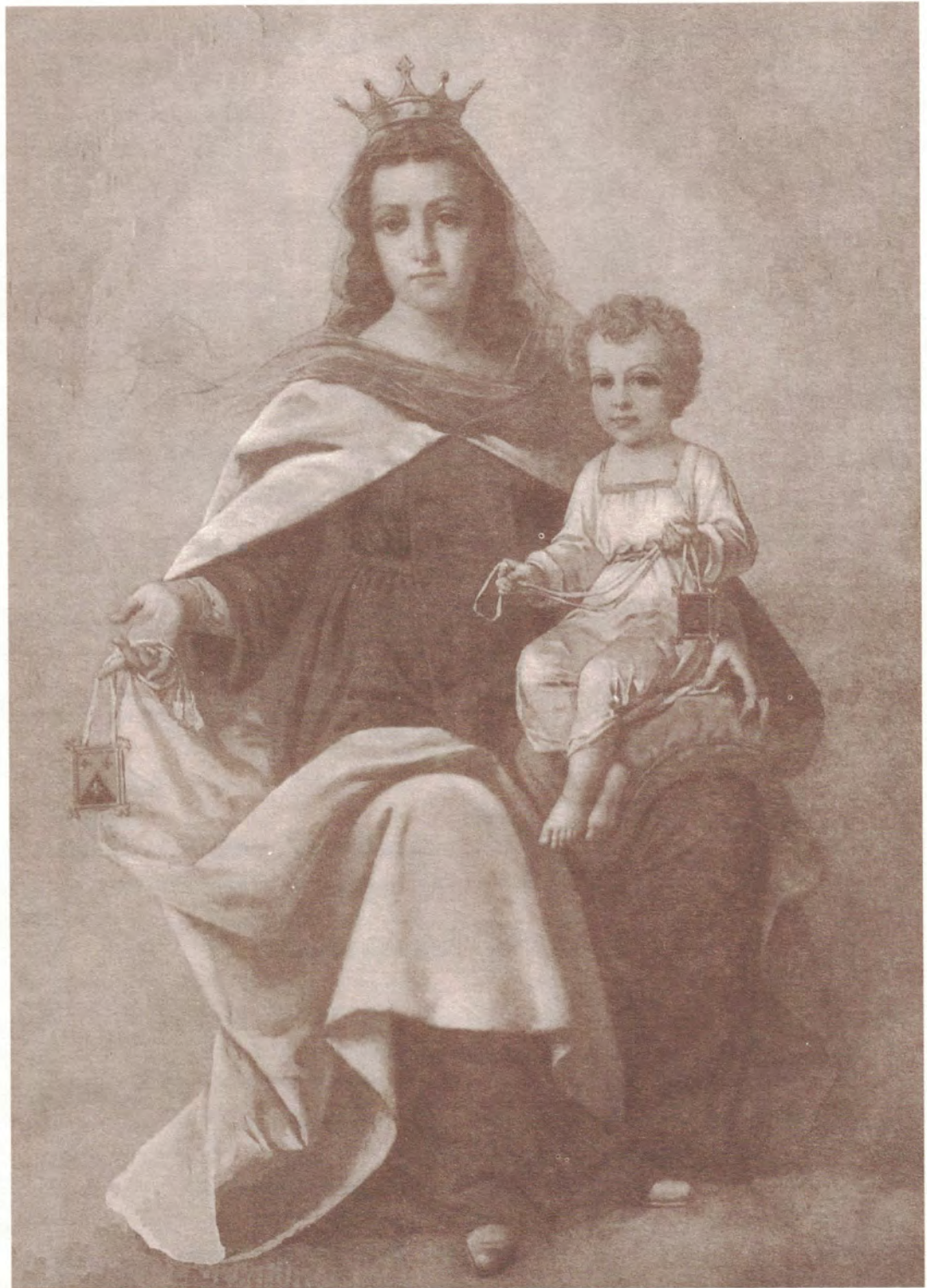




CARMEL CLARION

Discalced Carmelite Secular Order

Washington, D.C.



June —
July 2002

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Queen Beauty of Carmel, Morena, Rome

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CARMEL CLARION

Discalced Carmelite Friars
2131 Lincoln Road, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002-1151
Phone: 202-269-3792
Fax: 202-832-5711
E-mail: centala@juno.com

Editor

Fr. Theodore N. Centala OCD

Staff

Brother Tony Holmes SSCC
Rosemary Moak OCDS
Suzanne Treis OCDS

Provincial Delegates

Fr. Patrick Farrell OCD
Fr. Salvatore Sciarba OCD
Fr. Theodore N. Centala OCD

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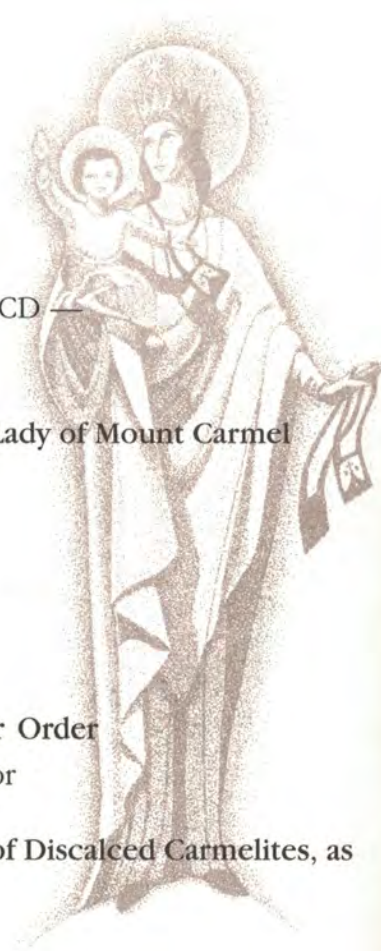


CARMEL CLARION

Discalced Carmelite Secular Order, Washington, D.C.

