



CARMEL CLARION

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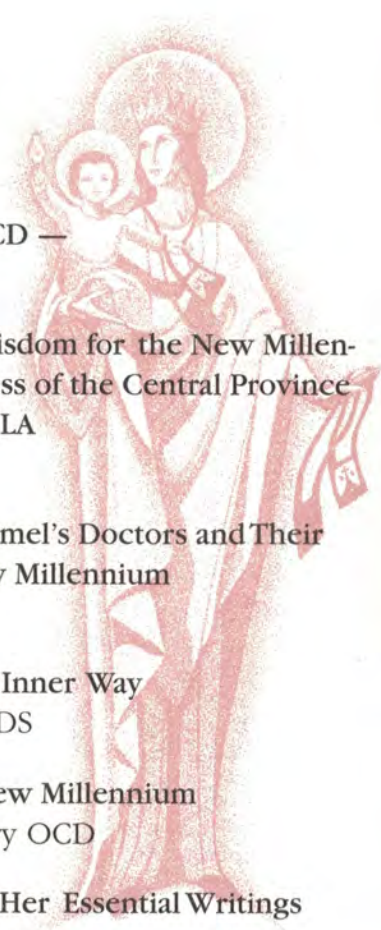


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Editorial

October and November are crowded with Carmelite Saints and capped with the feast of All Carmelite Saints on November 14th. They all arrived in heaven by means of prayer, in which they gave God permission to save and sanctify them. They did not give God total permission from the beginning because they did not have their total self at their command to give. Prayer is a progression.



It is amazing how free God created us, and how God with infinite patience waits for this permission. Jessica Powers mentions that we first seek God in the Word of God and in creation, which radiates traces of their Creator.

God usually is encountered in the night of our journey of Faith, unless we get knocked off our horse at high noon, as Saint Paul was. Who is this God? The Bible, our "pre-elected acre" offers some basic information that God is One, almighty, moral, a spirit, and has been around since the beginning, creating, improving, chastising, and making overtures of Love.

Creation can be a huge obstacle to finding God, just a place to wallow in materialism and pleasure. No traces of the Creator can be found

in creation without prayer. Later a promise of poverty is taken to strengthen the person so there is less chance of falling back into the dark.

As our old self decreases with persevering prayer and the practice of virtue, there is room for the first flowers of Christian Life to appear. They come from the new gifted life of God, a mysterious life, so freely given. Knowledge of God explodes in the Illuminative Way of the IV Mansions. Larger bookcases are sought at markets and yard sales.

With this new gift of Life, knowledge, strength, the Cross is embraced in many new forms, like the spiritual desert. A new need is felt to share these contemplative insights with other contemplatives. Yes, prayer is a progression, and a new phase has just been given to the one who prays at night. ■

The Editor

Prayer: A Progression

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

You came by night, harsh with the need of grace,
into the dubious presence of your Maker.
You combed a small and pre-elected acre
for some bright word of Him, or any trace.
Past the great judgment growths of thistle and thorn
and past the thicket of self you bore your yearning
till lo, you saw a pure white blossom burning
in glimmer, then, light, then unimpeded more!

Now the flower God-is-Love gives ceaseless glow;
now all your thoughts feast on its mystery,
but when love mounts through knowledge and goes
free,
then will the sated thinker arise and go
and brave the deserts of the soul to give
the flower he found to the contemplative.

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Carmel's Doctors of the Church

Wisdom for the New Millennium

The 19th Regional Congress of the Central Province

June 13-16, 2002, New Orleans LA

Fr. Theodore N Centala OCD

The scholarly presentations of the Carmelite team were both personal and challenging. They were very clear in pointing out to us that the teachings of our three Carmelite Doctors are in harmony with the signs of the times. Our whole world needs the wisdom that comes from above. Our Carmelite Doctors have a definite teaching that is based on that wisdom from above.

St John of the Cross teaches us about the discipline necessary to dispose ourselves for that complete transformation into a free Christ-like person.

St Teresa of Jesus of Avila teaches us about the wide variety of prayers, and those mandatory virtues for each set of Mansions. Without both we are a spiritual dwarf and will not enter the Center of the King.

Little Thérèse teaches us that nothing is too small along the way to total confidence and faithful trust in the ways of merciful love.

Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, although



not yet a Doctor of the Church, teaches us through five key themes: world, plan, truth, woman and cross. Her brilliant wisdom qualifies her to teach for the new millennium.

The Congress also included a very timely "Report on the Official Scapular Update" so that our Carmelites would walk and pray in harmony with Scripture and the Church, The People of God. We were further invigorated with a Vatican II review of the apostolic expectations of the laity who are Baptized.

Finally, we were spiritually sealed with a lengthy expose on "The New Legislation of the Secular Order". The presenter should have warned us to wear seat belts for some of the insightful portions of his presentation. Some of the homilies also contained real wisdom, really bearing fruit that will probably last. The audio tapes are a spiritual treasure for us during our traveling times on the road. ■



Frs Patrick Sugeur and Theodore Centala at the OCDS regional congress

The Doctor Will See You Now: Carmel's Doctors and Their Spiritual Prescriptions for the New Millennium

Presenter: Fr. Jerome Earley OCD

Condensed by: Suzanne Treis OCD

I want to start by quoting St. John of the Cross from the *Spiritual Cantic*, stanza 36, paragraphs 8-13, because I want to set the tone for this conference. John of the Cross writes: *"The soul will not be able to see itself in the beauty of God unless it is transformed in the wisdom of God, in which it sees itself in possession of both earthly and heavenly things. The soul always possesses this desire to have a clear and pure understanding of the Divine Truth."*

John of the Cross is identifying what wisdom is. It is being able to see clearly and to understand the Divine Truth, which is the plan of God for the universe, and for each one of us, and to see his design unfold in history and in our own lives. We will not be able to see the face of God unless we are transformed by this wisdom of God. John then goes on to talk about how we have to enter this wisdom. He calls it entering the thicket of God's way and knowledge and he writes:

"Oh, if we could but now fully understand how a soul cannot reach the thicket and wisdom of the riches of God, which are of many kinds, without entering the thicket of many kinds of suffering, finding in this its delight and consolation, and how a soul with an authentic desire for Divine Wisdom wants suffering first in order to enter this wisdom by the thicket of the Cross. The gate entering into these riches of his wisdom is the Cross, which is narrow, and few desire to

enter by it, but many desire the delights obtained from entering there."

This wonderful passage from the *Spiritual Cantic* truly sets the tone for this Congress. It demonstrates the wisdom of our own Carmelite doctors to help us face this new millennium, to face our individual struggles. It demonstrates how our saints are ever new for us, reminding us of the goal that we desire and the goal that has been promised to us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nobody wants to go to the doctor or to the dentist, but it's wise that we do so for health reasons, so that we can continue to do our work for the Lord, for our families, for society. We don't want to undergo that suffering, but we need to because of our human condition and our obligation to take care of ourselves.

