

SOLEMNITY OF ST JOHN OF THE CROSS - TERESIANUM 2023
SOLEMN PROFESSION. – Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle, our General Superior

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Indeed, it is always a great joy to celebrate with you here in this chapel of the Teresianum. Today is one of our great Carmelite feasts, commemorating the human and spiritual adventure of John of the Cross. We are fortunate to have John of the Cross as our first Carmelite, teacher and companion.

This 14th December, as usual, we experience the joy of the solemn profession of some of our confreres: Augustine, Edga Charles, Gaspard, Timothy, Todisoa, Yves and Zoel Michel. Nigeria, Tanzania, Congo and Madagascar. Congratulations for having come this far and for living this moment, this profession as a starting point, not simply as an arrival, but as a path of continuous growth and permanent dedication. May John keep the flame of love in each of you, the freshness of this unique day, a light in the night and joy in the simplicity of life. Do not lose this freshness and this joy. If you become bitter, unbearable and joyless, if you do not treat your brothers well and forget the gift of your vocation, it is better to be happy on another path.

Today's readings are beautiful and precise: they describe very well the vocation of a Carmelite on a journey. **DO NOT BE AFRAID; LET YOURSELF BE EXAMINED AND ACCOMPANIED; ALWAYS WALK IN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BECOME ONE, WHEREVER YOU ARE, BUILD COMMUNION.**

(Isaiah) Fear not. 'I will not fear the wild beasts.... ' says J+. 'I will be with you in danger. For you are precious in my sight, for you are worthy of my esteem, and I love you....' Do not be afraid, for I am with you'.

John +, comes to say that you cannot do it because you feel strong, but because you trust and are in love, called and touched by God's love.....

(Ps 138) The psalm invites you to let yourself be scrutinized; let yourself be known by the Lord and also by the one who can help you at every step. On the Carmelite path, this humility of letting yourself be helped is decisive... (Rom 8) Whoever lets himself be guided by the Spirit of God is a child of God. You have not received a spirit of slavery, but of sonship, which makes us cry out 'Abba, Father'... (John 17). This is the most important word in the Bible, on your lips, as in the prayer of Therese and John+ it was the most pronounced word. J+ recited the priestly prayer by heart on the roads: 'Consecrate them in truth. Your word is truth. May they be one. This I ask of you, help me to make Carmel one family, one in truth, in creative communion.

John of the Cross is an Advent man: always in search, a pilgrim of union, naked of himself (selfless), passionate, and eager to live the essential, to become one. His art and his wisdom consisted in allowing himself to be found and to understand that it was God who was seeking him. Already as a child he knew that life is short and he lived it intensely. He hid himself from human glories. He knew, with lively intelligence, how to flee from intrigue and ambition, although he could not escape criticism, violence, and the wounds of men. But he knew how to cultivate and discover the pearl and the

treasure, in prison and in the night, in the wound and the contempt of others, in all of which he found the desired eyes that were engraved in his entrails. Everything was taken from him, but not the eyes of the Beloved.

Today the good news of the Pope's approval of the miracle of Ana de Jesús Lobera serves to remind me of a letter in November-December 1578 from Teresa of Jesus to Ana de Jesús, who was to become a great friend of John of the Cross. What happens so often... Ana lives with Juan; she in Beas and he in El Calvario, on the other side of the mountain, in the beautiful Sierra del Segura. Saint Teresa says sympathetically: *"I am amused, daughter, at how groundless is your complaining for you have in your midst mi padre, Fray Juan de la Cruz."* Teresa gives one of the most beautiful descriptions of John: a heavenly and divine man. This saint is a great treasure. Of great experience and learned. Teresa emphasizes his ability to listen to and accompany souls, and she encourages all souls to have dealings with him. He is an example of what Teresa wanted from her Carmelite children, wisdom and experience to accompany and guide souls. I bring this letter to your attention for two reasons: we too have our saints, John of the Cross and so many others, and we have them close to us and do not take advantage of them; we too are separated by a mountain of dispersion and lack of appreciation for the treasure we have in the Order. I want you to be awake in order to feed on this spiritual wisdom.

The other letter is from Saint Teresa to Mother Mary of the Incarnation in July 1591. John repeats the response he gives to his friends in the face of the mistreatment and rejection he is suffering. His response is memorable in the sense of resilience: **MEN DO NOT DO THESE THINGS, BUT GOD, WHO KNOW WHAT IS SUITABLE FOR US AND ARRANGES THINGS FOR OUR GOOD. THINK NOTHING ELSE BUT THAT GOD ORDAINS ALL, AND WHERE THERE IS NO LOVE, PUT LOVE, AND YOU WILL DRAW OUT LOVE.**

Today I leave with you these two ideas as a gift: The Holy One as a companion for the night and the road ahead, and the wisdom to put love where there is no love; to know that God makes us grow and molds us through everything that happens, if we let Him, if we are humble and wise.

I thank all seven of you.... I thank in a special way your families, your companions along the way, your formators in a special way, and the community that accompanies you. I entrust your lives to the womb of Mary, that she may give birth to Jesus within you, and that you may be the builders of a new, living, and holy Carmel.

"Seeking God demands a heart naked, strong, and that is free from all evils and goods that are not purely God" (CB 3,5).

Fr. Miguel Márquez, Superior General