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Editorial

Happy feast day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, also known as the Queen Beauty of Carmel. Our poetess acknowledges that Mary is the Queen Beauty of Carmel, especially because of her spiritual beauty. But then as a child of Carmel and a co-admirer with Little Saint Therese she quickly uses the title "Mother". Our Lady of Mount Carmel is also a model of sacrifice and prayer, especially contemplation, for all Carmelites. Self-sacrifice, we know, is necessary in order to practice the Beatitudes in our Promises.



One of our book notices, "Carmel and Mary: Theology and History of a Devotion" edited by John Welch O. Carm. is very timely spiritual reading.

The annual financial statement for last year included \$2,000 for charity. One thousand was sent to our Carmelite Missionaries in Nairobi, Kenya. The other thousand was sent to Pedro Gonzalez OCDS for his expenses as one of the ten-member commission that was working on the draft of our Constitutions.

Abundant thanks are due to all our members who served in elected and appointed positions over the last three years; also to all the volunteers who generously gave of their time,

talents, and charity. We welcome all the newly elected, appointed, and volunteers for the next three years. We also need to thank the provincial delegates, the spiritual assistants, the retreat directors and the spiritual directors of the last three years. May the Holy Spirit continue to send laborers into the vineyard of Carmel.

Please send in a slate of your new Council, secretary and treasurer so a comprehensive list may be made for the Carmel Clarion. The next issue should also carry the provincial delegates.

The 2-volume formation manual "I Want to See God" and "I Am a Daughter of the Church" has had a 3-year trial period with varied success. The last of a series of articles, which Fr. Sal Scirba OCD translated from the French, on how to utilize this "Practical Synthesis of Carmelite Spirituality" has appeared in the Clarion. Many communities of our OCDS have gleaned some good questions or points for formation class discussion. I would appreciate it if each community that has some questions or points for discussion would send a copy to the Main Office so they can be combined into one set and shared with the whole membership. ■

Fr. Theodore N Centala OCD Editor

Queen Beauty of Carmel

And Queen art thou, and love is thy domain.
Jewels to thy crown and stars along thy mantle
We pray to be, and blossoms on thy train.
O thou with loveliness, O thou with graces,
Set out, proceed most prosperously and reign.
Beauty of Carmel art thou, Blessed Virgin,

The children of Carmel have been dedicated
To seek God's beauty through thy beauty's
worth

In that thou first set foot upon Mount Carmel
Which is the symbol of beauty on this earth.
Thine is that holy mountain, Virgin Mother,
Which stands thy witness by an eastern sea,
And thine is each interior Mount Carmel
Since all God's graces rain on us through
thee.

Carmel we hymn as mount of contemplation
Teeming with treasures of the costliest price;
Royal it stands, a wilderness of beauty,
And yet it is a mount of sacrifice.

The spirit of Carmel, O Most Blessed Virgin,
Is thine own spirit of sacrifice and prayer.
It blooms, O Mary, from our heart's devotion
To thee whose sweet inheritance we share.

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

Fair are thy steps in shoes, O Prince's
daughter,
Who walk in queenliness toward God thy
goal.

And up the mountain, inward through the
mansions,
With thee we seek the Bridegroom of our
soul.

We love thee and are running in thy footsteps
To trace by fragrance where thou has trod,
That holy path whereon the saints of Carmel
Attained to love, the kingdom of their God.

So we renew in thee our dedication,
Speak with one voice allegiance to our
Queen,

Enter anew upon our paths of penance
And seek in prayer the heights our saints have
seen.

We choose thee, then, our Model and our
Mother,

Thee will we follow, thee will we extol,
O Beauty of the mount of contemplation,
Queen of the crystal mansions of the soul.

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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:

1-9 copies	17%	\$37.34 postage paid	10-24 copies	20%	\$36.00 postage paid
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The Littlest Angel

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Solemn Commemoration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Fr. John J Sullivan, OCD, STD

Presiding and Preaching on July 16, 2001, in the Carmelite Chapel in Washington DC.