We have to do this on a deeper level, on a spiritual level, on a supernatural level as well. That's why the doctors of the Church have been given to us as a gift. The Church gives us these wonderful saints to help us to understand the wisdom of God, to understand his Word, to understand how the power of the Holy Spirit is making us ever new. A doctor of the Church was one who taught - taught theology, taught about the mysteries of Christ.

The first requirement for being a doctor was great sanctity, meaning someone who was



docile enough to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and to use those graces for the glory of God and for the good of the Church, which includes the laity. They had to have eminent learning and, of course, they had to be proclaimed a doctor by a pope. They all helped to deepen the faithful's understanding of the truth of Jesus Christ and the mysteries of our faith and to spiritually heal people. So that's how Carmelites are to be. Carmelites need to be the clinicians for people's souls by teaching them contemplative prayer and to see the wonder of God everywhere.

The doctors of the Church spoke for their times, in their own historical time and place. That is why some of the doctors do not seem as meaningful to us today. Some, however, have more universal appeal.

Our own Carmelite doctors St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Jesus, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, speak continually for our times. They have not gone out of vogue... they are ever fresh... because they speak to the interior, the interior where things are most important, the interior where the ultimate decisions are made, the interior where the ultimate commitments are made, and where we have to find God so that we can bring him to others.

John, Teresa and Thérèse speak not only for our times, but for all centuries, for all of us. St. John of the Cross, the mystical doctor, was given his doctorate by Pius XI on August 24, 1926. In the brief that Pius XI wrote for that occasion, he talked about John of the Cross as the mystical doctor of the dark night. It's a beautiful passage. Then St. Teresa of Jesus, was made a doctor by Pope Paul VI on September 27, 1970. Pope Paul called her a great Carmelite, the doctor of

prayer—St. Teresa the Great, you might say. St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, was made a doctor by our current pontiff, John Paul II, on October 19, 1997 – the doctor of merciful love. Their teachings, their sanctity, their message, their eminent teaching for us as Carmelites and for our new millennium is what we want to reflect upon this weekend. We will even bring in the potential doctor, St. Teresa Benedicta, Edith Stein.



I started with those quotes of St. John of the Cross because they speak of our goal as God's spiritual creatures, as his children, and of the riches that he wants us to be endowed with. They speak of the way to obtain that goal by means of suffering, the paradoxical wisdom of God—the Cross. But, they go beyond the Cross, to the

resurrection, our redemption.

In the wisdom of our three doctors of the Church, we can find spiritual medicine that can offer us a healthy perspective on life and ourselves, and shows us the way to achieve the wholesomeness necessary to see the face of God. Their wisdom helps us to be healed of our moral heart failures, our theological flabbiness and our spiritual anemia.

We have to realize what our condition is. That's why we go to the doctor: "Doctor, please tell me what my condition is." We also go to get an overall idea how things are going for us, our emotional life, our physical life, and how our condition impacts our spiritual and intellectual life, as well as the other way around.

St. John of the Cross said, "If you want to be healed, then you have to start with the interior. The exterior can be lived with greater productivity and greater peace and so on." So I was

thinking, Ok, if we're going to go to the office of St. John of the Cross, go to St. Teresa's clinic, or go to St. Thérèse's day care, what's the first thing we want to do?

First of all, we have to get a diagnosis. What is the diagnosis for our times, for our society, for us individually, perhaps globally? What's happening at the various levels of our existence? John Paul II said that we have come to the fullness of times in this coming of the new millennium. We have to be able to read the signs of the times. We've come to the fullness of time because of our Lord Jesus Christ coming in our midst.

Who are we as human beings? Who are we as creatures of God? What's the dynamic relationship between the two? To read the signs of the times, we have to be able to read ourselves. What's the state of things in our own heart, in our society? How would we characterize our condition at this current moment in history and in time, as a people, as a society, more importantly, as a community?

The new millennium began as a time of great joy and rejoicing. Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, said, "We're living in a time of great promise, of great hope." His theme has been hope all throughout his writings. And all his writings have been great contemplative writings, especially his *Beginning of the New Millennium* letter. He said this is supposed to be a time of great joy and rejoicing, of hope, of great perspective on history, a kind of coming out of ourselves and discovering anew the presence of God and knowing what the meaning of redemption is for each one of us as well as for the world. Jesus has freed us from sin, the disease of sin, the corruption of sin, the rust of sin that corrodes us. This is a year of favor, a time of favor when we remember that we live in the presence of God, especially as Carmelites.

Is this what our condition is? Actually this is a time of confusion, of doubt, of darkness, suspicion, of anger—lots of anger—of mistrust, of

moral collapse, of indifference and, as Our Holy Father said, a time of uncertainty, a lack of discernment, because so many people are questioning the faith, questioning what sin is, questioning what is moral or not. Everything is turned upside-down. The law protects the criminals, it seems. The law protects immoral behavior.

This is a time of uncertainty. I hear all the time, "Father, what's a sin?" We are experiencing a lack of discernment, particularly with human dignity, the respect and honor that we owe each other. Our Holy Father said, "This is a time you should be experiencing joy and great discovery of the wonders of God" and yet it is a time of violence, injustice, exclusion, separation, ennui."

It's a time of spiritual ills in which we overlook the issues at hand and we cover up or sweep reality under the rug. We suffer from the disease of presumption in this country. We want to be contemplatives, but we are in danger of losing the integrity of our contemplative life. We're losing the integrity of the gift that God has given us because we've got to be active. We can't slow down. We love stress. We love it. We really do because, if we're not doing something, then we go into psychological guilt and we're miserable and will do anything to distract our wills from attaining holiness.

We live in a diseased society, a society that offers great promise and hope, but is spiritually diseased. Our Holy Father has done everything possible in his writings and in his own witness to remind us that we are creatures and children of God - to turn around our attitude of doing everything we can to destroy ourselves because we just want to ignore things. The new millennium was to be—and is to be—a time of freedom. A time of freedom for us to restore the dignity we have as children of God.

How are we to attain this spiritual healing? Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II says, in talking about the last century, (WWI, WWII, the concentration camps, the experiments done by

the medical field on human beings, all the horrors of the 20th century) “All these events demonstrate most vividly that the world needs purification, that it needs to be converted.” And this is what our doctors, John, Teresa and Thérèse, are saying. We need to be purified and we need to surrender to God.

Conversion is simply surrendering more and more to God. The more we surrender and abandon ourselves to God, the more we are undergoing conversion. We’re getting a blood transfusion when we repent, and the blood is the mercy of God. This is what our doctors are teaching us with their message of prayer, abandonment and surrender to the mercy and love of God.

So, if this is our diagnosis, what surgery needs to be done? Where do we have to operate? It is the self. Our three doctors focus on the self. We need open heart surgery so that the self can be healed, restored and become transformed by God. The surgery’s got to be done to counteract our desire to destroy ourselves, to sweep things under the rug.

St. Teresa had to deal with melancholy, depression, Psychology 101. She recognized the illnesses of her time and she could see that it was rooted in the self, the self-willed person, the self-willed woman who came to Carmel perhaps for her own advantages. I recommend that you look at Chapters 10 and 11 in *The Way of Perfection*. St Teresa is trying to remind us, “Don’t be complacent. Honey, go to the doctor.”

