



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During October of 2023 Fr. George Mangiaracina, OCD, Br. John-Magdalene, OCD and the members of the Provincial Council (PC) were fortunate to meet *in person* with the members of the California/Arizona and Oklahoma PC's for our annual Inter-Provincial Council meeting.

Our Superior General Fr. Casale was able to join for a time via video conference, at first acknowledging the 20th anniversary of the approval of our OCDS Constitutions by the Holy See in 2003. He then went on to exclaim that there are 29,000 OCDS members in the world with over 6,000 in the USA! The uniform formation program in the USA is an example of collaboration to the rest of the Order. When the formation program was presented in Rome, it was emphasized that the foundational aspect is that of human formation. Our Holy Mother Teresa emphasized that *'Everything starts with self-knowledge.'*

Further into the meeting each PC shared updates on their Province as well as their various ministries to each community. It was very enlightening for our own PC members as we learned how very far behind the other provinces we are. In fact the OK Provincial Council which has 33 communities, 886 members is especially active in their ministry to their communities. While the CA/AZ province (70 communities, 2,000 members) is not far behind in their availability to its members as well. It was clear to us representing the Washington Province (145 communities, 3,800 members) that changes need to be made and the role of the provincial council utilized to its full potential as stated in Statute #87: *The primary responsibility of the OCDS Provincial Council is to assist in formation and the apostolate. The Provincial Council shall also serve as a consultative body to the Provincial Superior and be of service to the Secular Order.*

Self-knowledge is part of the growing process in a Provincial sense as well. As we face the challenges of the coming years, we see a good number of our members aging out and a lack of new vocations in some parts. Working together we can share IDEAS and SOLUTIONS that have been successful for communities in these two areas and more.

Our own visitation program was just beginning when we had to put a hold on it in 2020 due to the Covid virus. Having received Fr. George's blessing we will be restarting the program. Looking forward we would like to assist with training sessions for councils, presidents & formation directors.

Fr George has requested that the PC *"be of service"* to you by directly addressing your questions and concerns with *prudent discretion*. In turn, Fr. George would be brought into a conversation/communication if the PC is unsure of the answer/solution. Anything of a serious nature would be directed to him as our Provincial Delegate or Fr. Daniel Chowning, OCD as our Provincial.

All of these ministries and more will be a great help to the friars and empower the PC to become responsible for itself while still remaining under the juridical authority of the friars.

To get in touch with us simply email: [ocds-pc-washprov@googlegroups.com](mailto:ocds-pc-washprov@googlegroups.com).

We are happy and privileged to serve you. Enabling us to minister to you fulfills our responsibility as a council.

May the peace of Christ be with you,

Wendy Palanza, OCDS, President  
Laura Iwan, OCDS  
Terry Lemke, OCDS  
Mary Valenti, OCDS