



April 2, 2018

To: All OCDS Community, Group, and Study Group Members in Arizona and New Mexico

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Carmel,

It is with great joy that I write to you as your representative on the CA-AZ OCDS Provincial Council. As some of you already know, our Provincial Delegate, Fr. Juan Elias, has designated me as the first point of contact for the OCDS Communities, Groups, and Study Groups located in Arizona and New Mexico. I hope to meet as many of you as possible in the course of the current Triennium.

In Carmel, we have a beautiful vocation. Whatever reason originally brought us to Carmel, we can be assured that God has drawn us here so we may grow closer to him and participate in the building up of his kingdom on earth and in heaven.

One trait shared by all Carmelites is a profound belief in the power of prayer. If you are ever tempted to feel discouraged, please remember that our vocation has profound value and efficacy in the Church and in the world. Our prayers matter, and they make a difference.

In many ways our vocation is a hidden one. We do not often receive recognition in the world or even in the Church for our efforts on their behalf. However, this is a profound blessing for us as individuals, because it provides a perfect environment for us to grow in genuine detachment, humility, and unconditional love. There are no words to express the respect and appreciation I have for each of you as you persevere in your vocation, often under trying and difficult circumstances with little appreciation for what you do.

As we grow in union with God, we also automatically become more apostolic. As St. Teresa of Jesus explained in the *Interior Castle*, the closer we come to God, the more we want to help him accomplish his will and help others grow closer to him. Thank you for everything you do on behalf of our wonderful Lord.

Please be assured of my continued prayers, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns or questions you may have.

In Christ,

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