Today we are privileged to celebrate our Order's patronal feast for the first time in the new millennium, providing you follow the calculations of the technical date and calendar keepers. Just to think of it: the Carmelite Order that began at an early stage of the previous millennium, somewhere in the late 1100's, now exists in almost 100 countries and is getting ready to mark the 800th anniversary of the delivery of its Rule to the first community ever, to the Carmelite hermits living on Mount Carmel in Northern Israel. But enough of numbers — we easily notice both the importance and pride we justly attach to a feast like this: the annual commemoration that marks our identity as an Order dedicated to Mary in her Son's Church. Of course, our patroness harkens us back another 1,000 years to the moment she gave birth to Christ himself. Nonetheless, we notice the place where our liturgical commemoration places her through the passage of the Gospel just proclaimed. Even though that is not a place we might expect, it was a crucial one for the life she shared with her Son: she stood at the foot of the Cross. (John 19:25)

Reflect for a moment on that. We see a shining example of maternal presence at a scene of urgent, utmost need for support that emanated from her Son. The crafters of the Carmelite Lectionary could not have done better when they retained that passage from the Gospel of John in the revised readings after the Vatican II Council. They could see how having Mary present to Jesus on the Cross would help us realize — we who rely on her patronage through our affection for the brown scapular — how consoled



we are to find Mary in such a touching scene, and this precisely on the feast that celebrates her as our Order's patroness and protectress.

Other Orders in the Church have well-known saints as their patron saints. Some of them are world figures, such as Saint Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits; or Saint Francis of Assisi who in founding the Franciscans gave birth to the mendicant movement of the Middle Ages that the Carmelite hermits would soon join; or, finally, from those same Middle Ages Saint Dominic de Guzman, founder of the Dominicans. But today we see Mary suffering, at the center of our commemoration of her. There's a message for us in this. It could be easy, in place of the Crucifixion scene, to imagine other Gospel passages that suit Carmel and its devotion for its patroness: for example, one

could envision the moment in her life when “she took her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and placed him in the manger” and in that way stress the Holy Land origins of our Order not so far from Bethlehem. The cloth involved in the swaddling clothes would be a reminder of Carmelite devotion to Mary throughout the world by the wearing of the brown scapular.

Still, the Liturgy of the Word stresses the compassionate Mary who is the inspiration for those who wear her scapular, more than that piece of vesture. The Crucifixion is the event in Christ’s life that connects her to us primarily. How many Carmelite Saints and Blesseds realized this as they took “of the Cross” or some other facet of the Passion for their subtitle (there’s John of the Cross, Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, and Mary of Jesus Crucified, to name

but the most celebrated among them). They knew that the best thing Mary had to offer was not childishness in devotion or promises of exceptions to the rule of human destiny, but support in sorrow, suffering and the attrition of daily life. Her scapular symbolizes all that. We would be wrong to think of it as a ticket to a free ride somewhere else. Rather, it designates us as loyal children of the Mother of the Suffering Servant.

Surely, she is Queen of Carmel, too. But we ought to remember she became Queen of Heaven by staying with the “King of the Jews,” the King of Kings put to death for his fidelity. The best we can hope to obtain from her, as we associate ourselves with the Order that looks at her and to Christ on the Cross, is the gift of perseverance . . . for as long as time in this life is given to us . . . and leave the rest to them in their kindness.

This is the same as saying how thankful we are for the chance to honor Mary, Queen of Carmel, as Carmel’s story unfolds forward in time. Our concern is not the history of past generations of Carmelites, their accomplishments, and the benefits of graces they might have received from Mary and Jesus. Our aim ought to consist in promoting the story: to live prayerful lives like our forebears; to help each other in mutual love; to show compassion for the world’s needs; and to share the Christian vision with others. Proving it can take many forms. Why not try to start by clothing the naked? So many people go to bed starving, so many do not enjoy adequate housing, and so many lack proper clothing. Our goal is not to wish passively to be clothed with a sign of protection, but to take the piece of clothing that is the scapular as a sign of commitment to imitate Mary who associated herself with the poor and suffering.

Thus, we will do for Mary what the Gospel passage says John did, namely, “make a place for her in (our) home.” Then we will be able to expect that she and her Son will introduce us gladly into their heavenly home. ■

EDITH STEIN, ESSENTIAL WRITINGS

Edited by John Sullivan, OCD

This is an all-around reader/anthology of the writings of Edith Stein (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, OCD). Fr. John Sullivan has composed a book of passages designed to acquaint you with the spiritual genius and insights of Saint Edith. He initiates the reader to her life and main spiritual emphasis by an introduction of his own.




