CONSILIUM GENERALE ORDO CARMELITARUM

"You must have some sort of work to do" (Rule 20)
Our Contemplative Fraternity Discerns Its Mission

Global Plan

of the General Council

2025 – 2031

ROME

GENERAL CURIA

2026

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Introduction from the Prior General

Global Plan of the General Council for the Six-Year Period 2025–2031

"You must have some sort of work to do" (Rule 20) Our Contemplative Fraternity Discerns Its Mission

Malang (Indonesia), 9th – 26th September 2025

Dear brothers,

I am very happy to present to you the "Global Plan of the General Council for the Six-Year Period 2025–2031." In this publication, we synthesise the discernment carried out by the Order during the General Chapter held from the 9th to the 26th September 2025 in Malang (Indonesia) — a historic milestone, as it took place in Asia for the first time — as well as the subsequent reflection of the General Council. This programme gathers the guidelines of the General Chapter for the coming years and the projects that, with generosity and creativity, can be carried out across the Order, both by geographical areas and by responsibilities and tasks. The newly formed commissions and their collaborators are also appended to this document.

This plan is accompanied by the final message of the 2025 General Chapter to the entire Carmelite Family, which I believe will serve as a fruitful instrument for future reflection. The certainty that the Carmelite charism, raised up by the Holy Spirit, remains a gift for the world and for the Church, invites each of us to contribute our gifts and talents, wherever we may be and whatever our responsibility, to advance this shared project. The theme of our

chapter, "Our contemplative fraternity discerns its mission," helps us frame several general challenges that, by way of introduction, are worth recalling.

1. Fidelity to the Charism: Cultivating the Interior Life

During the General Chapter, we remembered that contemplation is not only the heart of the Carmelite charism but is in itself the finest gift we can offer to the world and to the Church. "As mendicants, we are open to every ministry and apostolate" (cf. *RIVC* 113; *Const.* 95); yet, since we Carmelites carry out our mission among the people above all through the richness of our contemplative life, "whatever we do, we pay special attention to the spiritual path of the people" (cf. *RIVC* 113; *Const.* 95). Our brother Jack Welch, O.Carm., who passed away during the General Chapter, noted with great insight — and I subscribe to it wholeheartedly — that "the greatest prophetic challenge for Carmel today is to help the world to cultivate the interior life." We are not dry for lack of God, but because we do not know how to dig deep to the "Fountain" within us. This is Carmel's great challenge: to guide people into deepening their own experience until they find, lovingly present there, the presence of God. This task demands that we cultivate the interior life today against the noise, haste, and superficiality that scatter us.

Our brother Most Rev. Filippo Iannone, Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, commended me to the protection of Holy Mary in his words of congratulation. He asked Her to assist me in the responsibility of accompanying the Order in its "spiritual growth," for the world and the Church need the Carmelite charism to be "lived and embodied in a faithful and coherent manner." This is a wish I also make entirely my own. An intuition has taken firm root in me since we celebrated the General Chapter: only if we tend the root that sustains us from within can Carmel bear its finest fruit (cf. *Jer* 2:7).

During this six-year term, we trust to continue encouraging and

accompanying the Order in initial and ongoing formation, the care of houses of formation, the training of formators, the study and deepening of our Carmelite tradition and charism (with special attention to the inspiring figures of Carmel: the Virgin Mary, our Mother and Sister, and the Prophet Elijah), as well as the long-awaited editing of the Order's own liturgical texts (Ritual of Professions, Missal, Lectionary, and Proper Liturgy of the Hours).

2. Unity of Life: Prayer and Action

The Carmelite Rule exhorts us to work in silence so that the gift of contemplation may not be corrupted: "you must do some work" (Rule 20). It is an invitation for our works to emanate not the aroma of our "ego," but the "sweet fragrance of Christ" (cf. 2 *Cor* 2:15). In principle, there ought to be no contradiction between prayer and work. During my visit to the Philippines, I was struck by the teaching of Most Rev. Julio Labayen, OCD (1926–2016), who aided the country's democratic transition, that "prayer" and "action" are two moments of the same reality. Prayer without action is empty; action without prayer is soul-less activism. Rather, "the reality that unites prayer and action is called mission." Our mystics emphasised that harmonising this "unity of life" is a permanent challenge: "In apostolic activity, the heart must always remain recollected in God, so that prayer and action are not two separate things, but one and the same continuous movement of Carmelite life" (Ven. Michael of St. Augustine, 1621–1684).

Throughout the General Chapter, the question echoed: "Can we continue doing everything we do?" If our ministries rob us of our moments of prayer, work is reduced to a "soul-less rush." A deception of our age is that we confuse "living" with "producing" (ideas, articles, activities, experiences). We forget that God does not produce, but creates, loves, and contemplates. When work stifles silence, we cease to be creators and become mere task managers. It is not a matter of juggling hours between the chapel and the street as if they were rival forces competing on our agenda.

The challenge is far more radical: to examine *from where* we do what we do. St. Titus Brandsma, a man of dizzying exterior activity, understood with luminous prophetic clarity that mysticism is not fleeing the world, but discovering and embodying God's presence in daily life: "Prayer is not an oasis in the desert of life, but life itself." Titus was acutely aware that when we cultivate the presence of God, work, far from being a distraction that interrupts prayer, becomes a "moment" in which God gives Himself to us: "We must not isolate ourselves from life to find God. If the love of God lives within us, it will manifest itself naturally in our outward activity, so that there will be no division between prayer and work" (St. Titus Brandsma).

3. Community Life: "Islands of Humanity"

In recent General Chapters, there is a question that I perceive remains consistently uncomfortable: How many brothers should a community have? The CIC is very clear: three (cf. *Can.* 115 § 2). We, as an Order, less so... In its theological essence, a *Mendicant Order,* where community is an essential constituent of identity, is not the same as a *Society of Apostolic Life,* where the organisation of the group serves the efficacy of an apostolate. Granted, both models are ecclesiologically valid. But what are we? A Mendicant Order and a Society of Apostolic Life are not the same. It is true that quantity is not synonymous with quality; yet, if we normalise this trajectory, we risk falling into the temptation of inertia and eliminating the essential elements of our fraternal life described in the Rule: the Eucharist, the local chapter, *lectio divina,* recreation, the refectory, fraternal correction and forgiveness, and dialogue (cf. *Const.* 35). Ultimately, every Carmelite entity must ensure that communities do not degenerate into mere work teams.

Our brother Christopher O'Donnell, O.Carm., quoting the celebrated Hans Urs von Balthasar, described the Carmelite community as an "island of humanity." This "island" is neither a closed ghetto nor a self-absorbed refuge, but an anticipation of the Kingdom of God: a serene haven where, through mutual

acceptance, we can reveal ourselves as we truly are. The Holy Spirit trains us through community living so that the grace of true holiness may render us profoundly human. As Fr. Bartolomé Xiberta, O.Carm., argued, the Carmelite community is, above all, the visible manifestation of the Mystical Body of Christ, where love for the brother becomes our primary act of worship to God. In community, through unconditional welcome, we learn to embrace both the fragility of others and our own, awakening fraternal love. The authenticity of our community life, radiating the joy of the Risen Christ, is our best letter of recommendation and the principal attraction for young people and vocational discernment.

4. Mission: "Enlarge the Site of Your Tent" (cf. *Is* 54:2–3)

The mendicant tradition opens us to every ministry or apostolate. And what is the essence of the apostolate? "To love much" — as the mystics would say. True love does not optimise itself; it pours out abundantly upon all. St. Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi addressed Jesus, calling Him: "Madman of Love!" — "You are mad with Love!" One day, in an ecstasy of love, she took down the crucifix, unnailed Jesus, and, embracing Him, began to cry out: "Love, Love, Love, unloved and unknown by anyone!" And she immediately exclaimed: "Love, Love, grant me such power of voice that, in calling You Love, I may be heard from East to West, in all parts of the world, even unto hell, so that You may be known and loved by all, O Love!" Before the boundaries of the world, love knows no limits or distances; "living charity is the only force capable of rekindling hope in every corner of the earth" (*Magnifica humanitas,* 78). What is evangelisation if not a cry, an impetus, through which we long for the Love of God to reach the ends of the earth? In proclaiming the Gospel, we "enlarge the site of our tent" (cf. *Is* 54:2–3) to make room for God and those who come with Him: humanity.

Several challenges present themselves for the future of our mission: evangelisation and interreligious dialogue, which, far

from opposing each other, sustain and nourish one another (cf. *Ad Gentes* 9); expanding the frontiers of Carmel to carry the fire of our charism and a word of hope where we are not yet present; consolidating those mission territories established in the past; and living our mission through generosity and the sharing of goods: a financial support rooted in the Gospel to sustain Carmel's presence where it is most needed. An issue we cannot overlook: Christ Himself entrusted us with the care and protection of the smallest and most vulnerable: "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me" (*Mt* 18:5). We commit ourselves decisively to ensuring that our communities and ministries are safe environments for minors and vulnerable persons.

5. Reorganisation: "Pruning to Flourish"

Some entities in our Order are flourishing; others are fading. A fraternal spirit of mutual assistance is already evident across many areas of our Order. However, during the General Chapter, it was recognised that this spirit of collaboration will not suffice to sustain or salvage certain entities. Institutional maturity calls for the courage to "prune" structures that have lost their vitality. Far from being a failure, this detachment, besides being a sign of responsible governance, is a profoundly spiritual decision. The ancient Marian motto, "The Flower of Carmel, pruned, springs forth with greater vigour," fills us with hope, reminding us that in times of martyrdom, persecution, or pruning, the Order has always been reborn with greater strength. Indeed, this is depicted in the famous engraving of St. Angelus of Sicily in the *Acta Sanctorum* (Antwerp, 1680), commemorating his life-giving martyrdom, as well as in the stone carving in the courtyard of Aylesford Priory (UK), commemorating our return in 1950 following the suppression under Henry VIII. Reorganisation is not destruction: it is pruning so that a more vigorous shoot may spring from the trunk *(Flos Carmeli, recissus, vegetior assurgit).*

The Constitutions — approved and discerned by all — must guide us in these processes. Constitution article no. 187 should not hang

over us as a Sword of Damocles. Amidst the restructuring processes that must be undertaken due to the lack of vocations, the ageing of the friars, or the lack of leadership and governance, the words echoed powerfully during the General Chapter: "Do not fear!" (*Hag* 2:5). During the Chapter, the readings from the prophets Haggai and Ezra invited us, with hope, to rebuild the Temple of God. This reconstruction is not founded on mere human optimism based on numbers, strategies, and capabilities. Christ is the cornerstone of this new edifice. Genuine hope begins when the path is strewn with setbacks. God cannot remain trapped in rigid structures, in a provincial organisation chart, or in a map of the Order's demarcations. The dynamics of reconfiguring our presence in parts of Europe, Africa, and Hispanic Latin America demand a courageous and prompt determination. This juncture offers us the opportunity to be "witnesses to unity," making visible our internationality, interculturality, fraternal support, and communion of goods. At the same time, we are making progress in responsibility, transparency and solidarity in the administration of the assets entrusted to us.

