautiful heritage but living a vocation that the Church and the world need today. Rooted in the spirituality of Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, we are called to be men and women of prayer, fraternity and mission. Let us give thank for the graces of the past, embrace the challenges of the present with courage and look to the future with hope. May our communities become true schools of prayer and joyful witnesses to the experience of God. The future of the OCDS depends on our fidelity to the charism and our willingness to pass it on to new generations. Let us be renewed in our commitments to holiness, confident that the Lord continues to walk with us. "Now is the time to walk."

Sunday, 26 July 2026

10:00 - 17:00 Excursions at choice

- i. Avila (visit to the monastery of the Encarnación and San José, 1st Teresian foundation)
- ii. Alba de Tormes (tomb of St. Teresa of Jesus)
- iii. Segovia (tomb of St. John of the Cross)
- iv. Medina del Campo y Fontiveros (2nd Teresian foundation, and birthplace of San Juan de la Cruz)
- v. Duruelo y Salamanca (The first foundation of the discalced friars; 7th Teresian foundation).

Closing Mass in the Cathedral of Avila – Principal celebrant - Jesús Rico García, Bishop of Avila, presiding.





The Speakers

Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle OCD, Superior General - "Identity of the Secular Carmelite".



Fr. Miguel of Mary Márquez Calle, O.C.D. was born in 1965 in Plasencia (Cáceres), Spain. He entered the Discalced Carmelite Order in 1983 and made his religious profession in 1985. He was ordained a priest in Medina del Campo in 1990. He has a degree in Dogmatic Theology from the Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid, with a thesis on the image of God in the Magnificat.

Has held numerous positions of responsibility in the life of the Discalced Carmelite Provinces of Castilla and Ibérica. In the Province of Castilla, Father Miguel served as a Provincial Councillor from 1999–2002, then as Vicar Provincial from 2002–2005, a position to which he was elected once again at the Provincial Chapter of 2008; next, he served as the Provincial Superior of the Castilian province. He also has served as a formator in that province, directing the students for six years in the community of Salamanca. In February 2015, Father Márquez

was the first provincial superior elected to serve the new Iberian Province of St. Teresa of Jesus, which was created from the union of all the smaller Discalced Carmelite provinces in Spain and the Balearic Islands during the extraordinary provincial chapter that was convened for this specific purpose. He was re-elected to serve once again in the first ordinary provincial chapter in April 2017 for a term from 2017–2020.

Father Márquez is author of numerous publications on theology and spirituality. He also has written many articles as a regular contributor to magazines and journals. Father Márquez also has served as a professor of mysticism and Mariology in the CITeS University of Mysticism in Avila, as a professor of Mariology in the Carmelite renewal program at Stella Maris Monastery on Mount Carmel, and he also has served as a professor of pastoral ministry in the Institute of Spirituality of Santo Domingo.

Father Miguel has directed many retreats and days of recollection and has provided assistance to numerous prayer groups. He also has dedicated much time and effort to the spiritual direction and accompaniment of many people, including priests, religious, nuns, and laity.

Teodolinda (Linda) Levi OCDS. - "Sense of belonging and co-responsibility".



Teodolinda (Linda) Levi, lives in Rovigo, a city in the Veneto region of northern Italy. She is a retired teacher who taught Philosophy and Human Sciences in a high school in the city where she lives. Her studies at the Catholic University of Milan and her membership in an Association of Catholic teachers laid the foundations of her youthful formation, not only cultural, but also - and above all - religious. For many years I was a catechist in my parish and currently I am a Communion minister and lead a weekly adoration time. She entered the Secular Carmelite Order in 1999 and made her definitive Promise in 2008. In 2014 she was elected Provincial President and served for two triennia until 2021 (one more year because of the pandemic, which delayed voting). In 2021 she was elected President of the Interprovincial Coordinating Committee of Italy and re-elected for a second three-year term ending in November 2026.



Angela Vel OCDS (Vidya Angela Kulanthevel-Vel) - "Initial and continuing education".



