



CARMEL CLARION

Disalced Carmelite Secular Order

Washington, D.C.



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Jesus said to His mother, "Woman, there is your son." John 19:26

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CARMEL CLARION

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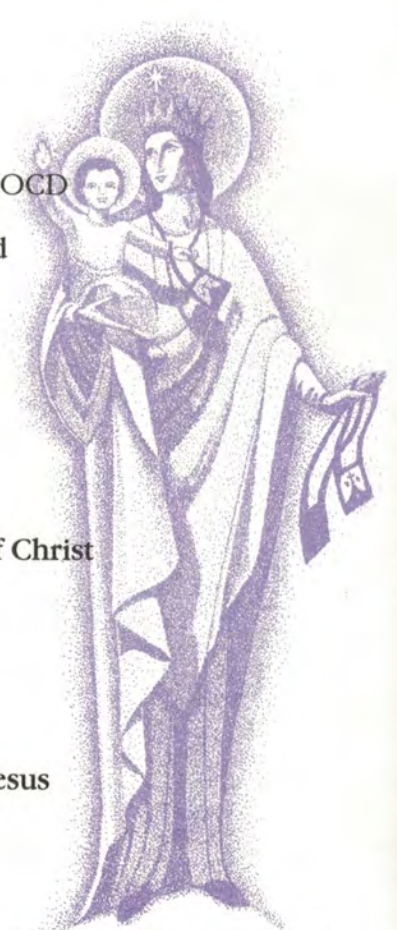


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Editorial

During Lent let us ponder the profound message in the poem by Jessica Powers, *The Book and the Cup*. It reminds us that we should be confident that our God of mercy and compassion is out looking for the lost sheep. Saint Teresa writes that as we become closer to Christ, the Holy One, we also become more aware of our own evilness. And God sees all this without any earthly light. Result: every Lent each one of us become aware: I am a lost sheep.

There is enough written in that book for me to conclude that I may not yet be saved! God is helping me to see this, from the intimacy of the Indwelling, just a local call to my conscience. Others may suspect it from a distance. I know I cannot hide and even plenty of handkerchiefs are not the answer.

It seems that my body may have been the source of my shame. If only I were more of a spirit, but some of the angels also sinned and



can no longer behold the Face of God. I need my whole human person to do penance, to practice virtue with my strength and determination.

I must not try to distract myself by seeking refuge in the many books in my bookshelf. God is holding the right book for me: The Will of God. And Saint John of the Cross writes that the same Flame that causes

cauterizing pain, also causes great joy when the residue of our sins is burnt away. So, yes, I will accept the book and drink from the cup.

Little Therese prayed to God to complete all her purification while she was on this earth, for she wanted to go straight to heaven. She understood that the fires of Love are more purifying than the fires of Purgatory. All we have to do is to allow that refining Fire to freely work on our whole person. Otherwise we could be grabbed by two strong angels and put in some spiritual microwave oven and forced to take the slower fixed rate in Purgatory. Let us not vote for the wrong thing. ■

Fr Theodore N Centala OCD, Editor

The Book and the Cup

Sister Miriam of the Holy Spirit OCD —
Jessica Powers (1905-88)

I am reading out of the book of my own evil;
I am drinking out of the cup of my own shame
here in the darkness with no candle lit.
The Hand of God is holding the book for me, and I
am reading it.
He is holding the cup and its drink is liquid flame.

Where can I hide from this vast condemnation?
The Face of God is merciful, is kind;
yet my own script is pitiless to accuse,
and the deep draught of my own conscience sears.
I try, as once, to make escape through weeping;
but here one sees more clearly through one's tears.

Oh, to be lost, destroyed, obliterated!
To have the self in me erased and done!
Would I were naked spirit holding God and
all else nothingness, oblivion...

Yet since the Will of God presents this book,
I would not turn from it to look upon
the fairest poetry that earth has given.
I would not trade this cauterizing cup for all the
wines in heaven.

Preserving Our Strength for God

When the will directs these faculties, passions, and appetites toward God, turning away from all that is not God, the soul preserves its strength for God and comes to love God with all its might. — St John of the Cross - Ascent III 16, 1-2

If you would learn self-mastery, begin by yielding yourself to the One Great Master. — Lobstein

Conquer thyself. Till thou hast done this, thou art but a slave; for it is almost as well to be subjected to another's appetite as to thine own. — Burton.

The command of one's self is the greatest empire a man can aspire unto, and consequently, to be subject to our own passions is the most grievous slavery. He who best governs himself is best fitted to govern others. He who reigns within himself and rules his passions, desires and fears is more than a king. — Milton

For want of self-restraint, many men are engaged all their lives in fighting with difficulties of their own making, and rendering success impossible by their own cross-grained ungentleness; whilst others, it may be much less gifted, make their way and achieve success by simple patience, equanimity and self-control. — Smiles

Self-government is, indeed, the noblest rule on earth: the object of a loftier ambition than the possession of crowns or sceptres. The truest conquest is where the soul is bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The monarch of his own mind is the only real potentate. — Caird

The man whom Heaven appoints to govern others should himself first learn to bend his pas-

sions to the sway of reason. — Thomson

To rule self and subdue our passions is the more praiseworthy because so few know how to do it. — Guiccardini

He that lays down precepts for governing our lives and moderating our passions, obliges humanity, not only in the present, but for all future generations. — Seneca

More dear in the sight of God and His angels than any other conquest is the conquest of self —A. P. Stanley

Self-control is promoted by humility. Pride is a fruitful source of uneasiness. It keeps the mind in disquiet. Humility is the antidote. — Lydia H. Sigourney

Recollection. It involves a gradual increase in self-control and an end to vain wondering from the right path; it means conquering, which is a making use of one's senses for the sake of the inner life. — St Teresa of Jesus of Avila WP 29,7

Real glory springs from the silent conquest of ourselves; without that the conqueror is only the first slave. — Thomson

No conflict is so severe as his who labors to subdue himself. — Thomas Kempis

Do you want to know the man against whom you have most reason to guard yourself? Your looking-glass will give you very fair likeness of his face. — Whately

No man is free who cannot command himself. — Pythagoras

Wouldst thou have thy flesh obey thy spirit? Then let thy spirit obey thy God. Thou must be governed, that thou may'st govern. — Augustine



Better conquest never canst thou make than warn thy constant and thy nobler parts against giddy, loose suggestions. — Shakespeare

And believe that this determination is more important than we can realize. — St Teresa of Jesus of Avila WP 11, 5

May I govern my passions with absolute sway, and grow wiser and better as life wears away. — Watts

The most precious of all possessions is power over ourselves; power to withstand trial, to bear suffering, to front danger; power over pleasure and pain: power to follow our convictions,

however resisted by menace and scorn; the power of calm reliance in scenes of darkness and storms. He that has not a mastery over his inclinations; he that knows not how to resist the importunity of present pleasure or pain, for the sake of what reason tells him is fit to be done, wants the true principle of virtue and industry, and is in great danger of never being good for anything. — Locke

Live by will rather than by imagination. If you feel your weakness, God wants you to make acts of your will, which you will offer to God as so many acts of love. — Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity ■

NEW FORMATION TEXT BOOK MANUAL

The 2-volume set (usually not sold separately) *I Want to See God* and *I Am A Daughter of Church* by Fr Marie-Eugene OCD, from Christian Classics, should be able to be ordered from most book shops. It is usually priced at \$44.95. There may also be some discounts for quantity purchases.