6. Compassion: "Listening to the Groans of Creation"

Carmelite mysticism does not distance us from reality. The contemplative is a prophet who listens to the groans of creation. The contemplative purifies the senses to feel the outcry of reality in every corner:

> "Pouring out a thousand graces,
> He passed through these groves in haste,
> and as He gazed upon them,
> by His glance alone,
> left them clothed in beauty." (St. John of the Cross)

The social doctrine of the Church, prophetism, care for creation should not be a passing fad; it is the radical and logical consequence of the Mystery of the Incarnation. The attentive

contemplative is never socially indifferent. Blindness to the suffering of others dehumanises both those who suffer and those who tolerate it. God does not redeem creation from the outside, but *through* it. Carmel is called to offer a testimony of simplicity and prophetic stewardship of creation in those lands where political and socio-environmental crises strike the poorest most severely. Charity should not be a mere moral veneer in our ministries, but a profound stirring of the heart before a wounded world. Algorithms do not embrace, nor do they heal... It is the Carmelite of flesh and blood who embraces and heals. When one is filled with God, justice and peace spring spontaneously from the heart, because "in all things news of God is found" (St. John of the Cross).

Contemplation is not an evasive refuge from injustice, but a prophetic gaze that penetrates human pain. Pope Francis (General Chapter 2019) expressed distrust of any contemplative who lacks compassion: "If around you there are no sick people, no marginalised people [...] it is not that they are not there [...] but simply that you do not see them." Contemplation would be a mere accidental episode if it were reduced to ecstasies that isolate us from the joys and anxieties of the people. Touching the wounds of Christ in the suffering flesh of the poor — not with pity, but awestruck before the mystery — is a living liturgy and one of the most challenging tasks of the Gospel, for it demands that we move beyond paternalism and mere administrative welfare. A contemplative attitude does not distance us from violence, terrorism, human exploitation, corruption, war, migration, discrimination, or the suffering of the innocent... To this we must add what recent magisterial documents remind us: "The worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care" (*EG* 200). The Carmelite charism — the core of which is precisely the accompaniment of the interior life — is called to offer a deeper and more transformative response to these challenges.

7. The Carmelite Family

"The Rule given to the hermits of Mount Carmel did not remain enclosed within the cells of the desert but became the way of life for all those — friars, nuns, or secular laity — who seek to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ" (J. Smet, O.Carm.). Although primarily addressed to the friars, this plan for the six-year term relies on the invaluable support of the entire Carmelite Family (nuns, religious sisters, Third Order Carmel, Carmelite seculars of various groups, youth, Teresian Carmel, etc.), with whom we labour in various places and apostolates. No one holds a "monopoly" over the Carmelite charism. Belonging to our family means cultivating friendship, encounter, hospitality, dialogue, and shared mission. Other issues raised during our General Chapter include:

- *7.1 Nuns and Communities of Eremitic Lifestyle (cf. Const. 44).* The revision of the Constitutions of the nuns, which will be resumed during this six-year term, transcends a mere legal or administrative procedure. It is a matter of safeguarding their contemplative style proper to the Carmelite tradition while embracing, with discernment and evangelical maturity, the necessary renewal of our times. Furthermore, the Order of Carmel seeks to articulate a clear legal framework to coordinate and regularise the communities of eremitic lifestyle approved prior to the 2019 Constitutions, safeguarding their full ecclesial and canonical communion, and ensuring the richness they offer in continuity with the fruitful Carmelite tradition.

- *7.2 Third Order Carmelites (TOC) and Affiliated Consecrated Life.* The TOC requires serious theological formation and a clear normative framework that adapts the Rule for those who feel drawn to our spirituality, particularly in secular life. All of this fosters co-responsibility among the members of the Carmelite Family, especially the laity, who live the Carmelite charism amidst their families, workplaces, and social realities, without falling into clerical inertia or compromising their lay vocation. At the same time, we desire that close collaboration with the

Congregations and Institutes of Consecrated Life affiliated with the Order of Carmel be structured as a true exercise of synodality and communion (formation and re-reading of the charism; shared mission and apostolate; joint vocational promotion; spaces for dialogue and governance bodies).

Conclusion

What is the one thing that cannot be lost? When the Church faced periods of crisis, she never found a new path because someone suddenly designed an extraordinary strategic plan. That never crossed their minds. None of them aspired to revolutionise the world. She was reborn whenever a man or a woman decided to take the Gospel radically seriously and turned back to Jesus. Francis of Assisi, Teresa of Jesús, Charles de Foucault, Teresa of Calcutta... only Jesus remains. And for that reason, they transformed the lives of countless people and the world around them. As long as we keep alive our friendship with Him, we have no reason to fear the future.

O Virgin Mary, Mother and Beauty of Carmel!

We acknowledge with humble gratitude that the Carmelite Order has been filled with innumerable favours through your loving intercession before your Son Jesus. Under the mantle of your patronage, we consecrate today the entire Carmelite Family. Obtain for us, heavenly Mother, the grace to know you, love you, imitate you and radiate you, so that, transformed by your example, we may configure our lives to Jesus Christ and manifest him with joyful fidelity in the midst of the world.

Desiderio García Martínez, O.Carm.
Prior General.

Rome
October 2026

Final Message of the General Chapter 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel,

1. With gratitude to God and to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, we, the delegates of the Carmelite General Chapter, gathered in Malang, Indonesia, from 9-26 September 2025, reflected on the theme: "You must have some sort of work to do" (Rule 20) - Our Contemplative Fraternity Discerns Its Mission. We address this final message to the entire Carmelite Family.

Thanksgiving and Context

2. We are deeply grateful to the Indonesian Province and the Secretariat of the General Chapter for their outstanding hospitality, organisation and vitality, creating the best possible conditions and environment for the celebration of this General Chapter. We also express our thanks to Pope Leo XIV, who, in a letter addressed to the Chapter, reminded us that our roots in silent prayer and mutual care cultivate a stillness that allows us to discern *the signs of the times*, especially from the perspective of the poor (*Const.* 118). He emphasised that our shared life of prayer is the foundation of all our service, and entrusted this Chapter to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

3. Our days together were marked by fraternity, honesty, and prayerful discernment. With gratitude and reverence, we also remembered the four sisters of our Order who tragically passed into eternal life in a car accident in Tanzania. In the light of the Jubilee Year, we became more aware of belonging to a wider, pilgrim Church. Our reflections were enriched by reports from the Prior

General, the General Council, commissions, and the four geographic areas of the Order, as well as by contributions from experts who helped us read the *signs of the times*.[1]

4. One such voice was Sr. Patricia Murray, IBVM. Drawing on the Church's Synodal Pathway of Communion, Participation, and Mission, she reminded us that our response must move from words to action. We are to resist indifference and embody mercy and transformation. She challenged us to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit and to *"widen the tent of our hearts,"* carrying our charism to the margins with courage, empathy, and hope. The quality of our presence is above all that matters, so people see the presence of God in us.

5. Mission, we learned, arises from the communion of God's own life, extending into creation and history, and is firmly rooted in God's universal salvific will (1 *Tim* 2:4). The Church does not so much have a mission as the mission has a Church. The Holy Spirit calls us today to reestablish our "contemplative being before the Lord." This Elian identity, grounded in service, prayer, and fraternity, is the wellspring of prophetic action in response to the cries of our age: the plight of migrants and refugees, the devastation of war, the wounds of poverty and exclusion in a greed-driven economy, religious fundamentalism and racism, and the threats of climate change and environmental degradation.

6. In this light, Rule 20 "You must have some sort of work to do" spoke to us afresh. Our "work" is not only labour but

[1] Amongst others, we heard from: Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD (Superior General), Sr. Merry Teresa Sri Rejeki, H.Carm., Sr. Sesilia, P.Karm., Sr. Alvaresta, P.Karm., Sr. Lusia Wahyuningrum, O.Carm., Sr. Maria Brigitta Gitaningsih, O. Carm,, Ruel Santos, T.O.Carm., from the Philippines, as well as a representative of the youth from Timor Leste, Ms. Merlinda Amaral.

the daily weaving together of prayer, fraternity, and service, so that every action becomes contemplative mission.

Our Experience Together

7. These days in Malang were not merely discussions but moments of fraternal discernment, enriched by the beauty of Indonesia's cultural and spiritual life. Our "work" is not simply to be busy, but to allow mission to flow from Christ's mercy into the realities of our world. Time and again we were reminded that true leadership in Carmel is defined by authority that arises from the witness of a fraternity rooted in prayer, humility, and service. Mission is not a strategy but a response to God's mercy, which transforms us into a community of love. We also sought the clarity that only the Holy Spirit can provide to recognise the beams that obscure our vision.
8. In this Chapter, we experienced fraternity itself as contemplative work: listening deeply to one another, engaging in honest dialogue, and sharing responsibility for our common mission. The diversity of cultures gathered here was not a challenge but a gift, a sign of the international character of Carmel today.
9. This Chapter reminded us that discernment is not a single event but a way of life: remaining attentive to the Spirit so that our mission is always renewed and responsive to the needs of the Church and the world.

Facing Reality with Hope

10. Our brother Bishop Wilmar Santin, O.Carm., from the Territorial Prelature of Itaituba, Brazil, reminded us that mission belongs to the very heart of our Carmelite identity: rooted in contemplation, expressed in fraternity, and sent

forth to the peripheries. He recalled the courage and creativity of Carmelites in the Amazon and beyond, urging us to move from a mentality of maintenance to a spirit of missionary discipleship, forming communities that are outward-looking and willing to step into new spaces of poverty, migration, and ecological crisis.

11. Our brother Bishop Henricus Pidyarto Gunawan, O. Carm., from the Diocese of Malang, Indonesia, reflected with us on the Carmelite charism as a gift for the Church and the world. He reminded us that our works must have real quality, answer concrete needs, and be credible in us who offer them; authentically Carmelite, beneficial to God's people, and witnessed in our daily lives. He called us to balance work and prayer, avoiding both laziness and overwork, lest our vocation become shallow or exhausted. Silence, he reminded us, is essential for communion with God, while fraternity demands teamwork and shared responsibility rather than isolation or individualism. Inspired by Elijah and Jesus, we are called to defend the poor and marginalised, ensuring that our apostolic works are always an authentic expression of our charism.
12. Being in Indonesia, we were surrounded by the presence of members of the Islamic religion. We were reminded that in our constitutions we state that the prophet Elijah is for us a bridge to the other monotheistic religions. Mrs. Alissa Wahid, a Muslim scholar and activist, the daughter of the former president of Indonesia, along with our brother Hariawan Adji, O.Carm., gave us some extraordinary insights into what is possible through interreligious dialogue and mobilisation, that bring people together.
13. Enlightened by the witness of young Carmelites, we were encouraged to see that they are drawn to communities where authenticity, fraternity, Marian devotion, and a

rhythm of prayer naturally lead to generous service. Their hope and passion inspire us to remain faithful to the heart of our vocation.

14. At the same time, we cannot ignore the realities of our time. In Europe, we are called to face declining vocations and the weight of structures with honesty and courage, letting go where needed, while embracing the new energy of youth gatherings, lay collaboration, and international networks. In the Americas, we are called to nurture flourishing vocations in Latin America. In North America, we face the challenges of fewer vocations and ageing with creativity and solidarity. At the same time, we recognise many signs of vitality in common novitiates, shared formation, and renewed commitment. In Africa, we are called to strengthen vibrant young communities by investing in solid formation and leadership, and seeking greater financial sustainability, so they may grow in autonomy and responsibility. In Asia-Australia-Oceania, we are called to root abundant vocations, especially in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste, in a deep contemplative fraternity, so that this vitality may remain a true gift and not drift into mere activism.

