



# Lay Carmelites

The General Commission of the Laity

Lay Carmelite E-Bulletin I-No.1 MMXIV



**Celebrating VIII Centenary of the Death  
of St. Albert of Jerusalem**

## Letter from the Chair of the General Commission

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel,

With great joy and hope we present the first electronic newsletter for the Lay Carmelites. This initiative is the result of our first meeting with the new General Commission for the Carmelite Laity and Youth of our Order. Reflection on this international group has led to the desire to strengthen two aspects during this sexennium: spiritual formation and communications.

We are sure that this newsletter will be a good way to learn more about our charism and spirituality, as well as the various projects of the laity and youth in different parts of the world. In this issue we highlight the figure of St. Albert of Jerusalem, the Latin Patriarch of the Holy Land who gave us the Carmelite Rule and whose eighth centenary of death we are celebrating this year. We appreciate your suggestions and contributions for future editions of this E-Bulletin.

*Fr. Raúl Maraví, O.Carm.*



# Saint Albert of Jerusalem

by Michele Bonanno, TOC, Italy



Albert Avogadro, supposedly born in 1150 in Castro Gualterii (Reggio Emilia), was a canon of Santa Croce di Mortara, then Bishop of Bobbio, and subsequently of Vercelli. He was elected Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1205. In 1206 he went to St. John of Acre with the role of Papal Delegate to the Holy Land. There he resided until his death because Jerusalem had been re-occupied by the Saracen armies. During his episcopate he offered to the hermits on Mount Carmel a “*formula vitae*” according to their “purpose”. He was assassinated during a procession on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in 1214 by an unhappy and vindictive member of the Hospital of the Holy Spirit, who had been deposed of his position by the patriarch because of his scandalous life.

Albert of Jerusalem, according to historical sources, after an intense period of forma-

tion in law and becoming an orphan, followed the Lord by joining the Canons of the Holy Cross at Mortara. He was called to embody the pastoral availability of the Lord through positions of increasing responsibility: Prior at Mortara (1180), Bishop of Bobbio (1184-85), Bishop of Vercelli (1185-1205). When the Chapter of Canons of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem (exiled in Acre) elected him Patriarch, Pope Innocent III constrained him to accept “*in obsequio crucifixi*,” in obedience to the Lord Jesus, the Crucified. Thence Albert left again his security and began his journey to meet the Lord in the Holy Land which was midst of conflicts and also the future Carmelites.

Alberto wrote a Rule, or rather a *formula vitae* for the hermits, who lived on Mount Carmel (in the period from 1206 through 1214). They were brothers committed to walk together towards holiness and an encounter with Christ. The Carmelite tradition states that it was a “Way of Life” that was to bring them together in “*unum collegium*”. Through simple yet demanding and decisive recommendations, he interpreted and proposed a way of living the faith in which personal commitment in faithfulness to follow Jesus in listening to the Word, in penance, in prayer, in work and silence, was continuously animated in obedience toward the centrality of the “*propositum*” shared by them. So the brother-hermit renounces himself and joins the others in a journey towards the “place” where every aspect of their vocation receives energy, life, and verification. And it is clear that in the background there can be nothing else but the Church, which listens-follows-serves its only Lord.

In the sixteenth century, the liturgical feast of Albert was celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, but later it was commemorated in the whole Order on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September.

Some have tried to build a case for his status as a martyr but the tradition of the Order has always been that of honoring him as a bishop and confessor.

The occasion of the eighth centenary of the death of St. Albert of Jerusalem allows us to

appreciate him and know him more deeply as a man involved in diplomatic activities, as a mediator of various disputes, but above all he has related us to the initial dream of those who on Mount Carmel felt called to build a family in the Church, following Christ in peace and poverty, prayer and penance.



As a Carmelite family scattered all over the world, we entrust our prayers to St. Albert, and ask him to intercede with the Father so that we can become like him, *mediators and bearers of peace in the world*.

About the author:

Michele Bonanno is the president of the the TOC of the Carmelite Province of Italy

# Why J Became a Third Order Carmelite

By Rosalie Alcantara Castro, TOC, Philippines

Why did I become a Third Order Carmelite?

Nothing happens by accident. Everything happens for a reason.