One of our Secular Order members, Sharon Riggins who has a book shop, is willing to make the 2-volume set available to us at a variable discount of:

2-4 copies	10%	\$40.45 postage paid
5-9 copies	15%	\$38.20 postage paid
10-24 copies	20%	\$36.00 postage paid
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The Littlest Angel

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Fr. Ted,

I applaud you for this excellent newsletter! I continue to rely on it to help me remain abreast of Secular Carmelite happenings in your Jurisdiction —not only with my Lay Carmelite work here in North America, but now as a member of the O. Carm. International Commission for the Laity in Carmel.

T.Z., O. Carm.

Dear Fr. Ted,

Thank you for the advanced copy of the Clarion. I immersed myself in the Letter of Pope John Paul II on John of the Cross in preparation for his feast day. This article enhanced my understanding of St. John of the Cross's spirituality. Our December meeting was the morning after my return. I told the community of the upcoming Clarion and asked that they read the 13 page article on John of the Cross so that we can have a community discussion on this at our January 27th meeting.

J.E., OCDS

Teresian Spirituality

Fr Marie-Eugene, OCD

First Phase: God intervenes with general help

1st Mansions - No manifestation. Avoids mortal sin. Studies Jesus Christ in the Gospels and follows Him in His sacred humanity.

2nd Mansions - Vigorous and painful effort at progress. Sensible consolations and aridities. Applies itself to prayer, to recollection, to the correction of faults, to the organization of its spiritual life by a rule, and detachment. This vigorous and persevering effort is sustained by spiritual reading, direction and spiritual friendships.

3rd Mansions - Triumph of reasonable activity. Facility in recollection. In a well organized life of piety, it carefully avoids sin, and practices the prayer of simplicity.

Second Phase:

God intervenes with particular help

Introduction - God intervenes progressively in the soul through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He invades it unto the transformation of love. The soul surrenders to God, gives itself to Him in humility and patience; it favors the growth of His action by an energetic asceticism. Holy Wisdom acting in the soul.

4th Mansions - Night of the senses. Quiet. Interior presence of God manifested by a blinding light (Night), by a sweet captivation (passive recollection, quiet). Respects the action of God in prayer; completes it; peace, silence, moderated activity. Besides prayer, energetic asceticism in order to destroy the spiritual capital sins.

5th Mansions - Union of the will. Habitual captivation of the will, sometimes after mystical grace of union. Fidelity to the Law; obedience. Divine Wisdom takes possession of the will for the realization of His eternal design, the Church.

6th Mansions - Dark night of the spirit. Formation of the saint and the apostle. God purifies and enriches by His touches in the soul and in the operative faculties. Surrender and silent patience. Poverty and hope. Union with Christ the Savior and with Mary, all mother.

7th Mansions - Transforming union. The divine conquest completed; utilization for the Church. Perfect chastity and charity. In the service of the Church. Union with the whole Christ. ■



Specific Points for Review

Part Two

Fr Aloysius Deeney OCD, General Delegate

To look at the actual Rule of Life as it is, make observations about it and discuss how to improve it, is not a negative comment on what is there. It is simply a process to see what might be included to make it express what the vocation is.

Rule, Constitutions, Norms or Statutes?

My first point for review is the use of the title Rule. In the history of spirituality, the word rule has been reserved for the most part to designate the original inspiration of the great spiritual traditions of religious families in the Church. Generally the Rules are the Rule of Saint Benedict, the Rule of Saint Francis, the Rule of Saint Augustine and the Rule of Saint Albert in the western Church and the Rule of Saint Basil in the eastern Church. These rules are approved by the Church. The entire family of Carmel has only one rule, that of Saint Albert. By the phrase “the entire family of Carmel” I mean the friars, nuns, affiliated and aggregated institutes, both religious and secular of both branches of the Order.

In addition to the Rule of Saint Albert, and for the purposes of clarification and applica-



tion, we all have constitutions and/or norms that accompany the Rule. The only group of Carmelites that has another “rule” other than the Rule of Saint Albert is the Secular Order. I would like to propose that the Secular Order join the rest of the Order in preserving the word Rule for the Rule of Saint Albert, and in place of the word Rule designate the proper legislation of the Secular Order as Norms for Carmelite Seculars. I think that it would help us all to unite together under the one Rule.

What follows now is a series of questions on various topics the purpose of which is to clarify the following points:

1. Exactly what is the Secular Order?
2. Who has a vocation to the Secular Order?
3. What is the relationship of the Secular Order to the other parts of the Order?
4. What is the responsibility of this vocation?

Remember this, if nothing else that I might say, please remember this: to be a Secular Carmelite is not a privilege. To be a Secular Carmelite is a responsibility.

Structure and maintenance

1. Who is responsible for the structure and maintenance of the OCDS?
2. How do they exercise that responsibility?
3. What local, jurisdictional, national and international structures are necessary for a viable functioning of the OCDS?
4. How should these structures be presented in the legislation of the OCDS?
5. How would you conceive a more direct collaboration between the jurisdictions of the OCDS and the Center of the Order?

- a. Structure
 - b. Maintenance
 - c. Communications
6. What is the relationship among the various expressions of the Teresian charism?
- a. Friars, nuns and seculars
 - b. Charismatic relationship
 - c. Juridical relationship

Discernment and Formation

I want to begin with a quote from *Christifideles Laici*. "In the work of formation some convictions reveal themselves as particularly necessary and fruitful. First of all, there is the conviction that one cannot offer a true and effective formation to others if the individual has not taken on or developed a personal responsibility for formation: this, in fact, is essentially a 'formation of self'. In addition, there is the conviction that at one and the same time each of us is the goal and principle of formation: the more we are formed and the more we feel the need to