So one of her spiritual prescriptions is: Don’t be complacent about what God has done for us, where he has placed us. Don’t be complacent about what we are truly seeking. She says, “*Unless we take great care and each of us looks well to it that one renounces one’s self will, which is the most important business of all, there will be many things to deprive us of the holy freedom of spirit, which our souls seek in order to soar to their maker unburdened by the leaden weight of*

the earth.” So that’s where the surgery’s got to be done, on our self-willed nature, because we want to appease ourselves. We want to push things under the rug, “I’m not all that bad a person. If that person makes excuses, I can make excuses, too.”

What’s the cure? What’s the prescription? The first thing we must strive for is to rid ourselves of our love for our bodies. Tough. I mean, where’s our real health? Certainly, we have to take care of ourselves, but at what point are we simply looking for comfort? A fault this body has is that the more comfort we try to give it, the more needs it discovers.

Isn’t that the truth? I can’t do without this. I have to have this computer part. Or, I have to have this perfect place. Or, I have to have this. I have to have that. You know. The more we give in to our self and the comforts that we long to have, the more we’re going to discover that we’ll be attached to that item. *So the prescription is, of course, detachment.* You’ve come to die for Christ, not to live comfortably for Christ. You have to die to self, get the alien out of your heart. She says, “Stop complaining and be generous. Turn one’s attention to God and be humble. Stop being a softie. Stop complaining.” That’s the cure. Be generous, stop complaining, be detached, die for Christ.

How many of us would really die for Christ, and not just live comfortably for Christ? Build up those spiritual muscles! St. Joan of Arc said, “Attack! What do you mean defend? We’ve got a mission here. Attack!” Spiritually attack! Don’t be afraid! Root out that tumor of self-love. That’s what St. Thérèse suffered from. In her autobiography she said, “I was obsessed with self-love” She realized her obsession. Her inordinate passion of self-love controlled her, so that a good part of her life was spent defeating this demon. She realized that she had to be cured of her self-love by means of humility.

In Chapter Five of *Story of a Soul*, she said,

“The Lord brought me strength and the courage that I needed. He armed me so well that I never looked back. I was like a great runner who sees the track before him. If I would only correspond faithfully with each grace that was given me, a multitude of others would follow.”

She was a jogger! The doctor told her to get out and jog, spiritually. “I was like a great runner that sees the track before me.” She saw what her purpose was; she saw what the human condition was and she opened herself to humility and conquered that tumor of self-love. *That’s her prescription: humility.*

We need to go through the painful experience of recognizing what toxins we have to eliminate from ourselves. St. Teresa said in *The Way of Perfection* “Forget about yourselves, except for what concerns a definite need. So what if we die? If our body has mocked us so often, shouldn’t we mock it at least once? Shouldn’t we mock it at least once by sublimating the senses and allowing the spiritual to regain its primary... it’s primacy of place?”

This is what St. John of the Cross also prescribes as the cure. In *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book 1, Chapter 13: “Incline not to the easiest, but to the most difficult.” You know, that whole series of counsels. “Not to the easiest, but to the most difficult; not only to do it, but also to practice it.” We need to break through that wall of complacency, of self will, to break through that wall like a runner, that last mile on a marathon, and to do it not to the easiest, but the most difficult.

The self is where we have to perform our sur-

gery in order to allow detachment, humility, and mortification. We need to rechallenge ourselves to be cured. To save our society, we must look at our own souls acknowledge just who we are. *Self-knowledge is the other spiritual prescription.* We need to undergo the pain of looking at ourselves and acknowledging who we are, for whom we are. If we want to save our society—if we want to save our community—what is the prescription that our doctors tell us? It is love. Love.

We live in society, but what does society mean? Society means that we’ve get to come together. We live by rules and boundaries. However, a community is held together by love. That’s the prescription, the ultimate prescription of Teresa, John and Thérèse. As Thérèse said, “Love is my vocation.” Who doesn’t

“We need to undergo the pain of looking at ourselves and acknowledging who we are, for whom we are. If we want to save our society — if we want to save our community — what is the prescription that our doctors tell us? It is love. Love.”

have that vocation? Who doesn’t have that healing power given to us?

This cure is what the new millennium, the Jubilee Is all about - to rediscover God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - to find him anew in our heart, and to grasp the mysteries of Christ, to be amazed by them, to be in awe of them, to be overshadowed by them as our blessed mother was, and to eradicate from our hearts those inordinate passions that keep us from being transformed. We do this through the power of the Holy Spirit. This necessary purification is why the martyrs are so prominent now in history, and why Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, wanted a new martyrology made.

The other spiritual disease is the kind of inertia in which we live, this passion for indifference, of

sweeping things under the rug, of avoiding our mission. For that we need a blood transfusion. The Holy Spirit gives us gifts. Those gifts are dropped into our hearts, into our blood stream. Dr. Holy Spirit's got to give them to us, so that we can eradicate these inordinate passions.

That's what John of the Cross is talking about at the beginning of *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, "I will show you a way to surrender to God and to overcome your inordinate passions and to be purified of them so that the heart can be aflame with love." The cleansing then is part of our human condition.

What is the cure of our saints for this indifference, this inertia? It is purity of heart. Purity of heart is perhaps the one virtue that identifies our Carmelites. John of the Cross is a heart doc-

tor. If you have problems with the heart, go to St. John. St. Teresa is like a general practitioner; she's all over the place. St. Thérèse, of course, is a pediatrician — a child doctor. They're all looking at purity of heart, cleansing the heart, cleansing our being so that we can become contemplative. Purity of heart is seeing things clearly as God wants them to be seen. We can cleanse our vision and our behavior by practicing the many different prescriptions of our saints — detachment, self-knowledge, humility, and mortification.

Purity of our heart will cleanse all of our practices; it will cleanse our knowledge, and certainly it will cleanse our prayer life, which is where we have to keep in shape. That's why St. John of the Cross talks about the heart being wounded in *The Living Flame of Love*. It's a matter of being purified in practice, in knowledge, and in the imagination so that we can overcome our cowardice.

What do we need? What's important? — the gospels, the sacraments, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and a pure heart. So, when we come out of the doctor's office of Teresa, John or Thérèse, what happens to us? We have a new understanding; we are purified; we are able to go out and do our mission — the wonderful embrace of prayer and the apostolate.