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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">June 2002</h1>						<p>1 St Justin In what peace Mary lent herself to everything she did. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i></p>
<p>2 Corpus Christi Prepare yourself, for God desires to grant you a great favor. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i></p>	<p>3 St Charles Lwanga & his Companions For the Christian there is no stranger. <i>Teresa Benedicta</i></p>	<p>4 Humility is content, humility is happy, humility is satisfied with everything. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i></p>	<p>5 St Boniface Where there is no love, put love, and you will find love. <i>St John of the Cross</i></p>	<p>6 St Norbert I am suffering very much, but I feel I can still bear greater trials. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i></p>	<p>7 Most Sacred Heart of Jesus <i>Bl Anne of St Bartholomew, OCD, 1549-1626</i></p>	<p>8 Immaculate Heart of Mary <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity is confirmed in 1891 & makes vow of virginity & decision to enter Carmel in 1894 at age 14.</i></p>
<p>9 10th Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>St Therese offers herself to Merciful Love in 1895.</i></p>	<p>10 Cause of St Therese is introduced to the Holy See in 1914.</p>	<p>11 St Barnabas, Apostle The endurance of darkness leads to great light. <i>St John of the Cross</i></p>	<p>12 All the gifts...which God grants to the soul, He always grants in order to lead it to eternal life. <i>St John of the Cross</i></p>	<p>13 St Anthony of Padua In perfect conformity to God's will lies all our good. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i></p>	<p>14 I was scrupulous lest I take away from or add anything to that which was written and ordained by our Saint (Teresa). <i>Bl Anne of St Bartholomew</i></p>	<p>15 If the love of Christ is in us, we shall do as He did and seek the lost sheep. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i></p>
<p>16 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time The soul's center is God. <i>St John of the Cross</i></p>	<p>17 If the mind has not become disciplined early on, it can easily become distracted and dissipated. <i>Br Lawrence of the Resurrection</i></p>	<p>18 If we long to find Jesus, the sure way is that of humility of heart and simplicity of soul. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i></p>	<p>19 St Romuald I had learned that one seldom reformed persons by "telling them the truth." <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i></p>	<p>20 A good heart is what He prizes and wishes from us. <i>Bl Anne of St Bartholomew</i></p>	<p>21 St Aloysius Gonzaga However, when all is said, truth suffers, but never dies. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i></p>	<p>22 St Paulinus of Nola Sts John Fisher & Thomas More</p>
<p>23 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time Sacrifice is the food of love. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i></p>	<p>24 Birth of John the Baptist And what do I say to Jesus? I say nothing--I love Him. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i></p>	<p>25 This Living Stream for which I thirst and long/ Provides my sup, my surety and my song. <i>St John of the Cross</i></p>	<p>26 Those who practice prayer, are aware that He is looking at them. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i></p>	<p>27 St Cyril of Alexandria When the evening of life comes you will be judged on love. <i>St John of the Cross</i></p>	<p>28 St Irenaeus The right of self-determination is an inalienable property of the soul. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i></p>	<p>29 Sts Peter and Paul, Apostles Where there is charity, there is God. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i></p>
<p>30 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time Humility always bears God in its heart. <i>The Little Arab</i></p>						

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 <i>Bl Junipero Serra</i> No human eye can see what God does in the soul during hours of inner prayer. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	2 It suffices to humble oneself, to bear with one's imperfections. That is real sanctity. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	3 <i>St Thomas, Apostle</i> You yourself are His dwelling...His secret chamber and hiding place. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	4 <i>St Elizabeth of Portugal</i> One has to work for humility, one must sow. Then God gives humility <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i>	5 <i>St Anthony Zaccaria</i> To stand before the face of the living God--that is our vocation. <i>St Tersea Benedicta</i>	6 <i>St Maria Goretti</i> Each time you wound charity, you wound Jesus who is charity itself. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i>
7 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time The humble heart is the chalice holding God. The Little Arab	8 Let us willingly make ourselves living stones of the church, willing servants of our brothers & sisters on this earth. <i>St Raphael Kalinowski</i>	9 Every soul should know that even though God doesn't answer its prayer immediately He'll answer it at the opportune time <i>St John of the Cross</i>	10 Our daily schedule ensures us of hours for solitary dialogue with the Lord, and these are the foundation of our life. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	11 <i>St Benedict</i> I advise you against long discourses in mental prayer, for they often foster distractions. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>	12 Love is always stirring and thinking about what it will do. It cannot contain itself. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	13 St Henry <i>St Teresita of the Andes, Virgin, OCD 1900-1919</i>
14 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time Strive to be attentive to God's presence. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>	15 <i>St Bonaventure</i> Let us desire and be occupied in prayer...so as to have this strength to serve. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	16 Our Lady of Mount Carmel Humility is the kingdom of the heart of God. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i>	17 <i>Bls Teresa of St Augustine and Companions, Virgins and Martyrs, OCD, 1974, Compiègne, France</i>	18 <i>St Camillus de Lellis</i> Recommend yourselves to God and have no doubt about the consolation He will give you. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i>	19 Christ prayed interiorly not only when he had withdrawn from the crowd, but also when he was among people <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	20 St Elijah, Father of Carmel What is necessary daughters, is that we be content with little. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>
21 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time Love is the only thing that can fill the heart of man. <i>The Little Arab</i>	22 St Mary Magdalene <i>Bl Elizabeth Catez (of the Trinity) is baptized in 1880.</i>	23 Our Lady, Mother of Divine Grace <i>St Bridget of Sweden</i> All authentic prayer is prayer of the Church. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	24 <i>Bls Maria Pilar, Teresa and Maria Angeles, Virgin Martyrs, OCD, 1936, Guadalajara Spain</i>	25 <i>St James, Apostle</i> God allows temptation for the sole purpose of letting us grow. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i>	26 <i>Sts Joachim and Anne</i> I have been captured in the loving nets of the Divine Fisherman. <i>St Teresita of the Andes</i>	27 <i>Bl Titus Brandsma, O.Carm, Priest, Martyr, 1881-1942</i> We can never finish studying the Gospels. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>
28 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>Bl John Soreth, O.Carm, Priest, 1400-1471</i>	29 St Martha <i>St Therese's Father died in 1894.</i> There must be special places on earth for the solemn praise of God. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	30 <i>St Peter Chysologus</i> One must erase the word discouragement from one's dictionary of love. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	31 <i>St Ignatius of Loyola</i> We find in him (St John of the Cross) the ancient eremitical spirit in its purest form. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	 <h1 style="margin-left: 20px;">July 2002</h1>		

Carmelite Studies

A Certificate Program Sponsored by The Carmelite Institute and Washington Theological Union

The Carmelite Institute, Washington, DC, founded by five Carmelite and Discalced Carmelite provinces in the United States, promotes studies in the Carmelite tradition and makes the tradition available for all who are interested in a spiritual life.