A few minutes after I agreed to write this article, I had half a mind to call and request that someone else be given the task. Guess where I was at that time? I was in the hospital, huddled in a corner, watching over my husband who had just suffered a hemorrhagic stroke. Deo, my husband of 44 years, who at 64 took no maintenance pills, didn't drink, didn't smoke, preferred a vegetable and fish diet, was lying



there, asleep or unconscious I couldn't tell, amongst white sheets and white pillows which he disliked using at home, a mass of white gowned figures hovering over him, miles of plastic tubings connected to his arms and legs, fighting for his life.

In retrospect, I realize now what prompted me to accept the task. I am a Carmelite Third Order. The story that follows is a window to my soul.

In 1999, I was an active Lay Affiliate of the Good Shepherd. I was the first Coordinator of the Group and held the position for some years until I left to become a Third Order Carmelite. But that's getting ahead of my story.

To understand the connection to my becoming a Carmelite Third Order, let me tell you about the Lay Affiliates of the Good Shepherd. In that time, we were a small number of middle-aged ladies, around fifteen, who helped the Good Shepherd Sisters in their apostolates. Being the mother of four girls studying at the St. Bridget School run by the Sisters, it was inevitable that

I would become an affiliate. Even without being officially one, I already ran errands for the Sisters. I drove my own car so I was often the one on hand during emergencies to bring students to the doctor. I helped in school stage productions behind the scenes. I was always an officer of the Parent-Teacher Association. I was a dog-sitter once. The list goes on and on.

Two among us happened to be members of the Third Order of Carmel or TOC. Another one was a member of the Order of Carmel Discalced Secular or OCDS. Little did they

know that I got interested in Carmel through them. As Affiliates, we received Training and Formation from the Sister in Charge. During prayer time, we arranged our seats in a circle. With our eyes closed, the Sister guided us in prayer. I was the youngest in the group and I liked to open my eyes just a bit to observe the other ladies. Invariably, I observed that the Carmelites had their eyes tightly closed and no doubt were deep in prayer. Feeling ashamed

for peeking, I would follow suit and assume their wonderful prayer posture.

A time came when the OCDS lady noticed me enough to try to convince me to join her Carmelite Community. I was overjoyed. It was a dry time in my prayer life and I needed a boost. BUT...But their community meeting was on Sundays. Sunday is sacred to me and my family. My beloved husband declared that I can do anything I liked and I can go anywhere I wished any day of the week. But never on a Sunday! I was not meant to be an OCDS.

It was around this time that I noticed the brown ladies at Church. I live two blocks from our Parish Church and I am a daily Mass goer. The ladies who always wore brown were at Mass everyday.

Funny how I thought they were followers of St. Anthony. One day, walking home from Church, I fell in step with a lady in brown. She lived close by. I greeted her and boldly asked about the brown dress. She said she was a member of the Third Order of Carmel! As such they wore brown most of the time. In fact, they had a brown Carmelite uniform. They met on Saturdays for Mass and to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. One Saturday in the month was devoted to business meetings and another Saturday was for Formation. She asked me to join them that Saturday at the Carmelite Shrine of our Church. I did. I liked what I saw. And that started me on the journey towards becoming a Third Order Carmelite. That was November 1999.

Why did I become a Third Order Carmelite?

The road to Carmel has not been easy. Against all odds, I went through Aspirancy, Postulancy, Novitiate, Temporary Profession. In 2008 I had my Final Profession. While I

was in Temporary Profession in 2006, the then National Prioress resigned at halfway her term. There was no provision in our Statutes for any member of her Council to take her place. Our communities are spread across the Philippine Archipelago so someone must necessarily have



to take over. Someone had to hold the reins together in the remaining one year and a half. For whatever reason, I was requested by the then Commissary General of the First Order, to take charge. I silently asked: "Why me?" Yet, in all humility, I accepted the position and there was no turning back. It was one reason why I became a Third Order Carmelite.

In the 2008 TOC National Convention, I was voted National Coordinator. (The title was changed from National Prioress to National Coordinator.) Then in 2011, I again became National Coordinator. I held the top position for seven and a half years. But, of course, it is a fact that if you want to be number one TOC, you should be prepared to be last. You are a servant leader. All these years, the TOC have been blessed with enumerable blessings, including real estate properties. I am proud to say though that the real assets of the TOC are the TOC themselves. They are formidable reasons why I became a Third Order Carmelite!