The wisdom of God propels us into doing our mission. We are being transformed in order to see the face of God. The spiritual prescriptions of our saints cut out the tumors that keep us blinded of the presence of God, that keep us from being holy, from being wholesome, from having integrity as Carmelites to the contemplative life. That's why John, Teresa and Thérèse are so important. They are the perennial doctors for the heart, for our well being. That is why they will always be ahead of medicine, ahead of psychology, ahead of sociology, and ahead of literature, because of the clarity of their vision. They had X-ray vision! ■

Drink of the Stream

Compiled by Peggy Hicks OCDS

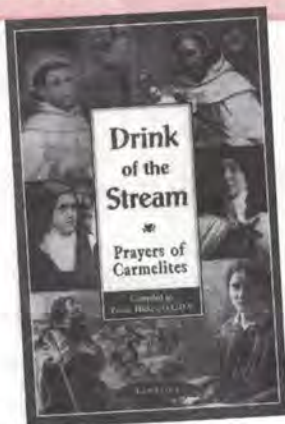
These prophets, saints, Doctors, and mystics, then, are like prisms revealing the divine light but in a marvelous variety of colors. They become for us splendid instruments for delving into the divine mysteries and coming to know the profundities of Christ's love. . .

—From the foreword by Kieran Kavanaugh OCD

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Teresa of Jesus: Mystagogue of the Inner Way

Presenter: Elda Maria Estrada OCDS

Elda Maria gave an inspiring presentation on Our Holy Mother St Teresa of Jesus, on why she is a Doctor of the Church and the importance of her contribution to the Church. There are three conditions necessary for a saint to be



named a Doctor of the Church. 1. Eminent doctrine. 2. Outstanding sanctity. 3. Declaration by the Pope.

Teresa's writings reveal a two-fold charism. Not only did she receive profound wisdom (she is often shown with the Holy Spirit dictating to her, indicating the charismatic source of her knowledge), she also exhibited extraordinary powers of communication. She was able to receive grace, understand the grace and convey it to others in the spirit it was given to her.

Many Doctors of the Church admired and spoke of Teresa. St. Francis de Sales called St Teresa the Great Herald of Divine Love. He advised everyone to read her works because of their sublime wisdom. St Alphonsus Ligouri said the influence of Teresa was all-important because from her, we learn the supreme importance of prayer in our lives. Although many Popes admired her, she was not declared a Doctor of the Church until September 27, 1970.

St. Teresa's charism was sacred silence, experiencing the mystery of the Living God in the depth of her soul. She understood the action of the Holy Spirit and was able to capture her ex-

periences in such a way, that the entire Church has benefited from her exposition.

Mysticism is simply the awareness of the dwelling of the Trinity, present from Baptism, in the depths of our souls. Teresa teaches us that the way to this awareness is prayer, and the humanity of Jesus Christ. She was completely Christocentric during a time in history that turned away from the humanity of Jesus and she built her life in imitation of Him. She discusses in Chapter IX of her *Life*, that Christ is the way to the Trinity. He asks us to search for ourselves in Him and to search for Him in ourselves.

It is during prayer that Jesus reveals Himself to us. First, He shares the treasure of His heart, then the treasures of His Mystery. St Teresa describes prayer simply as being in the presence of the One who loves us. Her awareness of this friendship is the foundation of her knowledge that we are called to holiness and friendship with God. It is not just for the few. We are all called to transforming union or spiritual marriage with our Good God. As we move toward transforming union, the "I" disappears and the "We" emerges. This is what we are called to as Carmelites! Nothing less.

Prayer is the actuation of the theological virtues through friendship with the One who loves us. Union is fruitful and the purpose of the Spiritual Marriage is to build the Church. Service is the natural outcome of prayer.

A mystagogue is a person who experiences the Living God and shows the way to others. Prayer defines St. Teresa and is her greatest legacy. Presence is the beginning. Prayer is the dynamic movement. Transforming Union is the Goal! ■

Saint Thérèse — Doctor for the New Millennium

Presenter: Fr. Matthais Montgomery OCD

Pope John Paul II declared St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face a Doctor of the Church on October 19, 1997. His Apostolic letter for the New Millennium, *The Science of Divine Love*, written in conjunction with the proclamation of Thérèse's doctorate, together with the homily at the Eucharist when he declared Thérèse a Doctor of the Church, are some of the many sources used to address the theme of the eminent doctrine of Thérèse's writings. From the Apostolic letter, we hear, "The Science of Divine Love, which the Father of mercies pours out through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, is a gift granted to the little and the humble so that they may know and proclaim the secrets of the kingdom, hidden from the learned and the wise."

The Holy Father states: "In the writings of Thérèse we do not find a scholarly presentation of the things of God, but we can discern an enlightened witness of the Faith which reveals the mystery and the holiness of the Church. Even though Thérèse does not have a true and proper doctrinal *corpus*, nevertheless a *particular radiance of doctrine* shines forth from her writings, which by a charism of the Holy Spirit grasp the very heart of her message in a fresh and original vision, presenting a teaching of eminent quality."

Thérèse did not give us a scholarly presentation, instead she wrote the story of her life, continued that in letters and further expressed her wisdom in the poems and plays that she wrote. She gave us a fresh original vision of the Church's teaching. John Paul said that Thérèse experienced revelation and made it her own. She was a soul of adoration and of wonder.

Jesus was the source of her energy, her com-

mitment, and her fruitfulness as she abandoned herself in Him. Thérèse states in *Story of a Soul* during the account of her Christmas conversion, that Jesus made

her a "fisher of souls". He gave her a great desire to work for the conversion of sinners. She said, "I felt charity enter into my soul and the need to forget myself to please others. Since then I have been happy." Thérèse wanted to slake the thirst of Jesus by bringing souls to Him and that is why the story of Pranzini's conversion was combined with her own conversion story, even though it took place many months later. After her Christmas conversion, Thérèse's behavior changed. She saw the impact of her self-love on her family and was able to respond to the grace of the present moment and change. She said, "The work I had been unable to do in ten years was done by Jesus in one instant, contenting Himself with my good will, which was never lacking."

Thérèse's doctorate enables us to see the boldness of her language. In describing her "little way", she said, "I want to seek out a means of going to heaven by a little way, very straight, very short, a little way totally new." She said, "My way is all confidence and love." She abandoned herself completely to Jesus and because of her good will and openness, Jesus was able to completely transform her soul and behavior.

The message of Thérèse is that the Gospel is ever new and there for the taking if we would only surrender our hearts to the infinite grace of



Jesus. Because of our selfishness and sins, the Gospel grace of Jesus can become crusted over with our trivial concerns and we can let our wills impede the action of the Holy Spirit within us.

Thérèse knew that God was love, merciful love. She discovered this during a time of Jansenism and the focus on God's justice in the Church. She knew that God wanted her to share in the perfection of His love and that He would provide the means, as beautifully depicted in the elevator passage in *Manuscript C*. She found scripture passages that revealed to her the importance of remaining little, of letting go. Thérèse did this by prayer, by practicing "little virtues", little penances in mortifying self-love and trusting completely in God. She trusted in God's Merciful Love and His ability to bring her where He wanted her to be. Thérèse saw from Jesus that the nature of love was to humble oneself, as He humbled Himself when He took on human form. By emptying ourselves, we allow God to provide us with the means of growing in holiness.

In John Paul's treatise on the universal call to holiness, he emphasized the place of prayer. He said, "Prayer, above all, is necessary in the Christian life. The depth of prayer affects our ability to transform salvation history, to shape history according to God's plan. Fr. Matthais asked us to see if we allowed our wills to impede the work of Jesus in our hearts, minds and souls. He asked us to examine our lives and see if we are being renewed and transformed each day to be more like Christ. Are we willing to allow change to happen? Do we recall the very special graces we receive in our own lives? Thérèse exemplified this awareness and when speaking in the third person in her writings, was emphasizing a grace that she received.