15. Across all areas, safeguarding, intercultural living, and credible witness remain urgent challenges. To strengthen our common response, the General Chapter committed to deepen intercultural fraternity and ensure an authentic witness in every context. We also decided to enforce safeguarding with mandatory structures throughout the Order, ensuring consistent protection and accountability at every level.

Emerging Priorities

16. Guided by the Rule's exhortation to "have some sort of

work to do," the Chapter has identified several priorities for our Order and the wider Carmelite Family. Formation, both initial and ongoing, must nurture human and spiritual maturity and ensure that our charism is lived fully in today's world. We recognise young people as "the now of God," and commit to walking with them, creating authentic spaces where vocations can grow. Our discernment and mission belong to the whole Carmelite Family. Together, friars, nuns, sisters, members of the Third Order, and lay Carmelites, we are called to share responsibility for the charism entrusted to us. The witness and vitality of the laity, especially the Third Order, are indispensable for carrying the Carmelite spirit into families, parishes, and society. Each contributes according to their vocation, sharing resources and supporting one another, so that no community walks alone. This solidarity should extend across provinces and continents in formation, personnel, and finances.

17. In discerning as a community our apostolic commitments, we will maintain those works that authentically express our charism, adapt them to local contexts and the signs of the times, and when necessary, let go of those that no longer serve the Gospel in a Carmelite way. At the same time, we recognise the importance of communicating our charism with clarity and responsibility, using both digital and traditional media wisely. Our contemplative response to *the cry of the poor* and *the cry of the earth* remains central to our mission, urging us to stand for justice, peace, and care for creation. Finally, we are committed to renewing our communities as living witnesses of fraternity, fostering leadership that is visionary and service-oriented, and strengthening our liturgical life as the heart of our witness to God's presence in the world.

Going Forward

18. In Malang, we experienced fraternity, diversity, and hope. We acknowledged our limitations, yet we also encountered the abundance of God's grace. What we seek is not pious optimism but real hope: a hope rooted in Christ, sustained by prayer, and lived in daily fidelity to fraternity and mission.

19. As Carmelites, we know that desert prayer is not escape but the wellspring of life, transforming us into living water for the world. Our vocation is to abide in God's love so that our communities radiate joy, gratitude, and mercy. Looking to the future, we carry forward the insights gained here: that mission flows from prayer, that fraternity itself is mission, and that our charism is not our possession but God's gift to the Church and the world.

20. To accompany the members of the order throughout the next six years, we elected a new leadership: Prior General, Desiderio García Martínez, O.Carm. (ACV); Vice Prior General, Franciscus Xaverius Hariawan Adji, O.Carm. (INDO); Procurator General, Michael Farrugia, O.Carm. (MEL); Bursar General, Christian Körner, O.Carm. (GER); General Councilor for Africa, Eric Chrisostome N'Do, O. Carm. (BET); General Councilor for the Americas, Rolf Nepomuk (Nepi) Willemsen, O.Carm. (PCM); General Councilor for Asia-Australia-Oceania, Robert Thomas Puthussery, O.Carm. (ISTA); and General Councilor for Europe, Richard Byrne, O.Carm. (HIB).

21. We entrust our renewed commitment to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, our Mother and Sister, under whose mantle we find protection and peace, and are confident in the double portion of the spirit of the Prophet Elijah given to us. May they guide us to discern our "work" as Carmelites today: to witness God's mercy, to serve in

fraternity, and to walk humbly with God's people.

22. As we look ahead, we do so with trust that the Spirit of God who has guided us in Malang will continue to guide us. The journey of the next six years is not without challenge, but it is filled with opportunity: to be contemplative communities on mission, a living sign of hope for the Church and for the world.

Malang, Indonesia
26 September 2025

Africa

Eric Chrisostome N'Do, O.Carm.

In accordance with the final message of the General Chapter 2025 regarding Carmel in Africa, it was recommended that the General Council assist the Carmel in Africa, in communion with the different entities and realities that have been established on this continent, in order to grow in responsibility and autonomy. This responsible and autonomous growth undoubtedly aligns with the ultimate purpose of all Christian life: holiness. That is why, while working for greater responsibility and autonomy in Carmel in Africa, we wish to remind at every stage the aspiration for a life of holiness, which should be the crowning achievement of our mission in the Carmel and in the Church.

At the heart of the challenges lies the question of formation. The Carmelite vocation is not sustained by numbers alone, but by the quality of the formation that enables each brother and sister to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ, rooted in prayer, fraternity, and service.

In several parts of Africa, the rapid growth in vocations has not always been matched by the availability of adequately prepared formators or by the necessary structures to support formation.

The growth of the Carmelite presence in Africa is one of the great signs of hope for the Order today. In many regions, vocations continue to increase, bringing vitality and new possibilities for the life and mission of Carmel. This growth, however, also presents significant challenges that require careful discernment and responsible planning.

At the same time, the sustainability of formation in Africa remains an important concern. The Order is therefore called to reflect on forms of solidarity that contribute to greater responsibility and

self-sustainability.

Plans for the six-year period

In order to overcome all challenges aforementioned, and in order to give increased witness to diversity in unity on the continent of Africa, the following will be the plans and objectives for the African Geographic Area for the next six years:

1. To enhance co-ordination and collaboration through the activities of the Carmelite Family in Africa. This is the overall mission of the Area for the next six years.
2. To explore and find ways to strengthen the identity of the Carmelite Family in Africa.
3. To create an environment whereby the richness of different traditions, cultures, and values within the Area can be exchanged.
4. To create opportunities for participating in programs that benefits the entire Carmelite Family in Africa.
5. To create groupings of the different realities within the Area in order to strengthen collaboration within the Area and to seek from each grouping representatives for each expression of Carmel who could work together.
6. To hold annual meetings (which can be online or in person) to which representatives of each expression of the Carmelite Family from every reality in Africa will be invited to attend in order to evaluate the development and wellbeing of the Carmelite Family, formation, safeguarding, expansion of presence, sustainable development and other topics for the African Geographic Area.
7. To publish quarterly reports on the activities of the Carmelite Family in Africa.

The Americas

Rolf Nepomuk (Nepi) Willemsen, O.Carm.

The Carmelite presence in the Americas reflects a rich diversity of cultures, histories, and pastoral realities. The Order is present throughout North America, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America, where its members share in the mission of the Church through prayer, community life, and service to the people of God.

Within this vast geographic area, the Order includes provinces, commissariats, delegations, missions, and other communities whose circumstances vary widely. Some regions experience growth in vocations and expanding ministries, while others face declining numbers and ageing communities. These differing realities present both challenges and opportunities for the life and mission of the Order.

In this context, strengthening relationships and collaboration across regional and national boundaries will be an important priority for the coming years. Greater communication and cooperation among the various entities of the Order can help foster mutual support and encourage the sharing of experiences, resources, and pastoral initiatives. Existing initiatives such as FOCAM have already demonstrated the value of continental collaboration and provide a foundation upon which further cooperation can be built.

The interconnected nature of the contemporary world also makes collaboration across the Americas more feasible than in the past. The increasing mobility of peoples and the growing intercultural character of many Carmelite communities invite the Order to deepen its capacity for mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue, and shared mission across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

The presence of the Carmelite Family has long been an essential dimension of Carmel's life and mission in the Americas. Alongside the friars, the nuns, congregations of Carmelite sisters, and numerous lay Carmelites contribute significantly to the vitality of the Carmelite charism and its witness in the Church. In many parts of the Americas, collaboration among the different branches of the Carmelite Family already takes place through shared initiatives in prayer, formation, and apostolic service. Strengthening these relationships can further enrich the life of the Order and help the Carmelite charism reach new generations.

Particular attention should also be given to the engagement of young people and young adults. In many parts of the Americas there are growing opportunities to share the Carmelite tradition with younger generations, inviting them to discover the richness of Carmelite spirituality and to discern their place within the life and mission of the Church. In societies increasingly marked by rapid cultural change, social fragmentation, and polarisation, the Carmelite tradition offers a path of prayer, discernment, community, and authentic human encounter.

Through deeper collaboration among the various entities of the Order and within the wider Carmelite Family, the Carmelite presence in the Americas can continue to grow as a sign of communion, shared responsibility, and mission within the Church.

Plans for the six-year period

1. Strengthen communication and collaboration among the various entities of the Order in the Americas, including provinces, commissariats, delegations, missions, and communities, encouraging the sharing of experiences and pastoral initiatives.

2. Establish regular opportunities for dialogue and collaboration among the major superiors and leaders of the entities of the Americas in order to strengthen

fraternity, mutual support, and shared reflection on the life and mission of the Order throughout the continent.

3. Promote greater cohesion across the different regions of the Americas—North America, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America—while recognizing and respecting the diverse realities present in each region.

4. Encourage intercultural collaboration and exchange among the entities of the Americas, fostering mutual understanding, shared learning, and a stronger sense of belonging to the wider Order.

5. Support collaborative initiatives in formation and vocational promotion among the entities of the Order where such cooperation can strengthen the life and mission of Carmel.

6. Promote initiatives that make the Carmelite charism accessible to young people, encouraging encounters and programs that help youth and young adults discover the richness of Carmelite spirituality and discern possible vocations.

7. Organise two meetings of FOCAM (Formadores Carmelitas de América) during the six-year period as opportunities for formation, collaboration, and exchange among formators from the Americas.

8. Establish a commission for the Carmelite Family in the Americas, bringing together representatives of the friars, nuns, congregations of sisters, and lay Carmelites in order to foster collaboration and shared initiatives.

9. Foster relationships between Carmelites of the Ancient Observance (O.Carm.) and the Discalced Carmelites

(OCD), particularly through participation in ALACAR (Asociación Latinoamericana de Carmelitas) and other initiatives that promote dialogue and cooperation within the wider Carmelite Family.

Asia–Australia–Oceania

Robert Thomas Puthussery, O.Carm.

The Asia–Australia–Oceania area stands as one of the most vibrant and dynamic areas of the Carmelite Order today. Marked by its immense cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity, this Geographic Area encompasses encounters with major world religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and a multitude of indigenous and traditional spiritualities. This diversity is both a precious asset and a demanding challenge. On one hand, the ongoing dialogue with these faith traditions enriches the Carmelite witness, fostering mutual respect, deeper understanding, and authentic inculturation. As *Evangelii Gaudium* reminds us, "If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we can learn so much from one another!" (*EG* 246). On the other hand, political instability, anti-religious sentiments, and economic underdevelopment—characterised by inflation and the devaluation of currency—pose serious hurdles to sustained ministry and formation. These realities urge us not to retreat, but to engage creatively, drawing from what the Spirit has sown in every culture.

However, amidst these challenges, the region continues to pulse with deep vitality and great promise for the future of the Order. The ever-growing number of young vocations—particularly from countries like Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, the Philippines, and parts of India—testifies to a flourishing spiritual thirst and missionary zeal. This demographic richness breathes new life into our communities and offers significant missionary and human resources for the broader Order. The task ahead is to ensure that the living tradition of Carmel is authentically rooted and expressed within these diverse contexts, contributing to the formation of a more just and compassionate society. Through mutual collaboration, strategic planning, and the exchange of

personnel, the Asia–Australia–Oceania region is poised not only to sustain its own growth but also to support and revitalise other regions of the Order in need. This is truly a time of expansion, inclusion, and Spirit-led transformation.