A Good Shepherd Sister, a very good friend of mine, once said: “Sally, the good Lord has given you everything you could ask for. A time might come when the Lord will ask something from you. I pray you will be ready to give or do what He asks.” I believe that that time has come. I believe that that is another reason why I became a Third Order Carmelite. I believe it was God’s loving way of preparing me for such an eventuality. It has been almost three months since my husband’s serious stroke. We are looking into long, torturous and frustrating months of rehabilitation. I’m sure my being a Carmelite will carry us through with shining colours.

The TOChave rallied behind me! They have become my prayer warriors. I told my community that I find it so hard right now to pray. I can only say “O Lord!” and “O Mother Mary!” They exclaimed: “Yes! You are a contemplative!” Yes, becoming a contemplative is another reason I became a Third Order Carmelite.

And Yes! I became a member of the Third Order of Carmel so I can put all these in writing. Despite the ordeal of my husband’s illness, I chose to rise to the challenge and open the window to my soul. I know I chose correctly because in my experience now when I put them on paper, always the optimist, I realize that in God’s grace and in God’s own time amazing things can happen.

About the Author: Rosalie Alcantara Castro is a member of the Third Order of Carmel in the Philippines. She was the National Coordinator (National Prioress) of the Third Order of Carmel Philippines from 2006 to 2014. She’s now a member of the TOC Committee of the Region of Asia, Australia and Oceania.

Rosalie is married to Deo Castro, a retiree of United Laboratories, Inc. and Director of Finance of Leverage Works, Inc. They have four daughters, four sons-in-law and eleven grandchildren.

## Activities of the TOC in the Philippines

**Philippines:** The 36<sup>th</sup> TOC community in the Philippines was started last May 2014 upon the request of the parish priest of Holy Family Parish, Brgy, Kapitolyo, Pasig City. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> TOC community to be established in the Diocese of Pasig. The request came about when a TOC member from the community of Sta. Ana, Manila relocated to the said area. Around 10 persons started as aspirants of the community. Sis. Ester Rivera, a final professed member of Our Lady of the Abandoned TOC, was appointed prioress and Sis. Rossana Garcia, member of the National Formation Team, was appointed as the Director of Formation. The community is to be formally opened by the Provincial Delegate, Fr. Baltazar Ronato, OCarm on October and will take the name Mater Décor Carmeli TOC Community.

The TOC communities of Pilar, Las Pinas; Bacoor, Cavite; and Sta. Cruz, Laguna will have their Thematic Retreat focusing on the Carmelite Promises of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. This will be facilitated by Fr. Baltazar Ronato, OCarm and will be held at the Flos Carmeli House of Prayer, Calamba, Laguna on Sept. 5 – 7, 2014.

The NCR Novices will have their TOC Recollection on Sept. 14, 2014 (Feast of Exaltation of the Cross) as part of their spiritual formation. This will be facilitated by Bro. Ruel Santos and will be held at Titus Brandsma Center.

On Sept. 26 – 28, the newly elected National Council will meet for the first time to plan projects for the Third Order in the Philippines. It will also be the time of turn-over of the outgoing National Council. The Prior Provincial, Fr. Christian Buenafe, OCarm, will also attend the planning meeting. Venue of the meeting is at the Flos Carmeli House of Prayer which is administered by the TOC Philippines.

## 22nd Carmelite Family Day Celebration

**Philippines:** On July 20, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Carmelite Family Day celebration was held in the gymnasium of the Mater Carmeli School at Fr. Francisco Palau St., Sacred Heart Village, Novaliches, Quezon City. The theme of the gathering was “Karmelita, Tinatawag sa Kabanalan; Mga Propeta sa Makabagong Panahon.” (Carmelites: Called to Holiness, Prophets of the Modern Time). Rev. Fr. Reynaldo Sotero, Jr. OCD, Provincial Superior presided over the Holy Mass and Fr. Paul Medina, O.Carm. was the homilist.

This celebration was attended by many members of the Carmelite Family namely: Order of the Brothers of the Bl. Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel (O.Carm.), Order of the Discalced Carmelites (OCD); Instituto Nuestra Senora del Carmelo

(O.Carm.); Carmelitas Misioneras Teresianas (CMT); Donum Dei Missionary Family (DDMF); Carmelite Missionaries (CM); Carmelite Sisters of Our Lady (Carm. O.L.); Carmelite Missionary Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus (CMSSTCJ); Congregation of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (O.Carm); Third Order of the Carmelites (TOC); Order of the Discalced Carmelites Seculars (OCDS); Carmelite Missionary Seculars (CMS); Notre Dame de Vie Institute (NDV); DDMF Mothers; Carmelite Missionary Seculars-Youth (CMSY); and Carmel Youth.