Thérèse said "the Gospels sustain me during my hours of prayer. She knew the Kingdom of God was within and that Jesus, the Doctor of doctors teaches without the noise of words. She

went on, "How great is the power of prayer. Prayer is an aspiration of the heart, a simple glance toward Heaven, something great and supernatural that unites me to God." Thérèse had complete confidence in the Lord and shared with her sister Celine, "I'm not always faithful, but I never get discouraged. I simply go more deeply into Jesus and discover even more."

Thérèse desired to reach the summit of love, but did not wish for consolations and exhibited great wisdom in dealing with aridity. In a letter to Celine, she said, "the smoke of aridity is fragrant incense that rises up to please the Lord". When traveling through the subterranean passage of the dark night near the end of her life, Thérèse trusted completely, abandoning herself to the "path He wished her to travel." The fact that Jesus chose that path for her was all the consolation she needed.

Upon her death, Celine said that the way of Thérèse was the way of the good thief. Thérèse trusted completely and God surpassed all her expectations! ■

The Love That Keeps Us Sane

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

"Seeing Life In Light of Eternity"

This is not a book about using Thérèse's "little way" as a path to holiness.

Marc Foley O.C.D., is a Discalced Carmelite priest. He is currently residing at the Carmelite Friars in Washington, DC. He is also involved in retreat ministry and spiritual direction.

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Mining the Wisdom of Edith Stein: Her Essential Writings

Presenter: Fr. John Sullivan OCD

Although not a Doctor of the Church, Edith was a Doctor, a Ph.D., and a “spiritual master”. St. Thomas Aquinas describes wisdom as “knowledge with experience”. Edith Stein, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, certainly personified that description, as did our Holy Mother St Teresa of Jesus whose doctorate was a doctorate of experience.

Fr. John Sullivan devised the Book: Edith Stein: Her Essential Writings, for Maryknoll Press, to present Edith’s spiritual knowledge (not philosophical, psychological or pedagogical knowledge, which also is abundant). The purpose of his talk at the Congress was to give us some tools for mining the knowledge that Edith imparted to us. Fr. John noted that Edith’s knowledge sometimes comes across to us in an intimidating fashion. She left behind at least 24 published books. His intention in preparing the book was to present the writings that were essential to the spiritual dimension that was so important to her. The passages chosen for the book show us why she is a teacher for the millennium.

Fr. John said that on the surface there are five major themes that emphasize Edith’s spiritual wisdom. They are depicted in 5 words: world, plan, truth, woman, and cross.

The **world** for Edith was the theater for the sanctification of people and the spreading of holiness in the world. Her own words express it beautifully. *“Immediately before, and for a good while after my conversion, I was of the opinion that to lead a religious life meant one had to give up all that was secular and to live totally immersed in thoughts of the Divine. But gradually I realized that something else is asked of us in this*

world and that, even in the contemplative life, one may not sever the connection with the world. I even believe that the deeper one is drawn into God, the more one must “go out of oneself”; that is, one must go to the world in order to carry the divine life into it.”

Plan is God’s plan for us and how we detect, comply and carry out God’s plan in our lives. Edith’s trust in providence enabled her to go through the many ups and downs of her life.

Edith always sought the **truth**, the deeper meaning of life. Even when her faith ran cold and she embraced atheism as a young person, she was thirsting for God and seeking truth. She said, “God is truth. All who seek truth seek God, whether this is clear to them or not.”

Woman – Edith never for a moment thought that because she was a woman, she should be any less than an “acting person.” Pope John Paul II describes an “acting person” as one who accepts the challenge of life and does something to contribute to it. Edith spoke about women, for women and with women.

Finally, no anthology of Edith is complete without the **cross**. As we know, her name in religious life was Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. In Latin, Teresa Benedicta a Cruce means Teresa blessed by the cross. Edith believed that far from being a burden, she was blessed with the gift of freedom for her willingness to accept and embrace the cross.

Fr. John gave us some great tools to mine the wisdom of our new saint and hopefully has provided inspiration for us to go down into the mine to seek out the treasures of her writings for ourselves. ■

Universal Call to Transforming Union: Teresa, John and You

Presenter: Fr. Thomas Dubay, SM

The Transforming Union is the most sublime beauty the human person can attain on earth. It is the prelude of the Beatific Vision, our final consummation. The call to Transforming Union is *universal*. Fr. Dubay said that it is hard for people to imagine that we are all individually called. We may be able to accept the general call, but find it hard to believe that we in our sinfulness are part of the large group.

Fr. Dubay assumed that the audience all knew what Transforming Union is, so did not elaborate further on that point. He broke the lecture into 4 parts.

A rapid refresher from Scripture on this theme

A sketch of the universal call to the summit from Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross, which is simply the Gospel spelled out

A sketch of the relevance of transforming union in our state of life and

A practical examination of our lives

A Rapid Refresher From Scripture

Fr. Dubay began with a message from the Old Testament, Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 16 there is an allegorical history of God's people and in verses 13 and 14, Ezekiel talks about those who have said a complete Yes to God, what they become and what they're supposed to become. *You are exceeding beautiful with the dignity of a Queen. You are renowned among the nations for your beauty, perfect as it was, because of my splendor, which I have bestowed on you says the Lord God.* It is all taken for granted. There is no need to prove the point.

This theme is almost never talked about to most people. God's people are supposed to be *exceedingly* beautiful, famous in the world, per-

fect in beauty, because of the divine beauty that God bestows when we are open to Him. As the Lord said to Bl. Angelina of Foligno - "Make yourself a capacity and I will make myself a torrent." However, He will not force Himself on anybody.

There are many texts like this. Psalm 25:15 *My eyes (mind/attention) are always on the Lord.* That is one of the traits of the transforming union, that deep awareness of the Divine indwelling presence that is continual, habitual, and doesn't interfere with our normal activity. It is a dual awareness that is always present. The psalmist just takes this for granted.

John 10:10 - *I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly.* Things abound when they are overflowing. Make yourself a capacity and I will make myself a torrent.

St Paul prays for the Ephesians in 3:19-20 *Until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God.* This is staggering. This is what we are supposed to be in our life on earth, filled utterly with the unending power, delight, love and joy of God. It is amazing that we are called to this in spite of that fact that of ourselves, we can do nothing.

Universal call to the summit from John of the Cross and Teresa of Jesus

St John of the Cross has written between 20-25 clear statements on this point and makes dozens of passing references that transforming union is normal for everybody. The first example is from *The Living Flame of Love, Stanza 1, #15.* He is commenting on James 1:17. "The Father of lights who is not closed fist, but dif-

fuses himself abundantly, as the sun does its rays, without being a respecter of persons, wherever there is room." In James 1:17 he describes the Father as giving every good and perfect gift (the Summit). He is generous and diffuses Himself abundantly, everywhere to everybody, whenever they want it and live accordingly.