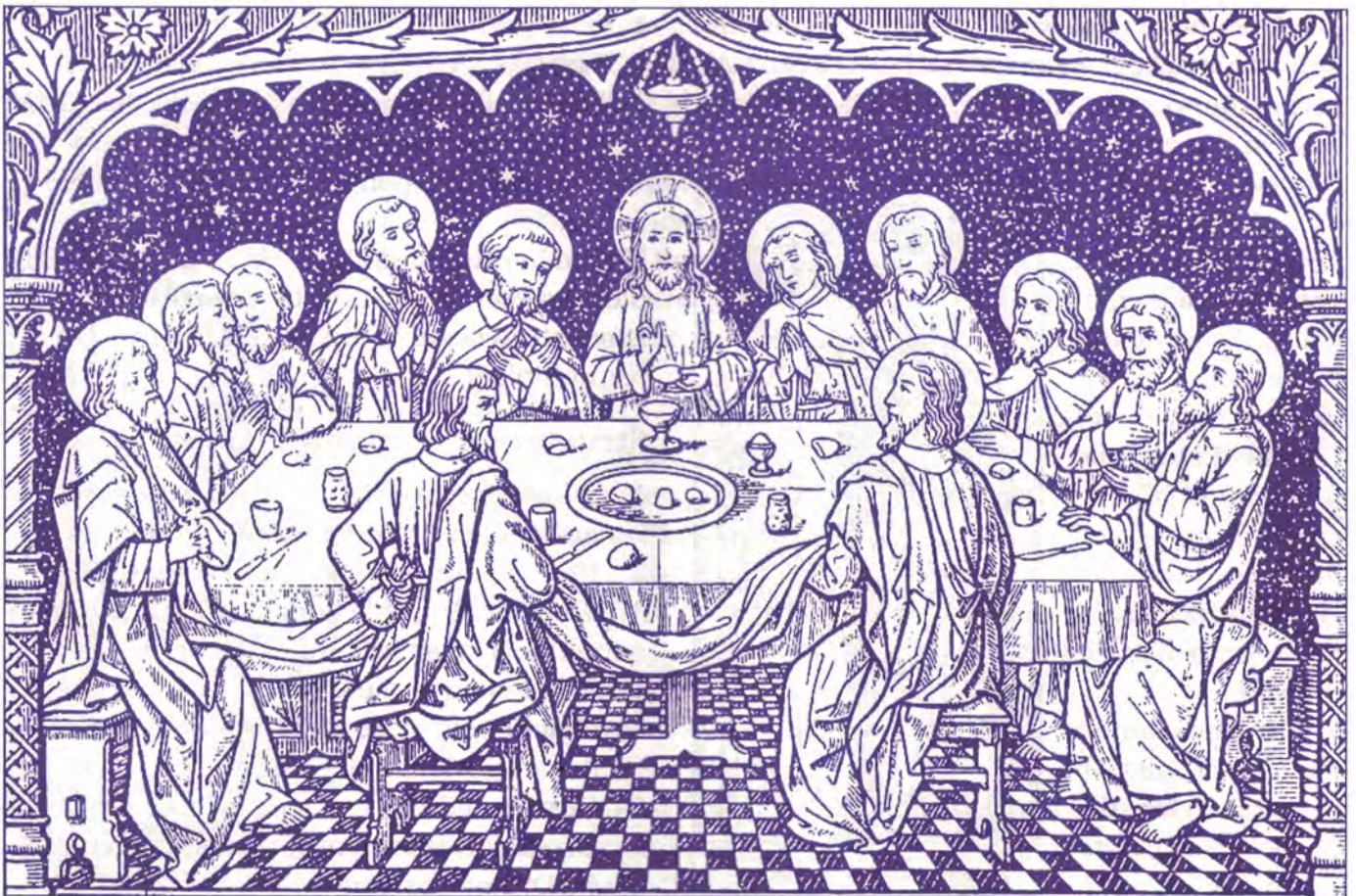
pursue and deepen our formation, still more will we be formed and be rendered capable of forming others" (CL 63).

It is particularly important to know that the work of formation, while having intelligent recourse to the means and methods available from human science, is made more effective the more it is open to the action of God.

Only the branch which does not fear being pruned by the heavenly vinedresser can bear much fruit for the individual and for others." (CL 63) Do not fear being pruned.

Questions

1. How does a formation program help in discerning the vocation of a Secular Carmelite?
2. Which jurisdictions of the Secular Order have a formation program in place? Does the formation program include an adequate teaching of the identity and role of lay persons as expressed in *Apostolicam Actuositatem* and *Christifideles Laici*?



3. What is the purpose of the various confraternities of associated laity?
 - a. Confraternity of the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
 - b. Confraternity of the Infant of Prague
 - c. Confraternity of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus.
4. Who should be directed to these confraternities?

Teresa of Jesus and the missionary responsibility of CL? On this point I have a concrete proposal to make. The proposal is this: That each jurisdiction of the OCDS takes responsibility for

a mission territory of the Order to provide the means for the development and formation of the OCDS in that territory.

Conclusion

We are not here to discuss the theories of the theology of the lay person in the Church. We are here to discover how to express in our legislation the richness and the responsibility of the charism of those lay persons who have been called to live the spirituality of Saint Teresa of Jesus at the service of the Church.

One element of the Teresian Carmelite charism is eremitical. One element is contemplative. One element is service. One element is community. One element is Marian. Please do not profess one or two elements to the exclusion of the other elements.

Gilbert Chesterton, an English Catholic commentator defined a heretic as "one who has a part of the truth and thinks he has the whole truth."

Your vocation is rich. It is also a responsibility. And you only discover the fullness of its richness by living its responsibility. ■



Apostolate and Service.

1. Accepting the call of the Church expressed in CL with the principles of Ecclesiality. What does this call ask of the Discalced Secular Order of Carmel?
2. One by one, how do we express the five principles of ecclesiality in our legislation?
3. The first of the actual fruits given in number 30 of CL is "the renewed appreciation for prayer, contemplation, liturgical and sacramental life".

How can the communities of the OCDS serve the needs of the Church and world by making these fruits an "actual fruit" of its Carmelite vocation?

Missions and Missionary Spirit

How do the jurisdictions and communities of OCDS live out the missionary zeal of Saint



Carmelite brown leatherette folder for certificate for the reception of Scapular, Promises and Vows.

It is 5x7 inches, has a 2 inch bright gold Carmelite shield on the cover, and an icon of the Espousal of Saints Mary and Joseph on the inside. There is an equal space to insert the certificate for the Reception of the Scapular, Temporary Promises, Final Promises, or for Vows. Furnished with white envelope.

The cost is only \$4 and the results last forever. There is a 25% discount for orders of 25 or more. The quantity is limited. A sample folder may be ordered for \$5. Order from the Secular Order Main Office in Washington, D.C.

A Guide to Attain the Fullness of Christ

Part of the Continuing Series on *I Want to See God*

Fr Pierre de Cointet

To see God, we must know Christ: The spiritually minded person eager for the spiritual ascent must seek no other way than Christ. To consider Christ, to imitate him in his actions, in his thoughts, in his sentiments and desires, to follow him from Bethlehem to Calvary is the surest and shortest way. To attain the fullness of Christ and have him live in us is the highest perfection. United with Jesus and attached to him, we are at the end of our climb and already in our place in eternity.

To attain the fullness of Christ is to seek to know him in a living, concrete fashion. It is to allow ourselves to be transformed in him by the gift of the Spirit even to the resemblance that love creates. In this sense of the actualization of presence by faith and especially by love, Saint Paul hoped God would enable the Ephesians to experience the dwelling of Christ in their souls: *Christum habitare per fidem in cordibus vestris* (p. 687, note 3, Eph 3:17; also p. 870, 1017).

And you, who do you say that I am?

In "I Want to See God," Christ is considered before all else as the one, universal mediator between God and us (p. 75 - 79) (The page references are taken from the French Edition). By his Incarnation the Son was established mediator in a descending manner and by his redemptive Passion Jesus accomplished this ascending mediation. Son of God, both eternally begotten as the Word of the Father and uttered in time as the

Incarnate Word, Jesus bears within himself the uncreated light that is God and all the light that God wanted to manifest to the world, the life that is in the bosom of the Trinity and the life that God wants to communicate to souls. Through him alone can light and divine grace descend here below; by him alone can we reach the throne of the Father of light and mercy (p. 75 - 76).



The gifts of salvation and divinization come to us through the humanity of Christ, united to the one divine nature in the person (in Greek, hypostasis) of the Word (thus the traditional expression "hypostatic union" often used by Fr Marie-Eugene). Thus constituted mediator by his Incarnation, Christ freely exercises this mediation by offering himself for us to the divine will throughout his entire earthly life, from the first moment of his existence and especially during his Passion (cf. p. 326-328 & 330, which places the Christian's gift of self in the light of Christ's obedience).

The Incarnate and redemptive Word is then the only way that leads us to God: Our whole spiritual life is bound to our union with Christ Jesus. Separated from him we are nothing and have no value or existence in the supernatural order (p. 76).

Drawing largely from Scripture, this gaze on Christ, the mediator, bases the necessity of seeking Christ Jesus in the prayer of recollection (p. 196) and provides the criterion of choice in spiritual readings (p. 202-204). It sheds light on the

attitude of the soul in the profound purifications of the spirit (p. 860- 882) and on the problem of the difference between mission and charity in the apostolate (p. 1040).