Washington Theological Union is a Roman Catholic school for ministry offering master's degrees, graduate certificates, and continuing education programs for men and women, religious and lay, to prepare them for ministries of service, witness, mission and leadership.

The Carmelite Chair of Spirituality is endowed by the Chicago Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary. The province has also established a scholarship fund to assist students in Carmelite Studies.

Carmelite Studies At Washington Theological Union

The Carmelite Chair of Spirituality at the Union together with the Carmelite Institute offers a certificate in Carmelite Studies. The certificate program provides a comprehensive introduction to the history and spirituality of the 800-year Carmelite tradition. The program traces the development of the tradition from its origins through the Teresian Reform to its present day witness.

Among the figures studied are Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, Lawrence of the Resurrection, Elizabeth of the Trinity, Therese of Lisieux, Titus Brandsma, and Edith Stein. Courses explore the Carmelite contribution to contemporary concerns such as human development, community, prayer, and prophetic living. Participants have access to Carmelite faculty and the Carmelitana Collection, a specialized library

in the Carmelite tradition located at Whitefriars Hall in Washington, DC.

Two semesters of study are required for the certificate, and participants may begin in either the Fall semester (September) or Spring semester (January). One semester of study is possible. This Carmelite program is included within the Union Sabbatical program.

Courses Required for Certificate:

FALL SEMESTER

The Foundation Tradition: Carmel 1200-1300

3 credits

Examines the early documents and development of the Carmelite Order and its spirituality from its foundation (c. 1206) through its first century as Carmel moved from a community of hermits to an international order of mendicant friars.

The Reforming Tradition: Carmel 1300-1500

3 credits

Examines the attempts to animate the Carmelite tradition through the social and religious turbulence of the later Middle Ages and how these attempts influenced the later Carmelite tradition, which culminated in the reforms of St. Teresa.

Teresa of Avila

2 credits

A study of Teresa's spirituality as presented in her major writings: *Life*, *The Way of Perfection*, and *The Interior Castle*.

SPRING SEMESTER

The Reform of Teresa of Avila: 1500-1600

3 credits

Studies the reform of the Order by Teresa of Avila, and the beginning of the Discalced

Carmelites; the spiritual themes of Teresa and John of the Cross.

Carmel Through the Modern Era:

1600-Present

3 credits

Studies the reform of Touraine and the later history of the Carmelites; the contributions of Lawrence of the Resurrection, Elizabeth of the Trinity, Therese of Lisieux, Titus Brandsma, and Edith Stein.

John of The Cross

2 credits

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2 credits

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Each semester students are encouraged to take an elective course in a theological discipline, which broadens the context for Carmelite studies. Courses may be chosen from a wide range of studies in contemporary theology, scripture, and ecclesiastical history; also available are ministry-oriented courses such as pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, prayer, evangelization, church law, and pastoral leadership.

Depending upon a student's background and interest, the certificate program may be taken for audit or credit, in either case, the Certificate in Carmelite Studies requires the completion of all assignments in required courses. The certificate may be included

in a program of studies for a Master's degree in theology with a concentration in Carmelite studies.

For information contact:



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DISTANCE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Many people who are interested in studying the Carmelite tradition are not able to attend a residential program. The Carmelite Institute is making available a program of studies through distance education. Students are invited to study the Carmelite tradition in their own homes and communities. Courses are taught at the graduate level for academic credit.

Contact the Carmelite Institute for more information on the program at:

Distance Education Program

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A Meditative Reflection on the Nicene Creed, taken from various sources

Fr. Theodore Centala OCD

We believe in One loving God as Father who has created us in his own image to love him and one another. He recreated all things in his only beloved Son, the new image and likeness of his Glory.

We believe that Jesus is Light of Eternal Light, Word of God, our Way, our Truth and our Life. To accomplish his mission of service to our world, he became flesh of our human flesh, and fully shared our human condition. By the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, he became just as human as each one of us. He was broken for our sins and was obedient unto death as he gave himself upon the cross. But he was raised up in Glory and now has the Name above all names, a name that burns in my heart. He is the only one that I seek to resemble.

We believe in the power of your Spirit in your Covenant with your people. The Spirit keeps us in your abiding presence in our daily lives, to know God's will and the Spirit challenges us to do it. When we falter and fail the

Spirit gives us cleansing forgiveness for our sins, which prevent us from loving. The Spirit opens our minds and hearts to the Holy Scriptures, which tell us of generations of people, all thirsting for you the Living God. The Spirit teaches us to pray for ourselves, our families, all your people with longings that are beyond words. The Spirit tells us about the sacredness of the family and helps us make each home a little Kingdom.