Angela lives in Hampton, Virginia, USA. She joined the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites after reading the works of St. John of the Cross. She is a definitively professed member of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites in the Washington Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and Director of Formation at St. Joseph's Community in Hampton, Virginia. Angela represents her province on the U.S. task force, developing a unified formation program for all Secular Carmelites in the country. She holds a certificate in Carmelite Studies from the Washington Theological Union. She has over thirty years of experience in the legal profession, specializing in personal injury law. Now semi-retired, she enjoys traveling, painting and gardening.

Fr. Alzinir Francisco Debastiani OCD - "Pastoral Care for the OCDS".



Alzinir Francisco Debastiani OCD, was born in the state of Santa Catarina, southern Brazil. In 1984, after a year of novitiate, he took his first vows in the Province of 'St Joseph' in Brazil. He studied philosophy in Belo Horizonte and theology at the Order's International College in Rome. He was ordained priest in 1991.

In his province, he held various positions as parish priest, student trainer, novice master, provincial, and delegate for the Secular Carmelite Order.

From 2012 to 2021, he served as General Delegate for the Secular Order.

He is currently superior of the Teresian Centre for Spirituality in S. Roque, a retreat house and headquarters of the novitiate of his Province. He assists the Discalced Carmelite Nuns and also helps

to organise retreats.

Manuel Vasquez, OCDS - "Forming together the Teresian Community"



I am Ecuadorian, from the city of Cuenca, and I am 42 years old. I am married to Jessica Pacheco, also a member of the OCDS. Fifteen years ago we began together a journey of faith and love that we have sought to live in the light of Carmel. God has blessed us with two children: Miranda, 14 years old, who participates in the youth groups of our Carmelite parish, and Jesús, 10 years old, who is preparing for his First Communion and joyfully serves as an altar server. Together with Jessica, in 2013 we founded the *Santos Esposos Martín Guérin* community in Cuenca, inspired by the lives of Saints Louis and Zélie Martin. In our home, we strive to live prayer, fraternity, and service as the pillars of our family life. My religious name, *Manuel de San José*, expresses my desire to follow the example of the Holy Patriarch: to be a faithful husband, a responsible father, and a quiet, hardworking man, walking step by step "along the little way to heaven."

In 2014 I formally began my journey in the OCDS, in the *Santos Esposos Martín Guérin* community. It has been a process of interior growth, prayer, and encounter with God through my brothers and sisters. I currently have five years of Definitive Promise, and I continue learning to walk in the presence of God, seeking to serve with humility and faithfulness to our charism. I am currently the National President. My service in Carmel has always been a response of love. What moves me is the desire to build fraternity, accompany formation processes, and encourage communities to live a vibrant Carmel, in communion with the Church. Professionally, I am a Computer Systems Engineer.

Zinha Voahanginiana, OCDS - "Prayer, Fraternity, and Animation"



She was born in Antananarivo, the capital of the Great Island of Madagascar, where she still resides today. She completed higher education and obtained her Degree in Economic Sciences at the University of Antananarivo, followed by a diploma from the National School of Administration of Madagascar. She began and developed a professional career and, having been trained in andragogy, her activities include teaching at the National School of Administration of Madagascar and at the Catholic University of Madagascar at undergraduate and master's levels for ten years.

She was baptized in the Protestant Church (FJKM) of Madagascar at the age of two. At a very young age, she insisted on becoming Catholic. She completed her secondary studies with the Brothers of the Christian Schools at Sainte Famille Mahamasina, where she had the opportunity to prepare for and receive her First Communion, make her Solemn Communion, and later receive

the Sacrament of Confirmation.

During the preparation for the Jubilee Year of 1999, the Year of the Father, she encountered the Mother through reading *The Way of Perfection*, in the section on the Our Father. She was called to the OCDS at the age of 24, in the first OCDS Community in the country, the Holy Family Community in Ampasanimalo, and took the name V. Zinaha of the Holy Mercy of Jesus. She made her definitive promise in the Secular Order of the Teresian Carmel on July 19, 2014, at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Ambarilava, Moramanga, belonging to the Carmelites.

She served as Assistant Formator of her Community starting in 2013 and was elected President of that same OCDS Community (2015–2018).

