Dear friends, well-wishers and benefactors,

This year Christmas will be celebrated in the context of the Extraordinary Jubilee, A Holy Year of Mercy (from 8th of December, 2015 to 20th of November, 2016). This is what St Faustina Kowalska – the Apostle of Divine Mercy wrote:

The Words becomes flesh; God dwells among us, the Word of God, Mercy Incarnate. By Your descent, You have lifted us up to Your divinity. Such is the excess of Your love, the abyss of Your mercy. Heaven is amazed at the superabundance of your love. No one fears to approach You now. You are the God of mercy. You have compassion on misery (Diary of St Faustina, 1745).

As we contemplate the great mystery of the Incarnation, we recall the abundance of mercies that have flooded our lives in the year that is to end. God, the Father of Mercies, has blessed us through you in ways that have left an imprint in our hearts. We wish to re-live some of the special moments with you, as we praise the goodness and generosity of the Divine Giver.

Peak Moments!

Glitter of gold. The only Major Seminary - PUSHPASHRAMA, crossed the threshold of 50 eventful years. In 1965 we were the first men's congregation to establish a monastery in the Diocese of Mysore. This house has always been a nursery of future priests – first of the aspirants, and now as the Institute of Philosophy and Religion. As most of our members have been trained in this Seminary, there was an overwhelming presence of around 70 friars at the solemn Eucharist on 27th of September, 2015, followed by a cultural bonanza to showcase the history and growth of the Institute. O Pushpashrama home sweet home...

Historical Moments!

The call of Avila. Friars from all over the globe converged in the Spanish city of our Holy Foundress, St Teresa of Jesus, for the General Chapter which is held every six years. Since we are celebrating this year her Fifth Birth Centenary (1515 - 2015), it was fitting that her sons gathered from 2nd to 24th May, 2015, where she began the reform in the 16th century. V. Rev. Fr Saverio Cannistrà, was re-elected as the Superior General of the Order.

Glory of sanctity. The entire Carmelite Order hailed the historical Canonization of the first married couple Sts Saints Louis Martin and Zelie Guerin, on 18th of October, 2015 during the Synod of Bishops on the theme of the family. They are parents of St John Bosco. The Parliament of People, comprising mainly of laity, is an integral part of Carmelite Order along with the Friars and Sisters of the Discalced Carmelite Order.

Outreach of Avila. The existence of Canada was not known to St Teresa. Finally the friars have a monastery of their own in the Eastern part of the country. Our joy knew no bounds, as the Little Flower Monastery was inaugurated on 15th of October, 2015, the Solemnity of St Teresa, in the august presence of three Bishops. It will function as a retreat house and also become the abode of aspirants wanting to embrace our way of life. This feat was achieved due to the large heartedness of our benefactor and friend, Miss Helen Chua Tiampo and the enterprising leadership of Fr Rudolf V. D'Souza OCD, the Regional Superior.

Paternal visits. The 8 days that our Superior General Rev. Fr Saverio Cannistrà spent in our Province have left a sweet memory in our hearts. He was accompanied by the Definitor General for India and Sri Lanka, Rev. Fr Johannes Gorantla (originally from Andhra Pradesh) who was making his maiden visit to our Province.

Close on his heels came Rev. Fr. Alzinir Debastiani, the Definitor General of the Secular Carmel, also all the way from the eternal city of Rome. He participated in the OCDS Provincial Congress and later met various OCDS communities within the Province.

Here I am Lord. This was the answer given by 7 Deacons who were raised to the Order of Sacred Priesthood, in Margao - Goa, Kodiugane - Mysuru, Mariapura - Bengaluru, Mudigere – Chickmagalur, and Mangaluru in the months of February and...
April. The newly ordained are: Frs. Antony Stephen, Joseph Cyril D’Souza, Sandeep Goveas, Augustine Robert, Noel D’Cunha, Arun Bennis and Pawan Alson Saldanha. They have begun their ministry in various communities of the Province. Meanwhile 4 Brothers in India and Tanzania, were conferred the Diaconate. We are indebted to all who have accompanied them with their prayers and material/financial support.