The baptized person is “of Christ”

The grace of baptism binds us doubly to Christ: it comes from Christ and it makes us live in Christ. Between Christ and us, the rapport is not merely an affective or intellectual one maintained with a character from the past. The bonds are supernatural and real: The Word became flesh, assumed a human nature which he has brought, a fortunate captive, to the bosom of the glory possessed by the Word before the world began. By this holy humanity of Christ, the Word grasps and leads all who let themselves be grasped by his grace (p. 77).

Everyone of every place and every time was truly present to each of the acts of the earthly life of Jesus, because these were the human acts of the Son of God and because, as man, Jesus saw his Father and loved each one of us. Fr Marie-Eugene contemplated this infinite love of Christ, from the first moment of his existence to his obedience at Gethsemani and on the cross, to shed light on the reality of sin (p. 149), the value of the gift of self (p. 326) and the drama lived out by man in the night of the spirit (p. 870).

This glory which appeared at the Transfiguration was ordinarily hidden, and it was in abasement that Christ Jesus saved us. But, taking on himself our sin, he thus made us capable of participating in his fullness: The divine life in us is the life of Christ; it proceeds from him and unites us to him to constitute with him a new reality, the entire vine, the total Christ composed of Christ and his members (p. 1019).

The gift of the Spirit of Christ makes us really “alter Christus”, sons by grace connatural with the Son by nature (p. 879). The grace of baptism binds us to Christ, makes us Christ, so that we may enter into his filial response to the Father and so that we may form one body with him, the total Christ or the Church. This Pauline doc-

trine of “Christ head of his body” was developed by Fr Marie-Eugene in relation to the contemplative discovery of the mystery of the Church and with recourse to Mary who participates in the primacy of Christ. In regard to sanctity she is proposed as the fullness of the grace of Christ in the baptized and in regard to the perfect apostolate as full participation in this grace.

Jesus is not only the way and the door, the means that leads to the goal; he is the mediator, for he is himself the pasture, the one term of perfection that the Holy Spirit aspires to accomplish in us through the diversity of charisms and vocations in his Body-Church (cf. p. 661, 1017).

Rooted in baptism and in the Eucharist, the spiritual life consists then in attaining the fullness of Christ Jesus, by espousing in the Holy Spirit the movement of his love which lowers itself to wounded humanity, to attain Christ “in the fullness of the extension of his life and grace in souls” (p. 862). The church is Christ extended or Christ poured out in his members. It extends him by providing for him additional human natures in which he pours forth the richness of his grace and by which he continues his priestly mission here below. Divine grace that can only come to us through Christ leads us to Christ and makes us of Christ. Thus we are to Christ as Christ is to God (p. 77).

To fix one’s gaze on Jesus

But practically, then how can we attain the fullness of Christ? First by placing oneself in the school of Jesus. So that this fond, constant intimacy with Christ Jesus is created and subsists in our daily life, we must know the liv-



ing Christ, see him as he lived and know how and in what interior and exterior circumstances he acted and spoke. Moreover, all our powers, from the senses to the depths of our intelligence, must be filled with this living, concrete knowledge (p. 203). Such a gaze, which accomplishes what it sees, goes beyond a simple intellectual curiosity: it demands constant care, unflagging perseverance, and the particular penetration of love in study and especially in prayer (p. 204).

In keeping with Teresa of Avila, Fr Marie-Eugene emphasizes that in order to pray one must go towards Christ Jesus (p. 66) and maintain a simple gaze on Him. But whereas, in the first phase of the spiritual life, explicit recourse to the humanity of Christ is essential by right as in fact, in the second, the light of the Word veils images and thoughts and it seems that one can no longer consider Christ in his humanity. This absence is a suffering for us: one can no longer think of Christ as before. Yet the mediation of Christ is absolutely necessary to progress in contemplation. In the chapters "the Good Jesus" and in "Spiritual Growth" (p. 129), Fr Marie-Eugene notes that this difficulty arises at the time of the entrance into contemplation, in



the fourth dwelling place. He then emphasizes that, in the nights of the fifth and sixth dwelling places, a humble search for Christ Jesus is absolutely necessary for spiritual progress (cf. p. 860-882). Thus this powerlessness in thinking about the detail of what one says is not an incapability of looking at Christ Jesus with faith and love, in the silence of a kind of prayer that is simplified because it has

become contemplative, for this gaze of faith is always possible (p. 68; cf. 74).

But to attain the fullness of Christ, the exercise of love is also necessary which, in the discharge of mission and through interior and exterior trials, identifies [one] with Christ (cf. p. 1049-1053). The gift of self delivers us up to the grace of Christ and lets us enter into the events of Christ and participate intimately in his mysteries, especially in the redemptive drama of Gethsemane. Identified with Christ by the invasion of his grace, the soul by the renewed oblation truly becomes an additional human nature for him in which it can extend the actualization of his mysteries (p. 328). The participation of the baptized person in the redemptive mystery of Gethsemane is not only a central aspect of the Teresian spirit (p. 124): it is lived out by those who pass through the night of the spirit. The Christ to whom grace unites us is the Redeemer who saves us by his cross in perfect obedience to the Father in love (p.326).

Sanctity: attaining the fullness of Christ

Therefore it is by humble perseverance in the gaze of faith on Christ Jesus that we arrive at true sanctity. We also become holy by entering more and more actively in the total Christ, the triumph of the Wisdom of love (cf. p. 301), by the grace of the Holy Spirit, by the Eucharist and by the perfect accomplishment of the mission entrusted to us in the mystical body. In pages that are important for grasping the end and the movement of the entire work (p. 485), Fr Marie-Eugene emphasizes that in Christ the two aspirations of Teresa of Avila are united: I Want to See God and I am a daughter of the church. She was seeking Jesus and it was the total Christ who revealed himself to her. The goal is not changed, but how astonishingly enlarged are its horizons! She saw only God and herself; she now only wants to know Christ Jesus and his members (p. 485).

The grace of the union of the will is an essential stage here. It prepares the perfect apos-

tle, identified with Christ Jesus and finding his glory in Christ communicated and poured out in his members (p. 662). The saint is such only because he has entered into the total Christ. Identified with Christ Jesus, he continues his priestly prayer of unity; with the Spirit of love he sighs "in the expectation of the adoption" and works

under his impulse to consume in unity all those "who are predestined to reproduce by resemblance the image of the Son" (p. 1076).

Such is the summit to which "I Want to See God" leads us: the resemblance of love and union with Christ Jesus for the actualization of the total Christ (p. 1022). ■

Spiritual Growth

Fr Etienne Michelin

The chapter on "spiritual growth" (p. 127–138) summarizes the perspectives offered by Fr Marie-Eugene to all the baptized concerned about the Christian life. It is structured in three sections. A short introduction attests to the evangelical basis of the question approached here, sets forth the questions in abeyance and, places the reader in an attitude of respect before the mystery under consideration, in the spirit of Saint Teresa of Avila. At the end of the chapter the author will render her a vibrant homage, (p.138) acknowledging among other areas, her marvelous knowledge of man and her eminent sense of God.

On the Way to Union with God

The first section, various aspects and stages (p. 127), takes up the image of the castle which



serves as the framework for all of, "I Want to See God" (cf. p. 10). From the periphery, the soul departs for its inmost center to be perfectly united with God and live completely in His light (that of Christ) and under His impulse (that of the Holy Spirit) (p. 128). This journey can be

considered as a progressive interiorization, a flight toward God, as ascension toward God and a movement toward God (a theme present throughout).