Ascent, 2, Cp. 11, #9 states that God *will* continue to raise us until we reach divine union if we are faithful to prayer. There is no question that He will do it. It is up to us - our free will and our choices.

Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 39, 7 asks the question - "O souls, created for these grandeurs and called to them. What are you doing? How are you spending your time?"

Flame, Stanza 2,27 points out why there are so few who reach transforming union. We don't want to give up our idols and flee from making the effort to grow. As a result God no longer makes the effort to purify us. Flame, Stanza 2,46 says that it is *impossible* for God to fail to reveal Himself if a soul achieves emptiness.

Teresa's teaching is the same as John's. The first example is from *The Interior Castle, Mansions 3, Cp 1*. She addresses the fact that the Lord *will not* fail to raise us if we are determined to grow and remain faithful to the goal. IC, Mansions 6, Cp 4 addresses the fact that is our fault, not God's, if we don't reach the summit.

In Teresa's *Life, Cp 27, 12* she says that it is certain, that God gives Himself in deep communing prayer to those who give up *all* (petty clingings, egocentrism) for Him. "He shows no partiality. He loves everyone. Nobody has any excuses."

Relevance of the Transforming Union in our Lives

A deepening prayer life prompts a person to give up petty idols, which prevent living the

Gospel fully. Growth in prayer renews our experience of the liturgy, by creating a deep inner burning love of the liturgy. The Mass is the high point of our day. Our communion with the Trinity is deeper, more authentic.

Deep prayer, immersion in the Trinity, feeds us in our deepest hunger - the hungers for truth, goodness, beauty, joy, delight and love most of all. Without feeding these hungers, we do not become the perfect

man or woman that God wants us to be.

The best thing we can do for people we love is to become a person of deep prayer, have an eternal impact on those we love. A person cannot be completely fulfilled without being profoundly in love with God.

A Practical Self - Examination

1. Is there room in me for this to happen? Am I willing to give up everything that doesn't lead me to God? Do I use the things of life and do everything for the glory of God? God made the beauties of creation to lead us to Him, not to make idols out of them. Everything God made is good, but do I make idols out of food, drinks, TV, reading, clothes, travel, etc.?

2. Do I see clearly enough that my effectiveness in the apostolic work that I do is in direct proportion to the depth of my prayer?

3. Do I look at myself as a person of totality? Do I think of myself that way, is that my ideal. Do I think and act like a saint?

Fr. Dubay closed with a statement from Vatican II in the *Constitution of the Liturgy (#10)* "The liturgy in its turn inspires the faithful to become one of heart and love when they have tasted to the full of the paschal mysteries. The renewal in the Eucharist of the Covenant between the Lord and man, draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them afire." ■



Report On The Official Scapular Update

A Renewed Scapular Catechesis

A Matter of Carmelite Integrity

Presenter: Fr. Sam Anthony Morello OCD

In October 2000, a new scapular update was released. It is titled *The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel—Catechesis and Ritual* and was prepared under the direction of the North American Provincials of the Carmelite Orders. Why a scapular update? Vatican II refocused the Church on the Trinitarian God. Within this great Trinitarian refocus there are Mariological Correctives that we need to attend to. Bishops concerned about magical approaches to the Blessed Virgin Mary added some Mariological Correctives in the text of the *Dogmatic Constitution on The Church*, which includes the greatest treatment on the Blessed Virgin Mary given by any Ecumenical Council in the history of the Church. Some references from the Constitution follow:

By her maternal charity, Mary cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into the happiness of their true home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator. (Chapter 8, #62)

The most Holy Synod exhorts theologians and preachers of the Divine Word to abstain zealously both from all gross exaggerations as well as from petty narrow-mindedness in considering the singular dignity of the Mother of God. Following the study of Sacred Scripture, the Holy Fathers, the doctors and liturgy of the Church, and under the guidance of the Church's magisterium, let them rightly illustrate

the duties and privileges of the Blessed Virgin which always look to Christ, the source of all truth, sanctity and piety. Let them assiduously keep away from whatever, either by word or deed, could lead separated brethren or any other into error regarding the true doctrine of the Church. Let the faithful remember moreover that true devotion consists neither in sterile or transitory affection, nor in a certain vain credulity, but proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues. (Chapter 8, #67)

Mary's role can only be seen in the context of the mystery of Christ and the mystery of the Church. She participates in the one mediation of Jesus Christ, as we all do, but in a pre-eminent way because of her pre-eminent role in the Incarnation and the super divine intimacy that she enjoys. Jesus is the sole Redeemer. Mary neither adds anything to, nor detracts anything from that redemption. The Holy Spirit is the primary Advocate. Christ Incarnate is God stepping out of the Trinity into creation and mediating a new relationship between the reality of creation and the Father, in the Holy Spirit, necessary because our original parents chose to separate themselves from the Will of God. Sin is the human tendency to make ourselves happy *our* way, *not* God's way.



Mary preeminently participates in the one mediation, but she does not give grace. Only God gives grace. She is a creature of God, like us. John Paul II states that everything Mary does, she does by way of prayer.

Since Vatican II, Carmelites are no longer allowed to make vows to the Blessed Virgin Mary along with God and our superiors. Consecration is considered an act of worship; you set yourself apart for the Divine Service. We best think of ourselves co-discipling Jesus Christ *with* Mary, not through Mary. His Holiness John Paul II has even begun using a new phrase, **entrustment** - entrustment to the Most Holy Mother of God. The Holy Father himself has started warning us of Marian maximalism. Not just anything Marian is Catholic.

We need to understand Mary's titles and role in relation to the Trinity. Our Lady shares in the role of the Paraclete, like the Church and we do, but in a pre-eminent way. However, she is not the primary Advocate. Catholics often substitute the Blessed Virgin Mary for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the primary Advocate.

The Carmelite family has been collaborating with the Holy See on this new scapular catechesis for 25 years. Through the new catechesis the Order has been more obedient to scripture, historical reality and theological reality. Accepting what is said is a matter of thinking with the Church. Carmelite integrity has been carried by this update.

The document brought an adjustment of the Order regarding the Sabbatine Privilege, which has proved upsetting to many Catholics. Modern historians have exposed that the Sabbatine Privilege is a bogus Papal Bull, falsely attributed to Pope John XXIII that led to exaggerated claims of privileges giving the scapular magical properties and providing the wearer with an automatic guarantee of salvation.

The Church has been trying to correct the magic of the scapular for over 400 years. In

1613, The Sacred Congregation of the Inquisition (which is now the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) released a decree forbidding Carmelite priests from preaching the Sabbatine Privilege. The correction didn't take then, but the new catechesis should lay the Sabbatine Privilege to rest.