And the numbers swell. Our friars rejoice in Tanzania as three novices made their first religious profession on 20th of July, 2015. We are looking forward to the 14th of December, 2015, when 10 enthusiastic novices will be pronouncing their religious vows at Tapovana, Kushalnagar – Karnataka and clothed with the Carmelite habit. In June we had 8 young and promising men seeking to join our religious family. The long journey of formation which lasts around 13 years begins with this first and bold step!

Among our nuns, the following pronounced their vows and entered the religious life:

Srs Sagaya Mary on 19th of March and Sr Arokia Mary on 22nd of March, 2015 (both from Bengaluru Carmel) Sr Pooja of the Holy Trinity on 1st of May, 2015 (Pune Carmel)

Academic excellence. Our Holy Mother wanted her friars to be men of great learning. We have a good line up this year. Fr Wilfred Pais, who is serving in Tanzania, successfully defended his doctoral thesis in Biblical Theology at the Pontifical Urbaniana University, Rome on 10th of June, 2015.

In India, 4 young friars completed their master’s degree through regular studies at various Ecclesiastical Faculties. They are Frs Roshen D’Souza (Biblical Theology), Arwin Tauro (Spiritual Theology), Pradeep Pinto (Indian Philosophy) and Vijay D’Costa (Western Philosophy).

Literary achievement. Br Malvino Alphonso has done it again. He was felicitated as the best writer for the Goan Konkanni monthly GULAB, by Fr Freddy J. D’Costa Memorial Trust.

Touching Moments!

A sower of the word. On 27th of March, 2015, God called Rev. Fr Jeronimo Bragança, a saintly friar from Goa at the ripe age of 81. He entered the Carmelite Order after renouncing an illustrious career in the Portuguese Government. He became a spiritual director, confessor and trusted friend to a number of people who sought his wise counsel and spiritual insights. His ardent love for the Word of God made him a widely sought after preacher and it could be reasonably guessed that he covered all the parishes in the Archdiocese of Goa at least once.

A pioneer. Rev. Sr Rose Mary of St Joseph who belonged to the Carmel of Bengaluru was the founder of two Carmels: Andheri-Mumbai and Raipur, went to receive the eternal reward of her labours on 4th of May, 2015.

Inspiring Moments!

Our friars continue to enrich the lives of the faithful through various publications, writings and media apostolate.

The veteran scribe, Fr Rudolf V. D’Souza has come out with his 31st literary product: The Way Less Traveled (on the Way of Perfection by St Teresa of Avila)

Fr Boniface D’Souza is creating ripples in South Africa through his books on faith formation, which have been prescribed as text books by the Archdiocese of Johannesberg. His latest and fifth publication is “Praying the Rosary with Mother Mary.”

Treasured Moments!

God has been immensely good to us and his “mercy endures forever” (Psalm 136). We bow our heads in gratitude to him. Thank you too for being one of those blessings from above. We treasure the friendship you share with us and cherish your many acts of kindness towards us and our mission. Together let us set out with hope in the New Year, confident that the Lord will work even greater wonders in our lives. He never ceases to surprise us in so many ways!

May the forthcoming Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy be a year of grace and blessings to you and your family as we pray: Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

The Spirit of Christmas should not be just one day but for the whole year. We wish you wonderful memories during this joyous season and all the New Year 2016.

Fr Charles Serrao OCD
Provincial Superior

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May God’s Love shown at Christmas inducte your soul. His peace and gracious Presence Cheer you and make you whole.

Reward for all your kindness
May Christ on you bestow.
That through the year before us Your happiness may grow.

Sending warm wishes to you and your family during this Christmas Season.

DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS (OCD)
Karnataka-Goa Province
Bengaluru, India
2015