## SUMMER CARMEL YOUTH CAMP



**Philippines:** The Luzon Chapter of the Carmel Youth Philippines has once again successfully organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Carmel Youth Luzon Summer Camp from May 9-11 2014, at Carmel of Mary, Star of the Sea Monastery in Sitio Balimbing Sampaloc Tanay, Rizal.

In line with the year of the Laity, it was themed as “Kabataan ng Karmel Laykong Bayani at Propeta sa makabagong panahon”. (Carmel Youth: Young Heroes and Prophets of the Modern Time)

It was hosted by the Carmel Youth Philippines - Tanay Youth Community together with the Carmel of Mary, Star of the Sea

(Cloistered nuns of Tanay) and their Lay Counterpart.

There were 74 participants from different chapters of Carmel Youth Luzon.

The summer camp was made meaningful by the resource speakers. These included Rev. Fr. Gabriel Dolotina, O. Carm., Carmel Youth Director and officer-in-charge who introduced the meaning and significance of the event, Rev. Fr. Rico Ponce, O.Carm. presented the «Challenges of Being a Brave Prophet in the Present Time». Lastly, Mother Rebecca Valdez, O. Carm., Prioress of the Monastery, gave inputs to deepen the response on «Vocation in Carmel Way (Contemplation, Service and Brotherhood)».

Other activities of the entire summer camp were as follows: Procession in Honor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, praying of the Holy Rosary, Holy Mass, Holy Hour, Taize Reflection and Community Night/Cultural Night.

The organizers and participants chose the Mater Carmeli Monastery in Sta. Ignacia, Tarlac to be the host of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Carmel Youth Camp in April 24 – 26, 2015.

Participants were so thankful to the generosity of the benefactors and donors of the successful event such as the resource speakers of each session, Friars of Bl. Titus Brandsma Province, Nuns of Stella Maris Federation, TOC's of different communities, especially Tanay Community.



## Lay Carmelites - A Growing Family

**Australia:** Four Lay Carmelites from Wentworthville, Rockhampton and Central Coast communities are preparing to make their Solemn Profession this year. Melbourne community will receive three new members later this year and four more people are enquiring about becoming 'distant' members of the Lay Carmelites.

The Lay Carmelite National Council met on 22-24 August at the Benedictine Abbey, Jamberoo, to discuss the latest developments, focussing on formation for those just beginning their journey into Carmel.

During the meeting Fr. Paul Gurr (Provincial Delegate for the Lay Carmelites) and Christine Wade (Moderator) reported on their visits to Rockhampton, New Zealand, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Central Coast and Wentworthville communities. Fr. Paul and Fr. Denis (Provincial) have also visited the 'scattered' Carmelites in Perth.

Coming up in September: Fr. Anthony Scerri, O.Carm. will join the Coorparoo Community for its retreat and Fr. Paul and Christine will lead a retreat for the Melbourne Community. Fr Paul will also be visiting the Coorparoo community in October.

The LCNCA will meet again on 7-9 November.

*source: www.carmelites.org.au*

## EUROPEAN LAY CARMELITE CONGRESS

The first European Lay Carmelite Congress took place at Aylesford Priory, England, 25-28 July 2014. This was an initiative organized by the British Province, in which some 50 delegates took part from Britain, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, Netherlands, and

European area of the Order.

Fr. John Keating, O.Carm., Councillor General for Europe, spoke on "Looking to the Future of Carmel in Europe with Hope". Johan Bergström-Allen, T.O.C., spoke on "The Variety of Lay Carmelite Life Across Europe". Bro. Patrick Mullins, O.Carm., spoke on "Titus Brandsma: Inspiration for Lay Carmel in Europe Today".

Each province and group gave presentations about their experience, as well as performing in a Cultural Evening. The Congress was inter-

persed with creative liturgies organised by Lay Carmelites.

The Congress was deemed a great success, permeated with a spirit of deep prayer and fellowship that celebrated unity in diversity. The delegates resolved to hold the next Congress in Malta in 2016

*source: www.carmelite.org*



Portugal, and included members of the Third Order, The Leaven Secular Institute, the Discalced Secular Order, new expressions of Lay Carmel including Carmelite Spirituality Groups, as well as friars working with Lay Carmel.