Another adjustment concerns the historicity of the scapular vision to St. Simon Stock. The historicity cannot be proved or disproved. Although upsetting to some people, the debate is not that important because private revelation is not a matter of dogma. Our theology and devotion do not rest on private revelation. What is important is what the vision represents, which is the protection of Our Lady. Mary has been the protectress and intercessor of our Order since its beginnings seven centuries ago. The joint letter of the Two Superior Generals to the Order on the Scapular Update in 2001 says, "The central truth of the vision story is the lived experience of Carmel. Mary as patroness has protected it and ensured its perseverance. Mary's prayers are powerful in securing eternal life."

The Order is also putting forth a new presentation of Carmel's Marian tradition. The Father Generals wrote a letter in the 2001, the Marian Year, presenting core Marian themes. Mary is our model for imitation and our protectress. This letter emphasizes the title Sister, Mary our Sister, Mary our Patroness and Mary of the Scriptures. Although not created by Carmelites, the title Mary our sister was developed by the Order. This is what the Vatican Council meant by Mary, the Woman of Faith, the basic Christian, one of us. We should follow Jesus *with* Mary. She is our model, mother and queen. When we take her off the pedestal, we can identify with and imitate her more easily.

Finally, the update renews the Association of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. The new prayers in the scapular rite amount to a catechesis that is Baptismal. "We put on the Lord Jesus Christ with

Mary as we put on our scapular. We wear with it Mary who heard the Word and said yes. We are faithful to Christ and we move toward the Blessed Trinity together with Mary our sister, our mother and our queen. We wear this sign as a reminder of the presence of Mary in our daily commitment to be clothed in Jesus Christ and to manifest Him in our life for the good of the Church, the whole of humanity and the glory of the most Blessed Trinity.”

It is important to remember that a person does not have to enroll in a Scapular Confraternity in order to share in the graces pertinent to this sacramental. Those who wear the scapular out of devotion, share in a spiritual affiliation to the Carmelite Order, even though they have no formal association with it. The Brown Scapular has become a universal sacramental and along with the rosary is one of the two main Marian devotions in the Church. ■

OCDS National Secretariat New Orleans, Louisiana June 12 -13, 2002

Suzanne Treis OCDS

The National Secretariat Board met before the 19th Regional Congress, which was hosted by the Central Jurisdiction. The Secretariat meeting opened with Mass and was chaired by Fr. Theodore Centala OCD, from the Eastern Jurisdiction. Additional representatives of the Eastern Jurisdiction who attended the meeting were Suzanne Treis OCDS, from Maryland and Michael Kotarski OCDS, from Michigan.

The Central Jurisdiction was represented by Fr. John Michael Payne OCD, Fr. Sam Anthony Morello OCD, Fr. Jerome Earley OCD, and Jayne Myrick OCDS, of Birmingham, Alabama.

Fr. Patrick Sugrue OCD, Sylvia Kelly OCDS, and Doreen Glynn Pawski OCDS, all from California, represented the Western Province.

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing the new Constitutions for the Secular Order. After considerable discussion, many suggestions and amendments were agreed upon and were submitted to Rome on behalf of the National Secretariat.

The other order of business was to finalize a

policy on the transfer of Lay Carmelites of the Ancient Order of Carmel to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. It

was written by Fr. Sam Anthony Morello, in response to a request from Fr. Patrick McMahan of the O. Carms in 2001. After discussion, and some minor changes it was accepted by the Board and will be submitted to the O. Carms. The primary concern was that any member choosing to transfer, receive the full formation required for them to become a member of the Secular Order. Although, a rare occurrence, both branches of the Order feel such a policy would be helpful.

Next year, 2003, the Eastern Province will host the Congress. The location is yet to be determined. The Western Province will host the Congress in 2004 and the Central Province will host the 2005 National Congress. ■



Suzanne Treis & Jayne Myrick

Baptism and The Apostolate of The Laity According to Vatican II and *Christifideles Laici*

Presenter: Dr. Nancy Thompson OCDS

When I finished preparation for this talk, I decided to go back to the beginning to see — if in the light of research, prayer and reflection — my Carmelite soul could resonate with a resounding “yes” to our call to the apostolate as members of the “Lay Christian faithful” and as Secular Carmelites. As the Congress began, you may recall a reading from the proposed OCDS Constitution that referred to our apostolate.



tolate, either collaborating with others in our fraternity or as individuals.”

Two lines especially stood out to me: “Committing ourselves to a presence in human society ...” and “Our apostolic activity is the fruit of our prayer...”

“Committing ourselves to a presence in human society” I think of two names/states by which I am known in the Church:

The New OCDS Constitution - Apostolate 21. “We realize that we have received much through our response to God’s call to holiness through Carmel. We also are aware of the need of the world for a witness to God’s presence. We respond to the Church’s invitation to all associations of Christ’s faithful by committing ourselves to a presence in human society (conforming to and participating in the apostolic goals of the Church and the Order.) As fruit of our participation in the life of the Church and Order we share through our apostolic works a renewed desire for prayer, contemplation, the liturgical and sacramental life.

22. Prayer and the apostolate when they are genuine are inseparable. Saint Teresa’s observation that the purpose of prayer is “the birth always of good works” reminds us that what we have received in our vocations must always have an effect on us. Our apostolic activity is the fruit of prayer as individuals and as fraternities, and, above all, as members of the Church.

23. For that reason, each of us has an apos-

lay and secular. Lay—I know that as a layperson, by virtue of my Baptism I am called to bring about the Kingdom of God in every corner of the world, which I enter. John of the Cross put it a different way, saying that if you go somewhere and do not find love, bring love and then you will find love. I say, if you don’t find the Kingdom of God, bring it and you will find it.

Secular—we all know that means “in the world”. I don’t know about you but when I first discovered this call to Carmel, in at least some small part of myself, I thought it was to take me from the world to an interior, contemplative life. However, we make promises “to live our contemplative lives in the world” as seculars and I have come to believe that is a fact that I must embrace and then bring to its fullness for the Kingdom of God. That is not easy.

“Our apostolic activity is the fruit of our prayer” Apostolate – I know that The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity describes apostolate as “work of service in spreading the Kingdom of

continued on page 21

continued from page 18

God". It is described as our right and duty by virtue of Baptism, "according to our state of life". State of life - young, old, teacher, parent, spouse. The work—it changes all the time, it's ever in process of definition depending on my age, on what I am doing. But it always requires a deeply detached "yes".

"According to the state of our life" in the family of Carmel, too. Our - who is the "our" in Carmel? When I thought about that, I remembered our discussions in Mexico at the OCDS Congress on the Rule, on the 3 states of life in Carmel: friars, nuns and seculars, and how prayer, community and apostolate fits in each of the three orders in our family, and how each person's vocation needs balanced expressions of these three aspects to come to its fullness:


Prayer for friars, nuns and seculars is contemplative. However, friars live in community with other friars, nuns live in a monastic/cloistered settings with other nuns (enclosed to protect and set aside an environment for their apostolate) and seculars live in the world in a family group or alone and form community with other seculars who have the same Carmelite vocation. The apostolate of the friars is lived through lives dedicated to the service of the Church and when Ordained, to the exercise of sacramental ministry and teaching. The apostolate of the nuns is the service of prayer for the Church. The apostolate of the seculars is works of service to bring about the kingdom of God in the world through the power of our life sanctified by the virtues, strengthened by prayer, the Eucharist and our life in Carmel.

