

# CARMEL CLARION



OCDS NEWSLETTER

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## The Soul That Cries to God

Jessica Powers  
1905-1988



The soul that cries to God out of the hot heart  
of contrition is indisputably heard.  
Here is the pact of love; it is triply signed  
with a sure eternal seal.  
Though the whimpering call creeps out from the  
den of the coiled serpent  
that hides from God and lies in wait  
for the virgin's heel,  
It stirs a sudden hastening out of heaven  
to the place of the cry. God takes this piteous one  
at its urgent word.  
He bundles it into His ship, with all its holdings,  
and the island of sin is left behind,  
in distance blurred.  
And He who redeems will use for the soul  
the full extent of its cargo: the songs,  
the memory's trivia, the sweet or acid tears,  
the spoils or the debt of frightening arrears.  
Ingenious to save, in the end His love  
will put to divine advantage  
the wisdom (if wisdom could be the word)  
of the wasted years.

**Editorial.** Lent is an excellent season for continued meditation on some of the scriptural names or titles of Jesus Christ our Lord, Savior and Redeemer.

Word	One Who is to Come
Emmanuel	Morning Star
Wonder-Counselor	God-Hero
Father-Forever	Prince of Peace
Jesus	Man from Bethlehem, Egypt, Nazareth
Baptised One	Anointed, Christ, Messiah
Teacher with Authority	Wonder Worker
Prophet	Son of David
Bread of Life	Cup of Salvation
Cornerstone, Capstone	Bridegroom
Healer	Servant of God
Shepherd	Way, Truth, Life
Just, Holy, Righteous	Transfigured One
Son of Man	Apostle
Beloved One	Forerunner
Founder, Author	Image, Reflection
Judge	Surety
Forgiver of Sins	Lamb
Scapegoat	Suffering Servant
Crucified One	First Born
Head	Mediator
Just, Holy, Righteous	Lord
God	King
Only Begotten One	Son of God
Priest	Rise on the Third Day
Conquerer of Death	Resurrection
The Risen One	Savior, Redeemer
Ascended, One Who	Glorified One
Paraclete, One Who Sent	Universal Savior
Alpha & Omega	Amen

Reprinted with permission from the book of religious poetry: **HOUSE AT REST** by Jessica Powers, also known as Sr. Miriam of the Holy Spirit OCD, 1984.

## CONVERSION IN CARMEL

It would not be harmony with our Carmelite charism to think that *conversion* is only for the initial grace from God to make the transition from living with the creepy-crawly vermin in the moat around the Castle: not being a God-fearing person, and to accepting the invitation to enter the Castle as a God-fearing person. We shall look at some forms of *conversion* in our Carmelite authors. Fr Theodore Centala OCD, Editor.

**Jessica Powers.** The Soul That Cries to God, The House At Rest, page 29. We saw in the text that the poet mentions the *hot heart of contrition* as a prerequisite for the Gift of the grace of *conversion*.

**Saint John of the Cross.** Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book I, Chapter 12, paragraph 3.(2). ...all these positive evils are together occasioned in the soul by each of these (inordinate) appetites. This is true whether the appetites concern mortal sin, venial sin, or imperfection. We call these evils positive,... because they correspond to a *conversion* to the creature, ...correspond to the *aversion* from God. (See last paragraph for solution.)

**Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity.** The Spiritual Doctrine of Elizabeth of the Trinity, M M Philipon OP, p. 2. Her first confession wrought a change in her soul which she later called her *conversion*, a shock "which caused a complete awakening with respect to the things of God." From that day forward she *resolutely* entered upon the struggle against her predominant faults...

**Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection.** The Practice of the Presence of God, Biographical Sketch, xviii. At the age of eighteen, a sudden intuition of the grandeur and presence of God grasped him profoundly....It was a silent call of the Divine Mystery and a *first conversion*..... He would later deplore the "*disorders of his youth*" and the "*sins of his past life*", determined to "*rectify his past conduct*."

**Saint Therese of the Child Jesus.** The Story of a Soul, Chapter 5. It was December 25, 1886, that I received the grace of leaving my childhood, in a word, the grace of my *complete conversion*. We had come back from Midnight Mass where I had the happiness of receiving the strong and powerful God. God would have to work a little miracle to make me grow up in an

instant, and this miracle He performed on that unforgettable Christmas day. On that luminous night which sheds such light on the delights of the Holy Trinity, Jesus, the gentle, little Child of only one hour, changed the night of my soul into rays of light. On that night when He made Himself subject to weakness and suffering for love of me, He made me strong and courageous, arming me with His weapons. Since that night I have never been defeated in any combat, but rather walked from victory to victory, beginning, so to speak, "to run as a giant"! (Psalm 18:6)

**Saint Teresa of Jesus of Avila.** Life, 9.1-3. Well, my soul now was tired (she was 39); and, in spite of its desire, my *wretched habits* would not allow it rest. It happened to me that one day entering the oratory I saw a statue they had borrowed for a certain feast to be celebrated in the house. It represented the much wounded Christ and was very devotional so that beholding it I was utterly distressed in seeing Him that way, for it well represented what He suffered for us. I felt so keenly aware of how poorly I thanked Him for those wounds that, it seems to me, *my heart broke*. Beseeking Him to strengthen me once and for all that I might not offend Him, I threw myself down before Him with the greatest outpouring of tears.

9.2. I was very devoted to the glorious Magdalene and frequently thought about her *conversion*, especially when I received Communion. For since I knew the Lord was certainly present there within me, I, thinking that he would not despise my tears, placed myself at His feet. And I don't know what I was saying (He did a great deal who allowed me to shed them for them, since I so quickly forgot that sentiment); and I commended myself to this glorious saint that she might obtain pardon for me.

9.3. But in this latter instance with this statue I am speaking of, it seems to me I profited more, for I was very *distrustful* of myself and placed all my *trust* in God. I think I then said that I would not rise from there until He granted what I was begging from Him. I believe certainly this was beneficial to me, because from that time I went on improving.

11. There must be many who have begun some time back and never manage to finish their course, and I believe it is largely because they do not *embrace* the Cross from the beginning.

Interior Castle, Mansions II, 1. All that the beginner in prayer has to do ... is to *labor* and be *resolute* and prepare with all possible diligence to bring their will into conformity with the will of God.... You may be quite sure that this comprises the very greatest perfection which can be attained on the spiritual road.

The Way of Perfection, XXXII. The aim of all my advise to you in this book is that we should *surrender* ourselves totally to the Creator, place our will in His hands and detach ourselves from the creatures....The *more resolute* we are in soul and the more we show Him by our actions that the words we use to Him are not words of mere politeness, the more and more does Our Lord draw us to Himself and raise us above our petty earthly things, and above ourselves, in order to prepare us to receive great favors from Him....What power this gift (of self) has! If it be made with due *resolution*, it cannot fail to draw the Almighty to become one with our lowliness and transform us into Himself and to effect a union between the Creator and the creature.

**Saint Teresa Benedict of the Cross.** Saint Edith Stein Called to the Truth - Blessed from the Cross: Portrait of a Life, Friedrich Cardinal Wetter, Archbishop of Munich and Freising Germany. This (her visit with Frau Reinach, recently widowed) was my first encounter with the Cross and with the divine power which it gives to those who *carry it*. For the first time I saw the Church which had been born of the redeeming suffering of Christ in her triumph over the sting of death; that victory was palpably before me. That was the moment in which **my unbelief collapsed**, Judaism waned and Christ blazed forth: Christ in the mystery of the Cross.

**Saint Teresa of Jesus of the Andes.** God the Joy of my Life: A Biography of Saint Teresa of Jesus of the Andes, page 8. From the time Juanita was 6 years old her mother and aunt took her to daily Mass. After the earthquake in 1906 Jesus *took my heart to be His own*. From the day she desired to receive Holy Communion drew stronger. She was told that she was too young, to wait four years, so she could learn how to pray and practice virtue. She did. When she received her First Holy Communion she heard Jesus speaking (locution) to her in her heart.

