



Comisión Internacional Const. 1991 International Commission Const. 1991

Commission for the Revision of Constitutions 1991

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Agustí Borrell

A very cordial and fraternal greeting to all of you, dear sisters of the Teresian Carmel.

I am going to briefly outline the history of the process of revising the Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelites of 1991, and more specifically the role of the International Commission, which is in full swing and is doing admirable work with great competence and dedication.

The aim is to renew the Constitutions in light of recent ecclesial documents (specifically *Vultum Dei quaerere* and *Cor orans*), and to take advantage of the occasion to carry out a more comprehensive review and adapt them to the current situation of the Church and the Order.

The goal is to try to draft the best possible constitutional text for the present and future of Discalced Carmelites throughout the world.

In February 2022, the Superior General, Father Miguel Márquez, consulted the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life on the advisability of revising the Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelites and the procedure to be followed.

The Dicastery responded shortly thereafter, confirming the role of the Superior General as coordinator of the process and approving the idea of an international assembly with representatives from all federations and associations.

The meeting was scheduled for April 2024 in Nemi (Italy), preceded by a questionnaire sent to all communities to prepare for the work. In February 2024, the General sent a letter to the Order explaining that the objective was to develop a common text that would reflect the life and spirit of the Discalced Carmelites today.

At the assembly held in Nemi, during a few days of intense fellowship and synodal work of listening in the Spirit, the foundations were laid for the revision of the Constitutions. There, the need was seen to establish an international commission to channel and guide the drafting process based on existing material and new contributions that would be collected.

The Commission is chaired by the Father General and composed of nine Discalced Carmelite nuns, who were chosen based on criteria of geographical and cultural representation, from proposals made by the federations and associations themselves:

- Rose Mary from Cameroon,
- Mary Elizabeth from the United States,
- Lucía from Chile,
- María Silvia from Argentina,
- Agustine from Indonesia,
- Anjali from India,
- Christine from France,
- Gema from Spain,
- and Verónica from Germany.

Also part of the Commission are the two friars from the General House Secretariat for the nuns, who contribute their canonical knowledge and experience: Rafał Wilkowski and Juan Pablo Patiño. In addition, the Commission has an external moderator, Sister Lidia Wrona, a Carmelite missionary, who facilitates the work without intervening in the content, and also a companion (myself), who offers advice and support without participating in decisions.

We must not forget the important role played in this process by:

- The Dicastery for Consecrated Life, which has the authority to officially approve the Constitutions.
- The Superior General, who, on behalf of the Dicastery, coordinates the project, appoints the Commission, presents the final text to the Dicastery, and ensures the unity of the charism at all times.
- And, especially, the federations and communities, who actively participate in the process, providing comments and suggestions.

The members of the Commission sometimes work individually, sometimes through virtual meetings, and occasionally meet in person for longer, more intensive sessions. The Commission has organized itself into two language groups (Spanish and English) to facilitate reflection and communication. It has a secretariat group, which is responsible for minutes, communication, archiving, and sending documentation; a drafting group, which prepares the drafts in Spanish (which has been adopted as the official language of the text); and a translation group, which ensures the fidelity of the text when translating it into English.

In keeping with the dynamic and the so-called “spirit of Nemi,” the working method is based on a synodal approach, grounded in “conversation in the Spirit,” which involves active and cordial listening and the search for consensus. The contribution of each person is valued, and each proposal is judged on its content, not on the person who presents it.

The Commission takes into account the reflections that the communities sent to the General House before April 2024, as well as the criteria that were given in Nemi as the basis and root for the revision of the constitutional text and the documents that were mentioned as useful for this revision: of course, the 1991 Constitutions currently in force, but also the Bible, the Rule, the Way of Perfection and other texts of St. Teresa, the Declarations and the new ecclesial documents (*Vultum Dei Quaerere*, *Cor Orans*, *Vita Consecrata*, etc.).

The Commission works with the awareness that it is offering a service to the entire Order and that it needs to pay attention to the opinions and sensitivities of Discalced Carmelites throughout the world. Therefore, at each stage of drafting, the draft materials prepared by the Commission will be sent to all federations and associations in order to gather feedback and suggestions that any community may have to improve the work done.

Logically, we must take into account the great diversity that currently exists within the Order, which today more than ever is a universal family, present on every continent and with a wide variety of languages and cultures, as well as different sensibilities and perspectives.

The Commission welcomes all opinions and proposals that are received and tries to gather the thoughts of the majority and take into account, as far as possible, the different opinions, always evaluating and discerning according to the working criteria based on the Nemi Assembly. The conferences, Pope Francis' message, the work of all the groups at the Assembly, and the final message of Nemi are the guide for the work of the communities, federations, and associations, as well as of the Commission itself, in terms of texts, language, style, and content.

The Constitutions should be a clear and essential text that reflects the fundamental elements of the lifestyle of the Discalced Carmelites and the Teresian charism in language that is valid for all, and therefore without going into specific details. Certain local traditions or cultural aspects cannot be specified in the Constitutions (and should, if anything, be included in particular statutes or regulations).

In fact, the Church provides for two types of norms in the proper law of religious families:

On the one hand,

1. The fundamental code or Constitutions, which contains the essential elements and must harmonize spiritual and legal aspects.
2. And, secondly, the complementary codes, which contain other norms that are included in directories, regulations, or statutes.

The Commission met in Ávila in April 2025, and held another two-week meeting at the end of October and beginning of November of the same year in Monte Compatri, near Rome. On this occasion, it finished drafting the proposal for the complete index of the Constitutions, as well as a detailed explanation of the criteria that have been followed: this is the first material that is being sent to all the federations to gather the contributions that each one wishes to make.

We must sincerely thank all the members of the Commission for the seriousness and enthusiasm with which they are carrying out the task entrusted to them. We accompany them with our prayers so that they may not lack the light and strength of the Spirit in this important task they are carrying out in the service of the Order.

We sincerely thank the Discalced Carmelites throughout the world for the interest, welcome, and collaboration they are already showing toward the work of the

Commission. All of this will enable us to draft Constitutions that are the fruit of everyone's work and that serve as a good guide for living the charism of Teresian Carmel today in accordance with the heart of God.

Thank you very much.

A fraternal embrace to all of you.