

**FINAL MESSAGE OF THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF
ASIAN-AUSTRALIAN-OCEANIAN CARMELITE LAITY**



Bali, Indonesia: 13 – 16 February 2020

Leave here, go East ... (1 Kings 17:3)
Contemplation in Ministry, Fraternity and Community:
Carmelite Life in Millennial Challenges

We, Lay Carmelites, gathered in the 4th International Congress of Asian-Australia-Oceanian Carmelite Laity in Bali, Indonesia on 13-16 February 2020: grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in the communion with the Holy Spirit..

We rejoice in our coming together as sisters and brothers in Carmel. We are delighted in the presence of many sisters and brothers from different areas of Asia, Australia and Oceania. This Congress is the sign of our unity in spite of our diversity. We are really grateful to the Lord for our shared vocation to be Lay Carmelites. This Congress enables us to know each other and to share our vocation, struggles, concerns and challenges in our journey in the path of the Lord.

In this gathering, through the three speakers, we together listen to the Holy Spirit and our Lord Jesus Christ, so as to know the Father's will for us in facing the millennial challenges.

The first speaker, Ms. Karlina Supelli, had her concern for the youth in facing the millennial era. She invited us to position ourselves as the parents of the youth who now are on the journey to the stars, to be the future leaders of the world and make this world a

better place to live. Ms. Karlina Supelli started her article by showing us the signs of times of this era: the rapid growth of technology. For us who are from the former generation, this advancement of technology may amaze and frighten us. We tend to see a lot of negative effects of this technology: internet and technology addiction, the spread of hoaxes, the emergence of fake news, the increase of suicides due to loneliness, etc. We may consider this era as a grey era of the world. Ms. Karlina Supelli said that despite all of these sad facts, we should not be worried or desperate since the Lord never leaves the youth. He gives to the youth capabilities to face and challenge the situation. The youth have their own perspectives and ways to overcome the problems. We as the older generation should be like Mother Mary. She did not try to control Jesus but trust Him and let Him do what He wanted to do according to His Father's will. As a mother she must have been worried, but she kept quiet and reflected on it, prayed for Him and accompanied Him through all the process.

The second speaker, Fr Ignasius Budiono O.Carm., offered a reflection on Psalm 1 for our guidance in living in this millennial era. He said that as Psalm 1 starts with the acclamation: 'Happy are..', we have to be optimistic to face this era. The acclamation 'Happy are ...' refers to a congratulation or a wish for us to be happy because we have made the right choice to take this way of life: a life in the presence of the Lord. We all are called to be righteous people, who live the law of the Lord. In order to be righteous people we have to contemplate the Word of the Lord day and night. Through this contemplation we can be spiritual people, people who live their inner lives in silence, people who live near the source of life that is God Himself. By living near Him we may have a happy life because the joy of the Gospel fills our heart and can be fruitful for others. Moreover, if we are faithful to journey in the path of the Lord, at the end of the journey, the Lord Himself will welcome us and grant us eternal happiness.

The third speaker, Fr Benny Phang O.Carm suggested a tender response to the challenges that we might face in family and society in this millennial era by living in contemplative holiness. As Lay Carmelites, we are called to live this holiness by opening ourselves to a transformation of mind and heart, of our vision and of our actions. In leading us to true contemplation, Fr Benny invited us to reflect on two common current issues: pornography and extramarital sex, in the light of the Five Luminous Mysteries. The Baptism of the Lord, the first mystery, reminds us of our dignity as a person created in the image of the Lord. The, second, The Wedding in Cana reminds us of the sacred love that unites man and woman in holy marriage. The third, The Proclamation of the Kingdom urges us not to position ourselves as God over our fellow human beings, seeing them as objects of our satisfaction. The fourth mystery, the Transfiguration invites us to transmit some of the peace and serenity given to us by what we contemplate. Finally, the last mystery, The Institution of the Eucharist invites us to be total self-giving which is the total act of love. Closing his presentation, Fr Benny restated his invitation for the all Lay Carmelites to (1) live joyfully in contemplative holiness, (2) become witnesses of this

holiness in our changing world by our actions, and (3) become teachers of spiritual life and prayer.

In the group discussion session, we had the opportunity to share our struggles, commitments, and wishes either as an individual or as a community, with our sisters and brothers in Carmel. We learned that all of us shared the same challenges and faced the same problems and obstacles so that we decided to have our common commitments:

1. We will share what we have learned in this Congress to Carmelite communities, family, students and workers. This millennial era may frighten us and bring us confusion due to our lack of knowledge. We commit ourselves to be open to the changing world, and not to see it as something negative but see it as the sign of the times with which the Lord communicates His will for us. We realize that the Lord never leaves us alone. We will bravely face this millennial era and its challenges with hope, faith and love.
2. We also realize that we have sisters and brothers who live the same spirituality. We plan hand in hand to enter into the millennial era. We will try to find ways to build communication and cooperation among Lay Carmelite communities so that we can support each other in deepening and living our Carmelite spirituality.
3. We find that many members of our society are not ready to face the millennial challenges. Some of them may have become victims of the era: they destroy themselves by focusing on their own desires and leaving the Lord. We have decided to be living witnesses of the joy of contemplative holiness in human society wherever we live. We will also promote Lectio Divina and encourage others to read and ponder the Words of the Lord so that they may experience the joy of the Gospel themselves. We hope that through this we may colour the society where we live with the love of the Lord.
4. We learn that the youth can face the worst impact of the negative side of world advancement due to their lack of experience. We plan to introduce our children and youth to the Gospel of the Lord and guide them to live it in their daily life. We promise to strengthen our family ties, and never leave them alone but support and accompany our children and youth in their process of becoming what God wants them to be.
5. We believe that Carmelite spirituality helps us and strengthens us in our journey in this world. We are very thankful for this and would like to share this with the youth and invite them to join us in our Carmelite family.
6. The commitments which we have made are not easy at all; we do not see them as burdens but as a cross that we carry happily in following Jesus Christ, our Lord. We will start doing these commitments by having personal conversions and strengthen our self-control over temptations. We will also develop our respect for our neighbours and God's creation. With the help of God's grace, we are sure that we can achieve what we hope for.

We would like to end our final message with an invitation to all of you, our sisters and brothers, the Lay Carmelites of Asia, Australia and Oceania to be with us as we put these commitments into reality. Thank you. May God bless us all.

Issued on 16 February 2020, Jayakarta Hotel, Bali, Indonesia