**Saint Teresa Margaret Redi of the Sacred Heart.** While she was attending the finishing school for girls run by the Benedictine Sisters, she was allowed to attend their liturgical functions, including retreats. At about twelve years of age she experienced a strong grace of *conversion*. She entered Carmel, working in the infirmary. She died at 22 in 1770 and her body is still incorrupt.

**Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified.** Mariam The Little Arab: Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified, page 4. From the age of four to eight she appeared to be a dreamer, one in search of solitude the better to think of God. She loved to be out in the orchard. Because it was out there that she found the *reflection* of the Creator: in the trees, flowers, insects and birds.... Like an echo of the voice she heard (locution) when she buried the little birds, she would often say: "Everything passes here on earth. What are we? Nothing, dust, nothingness, and God is so great, so beautiful, so loveable, and He is not loved!" She was already engrossed in this thought whose depth she would never cease plumbing to the last moment of her life.

**Saint Rafael Kalinowski of St Joseph.** Saint from the Salt Mines, page 110. July 1, 1866 (after four years in the salt mines). So you, my dear sister, believe that my way of religious thinking comes close to exaggeration. But how can I not give *myself up completely* to this religious feeling which saved me during the most difficult moments of my life, and then transformed me to the true way of life? God gave himself fully for us, how can we not dedicate ourselves fully to God? That now is my main trust. It will explain my current disposition, which I hope with God's help to keep forever." Six years later he left the salt mines and returned as he had arrived, by walking the three thousand miles back to Poland.

**Saint John of the Cross.** Spiritual Canticle, XXVII, 27.7.(2). As an imperfect soul is ordinarily inclined toward evil, at least in the first movements of its will, intellect, memory, and appetites, and as it has imperfections, so conversely the soul in this (state of holiness) is ordinarily inclined and moves toward God in the first movements of its intellect, memory, will, and appetites, because of the great help and stability it has in God and its **perfect conversion** toward him.

## Carmelite Community

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Dear Carmelites,

Greetings from Nairobi. Thanks to all of you who have sent us your gifts of news and prayers. Without your prayers we just couldn't continue.

(I had the privilege of attending) The International Meeting of Discalced Carmelite Missionaries in Quito, Ecuador from September 21 - October 5.... Each morning we heard of the organization and history of the Mission of Sucumbios [Bishop Gonzalez is a Carmelite] and in the afternoon went to see some of their projects: hospital, radio station, experimental farm, technical school, orphanage, foot-suspension bridge and their Small Christian Communities.

Late one afternoon, with the sun casting long shadows in a hot upper room, with sips of refreshing water, we were introduced to one of four native priests of this diocese. Fr. Raul Usca, an indigenous Indian, stopped in. He has been ordained a priest two years now. In a quiet voice, he, almost embarrassingly, tells us -- translated by Fr. Isadore -- how he entered the university for a degree. He was no longer interested in the Church because he didn't see any good it was doing for the people.

A priest invited him to join their small Christian discussion group, and slowly he became aware that the people ARE the Church. He became enthused and joined a missionary small Christian community helping the native Indians of Ecuador. One day, while the group was lamenting the fact that they gather without celebrating the Eucharist, one asked him. "Why don't you become a priest for us?" After some reflection he answered, "Give me a year to decide."

And he reflected for the year, assessing the benefits a native Indian could have as a priest. After that year he told the gathering, "I have decided. But it also involves all of you. If I am to become a priest, each of you has to assume some responsibility for forming Christian communities with me." Each one accepted a ministry: communications, healing, catechizing, teaching, etc. Then he said, Now I will become your priest."

They arranged a meeting with Bishop Gonzalez to inform him of the decisions one of his Christian Communities had taken. The bishop readily agreed. Raul took his years of theology by correspondence from a University in Bogota Columbia. Then he was ordained. The sun had almost set when he finished, but I hadn't noticed. He told his story so softly, that often I leaned forward to hear every word. It was a very personal account of grace coming through a sincere group of Christians for the building of God's kingdom.

Certainly, that was the most graced moment for me in Ecuador.

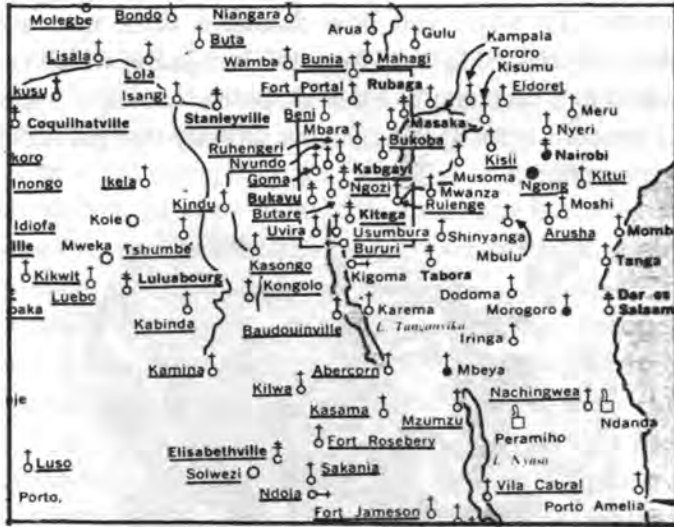
For eight days we had meetings in Quito which were well arranged, pertinent, informative and participatory. Fr. General, Fr. Caloi, Fr. Jerry Fitzpatrick, Fr. Stephen [secretary to the missions], Fr. Isadore, Fr. Raphael and Fr. Miguel were there as translators from the Generalate. We discussed, met in groups, wrote summary reports, and really got to know each of the Order's missions and missionaries well. Each evening videos of our missions were shown. Fr. Jim's didn't work because it was a different format. I didn't have one of Nairobi, so just passed photographs around.

While there Fr. Angelo [Delegate-Provincial, Malawi], Fr. Richard [Delegate-Provincial, Tanzania], Fr. Jim [Delegate-Provincial, Nigeria] and I met. Our Students occupied most of our meetings. Fr. Luis Hernandez-Bueno [General Provincial of D. R. Congo] also met with me a few times with a translator so I could answer his questions about his student with us, Br. Edmond. It was a very good meeting. It was very good seeing Bishop Labayan [Philippines] again. (Fr. Larry was a missionary there in the early 1970's.)

Leaving Quito I flew to Chicago where Fr. Phillip Thomas, Provincial, met me. I had about six days in Milwaukee to visit my family [all TEN of them] and purchase what was needed in Nairobi. Fr. Phillip also arranged an appointment for me to get a new pair of glasses [trifocals, not made in Africa]. The days went too quickly and after getting indigestion from a very large over-weight luggage fee, I boarded at Chicago and a few hours later got off at Nairobi. It's VERY good to be home again. Exams, apostolates, chickens, pigs, meetings, lectures, appointments have taken over just where I left off. Thanks for remembering us in prayer.

-- VERY Lucky Larry of Nairobi

## Carmelite Community - Nairobi Kenya November, 1998. From the desk of Shawn.



Dear friends in Carmel, and greetings to all of you from Kenya,

Life in the student house continues to bubble along with its mixture of the regular routine and moments that lift us out of the ordinary and everyday. One such occasion was the ordination to the diaconate of Br Andrew Unaegbu from Nigeria at the beginning of the month. Andrew was ordained, together with 17 other classmates, at Tangaza College. Bishop Colin Davies of Ngong diocese officiated.

This group of 18 was the largest we have seen so far at Tangaza. There had, however, already been two other groups of deacons from the college ordained this year, bringing the total number ordained for the year to well over 30. Four of these deacons are members of our Carmelite Community: Brs Jude, Ephraim and Andrew from Nigeria, and Br Chikaya from Malawi. Just one more sign, if one was needed, of the vitality of the Church in this part of the world.