Plans for the six-year period

1. Convene regular and timely meetings of the Provincials and Commissaries to strengthen communication, discernment, and collaborative decision-making within the Geographic Area.
2. Plan and organise common leadership programs aimed at enhancing leadership skills, fostering a culture of responsible and visionary leadership, and strengthening the capacity to work collaboratively as one international Order.
3. Organise gatherings for formators, students, and youth at the Geographic Area level to foster fraternity, exchange, collaboration, and mutual enrichment.
4. Establish structured programs for the ongoing formation and training of formators, including short-term intensive courses and intercultural formation initiatives.
5. Encourage friars to develop expertise in Asian and Oriental spirituality in order to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of ministry within the socio-cultural and religious contexts of the Geographic Area.
6. Promote dialogue and coordinated initiatives among the leadership to explore and support new missionary presences, pastoral opportunities, and emerging areas of evangelisation within the Geographic Area.
7. Strengthen and sustain the Geographic Area

Commissions for Formation, Youth, and JPIC as effective instruments of collaboration, planning, and shared mission.

8. Foster both inter-geographical and intra-geographical collaboration through common projects, the exchange of personnel, shared resources, and joint initiatives for the strengthening and renewal of the entire Order.

9. Encourage ongoing reflection and concrete initiatives toward financial sustainability through the sharing of best practices in administration, investments, resource management, and long-term economic planning for the future stability of the Provinces and Commissariats.

Europe

Richard Byrne, O.Carm.

Europe is a continent of the great pilgrim paths created over the centuries. Among its people there continues to be a deep hunger for God. Nevertheless, there has been a movement away from Christianity, as European society has become more secularised and de-traditionalised. Indeed, many of the countries in Europe could be described as post-Christian: the elements of Christian faith are present but without what Pope John Paul II called a shared "Christian memory and heritage." However, belief is not absent, although people are often more interested in spirituality than doctrine. The failure of the Church in safeguarding the weakest in society has had a devastating impact. Europe is also a land of increasing diversity and pluralism.

Overall, Carmel continues to bear fruit in Europe. A spirit of Carmel remains. Many friars serve generously in our ministries, have an interest in each other, and have good relations with lay people. Our formation houses—especially the international novitiate in Salamanca—are very good. Many friars have a passion for God and a passion for people. There is also a sense of a living tradition of Carmel with deep historical roots in Europe. European Carmelites are good at welcoming people from different cultures, and often have the resources (especially financial) to support the mission.

Naturally, there are challenges. Apart from the obvious issue of declining vocations, at times there can be a lack of passion, and a lack of trust in the future. On occasion, creativity seems hard to find, and we like our safety too much. We can be poor at prioritising our essential commitments: those that are essentially Carmelite in nature. There is an increasing danger in overloading fewer and fewer people with more and more tasks.

Yet, Carmelites are uniquely placed to offer a voice from our tradition in this complex and challenging Europe. Living in "allegiance to Jesus Christ," Carmelites in moments of encounter can speak of our personal and living relationship with Christ while recognising the plurality of religious positions. With the arrival of artificial intelligence, Carmel can easily speak about safeguarding what Pope Leo refers to as the "grandeur of humanity … revealed in its fullness in Christ" which is called to self-transcendence through fulfilment in love.

Looking to the future, there is much promise in walking in synodality with lay women and men; in the multicultural nature of Europe; and in developments in social media. There is also potential in new vocations from other places in the world (or in accepting older candidates). Furthermore, there are small but clear signs of growth and interest in religion among younger people in Europe. Confident that God continues to call people to the Church and to Carmel, Carmelites can help people to discern their vocation.

Our communities say to those who seek to exclude people from society that we Carmelites discover in each of our sisters and brothers the presence of God and can walk together towards God. As once we were the immigrants in Europe, our service in the midst of the people now allows us to joyfully accept the invitation "to encounter people on the 'peripheries' and share the Gospel with them" (*Const.* 101). We need to increasingly foster fraternal spaces which become authentic witnesses to our faith. Certainly, in an ageing Europe, we need to reflect on the care of our elderly friars and on the hope that their presence brings to us. The way in which we relate to those missions outside of Europe needs continual reflection and discernment.

A balance between our pastoral outreach and our conventual life will need to be maintained. Yet, we know that our mission and

discernment belong to all the members of the Carmelite Family, and we need to "share responsibility for the charism entrusted to us" (Final Message, General Chapter). European Carmel needs a renewed focus on Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation issues.

Above all, we need to honestly appraise where, and in what way, we Carmelites are called to live and serve in this age. This may require a dying to some of our inherited ways of doing things so that there may be new life. Inevitably, this will involve painful choices in how best to preserve the Carmelite charism while letting go of existing structures.

In summary, Carmel in Europe must renew its passion for Christ and the Gospel. We are challenged to a deep spiritual renewal in order to ensure that our Carmelite charism is embodied in every aspect of our lives.

Plans for the six-year period

1. To continue the annual meeting of the leadership of the European Area (the Priors Provincial, the Commissaries General, the Delegates General, the Presidents of the Regions, and the leaders of other distinctive groups of friars) strengthening it as a space for common discernment.

2. To continue the programme of online ongoing formation (and explore residential opportunities) within the European Area with the assistance of a committee. This committee should explore the possibilities of offering retreats, pilgrimages, and other spiritual exercises based on the elements of our charism.

3. To build upon the work of the Carmelite European Youth Committee in engaging with young people both across the European Area as a whole, while promoting

youth and young adult ministry in each entity.

4. To promote and develop shared initial formation, vocation programmes, and activities within the European Area (including the exploration of a common European student house, and various gatherings of formators, *formandi*, and vocation promoters).

5. To promote greater collaboration and partnerships among the entities of Europe, and beyond so as to include the other Geographic Areas of the Order.

6. To explore and carry out ways in which the relationships between the different expressions of the Carmelite Family in Europe can be strengthened.

Commission for Carmelite Ministries

F.X. Hariawan Adji, O.Carm.

The General Chapter of 2025 (9–26 September) reflected on the theme: "You must have some sort of work to do" (Rule 20): Our Contemplative Fraternity Discerns Its Mission. The Chapter invited the Carmelite Family to deepen its understanding of mission by reflecting on three questions: how work belongs to Carmelite identity, how Carmelites carry out their work, and how we respond to the signs of the times. Inspired by God's question to Elijah, "What are you doing here?", we recognise that work is not merely functional but a participation in God's work of creation and salvation.

The Carmelite tradition does not define a fixed set of ministries. The Rule of St. Albert focuses on prayer, fraternity, silence, and attentiveness to God rather than specific apostolic works. Likewise, RIVC 113 affirms that, as a mendicant order, Carmelites are open to any form of service while prioritizing the spiritual journey of the individual. The emphasis is not on activity itself but on transformation through a contemplative relationship with God.

Consequently, Carmelite ministries are the fruit of contemplation rather than a predetermined institutional structure. Rooted in prayer and communion with God, Carmelites respond to the needs of the Church and society through diverse forms of service such as education, pastoral care, spiritual accompaniment, social outreach, and hidden service. What unites these ministries is the contemplative spirit from which they arise.

At the heart of every Carmelite ministry is the mission to share and embody Carmelite spirituality. Grounded in silence, prayer, community, and service, the Carmelite way offers a path of friendship with God and attentive love for others. Through our ministries, we seek to make this spiritual path accessible to all who

desire a deeper relationship with God.

Carmelite ministry begins with invitation rather than imposition. We accompany people in discovering how prayer, silence, community, and discernment can transform life. By offering the Carmelite way as a path toward deeper communion with God and compassionate engagement with the world, we create spaces of encounter where God's presence can be experienced.

In general, Carmelite Ministries in the World Today are in the forms of:

- Spirituality Centres
    - Confession and spiritual directions
    - Retreat Centres
    - Spirituality Institutes
    - Shrines
- Parishes
- Formation and Education
    - Carmelite Libraries
    - Publications
    - Schools
    - Universities
- Life-Cycle Ministries
    - Senior Living
    - Hospice
    - Bereavement Ministry
- Creative Ministries
    - Digital Platform Ministries
    - Art Ministries
- JPIC Ministries (under Evangelisation and JPIC Commission)

- Youth Ministries (under Youth Commission)

The Carmelite tradition, rooted in contemplation and openness to God's action in history, naturally calls for new forms of ministry in every age. Because the Order is not tied to a fixed apostolic program, it remains free to respond creatively to changing pastoral realities, new forms of poverty, technological developments, and humanity's search for meaning. Such renewal is not a departure from the Carmelite spirit but an authentic expression of it.

This renewal requires honest and prayerful discernment of both our strengths and limitations, grounded in communal prayer and attentive listening to the Holy Spirit. As the Final Message of the General Chapter 2025 reminds us, we must preserve ministries that authentically express our charism, adapt them to contemporary needs, and, when necessary, courageously let go of works that no longer serve the Gospel in a distinctly Carmelite way.

Objectives

During this six-year term, the Commission for Carmelite Ministries seeks to engage the entire Carmelite Family—friars, nuns, affiliated congregations, and lay Carmelites—in a shared discernment of our apostolic commitments. The goal is to sustain ministries that authentically express the Carmelite charism, adapt them to local realities, foster creative new initiatives, and discontinue works that no longer serve the Gospel in a distinctly Carmelite way.

Plans for the six-year period

1. Develop common guidelines for mapping and evaluating apostolic commitments in light of the Carmelite charism.
2. Assist provinces, commissariats, delegations, and affiliated congregations in applying these guidelines within their local contexts.

3. Encourage communities to explore and develop new creative ministries.
4. Organise international and regional meetings for specific ministries such as parishes, schools, and spirituality centres.
5. Collaborate with the Commission for Formation to provide programs on Carmelite Apostolic Identity.
6. Collaborate with other commissions of the Order to develop ministries responding to contemporary needs, including migration, youth, catechesis, and related areas.

General Safeguarding Commission

Michael Farrugia, O.Carm.

The core mission of the Church is to be a sanctuary of safety, healing, and spiritual growth. Recognizing this profound responsibility, the Safeguarding Commission was established following the General Congregation in 2022. Following the appointment of its initial members by the General Council in March 2023, the Commission completed an intensive period of collaboration across all global entities of the Order, including Provinces, General Commissariats, and General Delegations. This initial phase successfully unified regional networks, updated foundational safety protocols, and established localised leadership by ensuring the appointment of a Delegate for Safeguarding in each entity. The culmination of this foundational work of the two definitive governing texts approved by the General Council in 2025: the *Safeguarding Policy* and the *Safeguarding Manual.*

Moving into the upcoming Sexennium (2025–2031), the Commission will continue its mission to strengthen safeguarding—first and foremost for children and vulnerable persons—in strict alignment with the universal norms of *Vos estis lux mundi.* The Commission will be promoting the survivor assistance and offering expert advice to the Prior General and his Council and the General Delegate of Safeguarding on the Order's current Policy and Manual, as well as the active policies and procedures operating throughout its various entities.

The Commission will also advise on the appropriate support, supervision, and management systems that must be established. It will ensure that adequate support is provided both to the specific entities where the individual resides and to the wider priory, parish, church, school, or community impacted by the abuse.

Furthermore, in conjunction with the General Delegate for Safeguarding, the Commission will continue to develop and update guidelines for abuse prevention and safe environments. It will facilitate connectivity among the General Council, the General Delegate for Safeguarding, and other entities while reviewing and offering feedback on how accepted protocol requirements are being implemented.

Finally, the Commission commits itself to preparing detailed geographical safeguarding reports to map localised risks, assess regional compliance, and identify specific community needs. To support these initiatives, the Commission will assist the General Delegate for Safeguarding in delivering training programs and meetings to address safeguarding on an international level and across the Order's specific geographical regions.