The purpose of the gathering was to foster friendship and communication across the

## Perth Lay Carmelites Keep Charism Alive

**Australia:** Nine years after the withdrawal of the Friars a small group of Lay Carmelites is still keeping the Carmelite charism alive in Perth.

Recently they were visited by Fr. Denis Andrew (Prior Provincial) and Fr. Paul Gurr (Provincial Delegate for the Lay Carmelites).

Portia Curtin, Judy Rowlands, Antoniette Skelton, Elaine Thomas, and Judith Greer shared lunch with Fr. Denis and Fr. Paul. Unfortunately, Josie Canciglia and Carol Jones were unable to be present.

*source: www.carmelites.org.au*



## The First Meeting of the General Commission for Carmelite Laity

From the 25th to the 30th of June, 2014, the members of the General Commission for Carmelite Laity held a meeting in Rome. Those who took part were, Fr. Désiré Unen, O.Carm. (Ita-Congo), Fr. Joseph Hung, O.Carm. (SEL-Vietnam), Jennifer Wanjiku (Kenya), Normita Lacanilao (Philippines), José Araujo Filho (Brazil), Michele Bonanno (Italy), Juan Luis Laghi (Young People in Perú), María José García de la Barrera (Young People in Spain), under the leadership of Fr. Raúl Maraví, O.Carm., Councillor General and President of this commission.

For five days the group worked on the content of the global plan for laity for this sexennium and how to put it into effect. Each member was given an opportunity to talk about the experience of the situation of the laity and of young people in the different places where the Order is working, and the needs that exist in those places. This work led the commission to form two sub-

commissions, one for formation and the other for communication for the purpose of responding to the concerns and expectations of lay people on the international level.

Similarly, a decision was taken to organise an International Congress for Lay Carmelites, to take place one year before the next General Chapter, as well as a series of other assemblies at a regional level. One of the objectives that this commission has is to give more visibility and training to the lay people who are part of the great Carmelite Family.



by Jennifer Wanjiku, TOC, Kenya

**Kenya:** May 30th 2014 marked the golden jubilee of the Third Order in Kenya. The Third Order began at Nkubu Boys High School in the Diocese of Meru by a young Consolata Missionary; Fr. Joseph Demarie, who was a faculty member at St. Pius X Seminary. The seminary was next to the boys' school. In the course of his work in the Seminary, Fr. Demarie would go over to this boys' school to meet the students and it is in one of these meetings that a few students confided in him their desire to live a deeper spiritual life. Fr. Demarie spoke to the students about some of the Third Orders in the church as described in a booklet he found in the library. The students, after reflecting on the Rule of the various third orders, were drawn to the Carmelite Third Order and this marked the beginning of a formation journey for six of them who became the first Third Order Carmelites in Kenya. (Fr. Demarie has since returned to the Consolata motherhouse in Torino, Italy due to ill health. Please pray for him.)

## GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE THIRD ORDER IN KENYA

Today the order has grown and spread out from Nkubu to different parts of Kenya. The membership has also grown to about 300 members. These members form the nine third order communities that currently exist in Kenya; Kakamega, Kimilili, Machakos, Nkoroi, Nairobi, Meru, Muthambi, Nyeri, Thika. Each group meets monthly both for regular meetings and formation sessions.

The members marked this golden jubilee with special celebrations. On 1st March, 2014, a group of third order members from Kakamega and Nairobi along two brothers from Bustani ya Karmeli (Nkoroi) met at the OCD monastery in Tindinyo which is in the Western part of Kenya to celebrate together with the cloistered nuns. They celebrated a mass of thanksgiving and shared a meal together. It was a great moment for the Carmelite family as each group recalled their beginning and experiences over the years.

Another celebration was held at the Carmelite monastery in Machakos. Third Order members from Machakos together with Fr. Onesmus, the director of the Third Order, joined the cloistered nuns and celebrated a mass of thanksgiving. It was a solemn moment as the family came together to share the joy of Carmel's presence in Kenya.

The main celebration took place on the annual family day which fell on 14th June 2014 at Nkoroi Parish; a Carmelite parish where also the formation house (Bustani ya Karmeli) for the brothers is also located. Members from all nine third order groups in Kenya together with their family members and also students from Carmelite groups in two girls' schools met at the parish. The day started with a beautiful Eucharistic celebration that was animated by the students. After mass all those in attendance gathered in the parish hall for entertainment and lunch prepared by the members from Nkoroi parish.