Life in a formation house, one with 25 men at various stages of their formation, is not without its challenges. But to have the opportunity to participate, in some way, in this exuberant manifestation of the Church, can only be called a privilege. It should not be too long now, with the help of your prayers and support, before we see the first Kenyan Carmelites emerge from initial formation with loins girt and arms trained for (battle) ministry.

The Monday evening after Andrew's ordination, Fr Larry and I boarded a bus for Tanzania. We journeyed through the night and some 18, mostly sleepless, hours later arrived at our destination, Morogoro. This is a house of studies run by our Indian confreres from the Kanataka-Goa Province. Five students from the Kenyan Region are doing their philosophy there at this time: Josephat and Stanislaus in their second year, and Richard (who comes to us from Uganda), Jacob and Abednego in their first year.

With just the one house in Kenya, we are fortunate that the friars in Tanzania are able accommodate our philosophers. The young men are well and are applying themselves to the tasks at hand. This involves not just their academic pursuits, but learning to adapt to differences of climate and culture. All this is invaluable preparation for their future as Carmelites.

After spending two nights in Morogoro we left for Mbeya, down by the border with Malawi: Br Thomas, the first Kenyan to profess his vows as a Carmelite friar, is spending a year there gaining pastoral experience. The friars have two parishes there: Uyole, where Thomas is working with Fr Stan, and Igoma, a 30 minute drive away, where Frs Walter and Peter are now stationed.

After life in a student house of 30 or more, Thomas is experiencing another form of Carmelite life. He is working hard in the parish, which has 13 mission stations apart from the main church, conducting Bible study, catechetics and assisting those preparing for confirmation and marriage. We were pleased to see how cheerfully he is facing up to the challenges of life on the mission.

While we were in Mbeya we had a chance to do some sightseeing. We scaled a crater to look down on Lake Ngozi, which is a very special place for the local inhabitants and is shrouded in a haze of myth, legend and unexplainable events. We also visited the site of a thirteen ton meteorite that landed early this century. Our brother Thomas was strangely affected by this experience. Up until that time, he had not really considered the possibility of a red-hot piece of extra-terrestrial metal the size of a larger freezer chest landing on him while he was asleep in his bed. For the rest of the day he was caught up in his own thoughts and not very talkative.

We enjoyed our week in Tanzania and were pleased to see our young men were doing well, but it was good to get back to the community in Nairobi. There is just a few more weeks of this semester and examinations are about to commence, so there is a sober atmosphere about the place.

The retreat house continues to be popular. Apart from retreatants we allow groups to come for workshops and seminars if they are deemed not to disrupt the prayerful atmosphere of the place.

Recently we hosted a plenary assembly of the Sudanese Bishops' Conference. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for them to meet in their own country without being harassed by the government forces. They spent two weeks with us preparing a joint statement, which among other things denounced the ethnic cleansing taking place in the south of Sudan and the "cynical response" of the authorities to the devastating famine in the region, where food is denied to certain areas that are the strongholds of Christians and animists. The Bishops, on leaving, expressed their thanks for our hospitality and the conducive atmosphere they found here.

Our large praying community (when we are all assembled we number 30) is one of the features of our retreat house apostolate. Many retreatants remark on the inspiration they get from joining our community in the liturgy. As I often remind the students, we are all involved in the work of ensuring that our guests have a prayerful and fruitful retreat. In a few weeks we will conduct our Advent Retreat and it is already booked out. In fact, people are now asking to participate in the retreat as non-residents. Our monthly day of recollection, every last Sunday, also continues to attract a regular following of between sixty and seventy people.

From the sports desk. Our football team (soccer) is going through something of a slump at the moment. How times have changed. Once the mighty Carmelites swept all before them on the playing field in scenes reminiscent of Elijah dealing with the prophets of Baal. But over the years the demographics of our student population has altered. The wild and slightly daunting athleticism of the "sons of the prophets" has given way to a company of saints and scholars.

Now we can no longer even raise our own team and

have been forced to amalgamate with the Consolata Community next door. In the college football competition our hybrid team was hustled out in the early rounds. To show you how detached these men are about such worldly activities, the last game, which resulted in a stunning 6-1 defeat, barely caused a ripple of concern across the academic serenity that pervades our community.



Well, dear friends, that's about all there is to report at this moment. To fill in the few remaining lines of this page, let me share with you an item from one of the local newspapers. A young man is recovering in Nakuru Hospital after sustaining multiple injuries. No, this is not a report of another road accident. He was injured while attempting to milk an elephant. Apparently a female elephant and her calf had wandered out of a wildlife reserve into the neighboring district. A group of young men spotted the pair and one of them, we will never know why, was seized with an inexplicable desire for elephant's milk. Under cover of the surrounding bush he made his approach and claims to have already acquired more than a pint of the rare commodity before the mother elephant became aware of what was happening. In her indignation she turned on the intruder and picking him up in her trunk, hurled him some distance away.

Perhaps at this stage he should have remained motionless, but in his panic he leaped up and climbed a near by tree. The elephant then uprooted the tree and shook the man out it before crashing the tree down on him. She then stormed off with her youngster in tow, allowing the young man's friends to come to his assistance. (Moral of story: drink cow's milk, and wipe off all milk from your face before visiting a zoo.)

Wishing you all a happy and holy Advent (Christmas and Lent) from Nairobi, **Shawn**

**Handbook for Spiritual Directors**, by Julie M. Douglas, Paulist Press, NY/Mahwah NJ, 1998, paper 90 pp, \$7.95.

I. Preliminary Remarks. I want to make it clear that you should not attempt to direct people unless you have proper insight, training and ability. This book alone is not enough. It is a "dictionary" for those who know how to cope with most situations but want to check up on a helpful way to approach some particular problem that a directee might present. It will not automatically teach you how to carry our spiritual direction and is certainly no substitute for an internship or a course of studies in spirituality or theology.

II. Spiritual Direction. St. Teresa of Avila and the Prerequisites for a Spiritual Director, page 6. Choosing a Spiritual Director, page 8. St. Teresa's List of Qualities for a Spiritual Director, page 9. St. John of the Cross on Spiritual Direction, 11. St. John's Guidelines for Spiritual Directors, 13. Faults in a Spiritual Director, 13.

III. Spiritual Direction and Pastoral Counseling, 15.

IV. Conclusion, page 17.

#### **Handbook of Definitions**

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**List of Recommended Readings**, pages 86-90.

## **1998 FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Our financial picture is a little better than it was last year. There are less auto expenses this year. We are in the black by \$3,662, which is very good for the formation handbooks project in 1999. We are also involved in elections, and a new provincial delegate might want a different color of drapes for his office.

#### **Income for 1998**

Balance from the previous year	\$ 334.18
Clarion to Members outside East Coast	1,591.00
Donations mostly from the Members	2,168.28
Folders for Scapular, Promises and Vows	556.00
Formation Handbooks	735.00
Isolated Members special dues	520.00
Membership Dues & Carmel Clarion @ 20	24,676.00
Pastoral Visits to the Groups of OCDS	1,392.00
Retreats & Tapes of Conferences	2,010.00
Rule of Life copies to the Members	115.00
Scapulars, large for our Ceremony	25.00
Tee Shirts, left over from the NYC Congress	551.00
Travel Reimbursement from visiting Groups	485.00
<b>Total Income for 1998</b>	<b>35,158.46</b>

#### **Expenses for 1998**

Airplane Travel for Congress & Seminars	1,009.47
Auto Maintenance & License	613.50
Auto Insurance	1,425.00
Auto Loan Payments	5,476.32
Auto Gasoline	329.13
Bank Charges, Crestar	55.86
Books and Tapes for Retreats & Talks	98.66
Charity, for items for new Groups	258.27
Clarion Other, labels & mailing	1,883.82
Clarion Postage, mostly bulk rate,	1,970.22
Clarion Printing for six issues per year	5,530.00
Formation Handbooks	1,252.23
Isolated Directors Expenses	407.45
Office Furniture	117.83
Office Supplies	415.25
Office Postage	1,070.57
Office Printing	1,456.00
Office Telephone	784.40
Scapulars, large for our Ceremonies	25.00
Seminars & Congress	1,317.30
Stipend to Carmelite Friars @ 500	6,000.00
<b>Total Expenses for 1998</b>	<b>\$31,496.28</b>
Balance on hand for 1999:	\$3,662.18

## Catholic-Jewish Relations Advisory Addresses Jewish Concerns About the Canonization of Edith Stein

William Cardinal Keeler, DD



In May of 1987, the bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (CEIRA) issued an advisory to the nation's Catholics indicating appropriate understandings for Catholic veneration of Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Blessed Edith Stein. At the time, I chaired the committee. The present statement renews that advisory and updates it based on insights gained through Catholic-Jewish dialogue in the intervening decade.