Ultimately, these combined efforts fulfil the vision of the global plan by transforming governing texts into active, localised practice. By establishing clear mechanisms for accountability, community supervision, and localised risk assessment, the Commission ensures that the Order moves beyond mere administrative compliance. This comprehensive approach establishes a lasting, unified culture of protection that bridges local realities with the Church and the Order standards. In doing so, the Commission secures the Order's long-term capability to serve as a verifiably safe, restorative, and transparent environment for everyone under its care throughout the 2025–2031 Sexennium and beyond.

General Financial Commission

Christian Körner, O.Carm.

God has called us to be good administrators of the gifts we have received with the responsibility to care well for taking good care of what has been entrusted to us. We always advance further in our responsibility, in transparency and solidarity in the administration of the material goods entrusted to us. Thus, we continue to put into practice the ideal established by our Constitutions: "In our use of material goods, it is our responsibility before God to observe faithfully the poverty which we have freely professed, keeping in mind that we make the vow of poverty in order to live a simple life, individually and within our communities, avoiding whatever might offend the sensibilities of the poor" (*Const.* 60). "To ensure that the economic structure of our religious life does not resemble existing global systems of unjust inequality, fraternity within the Carmelite family should find expression in concern for and sharing with communities throughout the Order in particular the poorer among them" (Con. 38).

Following on from what emerged during the General Chapter 2025, the six-year term will therefore move towards strengthening solidarity within the Order, supporting formation and growing entities, as well as ensuring responsible and sustainable management of our resources.

Plans for the six-year period

1. Seek other sources of finance (fundraising)—such as benefactors, organisations or aid agencies, etc.—for the various commitments or projects of the General Council.

2. Monitor the Curia's investments.

3. Meet annually with the General Finance Commission to review the Order's finances.
4. Monitor the hotel leasing process.
5. Promote financial solidarity within the Order—beyond ordinary contributions—so as to increase the Development and Formation Fund.
6. Assume financial responsibilities previously held by the Commission for the coordination of New Foundations: to ensure a system is in place to coordinate funding requests for various projects. In addition, to study and recommend possible solutions for those Provinces that have difficulty in financing their missions.
7. Examine and approve the contribution percentages of the provinces, promoting the participation of all and including the reality of the newly erected provinces.
8. Organise an international meeting of the Order's bursars during the six-year term.

Commission for Carmelite Youth

Robert Thomas Puthussery, O.Carm.

> "You, dear young people, are not the future. You are the now of God!" *(Pope Francis, WYD Panama, 2019).*
>
> "Aspire to great things, to holiness, wherever you are. Do not settle for less. You will then see the light of the Gospel growing every day, in you and around you." *(Pope Leo XIV, Homily at the Jubilee of Youth, Tor Vergata, Rome, 3 August 2025).*

Young people are both a challenge and a mission for the Church today. As the Synod on Youth reminds us:

> "We believe that even today God speaks to the Church and to the world through the youth, their creativity and commitment, as well as their suffering and cries for help. With them, we can more prophetically read our era and recognise the signs of the times." *(Final Document of the Synod on Youth, 64)*

What young people think, dream, and live has a profound influence on the Church, the Carmelite Family, and society. Across the Order, valuable ministry with youth is already taking place in diverse cultural and pastoral contexts. The Carmelite charism of contemplation, fraternity, and service — together with the witness of our Saints and Blesseds — continues to resonate deeply with young people searching for meaning, belonging, and hope.

Our ministry reaches both school-age youth and young adults, recognizing the different needs and challenges of each group. Carmelite schools remain "key places for the evangelisation of the young" (*Christus Vivit,* 222), while pilgrimages, ministries in the parishes and retreat centres, service to the poor, missionary experiences, music, sports, art, and prayer offer young people

opportunities to encounter Christ and discover their vocation within the Church and to see the world as God sees it.

As Carmelites, we seek to walk alongside young people with openness, humility, and flexibility. We recognise that "young people themselves are the protagonists of youth ministry" (*Christus Vivit,* 203). Therefore, we are called not simply to teach them, but also to listen to them, accompany them, and even allow ourselves to be challenged by them. Our ministries must always remain welcoming, especially to youth and to the poor (*Const.* 30).

Young people today are not primarily searching for sermons or abstract doctrines. More than anything, they seek authentic encounters, meaningful relationships, and experiences of God. Therefore, our mission is to help them encounter the Risen Christ, rooted in the Word of God and nourished by the Carmelite spirit of prayer and community. Safeguarding and responsible accompaniment remain essential dimensions of all ministry with youth.

Keeping in mind the tremendous influence of youth in today's world, the Carmelite Youth Commission (CYC), mandated by the General Chapter, seeks to accompany, animate, and empower young people through collaboration across the Order and the wider Carmelite Family.

> "We recognised in the episode of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (cf. *Lk* 24:13–35) a paradigmatic text for understanding the Church's mission in relation to younger generations." (*Final Document of the Synod on Youth*, 4)

Like Jesus on the road to Emmaus, we are called to walk with young people, listen to their hopes and struggles, share the Word with them, and help them recognise the presence of Christ in their lives. In doing so, we hope to rediscover with them the youthfulness of the Church and open ourselves to the grace of a

new Pentecost.

Plans for the six-year period

1. Dialogue with the leadership in the different geographic areas of the Order to become familiar with their youth programs and to identify the specific needs of each area in order to promote and organise events and programs for that geographic area.
2. Collaborate with the youth coordinator of the Order to plan, develop and execute different programs for young people throughout the Order.
3. Encourage and strengthen the development of Carmelite youth ministry, particularly in provinces, commissariats, and missions where youth ministry is still emerging or requires further support and formation.
4. Promote greater collaboration, communication, and sharing of resources among Carmelite youth initiatives across provinces, commissariats, and geographic areas, fostering a spirit of fraternity and unity within the international Carmelite Family.
5. Organise workshops, seminars, formation courses, and training programs for youth animators, leaders, and collaborators in order to equip them for a focused, creative, and effective youth ministry rooted in Carmelite spirituality.
6. Encourage Carmelite leadership to train young Carmelites spiritually and academically for the present and future youth mission of the Order.
7. Work for the development of a network of all those who work in youth ministry in the Order.
8. Encourage and promote inter- and intra-geographical retreats and pilgrimages connected to Carmelite

spirituality.

9. To assist in the facilitation of international events of young people especially at World Youth Days.

10. Encourage the creative and responsible use of digital media and social communication platforms for evangelisation, formation, networking, and accompaniment of young people in the Carmelite tradition.

Evangelisation, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission

Eric Chrisostome N'Do, O.Carm.

The essence of evangelisation is the proclamation of the Gospel, that is, of the person of Jesus Christ and the truth of the saving mystery of his passion, death and resurrection. The essential mission of the Church is the task of evangelising all people. In fact, the Church exists primarily to evangelise. As well as bringing the Good News to regions not yet touched by Christianity ("mission *ad gent*es") a new evangelisation (or re-evangelisation) to communities who "have lost a living sense of faith" is also necessary. It is our duty to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ always and everywhere. Pope Francis taught us that, "Evangelisers thus take on the 'smell of the sheep'" so much as an evangelising community immerses itself in the daily lives of people, bridging distances, embracing human life and thus "touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others." Yet, Pope Leo reminds us that this is not done by conquest but rather the radiance that comes from "lives transformed by the Kingdom of God."

Through our prophetic and contemplative service among the People of God, Carmel fully shares in the work of evangelisation (cf. *Const.* 28). Especially in the concrete realities in which we live and work, we "offer the contribution of our charism to the task of evangelisation by fostering a deeper grasp of the contemplative dimension of life, of fraternity, and concrete commitment to justice." Carmel joyfully goes 'out' so as to encounter people on the 'peripheries.' This encounter also takes place in the synodal process by which we undertake a journey together as members of the People of God. Pope Leo reminds us that synodality is the ecclesial name for the truth that "God created the world so that we

might all live as one."

Remaining "true to our mendicant roots," we Carmelites are sensitive to the needs of those around us. In particular, our Elijan inspiration calls us to walk along the path of justice as we seek to contribute to the building of a peaceful world. This concern by Carmelites for the problems of people springs from our "contemplative attitude to serve God's people and to see God, living and speaking in them." Thus, our ministry of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation is the "promotion and nurturance of God's reign in the world."

In this sexennium, the overall goal of this Commission is to help all the members of the Carmelite Family to "widen the tent of our hearts, carrying our charism to the margins with courage, empathy and hope." The Commission will prioritise an evangelisation by actions for the poor in accordance with the guidance given by Pope Leo XIV in his first Apostolic Exhortation:

> I am convinced that the preferential choice for the poor is a source of extraordinary renewal both for the Church and for society, if we can only set ourselves free of our self-centeredness and open our ears to their cry.

Naturally, it is true that many members of the Carmelite Family are already working in favour of the poor. They are called to continue their work on the ground in their local realities. However, others again need to be encouraged to take up our duty to the poor. As Pope Francis said to us, "If one day, around us, there are no longer sick and hungry people, abandoned and despised – the *minores* of which your begging tradition speaks – it will not be because they are not there, but simply because we do not see them." Our living in the midst of the people is a choice to share in the lives of "the little ones" *(minores)* of history and must be fulfilled through active commitment. The Commission believes that offering formation through conferences, congresses,

publications, etc. will be an important means to raise awareness of our duty in living in the midst of the people.

Sadly, it has sometimes been the experience of those appointed to the ministry of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation to feel isolated and even overwhelmed in the tasks that they faced. Often these ministries are seen as peripheral. Consequently, there is an even greater need to promote collaboration especially by developing and sustaining networks of contacts within the area of Justice and Peace and Integrity of creation. Existing programs need to be organised and coordinated.

Working for, and with, the entire Carmelite Order in a synodal way, the Commission aspires to be thoughtful and effective in action while inspiring proactive attitudes within the Order. Therefore, various experts and people who are working in their local realities on these issues have been appointed as members of the Commission. Contact will be maintained with each of the four Geographical Areas of the Order so that the Commission can be continually kept informed as to the reality on the ground. Knowledge of various social works and activities currently take place, contemporary environmental concerns and issues, along with the social doctrine of the Catholic Church will be important for all the members of the Commission.

Plans for the six-year period

In order to achieve its overall goal of helping all the members of the Carmel Family to "widen the tent of our hearts" so that our charism is carried to the margins with courage, empathy and hope, the Commission has the following objectives:

1. To support and assist those members of the Carmelite Family who are already working in various JPIC activities in favour of the poor.

2. To raise awareness through formation, and the sharing of good examples of JPIC activity, of our obligations in this

area. Such formation and sharing may take place through conferences, congresses, publications and by other means.

3. To explore and encourage ways in which the members of the Carmelite Family can further prioritise action for the poor.

4. To promote collaboration in this area especially by developing and sustaining networks of contacts within the area of JPIC.

5. To organise and co-ordinate existing programs in the area of JPIC throughout the Order.

6. To dialogue and collaborate (as agreed) with the Carmelite NGO to the United Nations.

7. To keep the Order abreast of contemporary issues in the Church regarding evangelisation.

8. To facilitate a greater participation of the brothers and sisters in Carmel in addressing the current challenges of evangelisation.

9. To regularly publish to the entire Carmelite Family communication and information regarding the various activities in the areas of evangelisation and JPIC to the Carmelite Family.