We now sum up our belief in You the Living God. We believe that you know and care for each person with individual loving concern. That you have a mission for each one of us: so that we can each minister in your name, sharing your love and blessings. We believe that when we accept our mission, our life is filled with purpose, power, confidence and joy. That doubt, risk, pain and suffering are part of the journey of a life of loving care. And finally, that you ask us to walk in a living faith and hope and want us to give you our total love, for you have given yourself totally to us. Amen. ■



International Carmelite News

News From Uganda

Brother Bernard Olk OCD
Carmelite Monastery
PO Box 260
Mityana, Uganda,

Dear (Fr.) Ted,
Lent, March 2002

Have been thinking of you, and thought I would write. Actually I've spoken of you as one

of ours, who has spent a good bit of time in mission. It was only the good stuff! Truly, I hope you are well. You have my greetings and you must pass along the same to the rest of the community. And a special hello to your executive secretary.

We are in our third week of the language course. Need I say, the honeymoon is over? I'm getting farther and farther behind — I think;

not that I've been ahead of the game. Gads, I had trouble with English in school. My only consolation is that I don't have to have a handle on Luganda as David does for Mass, confessions and preaching. I can manage at the market with one of the little kids! Our Bishop formally presented us to our parish this past Sunday, the 3rd.

It was a wonderful celebration, a drum Mass, entertainment and we even got up to speak in Luganda! We wrote out in English what we wanted to say and Fr. Kiki helped us put it into Lugandan. I managed five sentences quite well. Doesn't sound like much, but it made a hit with everyone. The Bishop even got up and danced at our presentations. Of course we knew what we were saying, as we composed it in English. It was good for me to be up in front of my parish!

Here in Kasambya where we are taking our course, we have the chance to accompany the White Fathers of Africa on their ministry visits. We will be doing the same things when we get to our parish. I went with Fr. John Paul. We took the dirt road through the villages (Main Street) that quickly became dirt and grass with an occasional washout. Then the dirt ends and we're on a pathway wide enough for a jeep. The banana trees and bush are beating on the sides of our jeep.

Then I heard the rhythmic beating of drums — John Paul said the drums were their church bells! Turning the bend I saw the two drummers, a table between two jackfruit trees with a cloth on it, mats and rough wooden benches. Their church! Because of the drummers there were people on many paths coming towards us. In minutes the benches were filled, people stood and many children occupied the straw mats. Father heard confessions sitting in the driver's seat, the penitents entered from the passenger's side. Services included a lengthy instruction, Mass and four Baptisms. Having 15 out stations, the priest sees each station once, maybe twice a month. Between these times, the head catechist does much of the local work. The Baptismal water was



Brother Bernard Olk OCD

poured from an empty cooking oil jug. A corporal was the Baptism garment, and baptismal candle a small snug pot!

After Mass and the instruction were finished, everything was rolled up and carried away. Church, people and place departed as quickly as it came. A short distance away a lunch waited for John Paul and I. The food served was matoke (bananas), enyams y'enkoko (chicken) and mucere (rice) all eaten with our hands. Of course we washed our hands first in soap and water. After lunch, a few words, very few in Luganda, and then the drive home.

Here with the White Fathers, we depend on rainwater for everything, stored in ground tanks. Water for consumption must be boiled. They have solar power for night lighting, cook with wood and charcoal and we launder by hand. David has already had malaria, and we all are on guard against yellow fever. It went through the community just before we arrived.

Everything concerned, all are well and things are going well. Do pray for us, especially as concerns "this" language program. Do remember me to the community. Tell Tony Parsons that there are two Scottish women volunteers working for the Diocese, Maria and Una. They are wonderful women and great to visit.

God Bless all. Pray for me. I'll do you all a few as well. ■

Berni

The Beauty of the Lord

Ann Chapin, OCDS

I have been painting sacred art for the past few years, mainly for churches or monastery settings. This has been in response to what I feel is a call to work toward restoring sacred art to the sanctuary of the church. I have found that images, which help us to focus on Christ and our relationship with God, are an important part of one's spiritual environment and well being. St. Teresa of Avila makes this very point when she wrote, "What you can do as a help in this matter is try to carry about an image or painting of this Lord that is to your liking, not so as to carry it about on your heart and never look at it but so as to speak often with Him; for he will inspire you with what to say." (Way of Perfection, 26, 9, page 136) God, besides being all-holy, all-powerful, all-wise, and all-merciful, is also all-beautiful, beautiful in a way we need to be reminded of in images.

Images are important; we all cover our desks at work with pictures of those we love. We know that for that moment when we really look deeply at that picture of a family member or pet, for a few moments we are delivered from the stresses of the day and calmed. Sacred images especially touch us at a level deeper than words and the normal distractions of the day. They connect directly with our spirit and soul in a timeless way, in a way that feels more like God's time than ours. They take us completely out of ourselves and grant us the divine delight of becoming completely absorbed in the awareness of God.



