

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MINUTES

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**Provincial Council Meeting
Provincial Office, Darien, Illinois
July 24, 2021
Minutes**

Present in Darien: Carl J. Markelz, O.Carm., David McEvoy, O.Carm., Gregory Houck, O.Carm. Present through Lifesize Video Conference: Daryl Moresco, O.Carm., Luis Jesús “Chuy” Paz Acosta, O.Carm. Absent (while in Germany): Rolf “Nepi” Willemsen, O.Carm.

Opening Prayer

The Provincial Council meeting began with an opening prayer by Gregory Houck, highlighting today’s feast of Blessed John Soreth.

Assignments:

Alfredo Guillén	Sabbatical, August 1, 2021—January 31, 2022
Benjamín Salas	Interim Formation Director, Casa San Alberto de Jerusalén, San Salvador, El Salvador, August 1, 2021--January 31, 2022
Rodolfo Aznarán*	Formation Director, Casa San Alberto de Jerusalén, San Salvador, El Salvador, effective February 1, 2022
Edgar Lucio Lezama	In Residence, Centro Xiberta, Ciudad Delgado, El Salvador, effective August 1, 2021
Roger Stanley Melara*	Parochial Vicar, Parroquia La Inmaculada Concepción, Pucusana, Peru, effective January 1, 2022
Herbert Jones	Marguerite’s House, Mary Immaculate Home and Community Based Services, Lawrence, MA, effective July 28, 2021
Bruce Taggart	St. Patrick’s Residence, Naperville, IL, effective August 1, 2021
Gregorio Vasquez	In residence, Casa del Carmen, Tlalpan, Mexico City, Mexico, effective July 25, 2021

* Appointed with approval of the Peruvian Commissary Council.

Open Listing

Pastor, Parroquia La Transfiguración del Señor, Torreón, Mexico

Invitation for a Honduras Foundation

The Provincial Council reviewed a letter of July 5, 2021, from Bishop Walter Guillén Soto, sdb, of Gracias, Honduras to Prior Provincial, Carl J. Markelz. Bishop Guillén, a religious of the Salesian Order of Don Bosco, is the first Bishop of Gracias, Honduras, a diocese that was recently erected by Pope Francis on April 27, 2021. Bishop Guillén, who was consecrated on June 11, is inviting our Carmelites in El Salvador to come and see the parish of Santa Lucia in Yamaranguila, with the hopes that we would be given administration of the parish.

Bishop Guillén noted that his new diocese has the largest number of Catholics in Honduras with many priestly and religious vocations, with 60 native priests and 100 religious women. Bishop Guillén was most effusive in his hope of a Carmelite presence in his new diocese stating: “the Carmelite habit will look very good in the midst of this most fervent and faithful community. . . .a fertile land for vocations to the Order. . . . The novena to the Virgen del Carmen will be asking for the arrival of the Order of Carmel to this Diocese which, from now on, will be its home.”

The Provincial Council enthusiastically endorsed a response to Bishop Guillén by approving a visit to Honduras by Alfredo Guillén and Chuy Paz the week of July 26, 2021.

Future Provincial Visitations to El Salvador

Carl Markelz plans to visit the Carmelites in El Salvador, August 17-24, 2021. He will be present to receive the solemn vows of José Arístides Menjivar Larios and David Ulises García Hernández on August 21. On August 22, he will also be present for the diaconate ordination of Arístides. Carl hopes to return to El Salvador in mid-December for the priestly ordinations of Roger Stanley Melara Mondragón and Edgar Lucio Lezama Aparicio. Carl and the entire Provincial Council are scheduled to visit our men in El Salvador, January 27—February 1, 2022.

2022 PCM Regional Meetings

Three members of the Provincial Council, Carl Markelz, Chuy Paz, and Nepi Willemsen, will form a planning committee to prepare the 2022 PCM Regional Meetings in the United States and Canada. The first meeting will be held at the Redemptorist Renewal Center in Tucson, AZ from May 31-June 3, 2022. The second meeting will be held from June 6-9, 2022, at the Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. Carmelites may attend either meeting at the time and place of their choice. The Council encourages the priors of the Province to help promote these upcoming meetings. Carmelites in Peru, Mexico, and El Salvador will hold their Regional Meetings at the time of their Annual Gatherings.

2023 PCM Chapter Preparatory Commission

The Provincial Council discussed the formation of the 2023 Chapter Preparatory Commission. Gregory Houck will serve as the Council Liaison to the Preparatory Commission. Tentative plans are to hold the 2023 Chapter at the Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, June 18-23, 2023.