Together with the Council of the Ampasanimalo Community and the spiritual assistant, she initiated missions for the foundation and formation of OCDS Groups in the various localities where the Friars and the Nuns of the Order of Discalced Carmelites are present. She was elected President of the newly created OCDS Province of Madagascar (2018–2021) at the



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first Provincial Chapter of the OCDS (May 24–27, 2018), and was re-elected for a second term (2021–2024). During these terms, the foundations of OCDS groups continued with the Provincial Council and the Provincial Delegate to the OCDS. She currently resides in Antananarivo. Zinaha belongs to the Saint Simon Stock–Itaosy Community, a community erected in January 2024.

Meg Ramos OCDS - "Creative Fidelity: the Mission of the OCDS in the Church, the Order, and the World"



She was born on February 4, 1958, in the city of Pasay, Philippines, the youngest of seven children in a very close-knit Roman Catholic family. From an early age, she was deeply influenced by the strength of character, faith, and abilities of the women in her family—her mother and her two sisters—which greatly shaped her values and personality.

After completing her studies in Business Administration and Computer Science, she was entrusted with the responsibility of managing the operational affairs of the family architectural-structural design and construction supervision firm. In 1982, after being persuaded to attend a weekend course, she began a new chapter of purpose and fulfillment in her life. She became involved in a Catholic community, where she devoted time to prayer, service, and social outreach.

After the tireless pursuit of the "Hound of Heaven," she found herself knocking on the door of Carmel in 1995 and made her Definitive Promise in 2022, committing herself to a life of prayer, community, and mission. Since then, she has served in various leadership roles in her beloved Saint Edith Stein Community in the city of Makati and on the Provincial Council of OCDS Philippines.

Fr. Ramiro Casale OCD, General Delegate for OCDS - "Walking together towards the future"

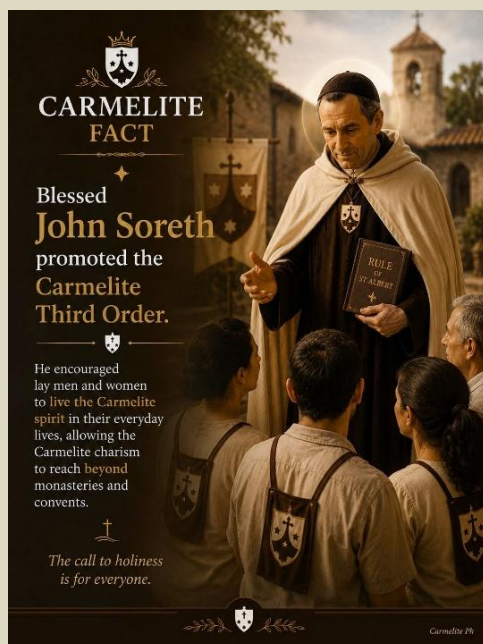


Fr. Ramiro was born in the city of Zacatecas, Mexico, on 28 June 1971. He studied Business Administration in his native city and worked in areas of management and finance. He entered the OCD Order on 15 July 2001 in the California-Arizona Province, U.S.A., making his First Profession on 2 February 2003.

He studied at the Mount Angel Seminary in the State of Oregon and obtained a Licence in Philosophy and Letters and a Master's Degree in Theology and Divinity. He also studied Theology at the Theological Faculty of the Teresianum in Rome and was awarded a Doctorate in Psychology by the Salesian Pontifical University, Rome.

Fr. Ramiro made his Solemn Profession in Rome, 14 December 2007, and was ordained priest in Alhambra, California, on 20 June 2009. He served as Director of the Carmelite Institute of Spirituality in Stanwood, Washington and was also Master of Postulants, Novices and Students. In October 2021, he was appointed General Delegate for the Discalced Carmelite Secular Order (OCDS).

Blessed John Soreth – Prior General 1451-1471.



It was during the generalate of Bl. John Soreth that the Carmelite nuns (2nd Order) and communities of lay Carmelites (3rd Order) emerged. With the Teresian reform, communities of friars, nuns and lay people continued. The lay groups are no longer referred as Third Order Discalced Carmelites but as Secular Discalced Carmelites. The three branches constitute one Order of Teresian Carmelites. Communities of nuns, friars and lay people continue in the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance.