Ann Chapin, OCDS

St. Teresa expresses a similar sentiment: "Do you want to know when it is very good to have a picture of Christ and when it is a thing in which I find much delight? When He himself is absent, or when by means of a great dryness He wants to make us feel He is absent. It is then a wonderful comfort to see an image of One whom we have so much reason to love." (Way of Perfection, 34, 11, page 173)

There is something about meditating on an image of Christ that captures in some small way the beauty of the Lord that has a real spiritual effect on a person. My goal in my paintings is therefore not to just paint a physical likeness of

a person's face or form. The physical likeness is not enough. My aim is to not only to be true to the physical form, but also and more importantly, the way in which the presence of God in the person makes the person spiritually beautiful - to somehow capture the

presence of God's love in the person.

After I became Catholic four years ago I was granted the desire to consecrate whatever artistic talent I have to the service of God. I soon felt led that my focus was to see sacred art restored to church sanctuaries. So many of the churches now are devoid of art. We do not live in the times when artisans creating statues, windows, and paintings are as critical to the construction of a church as the stone and mortar. Many of the churches I enter feel more like simple meeting halls than holy places.

A church that takes one's breath away when entering the sanctuary because of its beauty is a special treasure, since beauty itself points to God and brings one into His presence. Images of Christ, Mary, and the Saints in the sanctuary remind us that the mystical body of Christ transcends ordinary time and provide inspiration and comfort. Instead of distracting us from our immediate church community, they help us remember that we ourselves and those in our parish are called to be a part of the full communion of the saints; they point us to our destiny with one another in God. Such images remind us of the nobility and inherent dignity of all in the congregation, they show us the sort of people God will transform us into with our consent and cooperation.

My paintings are hanging in various churches, Catholic and Protestant, here in central Virginia, and requests for pieces are made by referral of someone who sees them in a church. The paintings are usually quite large; 8 by 12 feet is a normal size. I usually receive a call from the priest, and from there make a visit to the church to consult about what is desired for the particular space and to get a feel for the architecture and the style of the interior.

When I actually start the painting it begins by first making a frame upon which to stretch the canvas, and then preparing the canvas for the paint. I don't enjoy this part at all, but it has to be done carefully or the whole work will be affected. When the canvas is prepared, then I can begin to select the color scheme, the size and organization of the figures, and the overall style of the composition. Sometimes I will paint the piece just on a piece of unstretched canvas that can be rolled up and easily moved. This is done when there is the desire to change what is hanging based upon the liturgical season, or to loan out the hangings for retreats.

The most important part of preparation for a painting is prayer. Sometimes I will pray for a few weeks or a couple of months before beginning on a work of sacred art; it feels like a painting has to reach a certain level of interior maturity before I begin to work with paint and canvas, or the result will not be right. I pray for guidance in all things, particularly that the painting turn out to be exactly what will be most needed for the specific congregation at the church where the painting is to be hung.

I do not know how a painting is going to turn out when I begin. In fact, I am always surprised about some aspect of the finished piece. For example, I painted a copy of Fra Bartolomeo's Deposition for St. Mary of the Annunciation in Ladysmith, Virginia. In the version for this particular church I felt led to include the Crown of Thorns lying by the body of Christ. This isn't in the original, but adding it the version for the church in Ladysmith, makes the painting unique for them.

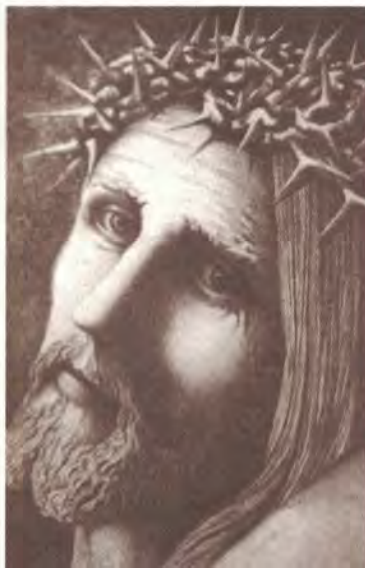
St. Balthus said, "To paint and to pray are the same thing." I find this to be true. For me, when I am painting, I am in a deeper state of prayer than just about at any other time. This is because when I am painting, I am in the scene I am depicting, and not so much aware any more of the paint and the canvas, as the feelings that the people in the scene are experiencing. In painting that copy of Fra Bartolomeo's Deposition I found that when I allowed myself to get lost in the grief Mary, John, and Mary Magdalene felt as they each embraced the body of Christ at the foot of the Cross, the painting would just come out right. On the other hand, if I did not engage with the spiritual dimension of what is going on and instead just dealt with paint and canvas, the image would not glow with that 'divine beauty', and I'd have to paint over it and start again. Something important happens when painting is recognized



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as a form a prayer that is crucial to the final outcome of the piece.

Painting images of the face of Christ is another matter altogether. As I said before, I am not trying just to paint a physical likeness; I am trying to capture some small sense of the image of the God-Man. The goal is to capture on canvas the beauty of God Incarnate. My experience so far is this: the very beauty of Christ is His love for us. Thus, to capture that beauty, I need to present to the viewers the face of Christ looking at them with the depth, uniqueness, and tenderness of love that is the very beauty of the Lord to be experienced by each person. Thus when they look at an image of the face of Jesus, what I think they should see is Jesus looking at them with this unfathomable love, so that they are immediately drawn into His presence. Each person should become aware of himself or herself as seen by the com-



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passionate and tender Christ and thus experience the reality of God's love for them. I feel that it is in the eyes of Christ looking at us that we can catch a glimpse of our true selves.