One can also speak of transformation in order to follow Christ, to imitate him, attain His fullness and have Him live in us (p. 78) even as far as gathering the most beautiful, the simplest supreme fruit of transforming union: the resemblance of love and union with Christ Jesus to experience the total Christ. Christian perfection and contemplative perfection truly are found in this union and in this experience of Christ Jesus, our Lord (p. 1022). One will also note that this resemblance of love makes of the baptized person a perfect child of God moved by the Holy Spirit whose active, dominating presence and whose impulse assures the soul a sovereign liberty (p. 1016).

In a word Fr Marie-Eugene summarizes: God is our end, to attain Him is perfection (p. 128). This statement should be read in the shining light of the last chapter of the work, "The Saint in the Total Christ."

The seven Teresian Dwelling Places are placed in the general movement of spiritual growth where progressive union with God is an essential characteristic. One goes from union to union: from rational activity in the light of God from the third Dwelling Place to the union of the will of the fifth Dwelling Place - where one becomes a beginner according to John of the Cross - and finally to the spiritual marriage or transforming union of the seventh Dwelling Place. Between these states, one goes through periods of transition or better of preparation (p. 128), states of ascension more delicate to get through and the most important to study. Thus dryness reigns in the second Dwelling Place (a dryness not to be confused with the contem-

plative dryness of page 129, cf. p. 579), the night of the senses in the fourth (cf. 539 and 554) and the night of the spirit in the sixth (p. 756). These periods call for special care from the spiritual director (p. 246).

Two living forces

Another aspect of spiritual growth is the activity of the two living forces that bring it about: the love of God for the soul and the love of the soul for God (p. 129), in the line of supernatural charity. This charity, because it is the love of friendship, establishes relationships of reciprocity between God and the soul.

Both active and passive, it gives and receives. It is made for these exchanges and exists only for them (p. 304). This is a central statement of all the teaching in "I Want to See God." It is found regarding prayer, which is identified with every vital movement of grace in our souls (p. 56) and knows no other law than the free expression of two loves that meet and give themselves reciprocally (p. 59). It is found at the summit of the spiritual life where the soul is completely receptive in the hands of God and where God himself submits to the wishes of the soul (p. 1074). Throughout the book it justifies the distinctions between active and passive night. It again sheds



light most profoundly on the activity of the theological virtues and also the moral virtues. Finally it illumines Fr Marie-Eugene's rich doctrine on the apostolate and the development of love (p. 1053).

Two Phases

Pages 129-130 are to be read most attentively, so nuanced is the teaching presented there. Let us recall the most evident conclusion. Two quite distinct phases appear in the

progression considered under this aspect (p.129). The first one, which extends to the third Dwelling Place, leaves to the individual the direction and the initiative for his spiritual life and culminates, so to speak, in an ordered life and simplified prayer (p. 267), at the threshold of Christian perfection (268), that is the kingdom of the wisdom of love (p. 293).

The second phase extends from the fourth to the seventh Dwelling Place. God intervenes progressively by increasingly more powerful help. He takes away the initiative from the soul and imposes on it submission and abandonment (p. 129). The divine intervention urges the soul to accept God's sanctifying action, to cooperate with it as much in prayer as in the practice of the virtues (p. 130), for the sake of progressive absorption in union (p. 842).

It is impossible to schematize the teaching given in these pages. At the beginning of the book a chart indicates both the union and the living richness of spiritual growth (p. 132). However, Fr Marie-Eugene opposes any systematizing that would attempt to explain the mystery rationally in clear terms and in apparently insightful formats (p. 137).

Determined Cooperation

If we adhere to the law of the progressive and ever more powerful harmonization of the two loves, we will understand that an important stage has been crossed when the love of God takes hold of the will (p. 637), the seat of love. We will also understand that the cooperation of the soul will be ever more energetic and delicate in order to remove the obstacles to the invasion of the grace that progressively conquers, transforms and submits to

God within (p. 34). This invasion of divine light produces a twilight and a night (p. 472), to such an extent that the state of perfection normally includes an invasion of this darkness in the entire soul and its faculties, which, now purified and adapted to the divine, find there a savory nourishment (p. 481). To attain this, the soul must work with all its energies to reduce within it the opposition between grace and sin. This is the cooperation that God requires of it

The holy card of Father Jacques of Jesus, below, is printed on the front and back of this page and can be cut out and kept.



**Father Jacques of Jesus
Lucien Bunel
1900-1945**

*Discalced Carmelite,
Martyr of Charity*

in order for him to accomplish the invasion of his grace. The treatises "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" and the "Way of Perfection" will be for the soul in this period, not merely works that present a lofty, inspirational ideal, but manuals of life that provide at each moment the practical formula for union with God adapted to the needs of the moment. The soul must then work for this union with the absolute using all the energetic and sometimes violent asceticism at its disposal (p. 602). This cooperation is studied and enlightened by the theological virtues, particularly hope (p. 821).

At the summit, love is more dynamic than ever. It bursts forth and streams forth from all sides to accomplish the ever more complete gift of itself (cf. p. 982).

The fruit of this action of God and of this cooperation of the soul, in strict dependence (p. 131), is a real transformation; Saint Teresa describes this transformation by comparing the soul to a silk worm that becomes a butterfly. There is a real metamorphosis here (p. 638), the most notable effect of which is the formation of the apostle. Such a transformation has echoes perceived in the psychological consciousness (p. 132), although the depth of the exchange for the most part escapes reflexive awareness.

LUCIEN BUNEL was born into a working-class family in Normandy on January 29, 1900. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1925 for the service of his home diocese of Rouen. Six years later, he entered religious life as a Discalced Carmelite and received the name of Père Jacques de Jesus. He became the founder and director of the Petit College, a preparatory school for boys at Avon, some thirty miles southeast of Paris. Following the Nazi occupation, he entered the Resistance and was arrested in 1944 for hiding Jewish students in the school. He was deported and finally died on June 2, 1945 as a result of his maltreatment at the Gusen concentration camp (Austria), where his heroic self-sacrifice made him truly a "Martyr of Charity."



Prayer for the Beatification of Père Jacques

O God, our Father, in your infinite goodness, you implanted deep within Père Jacques, from his earliest years, an eagerness to love you and to love all people with his whole heart.

You endowed him with special gifts for the education of youth; You chose him to be a priest and you called him to the religious life as a Carmelite.

In the inhuman degradation of the concentration camps, you made him a living witness of faith and love, until he had poured himself out completely.

O Father, grant us the blessings which we seek through the intercession of Père Jacques. And, if it is your will, make him a saint within your Church.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

With the permission of V. Rev. Louis Comet, Bishop of Meaux

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Secret Divine Action

The second part of the chapter is appropriately entitled "Mystery of Growth" (p. 132). Actually, these supernatural realities remain buried in the shadow of mystery while we await the vision of God (p. 133). Some principles, which are in keeping with our spontaneous convictions, are worth pointing out.

By incarnating itself in the human, the supernatural espouses the forms of the individual nature that it receives (p. 133). This signifies that the same action of God will bring about differentiated effects according to temperaments or even the times (p. 59).

Rarely, it seems to Fr Marie-Eugene, does the action of God directly produce perceptible phenomena (p. 133). This means that discretion and silence (p. 362) will accompany spiritual growth to the extent that one must wonder if God's gifts would not be better used by leaving them behind oneself in the shadows or in forgetfulness, to walk directly toward God himself (p. 372).

The perceptible manifestations of God's action diminish in frequency and intensity, as the faculties are purified (p. 133). Completely purified, the soul is then completely poor. From then on, at the summit of union, the poverty here experienced coincides with fullness now attained. Such are the benefits that poverty assures to hope here below, until both are buried and disappear humbly and silently in their triumph, at the threshold of the eternal vision (p. 832).