The 1987 statement sought to address two underlying Jewish concerns. The first was that the raising up of a convert of Jewish background for Catholic veneration might occasion the development of organized movements within the church to proselytize and convert other Jews. History, the bishops' CEIRA knew well, teaches us that such movements, while perhaps well intentioned, have almost invariably led to a severe diminishment of the religious freedom of the Jewish people in Christian lands and at times to forced conversions, expulsions and other forms of persecution.

Thus, the bishops' CEIRA declared: "Catholic respect for the integrity of Judaism and for the ongoing validity of God's irrevocable covenant with the Jewish people is solidly founded on our faith in the unshakable faithfulness of God's own word. As the Second Vatican Council declared, 'According to the apostle, the Jews still remain most dear to God for the sake of their fathers, for he does not repent of the gifts he makes nor of the calls he issues (cf. Rom. 11:28-29)' (*Nostra Aetate*, 4).

"Therefore, in no way can the beatification of Edith Stein be understood by Catholics as giving impetus to unwarranted proselytizing among the Jewish community. On the contrary, it urges us to ponder the continuing religious significance of Jewish traditions, with which we have so much in common, and to approach Jews not as potential 'objects' of conversion but rather as bearers of a unique witness to the name of the one God, the God of Israel.

"As the Holy Father declared during his visit to the Rome synagogue: 'Each of our religions, in the full awareness of the many bonds which unite them, wishes to be recognized and respected in its own identity, beyond any syncretism and any ambiguous appropriation...No one is unaware that the fundamental difference from the very beginning has been the attachment of us Catholics to the person and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, a son of your people... But it must be said that the ways opened for our collaboration, in the light of our heritage drawn from the law and the prophets, are various and important. Jews and Christians are the trustees and witnesses of an ethic marked by the Ten Commandments, in the observance of which man finds his truth and freedom' (April 13, 1986).



"Celebration of Edith Stein's own witness can only serve to enhance the church's sense of the significance of the 'spiritual bonds' (*Nostra Aetate*, 4) which link us to the Jewish people."

Happily, our CEIRA is able to report that there has not been any hint of an organized conversionary effort using Edith Stein's name being developed among Catholics. Her intellectual and spiritual journey, from which Catholics have so much to learn, is presented as her own, a model for Catholics, not a model for Jews. Meditation on and emulation of Blessed Teresa Benedicta of the Cross will deepen the faith of Catholics and, properly understood, should lead Catholics to a deeper appreciation of the spiritual richness and integrity of Judaism, the faith to which God has called the Jewish people.

The second major Jewish concern addressed by the bishops' CEIRA, and by the Holy Father in his homily at the beatification ceremony and elsewhere, was that raising up the figure of a Jewish convert as symbolic of the millions of victims of the *Shoah* might lead to an "appropriation" by the church of the Holocaust itself by making it seem that the church, not the Jewish people, was the primary victim of Nazi genocide. The bishops' CEIRA stated:

"We see the beatification of Edith Stein as a unique occasion for joint Catholic-Jewish reflection and reconciliation. In honoring Edith Stein, the church wishes to honor all the millions of Jewish victims of the *Shoah*. Christian veneration of Edith Stein does not lessen, but rather strengthens our need to preserve and honor the memory of the Jewish victims. Catholic veneration of Edith Stein will necessarily contribute to a continuing and deepened examination of conscience regarding sins of commission and omission perpetrated by Christians against Jews during the dark years of World War II, as well as reflection on those Christians who risked their very lives to save their Jewish brothers and sisters. Indeed, it was in retaliation for a public letter by the Dutch Catholic bishops protesting the deportation of Jews that Edith Stein was picked up by the Nazis and sent to Auschwitz. Through the beatification of Edith Stein the church calls all Christians today to join with the Jewish people in opposing any and all forms of anti-Semitism."

Again, our secretariat reports that the educational and devotional materials that have been developed since the beatification over a decade ago are free of both theological and historical "triumphalism." Rather, they stress that the killers of Edith Stein, that is to say, the perpetrators of the Holocaust, were by and large baptized Christians whose consciences, in the Holy Father's phrase, had been "lulled" by centuries of negative theological polemics against Jews and Judaism emanating from all levels of the Christian community. While it cannot be said in any sense that the murderers were practicing Christianity in perpetrating mass murder (indeed, Nazi ideology bitterly opposed and sought to destroy the church), meditation upon the martyrdom of Edith Stein must stress the guilt of Christians and call all today to repentance even as they rightly point to the saintliness of her life and death.

One can note here not only the numerous statements of the Holy Father calling the to repentance for the Shoah and what preceded it, but now within the last few years the remarkable series of statements of repentance issued by bishops' conferences both in Europe and the United States, including most especially that of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, trenchantly titled "We Remember," which concludes with the following insistent appeal to the whole church :

"At the end of this millennium the Catholic Church desires to express her deep sorrow for the failures of her sons and daughters of every age. This is an act of repentance (*teshuvah*), since as members of the church we are linked to the sins as well as the merits of all her children. The church approaches with deep respect and great compassion the experience of extermination, the *Shoah* suffered by the Jewish people during World War II. It is not a matter of mere words, but indeed of binding commitment. We pray that our sorrow for the tragedy which the Jewish people have suffered in our century will lead to a new relationship with the Jewish people. We wish to turn awareness of past sins into a firm resolve to build a new future in which there will be no more anti-Judaism among Christians.... The spoiled seeds of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism must never again be allowed to take root in any human heart" (March 16, 1998).

The statements of the European and American bishops' conferences, as well as that of the Holy See, have now been collected and published by the U.S. Catholic Conference<sup>1</sup>. The very important statement of May 15, 1998, by Cardinal Edward Cassidy, the president of the commission, completes the volume. In this statement, which reflects Jewish concerns over certain phrasings in "We Remember," Cardinal Cassidy gives the document its definitive interpretation as a teaching document of the magisterium.

Both the 1987 statement of the bishops' CEIRA and that of the Holy See urge further joint studies and dialogue between Catholics and Jews on the Holocaust and its implications for the future. Indeed, the past decade since the beatification has taught us the immense complexity of the issues, both theological and historical, that the figure of Edith Stein raises for our dialogue with the Jewish people.