Formation Commission

Rolf Nepomuk (Nepi) Willemsen, O.Carm.

Through formation, the Carmelite charism is handed on and renewed from generation to generation, preparing Carmelites to live their vocation in fidelity to the Gospel and the Rule of Saint Albert. Called to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ (cf. *Rule* 2), Carmelites are formed for a life of prayer, fraternity, and service within the Church.

Carmelite formation cannot be reduced to a technical program or merely academic preparation. It is a careful and patient work of accompaniment that attends to the integral growth of the person in human maturity, spiritual depth, intellectual formation, and fraternal life.

The most recent edition of the *Ratio Institutionis Vitæ Carmelitanæ, Carmelite Formation: A Journey of Transformation (2025),* reaffirms that formation is a lifelong journey through which Carmelites grow in fidelity to Christ, deepen their identity as contemplative brothers, and prepare themselves for service to the people of God. The Order will continue to promote the reception and application of the RIVC, while also encouraging its translation into practical resources that assist formators in applying its principles in diverse contexts.

In accordance with the Constitutions of the Order, formation is a lifelong process that accompanies the Carmelite throughout his entire life, enabling him continually to renew his commitment to the charism of the Order and to grow in his vocation (cf. Const. 124). The responsibility of the Formation Commission therefore embraces the whole process of Carmelite formation: the promotion and discernment of vocations, the accompaniment of candidates in the stages of initial formation, and the ongoing formation of those who have already made their solemn

profession and serve the Order in various ministries. Initial formation must also give appropriate attention to the identity of the Order as a fraternity of brothers. While many members of the Order are called to priestly ministry, formation should ensure a renewed appreciation of the vocation of the Carmelite brother and provide suitable preparation for those called to live their vocation in this way.

The Commission carries out its work in collaboration with the Delegate for Formation, assisting the Prior General and the General Council in promoting and coordinating formation throughout the Order.

Across the Order today, formation takes place in diverse contexts. Some regions experience significant growth in vocations, while others face declining numbers and aging communities. These differing realities call for greater collaboration and solidarity among provinces, so that the gift of vocations may be nurtured and sustained for the good of the entire Order.

The 2025 General Chapter, held in Malang, Indonesia, highlighted several priorities for formation in the coming years, including the strengthening of regional cooperation in formation, greater solidarity in supporting formation where resources are limited, and renewed attention to the preparation of those entrusted with the ministry of formation. In several parts of the Order, collaboration among provinces has already led to shared initiatives in formation, such as regional novitiates or common houses of study.

Particular importance must be given to the formation of formators. The ministry entrusted to formators is decisive for the vitality of the Order, since they accompany candidates in discerning and embracing the Carmelite vocation and help them integrate prayer, fraternity, and service into their lives. The Order must therefore ensure that those entrusted with this responsibility receive appropriate preparation and ongoing support.

Formation must also extend throughout the whole life of the Carmelite. Ongoing formation enables brothers to deepen their spiritual life, renew their understanding of the Carmelite charism, and respond creatively to the pastoral and missionary challenges of our time (cf. *Const.* 13, 124).

At the same time, the interconnected nature of the contemporary world makes collaboration in formation across provinces and regions more feasible and, in many cases, increasingly necessary. Shared initiatives in formation have already proven fruitful in several parts of the Order and will continue to be encouraged as expressions of Carmelite fraternity and cooperation. Where appropriate, provinces and regions are encouraged to explore additional forms of collaboration in formation, including joint novitiates, shared houses of study, and common programs for formators.

Formation requires not only human and spiritual resources but also material support. In regions where vocations are growing but financial resources are limited, the Order is called to express its fraternity through concrete solidarity so that formation programs can be sustained and strengthened. In this way, the Carmelite community seeks to live faithfully the vision of the Rule of Saint Albert, in which each member contributes according to his gifts to the life and mission of the community (cf. *Rule* 20).

Plans for the six-year period

1. Establish a program for the formation of formators within the Order, providing preparation and ongoing support for those entrusted with the ministry of formation.

2. Develop a handbook or companion for Carmelite formators to accompany the RIVC and assist in translating its principles into practical formation resources for diverse cultural and regional contexts throughout the Order.

3. Encourage regional cooperation in initial formation, supporting shared initiatives among provinces, including regional novitiates and common houses of study where appropriate.

4. Support vocational discernment across the Order by fostering communication and the sharing of experiences among those responsible for vocation ministry.

5. Foster a stronger culture of formation throughout the Order by encouraging greater understanding among friars and leaders of the importance of formation as a lifelong responsibility shared by the whole Carmelite community.

6. Promote ongoing formation for members of the Order by organizing international initiatives for renewal and study, including pilgrimages or formation programs connected to significant places in the Carmelite tradition.

7. Encourage greater accompaniment of friars during the transition from initial formation into ministry and community life, recognizing this period as particularly important for vocational perseverance and integration.

8. Encourage reflection within the Order on solidarity in formation, particularly in situations where regions experiencing growth in vocations face financial limitations in sustaining formation programs.

9. Encourage the preparation and support of Carmelite scholars, teachers, and formators who can contribute to formation, spiritual accompaniment, and academic life throughout the Order.

10. Promote collaboration within the Carmelite Family in

matters of formation and vocational accompaniment, encouraging initiatives through which friars, nuns, sisters, and lay Carmelites can share and transmit the richness of the Carmelite charism.

Spirituality, Prayer & Liturgy Commission

Richard Byrne, O.Carm.

> Carmelites live their life of allegiance to Jesus Christ in a contemplative attitude exercised in a life of prayer, fraternity and service in the midst of the people. The orientation towards contemplation is not merely one of these elements of our charism; it is the dynamic element which unifies them (*Const.* 14).
>
> Prayer is the way we relate to God both as individuals and as community. In prayer we become open to God who gradually transforms us through all the events of our lives, whether great or small (*Const.* 18).
>
> The Rule of Carmel puts liturgical life at the centre of our community life both in practice and symbolically (*RIVC*, 39).

From the very beginning, Carmelites have been shaped by their search for the "face of the living God" as they entrust themselves to God with an attitude of openness which allows them to discover God's presence in all things. Drawn by God on an inner journey, Carmelites allow themselves to be transformed in all their human frailty by God's overwhelming love towards union with God.

This contemplative attitude is at the heart of our Carmelite charism. It is the key that links together all the elements of our charism: prayer, fraternity and service. The same contemplative attitude is expressed differently depending on the context: at times it is in prayer; at other times, in fraternity; at other times again, in service. While these different elements themselves (prayer, service, and fraternity) are the paths to contemplation, yet, the contemplative attitude of the Carmelite remains always the same. There being no barriers between these three elements of our

charism, Carmelites can thus move easily from one dimension to another.

As a mendicant fraternity, Carmelites have placed themselves at the service of the church. Being mendicant friars not "constrained by high walls," Carmelites can and indeed must enter "the marketplace where many cultures interact." Our contemplative attitude allows all friars to learn to look upon the world "with the eyes of the Divine." Thus, in whatever type of work and ministry we might do, Carmelites are "especially mindful of the spiritual journeys" of those around them. This attention to the interior life radically changes every Carmelite's approach to their work and ministry. Perhaps "the greatest prophetic challenge for Carmel is to help today's world cultivate the interior life."

Naturally, as mendicant friars, our conventual life takes on a special importance that overrides other commitments. Our contemplative attitude allows greater love and giving of oneself in the context of community living. Through transformation, Carmelites are enabled to enter into and sustain authentic fraternal relationships with each other especially in those essential "moments of particular intensity and importance" in every community.

Prayer, which is above all the work of the Holy Spirit, permeates through every aspect of a Carmelite's life who cultivates a deep friendship with Christ especially by those various forms of prayer dear to the Carmelite tradition. The Carmelite way is marked by silence which creates in us the meeting place with the Other and others. Pondering the Word is an essential element of our charism and Carmelite identity and *lectio divina* is given a prominent role in our prayer life.

Intimately linked with personal prayer, liturgical prayer is the visible sign of the Order at prayer. Our contemplative attitude keeps the aesthetic and mystical dimensions of our liturgical celebrations always at a high level. Formation in liturgy is vital for

Carmelites and is not just about "liturgical studies for ministry or knowledge of the rubrics, but about the fraternal celebration of our Carmelite identity." In particular, the daily Eucharist is "the source and high point of our relationship with Christ." The communal celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially with the faithful, is an essential and foundational part of our Carmelite identity. Further, retreats, days of recollection, and the reading of the writings of our Order are fundamental to our lives.

Living in allegiance to Jesus Christ, Carmelites especially venerate two inspirational figures: Our Blessed Lady and the Prophet Elijah. Our patron, Mary, our Mother and Sister, guides our journey to God. Carmelites continually need to authentically renew our Marian tradition – based on solid biblical, liturgical, ecumenical, and anthropological foundations – so that we can find for this age "a new language and new ways of expressing our relationship with Mary on our spiritual journey." Carmelites walk in the footsteps of the Prophet Elijah learning both to recognise the hidden signs of God's presence and his work in our world, and how to remain in God's presence.

Alongside our two great inspirational figures, Carmelites venerate the saints and other holy women and men of Carmel. These significant figures from our tradition are important for our lives.

Consequently, we hold our Marian shrines – and other shrines or pilgrimage places connected with our Carmelite saints – as being of great value to us. These are often held in high regard not only as centres of the Word and liturgical life but also as centres of evangelisation, solidarity and places of encounter with those of other faiths and none.

In our globalised and pluralist world, Carmelites are not immune from the challenges that all humankind faces. Perhaps even more so in this age – as so often in the past – a spiritual renewal of the Order has become an urgent necessity. We can acknowledge with the General Chapter (2025) that "the Holy Spirit calls us today to

re-establish our 'contemplative being before the Lord'." Going forward with much courage and hope, we can also recognise with the General Chapter that "the journey of the next six years is not without challenge, but it is filled with opportunity: to be contemplative communities on mission, a living sign of hope for the Church and for the world."

Plans for the six-year period

The General Commission for Spirituality, Prayer and Liturgy intends to play its small role, alongside the Prior General and Council and the other General Commissions, to assist with the spiritual renewal of the Order in the following key aspects.

1. To renew and deepen the contemplative attitude within the Order and how it informs and unifies the prayer, fraternal, and service elements of our lives.
2. To foster and strengthen the Marian life of the Order (including its liturgical and devotional practices).
3. To deepen our awareness of, and devotion towards, the prophet Elijah, our saints, and our holy women and men in our lives and in our liturgy.
4. To support and intensify the role of the Word of God in our spirituality, liturgy, preaching and our ministry in general as a particular form of ministry in line with our charism and identity.
5. To raise awareness of the contemplative and mystical dimensions, and the aesthetic quality of our liturgical life, and to promote good liturgical practices in the Order through ongoing formation for all.
6. To build up the mendicant and conventual aspects of our charism in creative fidelity to our Carmelite tradition.
7. To suggest texts and practices for the liturgical preparation of the brothers in initial formation.

8. To facilitate retreats and other spiritual exercises within the Order, and to form people to lead Carmelite retreats (a seven-day or thirty-day retreat).

9. To encourage communication among the shrines of the Order (in conjunction with the Commission for Carmelite Ministries).

To implement these aspects, the Commission may organise congresses, seminars, and other meetings.

Revision of Carmelite Liturgical Books Commission

Giuseppe Midili, O.Carm.