John Soreth was born near Caen in Normandy, France in 1394. He entered the Carmelite friars in that city and was ordained a priest about 1417. John later went to Paris for advanced theological studies, earning a Doctorate in 1438. Soon after he was elected Provincial for north-central France and served in that office from 1440 until 1451.

Recognised for his outstanding spiritual and administrative leadership, he was elected the Prior General of the Carmelites in 1451. As Prior General he was a determined reformer at a time when reform was needed in the entire Church, but not always willingly accepted. John set about a program of reforming legislation and visiting as many

Carmelite communities as he could. He travelled widely in an effort to encourage his fellow Carmelites to live Carmelite life more authentically. During his canonical visits, he frequently stayed longer, urging and encouraging friars in formal observance and deeper commitment to a genuinely virtuous life.



John was instrumental in encouraging and establishing the first communities of Carmelite nuns, and oversaw the official incorporation of many women's communities into the Order, following the papal bull "Cum Nulla" of Nicholas V. As a result of the same papal bull, he was instrumental in the development of the Carmelite Third Order. John Soreth died at Angers, France, in 1471, after 20 years of spirited servant leadership. Among those who praised his work, following his death, was fellow Carmelite and poet Baptist Spagnoli of Mantua.

John Soreth is often depicted carrying a ciborium, commemorating a time when he gathered scattered Hosts from St Christopher's Church in 1468. and took them to the Carmelite Church. St Christopher's had been ransacked and set on fire by a violent mob.

Lord God, you willed that Blessed John Soreth should renew religious life and establish communities of women and laity in the Order of Carmel. May his prayers and merits help us to be ever more faithful in following Christ and His Mother. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

From the *Exhortation on the Carmelite Rule* by Blessed John Sorth.

It is from Christ himself, brother, that you will learn how to love him. Learn to love him tenderly, with all your heart; prudently, with all your soul; fervently, with all your strength. Love him tenderly, so that you will not be seduced away from him; prudently, so that you will not be open to deception; and fervently, so that downheartedness will not draw you away from God's love. May the wisdom of Christ seem sweet to you, so that you are not led away by the glory of the world and the pleasures of the flesh. May Christ, who is the Truth, enlighten you, so that you do not fall prey to the spirit of error and falsehood. May Christ, who is the Strength of God, fortify you when hardships wear you out.

St Basil says that we are bound to our benefactors by bonds of affection and duty. But what greater gift or favour could we receive than God himself? For he continues, I experience the ineffable love of God – a love more easily felt than described. Since God has planted seeds of goodness in us, we can be certain that he is awaiting their fruits.

So let the love of Christ kindle your enthusiasm; let his knowledge be your teacher, and his constancy your strength. May your enthusiasm be fervent, balanced in judgement and invincible, and neither lukewarm nor lacking in discretion. Love the Lord your God with all the affection of which your heart is capable; love him with all the attentiveness and balance of judgement of your soul and reason; love him with such strength that you will not be afraid to die for love of him. May the Lord Jesus seem so sweet and tender to your affections that the sweet enticements of the world hold no attraction for you; may his sweetness conquer their sweetness.

May he also be the guiding light of your intellect and the ruler of your reason; then you will not only avoid the deception of heresy and save your faith from their ambushes, but you will also avoid too great and indiscreet an enthusiasm in your behaviour. God is Wisdom, and he wants to be loved not only fervently, but also wisely; otherwise the spirit of error will easily take advantage of your enthusiasm. If you neglect this advice, that cunning enemy thereby has a most effective means of taking the love of God from your heart by making you progress carelessly and without discretion. Therefore, may your love be strong and persevering, neither giving in to fears nor being worn out by labours.

Not to be led astray by allurements, that's what it means to love with all one's heart; not to be deceived by false arguments, that's the meaning of loving with all one's soul; not to let your spirit be broken by difficulties, that is to love with all one's strength.

The Rules goes on to say that you should love your neighbour as yourself for he who loves God, love his neighbour too; "for he who does not love his brother whom he sees, how can he love God whom he does not see?"