In a reflective piece on "Edith Stein: Jewish Perspectives on Her Martyrdom," Holocaust scholar Zev Garber speaks for many in the Jewish community when he states his appreciation for the 1987 statement of the bishops' CEIRA:

"Catholic authorities say that sainthood for Sister Teresa is recommended because of her pious life, her religious writings, her good works and her execution. Her act of Christian martyrdom gives the church every right to claim her ultimate sacrifice as an act of testimony to the passion of Jesus, preparing the world for the kingdom of God. Jewish fears that the veneration of Sister Teresa would promote conversion among Jews or appropriate the *Shoah* event as a church tragedy are properly laid to rest in a statement of the bishops' CEIRA of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.... But it is in the reflection on Catholic-Jewish reconciliation vis-a-vis the words of Edith Stein and the church's understanding of her martyrdom that major obstacles continue to exist."<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Rabbi Daniel Polish, whose reflections on the beatification of Edith Stein were considered so helpful in 1987 that his article received a top award from the Catholic Press Association that year,<sup>3</sup> notes in an update written for a new volume of essays giving both Jewish and Christian perspectives on Edith Stein that the canonization "serves to highlight one of the many areas of significant disagreement between the

Catholic Church and Jewish understanding. Thus, while we cannot embrace the notion that Edith Stein will serve as a bridge (between Jews and Catholics) we can see the occasion of her canonization as opening a door to significant discourse. For if this moment offers us the opportunity to explore this area, it will have served a constructive purpose."<sup>4</sup>

The issues raised by these two Jewish scholars, and by Rabbi Jack Bemporad as well,<sup>5</sup> are serious and profound. Interestingly, Garber, Polish and Bemporad all engage in respectful dialogue with the Holy Father's homily at the beatification. Polish frames the dilemma posed for Jews by the sanctification as a paradox:

"To elaborate on this paradox, it is clear that in the eyes of those who executed her, Edith Stein was a Jew. For them she died as a Jew. She came from a Jewish family and was thus deemed to be racially Jewish. To the Nazis, it made no difference that Edith Stein had converted to Christianity. To Jewish self-understanding, on the other hand that fact made all the difference.

"While a nonpracticing, even nonbelieving Jew is considered to be Jewish, one who embraces another faith is understood by Jewish teaching as renouncing Jewish faith and must as a consequence be considered no longer a Jew. Thus the painful paradox and the dilemma that while Edith Stein died precisely because the tormentors of the Jews considered her to be Jewish, to those in the midst of whom she suffered and died she cannot have been deemed Jewish at all."

Garber and Bemporad argue in a similar fashion, helpfully taking the reader through some of the intricacies of applicable rabbinic tradition in the process.

This is a most delicate matter and one that will require much serious dialogue, not so much to resolve as simply to clarify. On the one hand, the issue of who is a Jew is not entirely resolved within the Jewish community (under whose sole responsibility the matter resides). On the other hand, the Catholic Church can and doubtlessly should accept at face value the integrity of individuals who come to it through God's gift of faith to them. And in Edith Stein's mind, we know she never for a moment felt that she had ceased to be a Jew. So the dilemma for Catholics is different than that posed by Edith Stein canonization for Jews.

As a church, we cannot pretend that she died as anything other than one of the millions of Jews murdered in the *Shoah*. This would be to fall into trap highlighted by the Jewish concerns articulated -- by Rabbi Polish among others -- 10 years ago that the church would somehow diminish the Jewishness of the *Shoah* or even appropriate it as a Catholic event by lifting up one of the 6 million for veneration. Edith Stein, it is important for the church to say, died both as a "daughter of Israel" and as a Christian martyr.

We need the reminder of Christian sinfulness that the first affirmation brings with it as well as the spiritual challenge of the second affirmation. But we need also to remember, sensitively and compassionately, that the Jewish people do not see it that way. Nor, of course, do they need the reminder of the *Shoah* in the same way we do.

The issue of Edith Stein's continuing Jewishness does not exhaust the areas where this canonization can be the catalyst for significant theological dialogue. For even the second affirmation, that Sister Benedicta died a martyr, and the very nature of what martyrdom means are variously understood in our two communities. Here are raised theological issues which go to the heart of the dialogue. What do we mean by redemptive suffering? By redemption itself? As Professor Garber puts it:

"No wonder the church has seen fit to beatify her as the quintessential Shoah martyr. She is of Jewish birth and loyal to the Jewish people, a confessor of human sins, which theologically crucified Jesus; and a participant in the 'theology of suffering,' who is redeemed by self-sacrifice inherent in Christlike creeds and deeds...."

"We would suggest, with all deference, that the church and the Jewish people can agree that the courage and passion of Edith Stein should help Christians learn the lessons of Shoah, but they necessarily differ in their theology of redemption. For the church, it is the Easter faith, spirit over matter, that enables victory to be proclaimed over Golgotha and Auschwitz. For the synagogue, it is the covenantal oath at Sinai, uniting spirit and matter and resulting in everyday acts of holiness, that permits Zion to triumph over Auschwitz. Recognition of this difference may lessen the Jewish objection to Pope John Paul's canonization of a 'Jewish' nun."

I would suggest just as deferentially that the dialogue over Edith Stein engaged in by Jews and Catholics does not and must not end with the recognition of difference on this level. Each of the points raised by Polish, Garber, Bemporad and others requires deeper reflection and sharing (for example, the issue of the relationship of matter and spirit in the church's sacramental understanding). For differences can at times mask deeper commonalities of revealed insight for Judaism and Christianity alike. This is the unending hope of dialogue between us and the unending goal of reconciliation. □

#### Footnotes

1. Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (CEIRA), *Catholics Remember the Holocaust*, (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1998).
2. Zev Garber, *Shoah: The Paradigmatic Genocide* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1995) 91.
3. Daniel Polish, "A Painful Legacy: Jews and Catholics Struggle to Understand Edith Stein and Auschwitz," *Ecumenical Trends* (Graymoor Ecumenical Institute, Vol. 16, No. 9, October 1987). See also the response by Dr. Eugene Fisher of our secretariat in the February 1988 issue.
4. Daniel Polish, "The Canonization of Edith Stein," in Waltraud Herbstrith, OCD, *Never Forget.- Christian and Jewish Perspectives on Edith Stein*, translated by Susanne Batzdorff (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1998). I can, by the way, recommend this excellent volume most highly to Catholic and Jewish readers alike who may wish to understand not only a remarkable woman but the implications of her sainthood for both communities in dialogue. Included are articles by European and American scholars, and by friends and members of her family.
5. Jack Bemporad, Memorandum to Cardinal Keeler, August 1998.

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# SAINT JOSEPH FOUNDER AND FATHER OF THE TERESIAN CARMEL

Issued by the Secretary General for the Carmelite Nuns



## I. Introduction

From the beginnings of the Catholic Church there is a presence of Saint Joseph, strongly emphasized by St Matthew. We see Joseph canonised by the Holy Spirit as a just man, true husband of Mary and outstanding and virginal father of Jesus. In a certain sense it can be said God's plans for our salvation were realized through him. In the initial centuries of the Church his presence was a silent one in keeping with his silent nature -- the Saint of silence -- of whom we do not possess even one word. His own personality was the deciding and potent force.

With the passing of the centuries there was a well-merited awakening of recognition of his presence. It would not be possible to spell out isolated events leading up to this understanding, which came about in a silent and irresistible manner. It is sufficient to recall that St Teresa of Jesus of Avila was herself one of the important and decisive stages of the developing awareness of St Joseph in the Church.

As examples of Saint Joseph's prestige in the Church, one could list all the religious congregations and confraternities dedicated to him or the hundreds of churches and many more altars consecrated in his honour. One could call attention to the statues, paintings, books and sermons which extol him, or the countless people who have been named after him. In recent years, the Church has insisted on Saint Joseph's importance all the more.

In convoking the Second Vatican Council by the apostolic constitution *Humanae Salutis*, Pope John XXIII entrusted it to Joseph's care. In the Pope's address closing the first part of the Council he expressed this same confidence: "*Mary the Immaculate Virgin Mary always be with us. Likewise Saint Joseph, her most chaste Spouse, Patron of this ecumenical Council, whose name will shine in the canon of the Mass from this day forward. May he accompany us in our journey, he who was given by God as companion and helper of the Holy Family*"<sup>1</sup>.