> The Rule of Carmel puts liturgical life at the centre of our community life both in practice and symbolically. (*RIVC*, 2025, 39)

While prayer can assume many forms, Carmelites regard liturgical prayer–especially communal–as a central part of our overall spiritual life. Intimately linked with our personal prayer, our liturgical prayer is the visible sign of the Order at prayer.

Carmelites are particularly nourished in the Word and in the Eucharist. As the bread is broken and shared, the daily Eucharist builds our Carmelite community, not just symbolically, but as a sign of our "sharing in the mystery of God and with the community of those in need." The communal celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially with the faithful, is central to our identity.

It is no surprise, therefore, that the liturgical texts of our Order take on a special importance for us, because just as the *lex orandi* expresses the *lex credendi*, in the same way the euchological formulas, the choices of biblical texts and the proper calendar express the spirituality and charism of Carmel. To have our own liturgical texts is essential for the spiritual renewal of the Order. Their use on a regular basis nourishes our vocation leading us more and more deeply into our tradition and spirituality. They are a fundamental and indispensable help for formation in the Order which is certainly aware of the essential relationship between "formation for the Liturgy and formation by the Liturgy." Throughout the liturgical year, such texts provide all of us with a continuous ongoing formation.

The General Council is conscious that the task of preparing, updating, and bringing to publication of the liturgical texts of our Order takes considerable time and the help of specific skills, not all of which are always available among the members of the Order. This is made even more challenging given the strong desire (and necessity) to have our texts in (at least) all three of the official languages of our Order.

Aware that the last edition of our *Editio typica* was approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1976, the General Council has decided to appoint a Commission for the Revision of Carmelite Liturgical Books to oversee this essential area.

Acknowledging the generosity and willingness of the Order of Discalced Carmelites to share their approved texts with us, the Commission will prepare the texts for our *Proprium Missarum* (and eventually our *Liturgia Horarum*) firstly in Latin, and then (at least) in all the official languages of the Order. The Secretary will also assist the Procurator General in preparing the texts for submission to the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments and, subsequent to their approval, will assist in their promulgation and publishing in the entire Order.

Plans for the six-year period

The Commission will prepare for the approval by the Prior General and Council and, subsequently, by the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the following Carmelite liturgical texts:

1. *Editio typica altera of the Proprium Missarum OCarm* firstly in Latin and, then following approval, in at least the three official languages of the Order.
2. *Editio typica Liturgia Horarum OCarm* firstly in Latin and, then following approval, in at least the three official languages of the Order.

The Commission will prepare these above texts for publication (at

least digitally) in the entire Order.

3. To prepare for publication (in the three official languages of the Order) the alterative readings for the *Office of Readings: Saturday Memorial of Our Lady* which has been approved by the General Council in Italian.

The Commission may then take on the preparation of other liturgical texts as are assigned to them by the Prior General and Council.

Liaison for St. Albert's International Centre (CISA)

F.X. Hariawan Adji, O.Carm.

Centre for Carmelite Studies – St. Albert (CISA) is the international house of academic studies under the General Council of the Carmelite Order. For this, the General Council chooses one of its members as the liaison who bridges between them, facilitates understanding, coordinates relationships, and helps both parties work together effectively.

Through CISA, the General Council continues the tradition of the Carmelite *studium* that can be traced back to the medieval period and is deeply connected to the Order's long-standing commitment to study, theological formation, and the preservation and development of its intellectual and spiritual heritage. Thus, CISA is not simply an international house under the General Council; it is an expression of the General Council's responsibility to cultivate theological intelligence, deepen understanding of the Carmelite tradition, and prepare friars and scholars to serve the Church and the world. Finally, through CISA, the General Council cultivates intellectual leadership for the whole Order.

The liaison serves as the principal link between the General Council and the International Student House, fostering effective communication, coordination, accompaniment, and mutual accountability. The liaison supports the implementation of the General Council's directives and ensures that the Council remains informed about the life, formation, and needs of the international student community, while respecting the proper authority and responsibilities of the Prior of CISA.

Plans for the six-year period

1. Establish a reliable two-way communication system

between the General Council and CISA.

2. Facilitate the effective implementation of Council decisions affecting CISA.

3. Improve fraternal connections between the General Council members and all members of CISA (initiating common programs and celebrations).

4. Develop a culture of transparency, responsibility, and constructive evaluation between the General Council and CISA.

5. Maintain regular contact with the Prior of CISA and the community, listen to their needs and concerns, and bring matters that need attention to the General Council.

6. Ensure that there is good communication between CISA and the Provinces.

7. Report to the General Council and the respected prior provincials about the development of the study of each student.

8. Together with the prior of CISA, conduct an annual strategic review; identify changing student demographics and needs; assess resources and facilities; and recommend priorities to the Council.

9. Together with the General Council, the prior of CISA, and the community, study and revise the statute of CISA.

Carmelite NGO

F.X. Hariawan Adji, O.Carm.

The Carmelite NGO represents the presence of the Carmelite Family within the international community, particularly through its engagement with the United Nations and related global initiatives. Through this work, the Carmelite charism contributes to the promotion of human dignity, justice, peace, and care for creation, in fidelity to the social teaching of the Church and the contemplative tradition of Carmel.

For many years the NGO has been sponsored by the Congregation of the Carmelite Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, an affiliated congregation of the Carmelite Family, that generously supported this ministry. In dialogue with the Sisters and in view of the broader responsibility of the Order for the Carmelite presence in international forums, a new stage is now beginning in which the NGO will be placed under the direct sponsorship of the Order.

This transition reflects the shared commitment of the Carmelite Family to promote justice, peace, and the dignity of the human person. By assuming sponsorship of the NGO, the Order seeks to strengthen its participation in international efforts that address the needs of the most vulnerable and promote the common good.

While the daily work of the NGO continues to be carried out by those entrusted with this mission, the Order will accompany and support its activity so that it remains closely connected with the spiritual and contemplative tradition of Carmel.

Plans for the six-year period

1. Complete the transfer of sponsorship of the Carmelite NGO to the Order, ensuring the establishment of the appropriate legal structures in accordance with the revised

statutes and bylaws of the organisation.

2. Provide oversight of the NGO through structures designated by the General Council, ensuring that its mission remains aligned with the values and charism of the Carmelite Order.

3. Accompany the transition to the new legal structure of the NGO, supporting the implementation of its revised governance framework while respecting the operational autonomy of the organisation.

4. Encourage collaboration between the NGO and the various entities of the Order and the wider Carmelite Family, fostering greater awareness of its work in the areas of justice, peace, and care for creation.

5. Promote communication within the Order about the work of the Carmelite NGO so that its initiatives may inspire and support the commitment of Carmelites to the service of the Church and the world.

6. Collaborate with the commissions of the Order to attract young Carmelites to the work of the Carmelite NGO.

7. Collaborate with Carmelite schools in spreading the use of the Carmelite *Laudato Si'* Curriculum and Carmelite Interfaith Week programs.

8. Participate more in UN conferences and meetings and distribute Carmelite position papers among the participants.

General Delegate for Carmelite Laity

F.X. Hariawan Adji, O.Carm.

Every Christian is called to holiness. This call is not reserved for priests, religious, or a select few, but is the vocation of all who have been baptised into Christ. Holiness is the gradual transformation of our lives through God's grace, enabling us to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is lived not only in extraordinary acts of virtue but also in the faithful fulfilment of daily responsibilities, in prayer, service, forgiveness, and acts of charity.

One path to holiness is Carmelite spirituality. At its heart is the conviction that God dwells within each person and continually invites us into a deeper relationship with Him. Through silence, prayer, contemplation, and openness to God's presence in the ordinary events of life, the Carmelite way forms the heart to love as Christ loves. It is a journey of transformation in which a person learns to seek God, listen to His voice, and allow His grace to shape every aspect of life, leading ever more fully to holiness.

For lay people, Carmelite spirituality offers a path to holiness in the midst of everyday life. It teaches that holiness is not found by escaping the world but by discovering God's presence within ordinary responsibilities, relationships, work, and daily struggles. Through prayer, contemplation, and a loving awareness of God dwelling within, lay Carmelites seek to unite their daily lives with Christ. In this way, ordinary moments become opportunities for grace, and everyday life itself becomes a journey toward holiness.

The lay Carmelites share with the Carmelite friars and religious the spiritual legacy of the Prophet Elijah and the Virgin Mary without leaving their secular lives. Being a lay Carmelite is a lifelong vocation, not simply an added devotion. A lay Carmelite seeks God's presence in ordinary circumstances and commits to

living the Gospel. As Carmelites, lay Carmelites focus on three main areas: contemplative prayer, community, and service to others (especially the poor and marginalised).

The lay Carmelite is made up of two realities: the Third Order of Carmel (T.O.Carm.), which has a formal rule of life and structured formation, and Carmelite laity (confraternities), which are often less formal and more devotional in character. Many Carmelite laity (confraternities) have roots in local Carmelite parishes, or Carmelite monasteries, or Carmelite ministries, where members commit themselves to living a Christian life more deeply through prayer, participation in the sacraments, works of charity, and devotion to certain Carmelite saints and traditions (such as the Brown Scapular). Therefore, Carmelite laity may vary by context and historical development.

The Delegate for the Carmelite Laity serves these various expressions of lay participation in the Carmelite charism throughout the world, including TOC, confraternities, scapular groups, parish-based lay communities, and other lay associations inspired by the Carmelite spirituality and tradition. While these groups differ in structure, history, and commitment, they share in the richness of the Carmelite charism and contribute to the life and mission of the Carmelite Family in diverse cultural and pastoral contexts.

Plans for the six-year period

1. Function as the central administrative office of Carmelite laity that supports the Prior General in governance, coordination, and communication with the various groups of Carmelite laity.
2. List and collect data on various groups of Carmelite laity in all geographical areas of the Order.
3. Promote Carmelite spirituality among lay people and help them to form and maintain their groups.

4. Accompany and support various groups of Carmelite laity in their spiritual journey.
5. Encourage Carmelite entities (friars) to develop, nurture, and cooperate with various groups of Carmelite laity in the spirit of synodality.
6. Foster the involvement and support of Carmelite laity in Carmelite ministries.
7. Cultivate gatherings of various groups of Carmelite laity at the local and geographical area levels.
8. Study how the Carmelite spirit is lived out in different contexts and develop a general formation manual for Carmelite laity to help them in their formation in such aspects as contemplation, prayer, community, solidarity, ministries, and care for our common home.
9. Organise an International Meeting of Carmelite Laity during these six years.

General Delegate for the Carmelite Third Order

Michael Farrugia, O.Carm.

During the plenary session of the new General Council, which took place in December 2025, the Prior General and the General Council nominated the new General Delegate for the Carmelite Third Order.

1. **The role and work of the General Delegate was set out in the following points:**
    1.1. **Institutional relations:** To care for and represent the relationship between the Third Order and the whole Order.
    1.2. **Representing the government:** To represent the Prior General or the General Government in questions regarding the Third Order.
    1.3. **Identity and charism:** To ensure the fidelity and the Carmelite spiritual formation of the members.
    1.4. **Oversee legislation:** To promote and oversee the observance and the awareness of the Rule and the norms of the Order.
    1.5. **Revision of texts:** To preside over the revision of the Rule of the Third Order.
    1.6. **Territorial coordination:** To coordinate the initiatives and activities of the fraternity or community at national and international levels.
    1.7. **Support the structures:** To assist the provisional International Council* and those elected officials in the different parts of the world.
2. **Objectives and way of functioning**

The members of the Carmelite Third Order live the faith and give witness to the Gospel in the daily context of their lay lives in family, community, society and work. The community or fraternity becomes the space of support, faith sharing, and expression of fraternal love. Finally, to give practical expression to our charism and strengthen community ties, the following strategic and operational objectives have been defined for the upcoming the upcoming work period:

2.1. Rule and identity in practice

- The Rule of the Third Order as a guide: Placing the Rule at the centre of daily lived reality, ensuring it serves not merely as a regulatory text but as a blueprint for a lived spiritual and apostolic life.
- Operational awareness: Translating the spiritual principals of the Rule into concrete actions and clearly defined tasks for each community.