Clearly, the question of the signs of spiritual growth is asked with a very special keenness, especially if one notes with Saint Teresa the soul's mobility along the way of God (p.

134), and if one takes into consideration God's sovereign freedom in His action. The Holy Spirit gives each one grace in the measure He has chosen (p. 135). God's action in the soul is ordered by the divine mercy that mystifies our human logic. Techniques or methods are not adequate to understand it and may, to the great detriment of the soul, stop or block too severely its beneficial waves. The most satisfactory explanations do not dispel the whole mystery of God's action in a soul (p. 258).

*God's action in the soul is ordered
by the divine mercy that mystifies
our human logic.*

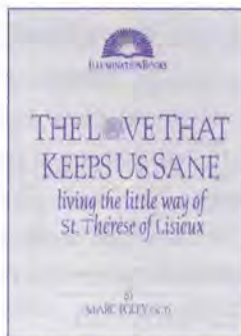
The Love That Keeps Us Sane

Living the Little Way of St. Terese of Lisieux
Marc Foley, O. C. D.

"Seeing Life In Light of Eternity"

This is not a book about using Therese's "little way" as a path to holiness. Therese's spirituality is often dismissed as cloyingly sweet and sentimental, useless for modern seekers. This new Illumination Book uncovers how Therese's sweetness was just a stylistic convention expected in the religious writing of her day. Beneath the form, says the author, is a straightforward spirituality that offers a practical, concrete, and very realistic method for preserving one's sanity in an often-insane world.

Marc Foley O.C.D., is a Discalced Carmelite priest. He is currently the rector of the Edith Stein House of Studies in Chicago, Illinois. He is also involved in retreat ministry and spiritual direction.



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The simplest example, so to speak, concerns beginning contemplation (p. 413). Fr Marie-Eugene points out that the interpretation of the signs given by Saint John of the Cross and their application to a concrete case require from the director a certain experience of contemplation (p. 258).

To attract God

Nonetheless one can seek the freedom of God in so far as it is possible to bring to bear an almost irresistible pressure on it that it may intercede in the spiritual life of the soul by the gifts of the Holy Spirit (p. 403).

The question of spiritual growth is so complex that the author asks the question: what is the value of the fine Teresian progression of the soul through the seven Dwelling Places? Is there value in studying it and referring to it (p. 136)? The answer is yes. She provides for us enlightening milestones in the darkness. We leave to the reader the joy of discovering the third part of our chapter.

I think that the genius proper to Fr Marie-Eugene consists greatly in the light we find in these pages. By thus insisting on the reality of spiritual growth as a dimension of the Christian life, he stirs up the hope of the church on its way to the fullness of Christ. ■

News from Nairobi

Carmelite Community
Langata South Road
P.O. Box 24109
Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa

20 October 2000 (Kenyatta Day)
Dear friends,

Our local paper warns of an impending government crackdown on "illegal snake farms." Our liturgical celebrations last for hours, with everyone moving and singing. From the front of our property, beyond a vast dry field, one can see the outline of the beauti-



Signatures of our Carmelite students from Kenya.

ful Ngong Hills, prominently featured in "Out of Africa." which was filmed on location nearby. Twice a week I cross that same field, past wandering Masaai goatherds, to take Kiswahili lessons in a traditional thatched mud hut. So many reminders that I am not in the United States any more!

As some of you already know, I was recently reassigned as the new student director for our Carmelite Community in Nairobi, Kenya, succeeding Father David Costello, who has returned to his own province to prepare for eventual foundation in Uganda. (I say "succeeding" rather than "replacing," because Father David is certainly irreplaceable and very much missed



Father Steven with some of the Carmelite students.

here. I arrived during the first week of September, and have spent past month and a half finding my bearings. Fortunately, everyone has been most patient with me.

I am one of the newest members of a community that now numbers close to 40. We hail from Australia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, and the United States. We represent dozens of languages, tribes, and peoples. Those in formation include 5 Kenyan postulants, 8 men in philosophical studies, 17 in theological studies for the priesthood, and 2 who have finished priestly studies but are not yet ordained. Our staff comprises 6 priests and one solemnly professed brother. The numbers will be even larger when our two novices return from Nigeria and our three philosophers in Tanzania finish their program.

So tight are the present accommodations, until we get another house, that some of the philosophers now have to share their small rooms. With only one washing machine available, most of the students end up doing their laundry by hand in the sink. Perhaps the biggest daily challenge is simply trying to transport 40 men to their various classes, ministries, and appointments in our two rickety vehicles, a decrepit car and battered truck that seem to spend as much time in the shop as at home. Like all the people of Kenya, we struggle with the effects of a long-term drought and declining economy. Fortunately we have a well deep enough that we can share our own abundant fresh water with our poorer neighbors; surely

our Holy Mother, St. Teresa of Avila, would love the symbolism of such "living water" from Carmel flowing out to refresh a parched land.

We thank you for your prayers and support for this community. As a newcomer here, I am tremendously impressed by the high quality of the candidates in our formation program. They hold great promise for the future of the Church and the Carmelite Order in Africa. And they continue to remember you each day in their prayers.

Fraternally,
 Steven Payne, OCD
 Director of Students
 Carmelite Community
 Nairobi, Kenya

Behold the Lamb of God: Communion Prayers for the Sick



Taken from our Carmelite Saints

by Penny Hickey
 OCDS, 1998.

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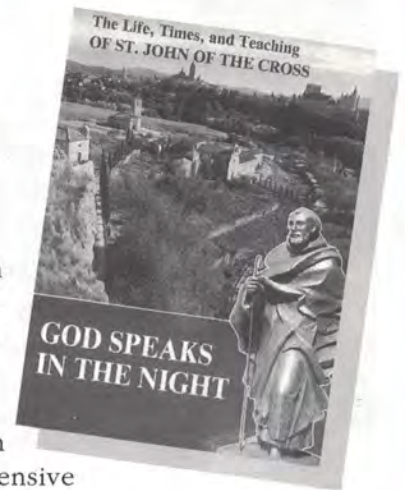
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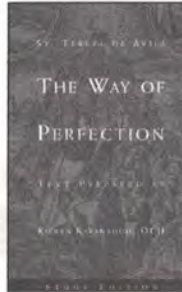


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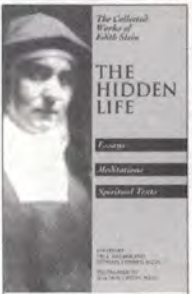
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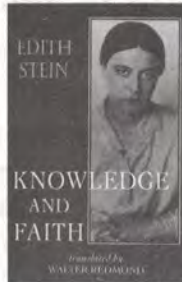


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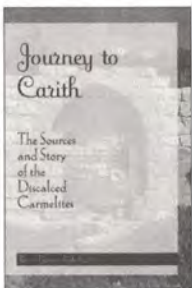