## II. - Theology of Saint Joseph

Scripture must be the source and soul of any good theology. Although the Gospels say little about St Joseph, what they do say is sufficient to grasp the most basic things about his place in the history of salvation, his virtue and greatness. In actual fact from these few words the Church has been developing present day theological and spiritual appreciation of him through the pronouncements of Popes, her liturgy, writings of saints, theologians, preachers and the common sense of faith. This is why the Church today honours and venerates him.

### 1. Scriptural background

The Gospel gives us the genealogy of Joseph<sup>2</sup> because Jesus derives his legal descent from Abraham with all its consequences, especially his descent from David through Joseph. Because of Joseph, Jesus was considered an heir to the eternal messianic Kingdom. This is the meaning and importance of the genealogy of Joseph who was married to Mary who gave birth to Christ.

In God's plan Saint Joseph played a role of capital importance. The Messiah was not only to be a son of David but also born of a Virgin. When Joseph, the man

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1. AAS 55 (1963) 41. We see the same sentiments in the opening address of the second session of the Council by Paul VI. "May all the Angels and Saints assist us and in a most special way Saint Joseph who has been declared Patron of this Council". AAS 55 (1963) 859; see AAS 56 (1964) 1013.

2. Mt 1: 1-16.

of few words gave his "Yes" to God, by taking Mary home as his wife, he made it possible for Jesus to be considered a son of David and accepted as Messiah. Everything announced to Joseph was of supreme worth<sup>3</sup>.

For this reason, the Holy Spirit sanctified Joseph, "the just man" and made him perfectly suited to being the husband of Mary. God prepared their marriage and directly intervened to bring it about. When the Word became Flesh, Joseph abandoned himself fully to God's will<sup>4</sup>. Because Joseph is Mary's husband, the Gospel also calls him father of Jesus: "Your father and I have been looking for you"<sup>5</sup>. The same Gospel makes it clear, however, that Joseph's fatherhood is virginal.

Joseph is a real father. Bethlehem makes that clear. Joseph lovingly brought Mary there and prepared for Jesus' birth. He sought decent lodgings among friends and acquaintances, and when he could not find any, he prepared for the holy event as best he could by taking shelter in a stable. He was with Mary when, as St Augustine says, Heaven gave them both a son. Joseph took Christ in his arms amidst the poverty and neglect that God had planned. He realized his own fatherhood in the Gift he received from the Holy Spirit<sup>6</sup>.

As father of the new-born child, Joseph and Mary had Jesus circumcised on the eighth day and gave him his name. In this exercise of paternal rights, the personality of Joseph in a certain sense marks Jesus, incorporating God's Son legally into the dynasty of David. It was also a prophetic act since the name, which meant Saviour, matched the role God had appointed for him<sup>7</sup>.

St Luke recounts how Joseph and Mary presented the Infant Jesus in the temple. We appreciate from that how much they recognized the importance of this consecration of their son to God.

As father, Joseph received an order from Heaven to take refuge in Egypt in order to escape the wrath of Herod. In due time, he was told to return to Palestine<sup>8</sup>.

As a dutiful son, Jesus obeyed Joseph and was subject to him<sup>9</sup>. We sense Joseph's strong feelings of love for his son when, at his birth, angels appeared to sing his praises and shepherds came to see him<sup>10</sup> and when Simeon blessed the Baby as his parents marvelled at what was being said about him<sup>11</sup>. Joseph's fatherly con-

cern is also obvious when Mary and he found Jesus in the temple after searching for three days, "You see that your father and I have been searching for you in sorrow"<sup>12</sup>.

## 2. Theological Reflection

Though the Gospel accounts of Saint Joseph are few, what little they do tell us is so profound that one can readily see his special role. From these Biblical sources a theology of Joseph has gradually developed. Its key points are as follows:

### a) Joseph, the Spouse of Mary

This is the first thing that stands out in the Gospel accounts. Joseph was married to Mary. Theirs was a true marriage with all of the rights and obligations even though sealed by the virginity of both of them. It was a real marriage established in a special way to

care for and educate within it Jesus, the fruit of the virginal womb of Mary. For this reason it was a marriage prepared and brought about by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Mary had to be a virgin but married to the just man Joseph. Jesus needed to be born in a virginal way into a real family. The chaste love of this real marriage was never tainted by the carnal. Therefore the Holy Spirit predestined Joseph and prepared him to be a worthy partner in this marriage. It was also a mar-



3. Mt 1: 18-24

4. Mt 1: 19a

5. Lk 2:48.

6. Lk 2:4-7

7. Lk 2:21; Mt 1:20-21, 25.

8. Mt 2:13-22.

9. Lk 2:5 1.

10. Lk 2:8ff.

11. Lk 2:33.

12. Lk 2:48.

riage to protect the good name of Mary in her divine motherhood and to introduce the Son of God into the world in the normal ways in which others come, with the exception of carnal generation.

### **b) Joseph, Father of Jesus**

It is from the uniqueness of this marriage that we understand the fatherhood of Joseph. God asked Joseph's consent for the marriage to Mary before bringing Jesus into the course of history. "Joseph, have no fear about taking Mary as your wife. It is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child .... And Joseph received her into his home"<sup>13</sup>, and with her the fruit of her womb, thus he would be called the father of Jesus, a title given to him in the Gospel.

The first writers to deal with St Joseph took up this question and answered it by way of analogy between the marriage contract and the legal right of possession and also by reference to the Jewish law of Levirate. They argued as follows: by conjugal right Mary belonged to Joseph. Just as Joseph would have had rights over the fertility of any field he might own, he had matrimonial rights to her fertility. But because of his vow of virginity, he renounced the use of this right. In a sense, he surrendered it to the Holy Spirit for it was by the Holy Spirit that Mary had conceived.

According to this somewhat patriarchal way of thinking, just as the fruit of a field belonged to the owner of the field, the fruit of the womb belonged to the husband. But since Joseph had renounced his rights, he was -- as it were legally "dead". He had no offspring. The Holy Spirit, in giving Mary a child, "raised up" a son for Joseph, as did the Jews of old who raised up offspring to their dead brothers. Jesus was Joseph's heir by analogy to levirate.

Theologians have tried to find a good word to describe Joseph's fatherhood: he is Jesus' legal father, his foster father, his supposed father, his virginal father, etc. In fact his fatherhood is unique. Joseph is Jesus' father in every sense except "according to the flesh". But the point of all this grasping after words is not to explain away Joseph's fatherhood. It is rather the opposite. The fact that he was not a natural father does not diminish his role as parent. Saint Augustine even wrote that one is a better father in the degree to which one is chaste.



### **c) Joseph's parenting**

Just as God creates and fashions the heart of every person<sup>14</sup>, he put into the heart of Joseph the highest aspirations of what a father should be. The heart of Joseph was specially made by God to care for His Son when he would take on flesh in our world. So there is no father's love for his child which can be compared with Joseph's love for Jesus. Joseph's love transcends all imagining, for God endowed him with a fatherly love unique in all the world. As one author says, "If Joseph was not the natural father of Jesus, it was not because he was found lacking in any way, but because God choose it to be so"<sup>15</sup>

One such expression of Joseph's fatherly love is the way he treated the young Jesus. It was the duty of the Jewish father to pass on the faith to his sons. It is clear from the Gospels that Joseph brought up Jesus well, teaching him the prayers that every faithful Israelite prayed daily at home, in the temple and in the synagogue, such as the Shema and prayers of thanksgiving -- prayers which every male over twelve had to know. Undoubtedly he taught him too those special passages of Scripture which referred to the salvation history of the Chosen People, along with the most commonly read Psalms, and the teachings of Prophets and Sages.

13. Mt 1:20b, 24. 14. Ps 33:1 15. I. COUTINO.

Since every young Jewish boy was taught a trade in order to earn a decent living, Saint Joseph taught Jesus how to be a carpenter. Thus, Jesus' life as a child and an adolescent was strongly marked by the education given him by Saint Joseph.



