



CURIA GENERALIZIA DEI CARMELITANI

VIA GIOVANNI LANZA, 138 - 00184 ROMA (ITALIA)

Tel. 06.4620181

e-mail: seggen@ocarm.org

To the Carmelite Nuns around the world

Rome, 20 November 2023

Prot. 328/2023

Dear Sisters,

on the day known as *pro orantibus* I write to you again, to express my appreciation for your life and dedication to the Church and to the Carmelite Order and to share some of my reflections with you. The knowledge that you are there, serving the Lord as contemplative Carmelite sisters is a source of strength and consolation for us all. I regret that my visits to you are brief and infrequent and as I see the months racing by I know I must do more to visit the communities I have not yet visited since 2019.

As the end of 2023 approaches, we are all praying for peace in this very war oriented world. We ask, have we not learned from the centuries gone by despite the enormity of the problem despite how awful the violence cruelty of the last century was? Are we not listening to the pleas of Pope Francis? Can there be no end to the arms race, the determined production, sale and use of arms from the very small and seemingly insignificant to the greatest and most powerful and destructive?

Carmel is a place of peace and your life exemplifies that. The peace we seek is the peace that only Jesus can give. It is the peace that reigns in the Blessed Trinity and that is in the plan of God for all creation. That is the vision we get from St. Mary Magdalen de'Pazzi, when she contemplated the words of Jesus in the liturgy: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you. (Jn 14,27): Some years ago as I was reflecting on this passage a poem came into my head which I would like to share with you now.

Trinity

From all time and before
the Father looked at the Son
he looked deeply
and he loved what he saw
The Spirit was in the looking
and there was peace.
And the Son, the Word of God
looked at the Father
The Word looked deeply
and he loved what he saw

The Spirit was in the looking
and there was peace.
In the beginning of time
the Father and the Son
looked into themselves
They looked deeply
and they loved what they saw
and the Spirit was in the looking
and the whole of creation came into being
in God's own image and likeness
it came into being
and there was peace
God looked into creation and found Mary
God looked deeply
And loved what he saw
The Spirit was in the looking
and the Word became flesh
And the Word was peace
Mary looked at the Word
the issue of her womb
She looked deeply
and she loved what she saw
and the Spirit was in the looking
and there was peace.
And Jesus looked at the world
he looked deeply
and he loved what he saw
and he waits until the world looks back
and looks deeply
and loves what it sees
and the Spirit is in the looking
and there is peace.

(Revelations and Understandings, The Second Day of the Spirit, the 9th of June, Pentecost.)

In this vision the life of the Blessed Trinity is a life of love and communication. It is a life that touches the depths of every reality and leaves no aspect of creation untouched. Our present situation is built on partial truths used and manipulated to serve partial interests. It lack any sense of the common good. We need to listen to Pope Francis when reflecting on the effects of Covid 19 he said:

What then is being asked of us? First of all, to let our hearts be changed by our experience of the crisis, to let God, at this time in history, transform our customary criteria for viewing the world around us. We can no longer think exclusively of carving out space for our personal or national interests; instead, we must think in terms of the common good, recognizing that we belong to a greater community, and opening our minds and hearts to universal human fraternity. We cannot continue to focus simply on preserving ourselves; rather, the time has come for all of us to endeavour to heal our society and our planet, to lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world, and to commit ourselves seriously to pursuing a good that is truly common. (Message for the World Day of Peace, 2023, n.5).

On this day of prayer for those who pray, let us unite in prayer and allow God's peace and God's desire for peace to fill our hearts and our minds and give us that way of looking, looking deeply and loving what we see because what we see is what God has given us to see and it is good. What is given by God is given to us in different ways, but it is for the good of all. There will be peace always in our communities when we have the ability to look at one another, look deeply and love what we see and know that it is for the good of all.



Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Míceál O'Neill".

Fr. Míceál O'Neill, O.Carm
Prior General