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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Seek in reading and you will find in meditation. Knock in prayer and it will be opened to you in contemplation. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	2 Presentation of the Lord It is within You that I must search for myself. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	3 <i>St Blaise</i> The contemplative is constantly covering the world with her co-redeeming prayer. This is what Our Lady did. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>
4 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time God does not fit in an occupied heart. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	5 St Agatha As for myself, I know no other means of reaching perfection but love. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	6 St Paul Miki & Companions The more intense a man's faith the closer is his union with God. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	7 Papal rescript issued for St Teresa to begin Discalced Nuns in 1562.	8 St Jerome Emiliani There is no other remedy for this evil of giving up prayer than to begin again. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	9 What a sweet joy to think God is just... that He takes into account our weaknesses. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	10 St Scholastica God, like the sun, stands above souls ready to communicate Himself. <i>St John of the Cross</i>
11 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time I can nourish myself on nothing but the truth. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	12 The soul savors the exquisite joy of loving God, it savors above all the love that God pours into it. <i>Pere Jacques de Jesus</i>	13 If a person is seeking God, his Beloved is seeking him much more. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	14 Sts Cyril & Methodius He does not call those who are worthy but those whom he pleases. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	15 A much greater love and confidence in this Lord began when I saw Him as one with whom I could converse continuously. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	16 When a soul gives herself wholly to God, He manifests Himself by letting the soul discover infinite horizons of love. <i>St Teresita of the Andes</i>	17 It's of capital importance to honor the Most Blessed Virgin and we love her if we endeavor to imitate her virtues. <i>St Raphael Kalinowski</i>
18 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time The soul's center is God. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	19 Perhaps the time has come for the Catholic woman also to stand with Mary and the Church under the cross. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	20 If you are nothing, you must not forget that Jesus is all... think only of this uniquely lovable all. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	21 St Peter Damian If we wish to become holy, let us work and endure in silence, keeping our soul in peace. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i>	22 Chair of St Peter, Apostle I just thread the needle. It is God who does everything. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i>	23 St Polycarp What pleases Him is that He sees me loving my littleness and my poverty. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	24 John de Yepes y Alvarez enters Carmel as John of the Cross in 1563. Walk in solitude with God. <i>St John of the Cross</i>
25 8th Sunday in Ordinary time My God I choose all! <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	26 Suffering is an invitation to be more like the Son in doing the Father's will. <i>Pope John Paul II, OCDS</i>	27 Mortification of the appetites is a requisite for man's spiritual fruitfulness. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	28 Ash Wednesday He has no need of our works but only of our love. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	<h1>February 2001</h1> 		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>March 2001</h1>				1 I desire in a word to be a saint, but I feel my helplessness and I beg you, o my God to be yourself my sanctity. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	2 That I may be purified and delivered from my miseries by contact with Him. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	3 St Katherine Drexel Be deeply sorry for any time that is lost or passes without your loving God. <i>St John of the Cross</i>
4 1st Sunday of Lent Love, how well our heart is made for that! <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	5 The soul in which God alone dwells has no other function than that of an altar. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	6 There is so little time to enjoy your presence and you hide from me. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	7 Sts Perpetua & Felicity St Teresa Margaret Redi of the Sacred Heart, OCD, died in 1770.	8 St John of God Your face in my only homeland. It's my kingdom of love. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	9 St Frances of Rome Well and good if all things change, Lord God, provided we are rooted in you. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	10 I should like to have lips the purest to pronounce the name of Mary, and a pen of gold to write it. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i>
11 2nd Sunday of Lent Pure contemplation lies in receiving. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	12 St Teresa of Jesus, OCD, Foundress, canonized in 1622. Many remain at the foot of the mount who could ascend to the top. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	13 St Teresa Margaret Redi of the Sacred Heart, OCD, canonized in 1934.	14 Faith is comparable to the feet by which one journeys to God, and love is like one's guide. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	15 Jesus is a hidden treasure which few souls can find, for it is hidden and the world loves what sparkles. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	16 All three persons dwell in the soul that loves them in truth. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	17 St Patrick I felt it was far more valuable to speak to God than to speak about Him. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>
18 3rd Sunday of Lent Forget all that is not Jesus. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	19 St Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary God and I, I and God, that is my life. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	20 St Teresa of Jesus's "conversion" in Lent before Christ at the pillar in 1554.	21 Those souls are rare who don't measure the divine power according to their own narrow minds. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	22 In the soul of Christ I find all the secrets of the heavenly Father. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	23 Cause of Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity introduced in 1931, just 6 years after St. Therese.	24 For once the will is touched by God Himself it cannot be satisfied except by God. <i>St John of the Cross</i>
25 4th Sunday of Lent Love Him intensely, as He deserves to be loved. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	26 Annunciation of the Lord In my opinion, where there is no obedience there are no Carmelites. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	27 What is our humiliation at the moment is our glory later on, even in this life. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	28 Teresa de Ahumada is born in 1515. Anyone who is to find a hidden treasure must enter the hiding place secretly. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	29 Now I ask you Lord, not to abandon me at any time in my recollection, for I am a squanderer of my soul. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	30 Whoever seeks to consult with the Eucharistic God in all her concerns..cannot but be drawn into the flow of divine Life <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	31 Mary prayed in silence. All the silence of prayer is necessary to hear and recognize the voice of God, the call of God. <i>Pere Jacques de Jesus</i>

2000 OCDS Main Office Financial Statement

INCOME FOR 2000

Annual Dues with Clarion @ \$25	\$58,946.00
Clarion Subscriptions only @ \$10	1,336.00
Donations from Members & Guild	2,614.00
Retreats & Days of Recollection	1,239.00
Sale of Brown Folders	681.00
Sale of Formation Handbooks	366.00
Travel Reimbursement	240.00
Unclassified Items	476.00
Total Income for 2000	65,898.00

EXPENSES FOR 2000

Automobile Car Payments	7,903.89
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	21,155.27
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Executive Secretary	9,492.50
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Office Equipment	427.46
Office Postage	240.97
Office Printing	787.07
Office Supplies	1,261.73
Office Telephone & Cellular Phone	833.54
	3,832.36
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Some Carmelite ABC's of the Spiritual Life

Age, OK with wisdom and grace
Arms out-stretched
Attentive to the Spirit
Beatitudes lived holistically
Breath deep and steady
Christ: the center of my life
Cup of Salvation drunk fully
Desires: undaunted like Teresa
Destiny: eternal Glory
Ear to our guardian angel
Eucharist reverently accepted
Fingers on the string
Foot to the path, perseverance
Frame not wasted from sin
Fridays spent with penance
Goal: totally Carmelite
Grace before & after each meal
Hair in the holy Wind
Hand to the plough
Head bowed in adoration
Heart on a friend
Heartbeat full of life
Imperfections acknowledged
Indwelling of the Holy Trinity
Interests, wholesome
Jesus, his Sacred Humanity
Joints and limbs strong
Knees, kneeling in prayer
Legs like columns
Little Way of Therese
Love of my neighbor
Memory purified of trivia
Merciful Love accepted
Mind occupied on will of God
Morning Offering with humility
Nails trimmed for tenderness
Nature: full of traces of God
Opportunities always used
Palate frugal, mindful of the poor
Pondering the Word of God
Promises lived whole-heartily
Quest for contemplation



Fr Theodore reviews his ABC's.

Resolutions with determination
Rest taken with gratitude
Saturdays with Marian devotion
Scapular worn with gratitude
Scripture prayerfully pondered
Sharing possessions generously
Sins confessed daily
Soul on God alone
Tongue nimble as a scribe
Under the Cross with Christ
Values: Christian, Catholic and Carmelite
Virtues watered daily
Vows kept lovingly
Words from the Word of God
Working in the Presence of God
XMAS every day of life
Yearning for Heaven
Zeal like that of Elijah

OCD - Poet of the Year

The Depth of Gratitude, a poem by Fr Theodore Centala OCD, of the Washington Province, reached the semi-finals of the recent competition held by the International Society of Poets in Owings Mills MD - USA. The society is placing the poem in its list of the top 1000 poems of the twentieth century. Fr Theodore has also been nominated by the society for the award of Poet of the Year 2000. (Communicationes O.C. D.)