#### d) Joseph's great sanctity

Because of Joseph's marriage to Mary and because he was a father to Jesus, theologians have concluded that his greatness and sanctity are unique. He is second to no one but Mary.... Because Joseph was the husband of Mary, God gave him a soul similar to hers, as St Bernard says. In any good marriage, there is a certain equality between the partners, but even more so in this marriage made by God Himself. For this reason, St Joseph was a Virgin like Mary, and was young when he married her. Just to think of Mary's sanctity is to deduce the same for Joseph.

Joseph's holiness never ceased to grow through his daily contact with Mary and Jesus, just as people experience a fire's heat the closer they are to it, or drink from a source of pure water when one is nearby.

Being the father of Jesus meant that Joseph possessed a sanctity worthy of such a calling. All the prerogatives of holiness in St Joseph have their source and explanation in the greatness of his fatherhood. This high office places St Joseph right at the throne of God conferring holiness and virtue far superior to all the angels. God the Father generously gave him every grace, even graces which might seem contradictory

such as virginity and matrimony. While God divides his gifts among other saints, he gave them all to Saint Joseph -- and without measure.

#### e) St Joseph's power of intercession

St Joseph's power of intercession is unique after that of Mary. In her hymn of praise to Joseph in Chapter 6 of her Life, St Teresa recognizes the theological reasons for this: he was father to Jesus and husband of Mary. If St Joseph gave an order to Jesus as his son on earth and Jesus obeyed him, then he continues to obey Joseph in heaven.... Pius IX gave expression to this faith by declaring Joseph Patron of the Universal Church on December 8, 1870. Even though the feast was suppressed later in the universal Church, it still remains true that St Joseph is Patron and unique Protector of the Church. Just as we recognize that Mary as Mother of the Church is also its Patroness and Protector, so also we recognize these qualities in Joseph.

### III. Saint Joseph in Carmel before Saint Teresa

Saint Joseph plays a part in Carmel from the origins of the Order, for it was in Palestine, the land of Joseph, that the flower of Carmel was planted and took root. Indeed, Carmel was cradled, as it were, by Mary and Joseph from its very beginnings. If it cannot be verified that "when the Carmelites, fleeing from persecution in the East and taking refuge in the West, brought the Feast of St Joseph"<sup>16</sup>, it is undeniable that they brought a personal and local devotion to Europe with them.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Carmelites were the first in the Latin Church to have a proper Office in honour of Saint Joseph. We find evidence of this in a breviary printed in Brussels in 1580 and in subsequent editions. This is certainly the Office that Holy Mother Teresa would have read when she celebrated the Feast of St Joseph.

16. LEON DE SAN JOAQUIN, *El culto de San Jose y la Orden del Carmen*, Barcelona, 1905, Ch 2, p. 48.

17. LEON DE SAN JOAQUIN *Op. cit.*, Ch 3, p.72. This office with its nine readings of the three nocturne, antiphons and responsories can be found in BAR-TOLOME MARIA XIBERTA, *Flores josefinas y la liturgia carmelitana antigua*, Est. Jos. 18 (1964) 301-319. The readings were taken from Pedro de Ailly.



So it can be said that as soon as the Carmelites began to honour St Joseph, they did it with an ardour which has hardly been equalled in the history of devotion to him. "Not only is this Office the most ancient one in the Latin Church, but it is also the most beautiful. All its parts, from the first antiphon to the last, represent the Saint in all the splendour of his glory"<sup>17</sup>.

What is being sung and celebrated on this Feast of the nineteenth of March?... This Office summarizes the Church teaching on St Joseph, which St Teresa read and meditated upon while she lived at the Incarnation. Even before she lived there, devotion to St Joseph was already firmly established, and it overflowed into her own life and writings.

#### IV. - St Teresa's relationship with Saint Joseph

Few people in history have been so gifted at getting along well with others as St Teresa. Her friendship was open and generous, and her social and spiritual relationships were extensive and varied. With Carmelites, she dealt with everyone from the Superior General down to a great many friars and nuns.

The same is true for the saints in Heaven. She was certainly not one of those people devoted to just a saints. On the contrary, she admitted that she was devoted to many, a list of 34 saints for whom she had a special devotion, was found in her breviary, but even that list is not complete. At the top of the list was Saint Joseph. Among the others were the Patriarchs, the 11,000 Virgins, the Saints of the Order and the Angels.

Many saints but one very special one, not only because he was first on the list but because of her special devotion to him: St Joseph.



##### a) St Teresa's devotion to St Joseph

What St Teresa tells us about the place of St Joseph in her own salvation history, is the expression of a pro-

found and sincerely felt devotion to the holy patriarch, a fact of life, a deep and most intimate experience over many years. She does not speak of what she learned from books or of what she heard in sermons at, least once a year when she arranged to celebrate his feast with the utmost solemnity<sup>18</sup> and on other occasions.

Rather she speaks from her personal experience with the Saint, in her own life and her soul. She does not say anything that she does not know first hand. Because of this, she is a real apostle of devotion to him.

Her love for Saint Joseph is evident from the time she entered the Incarnation. But it had already begun when she was a child. Is there not an allusion to St Joseph in these words of hers? "With the care my mother took to have us pray and be devoted to Our Lady and to some of the saints..."<sup>19</sup>. As for St Teresa, to have us pray and be devoted to Our one cannot, think of the Virgin without thinking of St Joseph at her side. Certainly from the time St Teresa entered the Incarnation, her devotion to him became strong, lively and she recommended him to others. It was a devotion that became part of her life and was composed of affection, commitment, veneration, confidence and love for him which led her to commend herself often to him.

One result of this attitude, lived out day to day but especially in times of spiritual or physical need, is that we realize she chose a saint full of goodness and power with whom she related as one would with a father and Lord. She saw through her own experience, (as did others to whom she encouraged this devotion) the benefits which St Joseph granted. The more she asked for, the more he gave.

We are not dealing here with mystical experience, but with a deep conviction based on faith and love that the graces she had received in soul and body were through St Joseph's intercession, in the measure of her confidence in asking and placing everything into his hands. From this comes the gratitude which is so typical of her. Moreover, she became a great advocate of his and won over many devotees to him. She writes: there are many who have become devoted to him .. I would tell them to recommend themselves to him.. and celebrate his feast with all solemnity. \_\_\_\_\_

18. Life 6:7.

19. Life 1:1.

## b) Supernatural and mystical experience

"... according to Dr. Ribera, St. Teresa had placed (a plaque ?) above the entrance to her monasteries that they were founded for Our Lady and for the glorious St Joseph. And she took the statue of this glorious saint, which is now in Avila, on all her foundations, calling him founder of the Order. Those who have made profession in the Discalced Carmelites recognize that the glorious St Joseph is the founder of the Reform, just as Carmel recognizes the most holy Virgin Mary as its foundress"<sup>20</sup>.

As a matter of fact, the founding of St Teresa's first monastery cannot really be explained without St Joseph's help. The first monastery of the Teresian Carmel was founded in an atmosphere bathed in the supernatural of a kind St Teresa understood, an atmosphere in which St Joseph had the leading role. As Father Gracian says, applying this important role to all the other convents St Teresa founded as well: "... in the way that St Joseph miraculously built this monastery of St Joseph, I could say that many others of the friars as well as of the nuns could not have been built if he had not helped in the construction"<sup>21</sup>.

## c) External forms of her devotion to Saint Joseph

St Teresa's abundant devotion to St Joseph and experience of him was manifested in many ways. Though her love of him reached supernatural heights, this did not make her lose contact with everyday reality. So even though her experience with him reached great heights, she expressed her love in the simplest and most down-to-earth and traditional ways. For her, the ordinary devotional practices of her day were still sources of piety, love and gratitude for St Joseph.