2.2. Internationality and sharing

- **Active participation:** Ensuring presence and taking a proactive part in in international meetings, valuing dialogue beyond national borders.
- **Exchange of experiences:** Fostering and facilitating the sharing of the different realities that make up the Third Order, enriching the community through mutual knowledge of cultures and pastoral approaches.

2.3. Formation and coordination tools

- **Educational development:** Oversee the careful drafting and subsequent publication of the formation manual, an essential tool for accompanying initial and on-going formation for the professed members. Additionally, Overseeing, the publication of the Third

Order Ritual.

- **Community mapping:** Maintain and update a directory of the Order's current fraternities to ensure a clear geographical and demographic overview, that facilitates communication and communion between the various local centres.

3. Diocesan priests

Develop a specific formation program for members of the diocesan clergy. A formation program for diocesan priests belong to the Carmelite Third Order integrates diocesan priesthood with the particular distinctiveness of Carmel, as defined by the Rule of Saint Albert and centred on prayer, fraternity and service.

4. Conclusions and future perspectives

The perspective outlined by these strategic objectives calls every community to a shared and dynamic responsibility. Living out the Rule, international outreach, the updating of the formation resources and territorial mapping are not isolated tasks, but as pillars of a unified journey of growth.

Through fidelity to the Carmelite charism and the daily practical commitment, the Third Order renews its lay mission. Fraternities are called to translate these guidelines into concrete programs, becoming beacons of contemplation, communion and prophetic service in contemporary society.

*Provisional International Council: for members, see appointments.

General Delegate for the Nuns

Francisco Daza Valverde, O.Carm.

The General Delegate for the Carmelite nuns shall be responsible for caring for this part of the Carmelite Family with solicitude (cf. *Const.* 112). In close collaboration with the Prior General and his Council, he shall also assist the friars and lay people in gaining a better understanding of and promoting the life of the Carmelite nuns. In this way, the manifold incarnation of the Carmelite charism is manifested in the Church and in the world (cf. *Const.* 324).

Plans for the six-year period

1. To encourage the review and updating of the nuns' Constitutions in the light of the Church's magisterium and the challenges of the signs of the times.
2. To foster communication and collaboration between the Federations of the Order, between monasteries, and between the nuns and the rest of the Carmelite Family.
3. To promote formation meetings for the Provincial Delegates of the nuns and the Assistants of the Federations, as well as to foster communication and communion with the local ordinaries.
4. To encourage the creation of new Federations or Associations, to promote new foundations, and to accompany the processes of affiliation or suppression of monasteries.
5. To plan, in communion with the Federations, formation programmes for prioresses, formators and sisters in initial formation.
6. To act as the liaison between the General Council and the hermit communities incorporated into or affiliated with the Order.

7. To foster the reciprocal collaboration of the Congregations and Institutes affiliated to the Order (cf. *Const.* 113).
8. To submit to the Procurator General those cases which must be referred to the Apostolic See.
9. To cooperate with the General Treasurer in the growth and administration of the "financial fund for the nuns."

General Postulator

Giovanna Brizi, Ph.D.

The tasks of the Postulator General are enumerated in Art. 325 of the *Constitutions*:

> § 2. The Postulator General has the task of promoting, taking responsibility for, and dealing with the causes for canonisation of the Servants of God pertaining to the Order (friars and nuns), in line with the current norms in this area. Other sectors of the Carmelite Family, such as the Religious Congregations, the Third Order and other aggregated groups (cf. article 110) may have recourse to the office of the Postulator General. The causes for canonisation of Servants of God who belong to the Order cannot be introduced without the consent of the Prior General and his Council.
>
> § 3. Twice a year the Postulator General shall present a report of the state of the causes to the Prior General and his council, and, if the Postulator General is also administrator of the respective funds, a report of the income and expenditure.

The canonical framework governing this Office possesses a character that is both "peculiar" and "universal." It is peculiar in that it is not contained within the Codes of Canon Law, which restrict themselves to a single cross-reference canon pointing to the special pontifical law for the Causes of Saints (can. 1403 of the CIC for the Latin Church and can. 1057 of the CCEO for the Eastern Churches). It is universal because its scope of application encompasses both the Western and Eastern Churches. Consequently, the entire normative framework is composed of various specific documents issued by the Holy See over the years.

Plans for the six-year term

1. Foster greater awareness within the Order regarding the dimension of holiness.
2. Establish synergy between the Postulator General and Carmelite entities to more effectively promote figures who have already been canonised or whose causes are currently underway (Servants of God, Venerables, Blesseds, and Saints).
3. Identify operational strategies, preferably in coordination with the General Delegate for the Nuns, aimed at initiating the beatification and canonisation processes for women of the Second Order.
4. Enhance the canonical and practical formation of vice-postulators and collaborators of the Postulator General.
5. Foster scholarly research into the Order's figures of holiness, in collaboration with the *Institutum Carmelitanum*.
6. In collaboration with the *Institutum Carmelitanum* and the Communications Office, promote the multilingual publication of primary sources and writings relating to Carmelite figures whose causes are underway or are in the preliminary inquiry stage; in particular, a significant section of the testimonies from the canonical processes concerning Saint Titus Brandsma will be published.
7. In collaboration with the Communications Office, develop modern digital tools to effectively communicate the Order's 'patrimony' (heritage) of holiness.

General Council

Prior General
Desiderio García Martínez, O.Carm.

Vice Prior General
Franciscus Xaverius Hariawan Adji, O.Carm.

Procurator General
Michael Farrugia, O.Carm.

Bursar General
Christian Körner, O.Carm.

General Councillor for Asia-Australia-Oceania
Robert Thomas Puthussery, O.Carm.

General Councillor for Europe
Richard Byrne, O.Carm.

General Councillor for Africa
Eric Chrisostome N'Do, O.Carm.

General Councillor for the Americas
Rolf Nepomuk (Nepi) Willemsen, O.Carm.

Appointments for General Commissions

Commission for Carmelite Ministries
Franciscus Xaverius Hariawan Adji O.Carm. *(President)*
Regina Rohani Betti *(Indo)*
Emanuel Franco Gómez, O.Carm. *(PCM)*
Jennifer Elizabeth Harris *(PCM)*
Owen Nunural Kudumba, O.Carm. *(Hib-Zimb)*
Gerard Hugh Walsh, O.Carm. *(Brit)*

General Safeguarding Commission
Michael Farrugia, O.Carm. *(President)*
Julie Courtney *(Brit)*
Mayra Flores *(USA)*
Babu Payikkattu, O.Carm. *(Ind)*

Financial Commission
Christian Körner, O.Carm. *(President)*
Joe Konynenburg *(ATL)*
Carl Markelz, O.Carm. *(PCM)*
Tadeusz Popiela, O.Carm. *(Prior CISA)*
Nuno Santos Pitta *(Cat)*
Nixon Silfanus *(Indo)*

Carmelite Youth Commission
Robert Thomas Puthussery, O.Carm. *(President)*
Alfredo Pisana, O.Carm. *(Ita)*
Daniel Ulises Gonzáles Cabrera, O.Carm. *(PCM)*
John Mutisi, O.Carm. *(Hib-Zimb)*
John Toryusen *(Brit)*
Joiezl Fern S. Pinon, O.Carm. *(Phil)*
Sr. Reni Yulia Meak, INSC *(Indo)*

Commission for Evangelisation, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Eric Chrisostome N'Do, O.Carm. *(President)*
Ignasius Budiono, O.Carm. *(Indo)*
Nieves García Cremades *(DNM)*
Sr Dothi Marie Dao, FMDD *(Viet)*
Sr. Victoria Mwithi Kimeu, HCSCJ *(Mozam)*
Denis Omae O.Carm. *(Ken)*
Mark Zittle O.Carm. *(SEL)*

Formation Commission

Rolf Nepomuk (Nepi) Willemsen, O.Carm. *(President)*
Alejandro (Sandro) López Lapuente Villalba, O.Carm. *(DNM)*
Jorge Demetrio Monterroso Mérida O.Carm. *(PCM)*
Onesmus Muthini Muthoka O.Carm. *(Ken)*
Alexander Dimas Pele Alu O.Carm. *(Indo)*
Joseph Tri Phan O.Carm. *(SEL-Viet)*

Spirituality, Prayer & Liturgy Commission

Richard Byrne, O.Carm. *(President)*
Elijah Januarius Mutinda, O.Carm. *(Ken)*
Prof. Donna Orsuto *(Pontifical Gregorian University)*
Sérgio Estefane Simone, O.Carm. *(Pern-Moz)*
Sr. M. Daniela Solustri, O.Carm. *(Cer)*
Sheldon R. Tabile, O.Carm. *(Phil)*
Alexander Vella, O.Carm. *(Mel)*

Commission for the Revision of Carmelite Liturgical Books

Giuseppe Midili, O.Carm. *(President, Ita)*
Richard Byrne, O.Carm. *(Hib)*
Fernando Luque Herrera, O.Carm. *(DNM)*
Prof. p. Massimo Marelli, s.i. (*Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff)*
Prof. Mons. Maurizio Barba *(Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith)*

Appointments for Offices

Secretary General
Giampiero Molinari, O.Carm. *(Ita)*

Co-Secretary General
Marc Jozef Lester G. Hallig, O.Carm. *(Phil)*

Carmelite NGO
Willian J. Harry, O.Carm. *(President)*
Eduardo Agosta Scarel, O.Carm. *(Vice President)*
F.X. Hariawan Adji, O.Carm. *(Liaison)*

General Delegate for Carmelite Laity
F.X. Hariawan Adji, O.Carm. *(Indo)*

Liaison to St. Albert's International Centre (CISA)
F.X. Hariawan Adji, O.Carm. *(Indo)*

General Delegate for the Carmelite Third Order
Michael Farrugia, O.Carm. *(Mel)*

General Delegate for the Nuns
Francisco Daza Valverde, O.Carm. *(DNM)*

Delegate for Formation
Alexander Dimas Pele Alu, O.Carm. *(Indo)*

General Postulator
Giovanna Brizi, Ph.D.

Liaison to the Institutum Carmelitanum
Michael Farrugia, O.Carm. *(Mel)*

Director of Communications
William Harry, O.Carm. *(PCM)*
until 28th February 2027
Jacob Roby Chakkalaparambil, O.Carm. *(STSA)*
from 1st March 2027

Members of the Provisional International Council of the Third Order: 2025-2028
General Coordinators:

S. Kelly Henderson	*(USA)*
Rosario Mª Vera Martin	*(Europe)*

Delegates:

Amos Ochieng Amouh	*(Africa)*
Ruel Santos	*(Asia)*
Rev. P. Miguel Norbert Ubarri	*(Europe)*
Clingeson Correia da Silva Bida	*(Latin America)*
Cynthia Ann Perazzo	*(North America)*
Francisco Carmo De Costa Tilman	*(Asia)*

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