Carmelite Schools Sponsorship Study Action Plan, 2021-2022

The Provincial Council approved an action plan regarding Sponsorship presented by Thomas Batsis, O.Carm. These schools include three that are solely owned by the Province, Mount Carmel High School, Chicago, IL, Salpointe Catholic High School, Tucson, AZ, and Crespi Carmelite High School, Encino, CA; two high schools that the Province co-sponsors, Carmel Catholic High School, Mundelein, IL and Joliet Catholic Academy, Joliet, IL; and one high school with a past relationship with the Province, De Sales Catholic High School, Louisville, KY. A study will be undertaken to provide information to the Provincial Council to identify the benefits and challenges in a sponsorship program. While visiting each school, the goal will be to determine to what extent the respective school identifies itself as Carmelite. A report to the Provincial Council will be presented by March 2022.

Provincial Financial Report for the June 30, 2021 Fiscal Year End

Brian Gawel, Director of Finance, provided an update to the Provincial Council on the financial matters of the Province for the fiscal year which ended June 30, 2021. The following was discussed:

- Brian provided a review of the unaudited balance sheet as of June 30, 2021, as well as the related income statement for the year just ended. Total net assets of the Province are approximately \$125,000,000, comprised primarily of cash, investments and property. At the end of the fiscal year, the Province had no bank debt obligations.
- Revenues for the year which ended June 30, 2021, not including investment income, were approximately \$7,500,000, with expenses totaling approximately \$9,000,000.
- Investment income (after investment fees) for the year ending June 30, 2021, was approximately \$16,200,000. The investment portfolio had an approximate return of 27%.
- A review of the investment portfolio composition by participant fund was summarized as follows:

Provincial Funds	\$70,855,000
Society of the Little Flower Funds	\$60,715,000
Lay Carmelite Center Funds	\$ 2,954,000
Carmelite Mission Funds	\$ 1,385,000
Peruvian Commissariat Funds	\$ 1,306,000

- A review of the various Province loan receivables was reviewed with the Provincial Council. Total loan receivables approximate \$1,800,000 as of June 30, 2021. Specifically:
 - Brian asked the Provincial Council to review the loan receivable from the Parish in Torreón, Mexico, currently at approximately \$1,000,000. Future discussions with the leadership of the parish will be conducted.
 - The loan receivable due from the Domus in Rome was reviewed and at this time is still considered collectible, as the Curia is making annual installment payments to the Province. The outstanding balance is \$482,000.
- The auditors have started their planning for the audit which will commence the week after Labor Day.

Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission

The Provincial Council reviewed the minutes of the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission meeting of June 26, 2021. The Commission discussed its mandate to provide on-going information to the Province regarding implementation of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. The Provincial Council discussed the suggestion from one of the members of the JPIC Commission to move toward all electric cars at Whitefriars Hall in Washington, DC. It was also noted that a solar panel analysis in Darien and at Whitefriars Hall was done by comparing pre-solar energy bills. The energy bill analysis for this first year estimated \$13,500 in savings and a solar generation equivalent to 350 metric tons of CO₂. The Commission also conducted a discussion on the topic of racism in our respective nations and within our Province.

Carmelitana Collection Board Meeting

The Provincial Council reviewed the minutes of the June 18, 2021, Carmelitana Collection Board Meeting. The Carmelitana Collection Board is reviewing a contract tailored to the Collection that was submitted by Lucidea Library Software Solutions for their GeniePlus library software. This will make the Collection's card catalog along with digitized versions of various books in the Collection available to the public. The Board has decided that the many duplicate copies of books in the Collection will be donated to the Mullens Library at Catholic University, with some, though, going to the Center for Carmelite Studies at Catholic University.

Communications from Rome

The Provincial Council reviewed three recent correspondences from Rome.

The first document dated May 31, 2021, was received from the **Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in Vatican City**. The topic of the document focused on the ability of religious communities to elect leadership and conduct Chapter business by mail and by telematic means, when exceptional circumstances (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) prevented a traditional gathering of members. This decree suspended the prior decision of July 1, 2020, which did not allow for such provisions. Special permission for Chapter assemblies by telematics was granted from July 1, 2021 until December 31, 2022. Procedures were also presented for elections by mail for this period.