### 1) Naming her monasteries

For Holy Mother, the convents that she founded, like the first in Avila, belonged to St Joseph. They were his houses. Because of this, she had most of them bear his name. Of the seventeen "little dovecots of the Virgin" which she began, eleven have the name St Joseph: Avila (1562), Medina del Campo (1567), Malagon (1568), Toledo (1569), Salamanca (1570), Segovia (1574), Beas de Segura (1575), Seville (1576), Caravaca (1576), Palencia (1580), and Burgos (1580). It is interesting that from the foundation at

Beas on, she ingeniously combined St Joseph's name with other titles.

### 2) Statues of Saint Joseph in her many foundations

Though not all the foundations of St Teresa bear the title Saint Joseph, his statue does



have a presiding place in every one of them. This is one more way in which she would show her devotion to the Saint in her convents. Most of these statues are still preserved today.

### 3) Celebration of the feasts of St Joseph

One of the surest signs of true devotion to a Saint is how the liturgy on his feasts is celebrated. Saint Teresa not only celebrated the feast of St Joseph, but she did so solemnly. As she herself says, "I did my best to celebrate his feast with all the solemnity possible"<sup>30</sup>. The custom of celebrating the Feast of Saint Joseph with great solemnity -- with music and a sermon, bell-ringing, elegant flower arrangements and clouds of incense and myrrh -- this used to be the custom in all the churches of the Order, according to Blessed John Baptist of Mantua.

Saint Teresa began it in the Incarnation and kept it up during the years she lived there. She continued it when she was re-elected Prioress, and used to celebrate it in the same way in whatever convent she happened to be staying on his feast day. This is one of the facts most testified to in the processes for her beatification and canonization.

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20. Josefina: 1: 5, Ch. 4. BMC 16:476.

21. Same, page 476.

30. Life 6:7.

She would also organize special celebrations for Mary and Joseph on solemn occasions like Christmas. On that day, according to Isabel Bautista, she would arrange a procession with the statues of the Virgin and St Joseph, with St Joseph begging for lodging for his pregnant wife.

#### **4) Chapter 6 of the Life, a praise of Saint Joseph**

Chapter six of Saint Teresa's Life, the book of the mercies of the Lord to her, is a short but dense hymn of praise of St Joseph.

#### **d) Persons of prayer ought to be devoted to Saint Joseph**

She writes "Especially persons of prayer should always be attached to him... Anyone who cannot find a master to teach him prayer should take this glorious saint for his master, and he will not go astray"<sup>32</sup>.

For St Teresa, those who give themselves to a life of prayer make up a special category in the Church: They are its servants of love"<sup>33</sup>. Her daughters the Discalced Carmelites belong to this group. For them, St Joseph is a past master.

With her understanding of what prayer is we can see why she proposes St Joseph as the greatest master in this domain. St Joseph's life, his vocation and mission were totally spent in Jesus' company and at his side as he spoke with him and served him. Living with Jesus and for Jesus was the whole reason for his existence.

Joseph's life found its meaning centred on Jesus: receiving him and placing him in his mother's arms, giving him his name, guarding and watching over him, feeding and teaching him, living in intimacy with him. Who of us could understand the sweet intimacy which he knew with Jesus? Who could even imagine the intimate sharing which developed between them and with Mary?

If prayer is an intimate friendship with Christ, then listening to the word of Jesus and seeing truth in his word is an essential part of it. Certainly St Joseph often listened, lost in thought, to the words of his Son and pondered them in his heart. If Jesus revealed secrets to the apostles because they were his friends"<sup>38</sup>, what secrets would he not have revealed to his own father Saint Joseph?

How Joseph, for his part, would have listened to the words of Jesus, so full of life and warmth! With what meekness he would have taken them in! With what love he would have meditated on them! What conversations must have taken place between the two!

Indeed, Joseph's whole life was a prayer, because it was spent in Jesus intimate company. No one was more familiar with this kind of prayer than St Joseph, who spent so much time with Jesus and Mary in an authentic communion of friendship and love.

For this reason In the Teresian Carmel Saint Joseph has always been a teacher of prayer. Countless souls in Carmel have found in him a sure guide on their path through prayer and have even arrived at a true mystical experience of him, as did Holy Mother Teresa.

#### **V. - Teresa, Apostle of devotion to Joseph**

When St Teresa writes of her own uniquely personal experience of St Joseph, so simply and vivaciously expressed, she has a purpose in mind: to encourage the same experience in others, because she wants everyone to be devoted to St Joseph and to commend themselves to him. In this she was richly successful. It is impossible to read the pages where she describes her experiences with him and remain indifferent. Though in quantity her words about him are few, the naturalness, warmth and love with which she writes about him have made her one of his great apostles -- and not only in Carmel, but in the whole Church.

#### **In the Teresian Carmel**

That the foundation of St Joseph's in Avila was a significant milestone for the apostolate of devotion to St Joseph is clear. Down through the centuries, he has been greatly served there, as Carmelite authors have emphasized.

The following is what Father John of the Annunciation, General of the Carmelite congregation in Spain, wrote about the foundation of St Joseph's, "the Blessed Sacrament was reserved at St Joseph's and the church was dedicated to our Father St Joseph, who has been Patron and Protector of our Reform from the beginning.... This convent of St Joseph in Avila is the

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32. Life 6:8.

33. Life II:1.

38. John 15:15.

forebearer of all the other convents of the Discalced, and it is also the forebearer of devotion to Saint Joseph in all the others"<sup>42</sup>.

As proof of how devotion to St Joseph became a part of the very heart and soul of the Discalced Carmelites, we have only to see the number of convents which followed Holy Mother's example and were named after St Joseph. By 1699, there were 321 convents of Discalced Carmelite friars in the world, not counting the hospices. Of these 73 were called St Joseph's. Of the 180 monasteries of nuns under the Jurisdiction of the Order, 57 were named after St Joseph.

More important than the material convents dedicated to St Joseph are the spiritual convents -- the souls -- where he plays a privileged part. Devotional customs to St Joseph which Holy Mother began are still being celebrated in the Teresian Carmel, and others have been introduced which take their inspiration from hers. The silence and solitude of Carmel makes for a warm home for St Joseph. These, in turn, serve as powerful centres of warmth radiating out to the Church throughout the world and spreading devotion to him.

### **Glorious pages**

Throughout the history of the Teresian Carmel, both friars and nuns, glorious pages have been written reflecting St Joseph, who has always been -- and who continues to be -- the Father, the Protector, and the Patron of the Order. Holy Mother Teresa's desire to know St Joseph has always resonated in the hearts of her Carmelites and found a home there.

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, whose devotion to Saint Joseph was part of her love for the Virgin Mary, prayed every day, "Oh Joseph, father and protector of virgins..." As she began her pilgrimage to Rome, she prayed that he would watch over her. When she visited Loretto, she felt deep emotion as she walked on the very floor which St Joseph had blessed with his sweat. In Carmel, she dedicated a poem to him, in which she praised his humble life at the service of Jesus and Mary and his simple and hard life of toil. In the refectory, she used to offer him anything that was special in the meal. This exclamation of hers in a synthesis of her entire love for him, "Oh good St Joseph! Oh how I love him! And in Heaven we will see and sing his glory".

Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity and so many more Carmelites have been devoted to him and responded to Holy Mother Teresa's call<sup>44</sup>

### **VI. - Conclusion**

For a Carmelite it would be impossible to put St Joseph to one side when the Spirit has spoken quite clearly in the Church and particularly so in the Teresian Carmel on his place and role in the history of salvation of the Church and each one of the saved. It would be to turn a deaf ear to Saint Teresa's loud cry to be devoted to her father and lord Saint Joseph, and that we commend ourselves to him particularly since we are people of prayer. Her weighty words coming from personal experience and affection make St Joseph as timely a saint as ever. □

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42. Prontuario del Curmen, t.2; dial. I 1, p.497,  
Madrid, 1699

44. Life 6:6.

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