



HE must increase, but "i" must decrease (John 3.30)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel,

The above title are the words of John the Baptist, words which carry within them one of the most precious secrets in the journey of spiritual life. Indeed, the more the "i" reduces, the more it makes space for God in our life. Rabbi Mikhal of Zlotchov has this inspiring observation to make on the words which Moses said to the People of Israel: *"I stood between the Lord and you," (Deut.5.5)*. Rabbi Mikhal says: "The 'I' stands between God and us. When a man says 'I' and encroaches upon the word of his Maker, he puts a wall between himself (herself) and God. But he/she who offers his/her 'I' - there is nothing between him and his Maker. For it is to him that the words refer: 'I am my beloved's and his desire is towards me.' When my 'I' has become my beloved's, then it is towards me that his desire turns." (*Martin Buber, Tales of the Hasidim*).

As we continue our preparations for the fifth centenary of the birth of Our Mother St Teresa (1515-2015), in our studies of her works we are constantly reminded about the truthfulness of the words of John the Baptist. Working on the 'I' is hard work and demands constant watch. It is no wonder that the Carmelite Saints consistently remind us of the importance of detachment, especially from material things and our self!

Our attention this year is on the Way of Perfection, and the more we take seriously to heart the teachings and advice of Our Mother, the less damage we do to ourselves and to those around us. As an extra bonus, the year 2011 is gracing us also with the OCDS Congress, which I hope that we make the best of it for our growth in Carmelite Spirituality, and our witness for Christ. A lot of work has already been done, and I congratulate Deacon Brian, MaryLou, and Salvatore, and others who have put so many hours into the serious and meticulous preparation for this Congress. On the part of each one of us, we are asked to offer our co-operation by making the necessary preparations to attend. Do make it a point of priority. It is once every three years, and your attendance is important. I have heard from British Columbia and Alberta, and from Thunder Bay that many are going to attend, and I cannot express enough my joy for their presence. The more the merrier!!! Our Fr Provincial, Fr Manny will be attending, and other Friars are also coming from British Columbia. Fr Victor Mallia, the Pastor of Our Lady Of Fatima Church will also be

with us. We are also going to be honoured with the presence of His Grace Archbishop Thomas Collins, who in spite of his busy schedule has made time to be with us at this important event in the growth of our spiritual life.

Thank God for the success of the talks which The Centre For Teresian Carmelite Education and Spirituality has been organizing. We plan to continue and are also improving on our ideas of how to make more use of the talents and opportunities that are available to us, such as selling of books and literature at the least possible cost. I am very much grateful to Carmela and others who help her in ordering, carrying, and selling and in buying these books. If any of you want to know how heavy these books, are ask me... believe me, in moving thousands of them from London to Scarborough, I do have a good experience!!!

My heartfelt thanks go also to the Secretariat, Marguerite Mason, Deacon Brian and other members of the OCDS who either with their prayers, financially, and also carrying books, tools, and furniture from London to Scarborough have shared the burden of the weight with me. Your help and support will not be forgotten. May God reward your generosity.

Now that I am settling in Scarborough, with the great support of Fr Victor, I do hope that with His Grace, I will soon continue to be of service to all of you and also to the Diocese of Toronto. I am very much impressed with the great hospitality and welcome both from the part of the Toronto Diocese, especially the Personnel Staff, and also by the great welcome of the Parishioners of Our Lady of Fatima. Thanks to the Knights of Columbus, The Lord's Flock, the Social Committee, the Youth Ministry, the Parish Council and others who have for sure organized a beautiful welcome breakfast for my arrival... over four hundred attended, apart from the Church-full attendance for the Eucharist!!!

The Parishioners of St Andrew the Apostle in London, after 21 years of service in the Diocese of London, out of which, 14 years and six months as Pastor of St Andrew's Parish, threw a marvellous farewell party for me as a sign of gratitude for my service among them. For sure I miss them, but life has to carry on. The support of the OCDS in London, the Secretaries, the Liturgy Committee, the CWL, the Knights of Columbus, and St Vincent de Paul Society in the Parish, the Janitor and his wife, the Choirs, Altar Servers, Readers and Eucharistic Ministers, RCIA Team, Kensington Village and Shut in Staff, the Sacramental team and the Baptism Prep team, and MANY other Parishioners have for sure manifested in a clear way their appreciation for my work among them...for all of you in my life I THANK MY GOD AND ASK HIM TO REWARD EACH AND EVERYONE OF YOU!!! It was an experience of great joy seeing many people working together expressing their love and support. Indeed, how beautiful is the love of the brothers and sisters for each other.

As we start the season of Advent, may God help us to make space for HIM in our lives, especially by making sure that the words of John the Baptist continue to resound in our hearts.

May God's Peace manifest itself to all of you on Christmas and all the days of your life.

We continue to pray for Sr Mary of the Trinity, and Sr Pia Vella, both of them ocd cloistered nuns whom the Good Lord has called to be with Him. May they rest in peace.

In the name of Very Rev Fr Provincial (Fr Manny), Fr Victor, and Fr Pius and myself, may the Lord grant you a Joyous and Peaceful Christmas.

*Fraternally in Carmel,
Fr Dominic, ocd
Provincial Delegate.*