The second document dated June 15, 2021, was received from **Míceál O’Neill, Prior General**, regarding the May 31–June 4, 2021, deliberations of the General Council. With the resignation of Andreas Lamtarida Simbolon of the Indonesian Province as the General Delegate for Formation, José Cláudio de Alencar Batista of the Brazilian Province of Pernambuco was appointed to this post. The General Council is still in discussion regarding a date for the 2022 General Congregation gathering. Scheduling has been delayed due to the possibility of an announcement of a date for the canonization of Blessed Titus Brandsma. The General Council would like to coordinate these events if possible. The 2019 Constitutions are soon to be published in English, Spanish, and Italian. Míceál also stated that the continuation of the integration of Carmel in North and South America under the care of one General Councilor is an on-going development. Míceál stated: “As a reflection of that integration, the name FOCAL (Carmelite Formation in Latin America) has now been changed to FOCAM (Carmelite Formation in the Americas). This is a very positive development as a result of which we are beginning to see the organization of formation courses on-line that cater to the needs of the two Americas and invite the participation of both.”

The third document dated June 30, 2021, was received from **Luis José Maza Subero, General Councilor of the Americas**. Luis announced that the next FOCAM gathering will take place on-line from August 26-28, 2021. This meeting is for all the formators of the different sectors of the Carmelite Family in the Americas, with the theme “Memory, Identity and Commitment.”

International Formation Meeting for Carmelites in Initial Formation

An international meeting of Carmelites in initial formation has been scheduled for this coming November, 2021. The meeting will take place virtually for three hours each day for five days. The meeting will take place in two regions. For Carmelites in Africa, Europe, and the Americas, the meeting is scheduled for November 15-19. For Carmelites in Asia and the Pacific, the meeting is scheduled for November 22-26. The topic of this meeting is “How to Engage Generation Z?” Participants will be asked to share their experience of being in Carmel, their joys, struggles, disappointments, challenges, and their hopes and dreams for the future. Daniel Ulises González of our Province has agreed to represent the regions of Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

North American Region Meeting of PCM and SEL Provincial Councils

The Councils of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Province and the Saint Elias Province met together on June 13, 2021, in Middletown, NY (North American

Region Meeting). Present from the PCM Province in person were Carl J. Markelz, Daryl Moresco, and Nepi Willemsen, with David McEvoy present via Zoom Video Conference. Present from the SEL Province in person were Mario Esposito, Paul Denault, Joseph Nguyen Do, and Francis Amodio, with Mark Zittle present via Zoom.

Mario reported that the new St. Albert's Priory in Middletown, NY, with accommodations for senior Carmelites, is scheduled to open this fall. In Vietnam, there are over three communities, and plans are underway to open a Novitiate there in August.

The members of the Joint Council agreed unanimously to implement the revised Statutes for the Lay Carmelites as submitted by the Lay Carmelite Offices of the two Provinces.

Tracy O'Sullivan, O.Carm. Blog Initiative

Carl Markelz presented to the Provincial Council a July 8, 2021 communication from Tracy O'Sullivan, O.Carm. Tracy has developed an integrated series of entries in a blog entitled "Praying Alone Together", that focuses on the Carmelite charism of deep personal prayer. Tracy sees his initiative as a practical and readable introduction that will be a concrete help for many individuals and groups beginning to go beyond the surface of Carmelite spirituality. Target populations for Tracy's blogs include vocation prospects, young Carmelites in formation, administrators, teachers, and staff in our Carmelite schools, retreat house staffs and retreatants, Lay Carmelites, and "special seekers" in the general population. The blog is bi-lingual, available in English and Spanish. Tracy requested that the Provincial Council discuss his initiative, evaluate it, and open this project in the future to the input of younger Carmelites. Gregory Houck will work with Tracy in promoting his blog among these and other target groups. The blog can be reached at <https://prayingalonetogether.blogspot.com/>

Incoming Pre-Novices at Whitefriars Hall

Two men have been recently accepted into the Carmelite Pre-Novitiate Formation Program at Whitefriars Hall: Christopher Ptak and Derrick Turrentine.

Chris Ptak, age 39, of Salt Lake City, Utah, holds a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Notre Dame, graduating magna cum laude with a major in Political Science and Psychology. He also holds a Master's Degree in Theology with emphasis in Biblical Languages from Loyola University, Chicago. Chris has spent a year as a Lay Maryknoll volunteer in China, studied Biblical Languages

at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and was an instructor at Lewis University, Joliet, IL.