Oldest Marian Icon of the Carmelite Tradition



This icon comes from Cyprus, made sometime between the end of 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century. Cyprus was a major centre for the production of Byzantine icons during the Crusades, when Greek, Latin and Eastern traditions co-existed. Our Lady appears enthroned with the Christ Child, following the Byzantine model of the Theotokos: Mother of God. The two upper angels indicate the heavenly character of the theme. The small side panels are especially valuable because they narrate episodes from the life of Jesus and Mary, forming an authentic “narrative cycle”. This type of icon was highly valued for catechesis and prayer. The icon has significant losses of polychrome and support but it still retains much of the original gilding and painting of the figures, allowing appreciate of the extraordinary quality of the Byzantine workmanship.

One of the most interesting details is the group of Carmelite friars kneeling under Our Lady’s mantle, representing her protection. It is a very early example of the depiction of Our Lady’s patronage of the Order. The Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is also the celebration of the Patronage of Our Lady of the Carmelite Order. If you’d like to understand and know more, you can read more about it in the article by Fr. Pier Giorgio of Christ the King, OCD, at:

<https://www.discalcedcarmel.org/blog/the-patronage-of-our-lady-of-mount-carmel>. You will notice that the friars' mantles are stiped – black and white - not pure white. The striped mantle points to the

prophet Elijah, who was closely associated with Mount Carmel and serves as a biblical inspiration for Carmelites. When Elijah passed on his prophetic spirit to Elisha, the mantle became the visible sign of following in the spirit and power of the prophet Elijah (cf. 2 Kings 2). The Carmelite mantle was originally striped and completely closed without a hood. The mantle was striped with seven bars, four white and three black. The black bars might have symbolized the burns suffered by the mantle as Elijah ascended to heaven in the fiery chariot. White is the colour associated with purity and black that of penance. Additionally, the seven bars could have referred to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit or the seven virtues, three theological and four cardinal. When the Carmelites returned to Europe, the striped mantle was swapped at the Chapter of Montpellier in 1287 to one that is completely white on. Also in 1287, the mantle was opened to show the scapular. The white mantle increasingly became the symbol of Mary’s Immaculate Conception. Armed with the white mantle and the scapular, Carmelites vigorously defended and promoted the doctrine of Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception.

This icon has an enormous value because it reflects a very primitive (early) expression of Carmelite spirituality acknowledging Our Lady’s patronage and protection, even before the development of the brown scapular devotion associated with St Simon Stock. The *Rule* given by St Albert specified that there be an oratory in the middle of the hermit cells. Thus she becomes the “Lady of the Place”. In medieval culture this amounted to choosing Mary as Patron: Carmelites will therefore serve her and she will look after them.

From *Clothed in Mary, Moved by the Spirit. A Renewed Covenant: The Brown Scapular* letter from Miguel Marques Calle of Mary, OCD, Superior General, to the whole Order of Discalced Carmelites on the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 16 July 2026

... we wish to continue deepening our understanding of the theology, spirituality, and pastoral dimension of the Brown Scapular. Recent surveys conducted throughout the Order regarding our Marian life reveal our family's deep appreciation for the gift of the Scapular, as well as the central place it continues to occupy in our pastoral ministry. This call to renew and deepen our Marian identity and devotion to the scapular is rooted in the urgent need for an authentic evangelical theology, spirituality, and pastoral ministry. Clothed in Mary, the simple and humble sign of the scapular reminds us of the need to return to the beauty, freshness, and boldness of our first love. Mary rekindles in each of us the pilgrimage of hope in a world facing the growing uncertainty of tomorrow. Clothed in Mary, we accept the challenge of moving toward tomorrow with the confident assurance of the Mother and Sister who will not abandon us and will always be at our side.

For several years now, we have been committed to this endeavor, inviting every Carmelite, both Religious and Lay, to nurture the Marian dimension—intimacy with Mary, and dialogue with her—as a school of renewal for our friendship with Jesus and a revitalization of our life of prayer. The time has come to ask ourselves once again about our actual life of prayer and about the growth of our friendship with Jesus. Everything related to Mary leads us to the experience of being children in the Son. Mary forms us in the image of the Son of her womb and invites us to be one with Him. All of this is brought to mind by the scapular, which is a summary of this Covenant with Jesus.