The Debt of Gratitude

Theodore N Centala

O Lord, back a couple of years ago in that
Commonwealth
Marleen and Barry prayed to you for blessed
fertile health.
That they might become mother and father in
their married life
for they appreciated how you had made them
husband and wife.

To their humble prayer Caroline Elizabeth was
your answer
an awesome bundle of joy they say — perhaps
a future dancer.

How can her parents express fitting thanks
without tender tears

not only at conception
and birth, but over
the ensuing years?

Why must gratitude be
repeated over and
over again to you?
It never equals your
gift of life, it seems
more is always due.
And then as Caroline
matures your bless-
ings will ever mount
they will realize they
are getting farther
behind in the count.

So, Lord, as the years
continue for Caro-
line, Marleen and Barry
their debt of gratitude will ever become harder
to carry.
But this is not due to any fault in the way they
pray and live
rather because of the many blessings you never
cease to give.



Written: 12 January 1988, Mt Carmel, Haifa Israel

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Reflections on a Life

Ruby Alexander was born December 4, 1924 in Selma, Alabama, to the union of George and Ruth Washington.

Ruby relocated to Chicago in the 40's and there she completed her formal education at the Walton Business School to become a Certified Public Accountant. She was the founder and owner of the Alexander Company which began in 1969. She took great pride in her profession and was a very responsible, and excellent accountant and consultant, where she worked diligently until her health declined. She was also a consultant for the Diocesan Priests in the south section of Chicago.

Ruby was a child of God and a woman of great faith, a devoted and loving wife, a nurturing and compassionate mother. She was understanding and a mentor to the extended family, a spiritual director to many, especially in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites, of which she was a member for many years. Ruby was a lady of great elegance who was extremely generous.



Ruby Alexander, 1924-2000

She was the secretary of Fr Bill Healy OCD when he was Provincial Delegate of the Secular Order of the Washington Province. Ruby was also the formation director for the isolated members for about twenty years.

She was also the secular delegate to many Congresses, both in the USA and the one in Rome.

Ruby Alexander was born into eternal life on December 12, 2000.

She leaves to cherish her precious memory, her loving husband Louis; one son, Father

Fred Alexander, OCD; two nieces, Delois Scott and Karen Webb; five nephews, Lawrence Alexander, Glen, George, Gerald Davis and Russell Hairston, grandnieces, grand nephews and all of her God-children.

Ruby Alexander's Funeral Mass was celebrated by her son, Father Fred Alexander, OCD. Holy Rosary Catholic Church gathered in many members of her family, friends, parishoners, and Carmelites. Let us all pray that she may see the face of God as soon as possible. ■

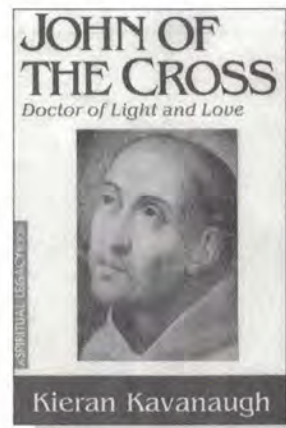
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Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. is a Carmelite priest and lives in Washington, DC.
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My Vocation To Love

Louise Thigpen, OCDS

Pope John XXIII once visited a prisoner who was in jail for killing his wife. He attempted to speak to the man but the prisoner would not face him. He walked into the cell and told the man, "If I were married, I may have killed my wife too." One never knows what life has in store for us. How will we handle the temptations and stresses of this, mortal life? Who will I become? What are my circumstances? How will I handle the circumstances in my life?

When I was 30 years old, I decided I would like to become a school teacher. I would teach in a Catholic school. Surely the Lord would consider this commendable. So began my quest for an education. I was not an ordinary college student. I was the oldest student in my class. I was married with four daughters, ages 10 to 2 years old. My circumstances were quite different from my classmates to say the

least. They were kind to me, inviting me to their parties. However, I, being a mature person with responsibilities, turned down their offers.

It took me more years than I care to admit to obtain a higher education. Due to the many obstacles, twists, turns, and circumstances in my life, I finally received a Master's Degree in Social Work. This is a story in itself! The Lord moved me in the direction He chose me to be in.

I have worked with mentally ill people for over twenty years now. Prisoners in their own minds. I must admit I have truly loved my work. The Lord has provided me with the grace to perform this great work very easily.

Society has forgotten these people who are so tortured by intruding, disorganized, destructive thoughts which have wreaked havoc on their lives. Many suffer without relief. Many have a history of unimagin-



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able abuse. Some have caused their own suffering through drug abuse. The very nature of mental illness causes immense suffering.

Isaiah 38:10-14 says: "In the noontime of life I must depart! To the gates of the nether world I shall be consigned for the rest of my years. . . I shall see the Lord no more in the land of the living. No longer shall I behold my fellow men among those who dwell in the world. My dwelling, like a shepherd's tent, is struck down and borne away from me; You have folded up my life like a weaver who severs the last thread. Day and night you give me over to torment; I cry out until the dawn. Like a lion he breaks all my bones; Like a swallow I utter shrill cries; I moan like a dove. My eyes grow weak, gazing heavenward: O Lord, I am in straits; be my surety!"

This is what mental illness must be like. Spirits so crushed. I could empathize. I could love and pray for and with the mentally ill. I could listen, cry, and laugh with them. I could assist and have compassion for them. Saint Vincent de Paul said, "We must sanctify our works by seeking God in them and by doing them in order to find God in them, rather than just to get them done." Seeking God in all things has enabled me to accomplish my work.

A few years ago a law was passed in New Jersey to commit sex offenders, who have completed their jail sentences, to a psychiatric hospital. Here-in lies my struggle. My work is now such a challenge. To show God's love and compassion has become difficult for me. I cry out as in Psalm 69:1-5: "Save me, God, for the waters have reached my neck. I have sunk into the mire of the deep, where there is no foothold. I have gone down to the watery depths; the flood overwhelms me. I am weary with crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes have failed looking for my God. More numerous than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause. Too many for my strength are my treacherous enemies. Must I now restore what I did not steal?"

God knows what He is doing. He has a reason for everything. I recall a story I heard about Rabbi Asher who set out on a journey. He took

three things with him: a rooster to wake him up in the morning, a lantern to read his Bible at night, and a donkey he could sit on to rest from walking. He came to a village one night, but none of the villagers would allow him stay over night with them. He said to himself, "God knows what He is doing. He has a reason for everything." So he camped out by the river.

Rabbi Asher lit the lantern so he could read the Bible. The wind blew it out. He lit it again several times but the wind kept blowing it out. He said to himself again, "God knows what He is doing. He has a reason for everything." The Rabbi decided to go to sleep early. During the night some thieves came by killed his rooster to eat and stole his donkey.

When the Rabbi woke up the next morning he saw that his rooster and donkey were gone. He said, "God knows what He is doing. He has a reason for everything." He later found out the village was attacked by a band of nomads. Every villager was killed. It seemed the nomads passed the river by, not seeing any light.

The Rabbi was spared because there was no crowing rooster or braying donkey. So too, I must believe God knows what He is doing. He has a reason for everything. The challenge to love as Jesus did is great. St. Therese's little way of love is certainly not so little. It is not simple. It is a very difficult path to tread.

So, slowly I get to know those who are the lepers of our day. I check my thoughts, I pray to Jesus and Therese, I bite my tongue, I contemplate my judgments, and I try to love despite my desire to walk away. I have along way to go. ■

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