Derrick Turrentine, age 39, of Lynchburg, Virginia has been re-admitted to the Carmelite formation program. He completed one year of formation at Whitefriars Hall from 2019-2020, withdrew from the program, and has now been re-admitted. Derrick holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a major in Sociology. He also holds a Master's Degree in Social Sciences from the University of Chicago. He has worked as an Associate Mental Health Professional and was active in the University of Chicago Black Gospel Choir. Derrick was received into the Catholic Church in 2018 and has been active since then in his parish RCIA program in Virginia.

Proposals to Build a Provincial “Culture of Vocations”

The Provincial Council reviewed a letter from Michael Joyce, O.Carm., and Matthew Gummess, O.Carm., to Carl Markelz following the June Provincial Convocation. A number of creative ideas were presented in this letter to motivate the men of our Province to promote vocations in their communities and ministries, with a special emphasis on the critical contributions of our men in formation and our newly professed and ordained members of the Province.

Provincial Council Discussions on Vocations, Racism, and Community

The Provincial Council concluded its deliberations with frank discussions on three issues of importance for the Province. The following summarizes a number of questions addressed.

Vocations: This year, two members of the Province (David McEvoy and Gregory Houck) will be involved directly with vocation promotion, but they also have other responsibilities in the Province. Is there a way to get some younger members involved, part-time, so as to reach out to more candidates, and increase our efforts? Perhaps some of our younger brothers could work part-time in a parish or school and do some vocation promotion more directly as part of their ministry. The Council is open to other ideas regarding vocations.

Racism: Racism is alive in the countries of the Province and some of our brothers do feel that they have experienced discrimination because of their race or ethnic background. We need to be more attuned and sensitive to our words and actions. Our lifestyle calls us to be counter-cultural and not be caught up in racism. We need to continue to work on the Provincial Council goal of integrating

the Province and rid ourselves of our biases and attitudes that keep us apart and lead to disrespect.

Community: In the past few years, there were at least three occasions where a community was asked to welcome a veteran member of our Province and the community said no, based on past experience of this person, and not wanting to deal with their personality quirks along with not wanting to upset the “equilibrium of the community.” Has our openness to allow communities to discuss new members before they move in led to exclusion and our inability to be flexible? Does a community have a right to say no to someone moving in? Should the Provincial Council overrule such a decision? But if a member knows they are not welcome, why would they want to live there? The Council works hard trying to find the right fit for a person in ministry and community. Why would a vocation prospect join us if they know one day they may be excluded from a community? More discussion and reflection is necessary in these areas. If anyone has additional thoughts on any of these issues, please e-mail them to Carl at cmarkelz@carmelnet.org

Provincial Council Statement on Human Dignity & Social Responsibility

At the request of the Secondary Schools Commission, the Provincial Council approved the following statement on our efforts to promote the human dignity of all people:

The Carmelites of the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary stand in solidarity with Catholic social teaching, which highlights building a more just society and living in holiness.

We live in allegiance to and walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ as we commit ourselves to the dignity of the human person by respecting people of every gender, race, ethnic heritage, creed, sexual orientation and financial resources.

The principles of family, community, participation, dignity of work, option for the poor, and care for God’s creation inspire our communities and ministries to always teach the truth of our history and work for justice and peace.

As a result, we do not support unjust systems of racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, human trafficking and slavery of any kind, and

any unjust system that does not promote the dignity of the human person that is a true gift from God.

May our God, through the intercession of Elijah the Prophet and Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, continue to transform us as we are called to conversion of heart, mind, body, and soul.

Future 2021 Dates

August 11-14	Carmelite Studies Program, Whitefriars Hall, DC
August 15	Roberto Mejia Solemn Profession, Washington, DC
August 17-24	Carl Markelz Provincial Visitation to El Salvador
August 21	Ulises García and Arístides Menjivar Solemn Profession - El Salvador
August 22	Arístides Menjivar Diaconate Ordination, El Salvador
August 26-28	FOCAM Formators' Virtual Meeting*
September 10	Provincial Council Meeting, Darien, IL *
September 11	Vocation Commission Meeting *
September 14	Priors' Meeting*
October 18-21	Provincial Council Meeting, Avon, NJ
October 22	PCM Formation Commission Meeting, Cresskill, NJ
October 23	Inter-Provincial Formation Commission Meeting, Harrison, NJ
November 15-19	International Carmelite Formation Meeting*
December 4	Provincial Council Meeting, Darien, IL*

*Via Lifesize Video or Zoom Conference

Respectfully submitted,
David McEvoy, O.Carm.