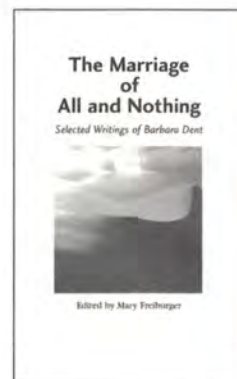
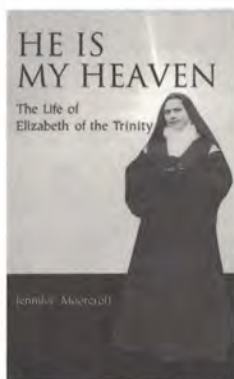
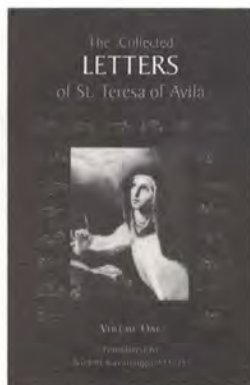
Thus, when I am painting an image of the face of Christ, I am primarily trying to portray what I see on the canvas correspond to what I experience from God. Thus my own prayer life affects my painting as well, the closer my experience of God (I mean by pure faith, not necessarily feeling), the more naturally the painting flows. When I am working on an image of the face of Christ, it is very much the experience that I paint and paint and paint, and for a while it is just paint and canvas, and then suddenly, He is there more than the paint and canvas. At the moment that happens, I know the painting is on the right track.

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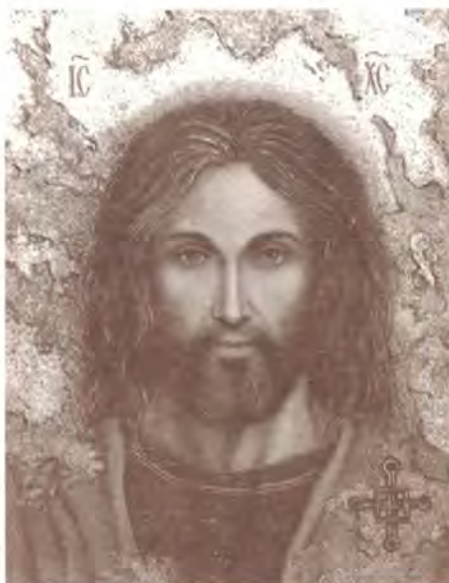
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After the painting has been hung in the sanctuary, the pastor sometimes asks me to speak to the congregation about how to use images in our prayer lives to grow closer to God. One point I usually make is that people will respond differently to the same painting. We each need different things at different points of our spiritual journey, and so it is completely natural to respond differently. No one is incorrect in how they respond; whatever one feels is what one feels. In looking at a



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Passion image, a person may be in physical, emotional, or spiritual pain. In that case they may look into the face of Jesus on the Cross and see Him understanding how deep the pain is and how hard it is to bear it each day. They may see Him also bearing it with them and in them and be granted some strengthening of their faith. Or they may experience something else, just for them at that moment. It is good just to look at a painting for a while and let the piece speak in a wordless way. Let the painting cradle you and nurture you.

There is no 'getting it right' from the perspective of some sort of academic artistic interpretation; all that sort of analysis of a piece of sacred art is irrelevant to the appropriate use for one's own spiritual good. John of the Cross writes, "...souls should use the painted image in such a way as not to suffer hindrance in their movement toward the living image, and how they should pay no more attention to images than is required for advancing to what is spiritual." (Ascent of Mount Carmel, III, 15, 2, page 291)

Therefore, if I were to give any advice regarding what sorts of sacred images to select and keep where you spend time in prayer, I would stress that it is important to pick a piece the moves you, regardless of what everyone else might think of the piece. Their taste is not

your taste, and we must all surround ourselves with what moves us. Some people are deeply moved by icons, others by more contemporary styles. However, I would also encourage openness to a style that is unfamiliar if God seems to be inexplicably drawing you to an image. At first I didn't much like traditional icons, and now I find they move me deeply. Give it some time and see what treasures may be hidden there.

As a final note I would like to share a quote from Olivier Clement, a modern theologian, expressing our need for divine beauty. He writes, "Christianity is the religion of faces. Only the Face of God in humanity enables us to discern the face of all humankind in God, to decipher, in the communion of saints, the riddle of the faces that surround us today. We can no longer witness to Christ in the Spirit without this third beauty. The beauty of God without humankind, which is a consuming fire, so that Moses could not even approach it from behind unless his face was covered, is not enough; nor is the beauty of humankind without God, that negative way to a dead end, by which unknowing is turned in absence and the desire for the absolute into the appetite for destruction. The beauty we need is that of Emmanuel – God with us – and the Holy Spirit – us with God." (On Human Being, Olivier Clement, New City Press, 2000 pp.138-139) ■

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