As Fr. Camilo Macisse OCD, the Superior General of our Order, said "The Rule places us in a listening attitude before the Word, a Word revealing and proclaiming God's Kingdom continually as his plan and to work so that it continues developing throughout history. Our Carmelite vocation is committed, by the Word to be

a sign and instrument of this plan of God." (talk given at the Carmelite Institute Congress on the Rule of St Albert, July 2001, San Antonio, TX, called "Biblical Spirituality in the Rule of Carmel").

"Our apostolic activity is the fruit of our prayer" Fruit of our prayer: How many have ever camped? I want you to sharpen your senses for a moment until you can hear the crackling of a campfire in your imagination. I want you to look reflectively into the wood pile and see one log particularly consumed by the fire: immolated, to the point that it is so affected in every part that it is impossible to tell the difference between the fire and the log because they have

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become so integrally one. Listen and see with your imagination if you can. There, do you hear that pop and see the burst of flame that shoots forth permeated with minute, glowing particles of the log? Freeze that frame. This is a picture of our apostolate: that living flame of love. Our life of union with God as it bursts forth as the little, shooting flame of love — that is what our apostolate as Carmelite seculars is meant to be for the good of the whole world, as a gift from God through the Church in the Carmelite Order.

It is my conviction that without an acquaintance with certain parts of our history as Church and the Second Vatican Council, it is not possible to gain a very clear understanding of Vatican II and to understand why Pope John XXIII would want to lead the Church in such a rigorous undertaking as to call not for change, but for correction, to bring the Church up to date, in the language of the Second Vatican Council.

Church history is not a course that most have taken as adults, if at all. So you can imagine the dilemma I have in undertaking a one hour and 15 minute talk called “Baptism and the Apostolate of the Laity, According to Vatican II and Christifideles Laici.” I have tried to put together just enough background material to help make sense of the topic, without running out of time or dwarfing the topic of this talk, itself. I’m looking to cover 2,000 years in half an hour. It is my hope you will be enticed to explore through good reading in the future, a more in depth study of Church History.

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resurrection. This period is found recounted in the 4 gospels.

30-312 AD - The Founding Period of the Church—a time driven by an understanding of individual conscience, response and responsibility — within the context of community and the world.

30-50 AD - The church began with the twelve Apostles and other disciples who knew Jesus personally and eventually came to recognize him as the Messiah. At the Last Supper, in the ritual meal that he asked be repeated in remembrance of him, Jesus showed the Apostles how they were to serve one another and share the Word of God. Jesus' death on the cross crushed his followers, but the Resurrection and the gift of Jesus' Spirit at Pentecost turned them into courageous heralds of the Good News. Thus, Pentecost truly marked the beginning of what we now know as "the Church".

As the Apostles gathered for the annual celebration of the Jewish Pentecost, they experienced a new, deeper conversion to Jesus, as the fruit of the New Pentecost, yet another instance of God sending the Holy Spirit to intervene in the story of salvation history. They proclaimed God's deeds convincingly and baptized many persons in Jesus' name. Jesus' original followers, and those baptized by the Apostles at Pentecost, did not consider themselves as converting from Judaism but simply as following Jesus' Way. They were considered members of a sect of Judaism called "followers of the way". It would be about 30 years before they were called "Christians" for the first time, as an insult, in Antioch. However for now, because the Apostles and other disciples claimed that Jesus was the Messiah, they ran into trouble with the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem and experienced persecution.

Peter had been left as head of the Apostles and church by Jesus. The Twelve, as the original Apostles are called in the New Testament,

were prominent in various ways until their deaths as martyrs, with the exception of John who early church history and tradition tells us escaped attempts to kill him and died of old age. They engaged in teaching the people of Jesus' death and resurrection. Many signs and wonders occurred at their hand. Other early leaders who were not of the original Twelve began to emerge, whose names we recognize readily today. James, a relative of Jesus who was not one of the two apostles named James, was asked by Peter to assist him as head of the church in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem church was considered the heart of the first generation church, much as Rome is today.

In Acts 2:42-47, we see the life the early Christian community described. "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

Jesus taught well what it meant to be a people of God in this new covenant that his death and resurrection established. He did not tell them how to live that out in the specific structure of a church group. He left that up to the leaders He chose to serve in His name. New roles and needs began to be identified as the infant church rapidly grew. The small group of twelve Apostles were soon overwhelmed with the matters of day to day operation for the body that grew by 3,000 one day and by 5,000 the

next, as Scripture relates. The fair distribution of goods and care for the widows and orphans were daunting tasks in themselves, without considering the other needs and responsibilities. The Acts of the Apostles preserves the story of how the early church recognized a need and responded in a creative way that serves as a model later. Nine men were chosen from the community to be raised to a new role of leadership in the establishment of the service role that we know of today as the diaconate. That first set of nine deacons assisted the Apostles with the day-to-day operation of the church, to free them up for teaching, preaching, baptizing, leading worship and other important needs of the church.

In the early years immediately after Jesus' death and resurrection, Saul, whom we know as Paul, came to the attention of the brothers in Jerusalem. Saul was a devout Pharisee and privileged, educated Roman citizen, who initially saw Jesus' followers as blasphemers. Also a devout Jew, he was an expert in the law who had come to Jerusalem to study under the great religious masters of the time. Because of his unique qualifications as an expert in the law and devout Jew, the Chief Priest, Gamaliel, asked Paul to officiate at the stoning of a man named Stephen, who was found guilty of blaspheming. Stephen had been chosen as one of the first group of deacons to assist the apostles with the day-to-day operation of the church. He had also become a gifted preacher. Acts 6: 8 tells us he was filled with grace and power and was working great wonders and signs among the people. We see an example of his powerful preaching. It was because of these things that he also became the first Christian martyr whose story we see preserved in the New Testament.

Though he had never previously participated in one, Saul successfully carried out Stephen's stoning sentence and was put in charge of rounding up those followers of the Way that had fled arrest, so they could be jailed and punished

for uttering blasphemies against God. He led this persecution of the early Christians for about the next 4 years. At that time, he set out to arrest Christians in Damascus that he heard were hiding there. On the way, however, a dramatic encounter with the Risen Jesus left Saul blind and unable to eat or drink. After being cured, experiencing conversion and being baptized, Saul went into the desert to reflect on his experience. When he returned, Saul was even more zealous in spreading Jesus' message than he had once been in persecuting Jesus' followers.

Samaritans and Gentiles, who were previously rejected by the Jewish community, began accepting the Good News, but the baptized followers of Jesus in Jerusalem objected to the baptizing of Gentiles because they did not first follow the Jewish Law. Meanwhile, Paul began preaching to his fellow Jews and was persecuted. Paul and Barnabas later had success in ministering to the Jewish-Gentile community in Antioch, and they undertook a missionary journey to more unfamiliar territory. Most Jews rejected them, sometimes violently. But many Gentiles accepted Jesus, and mixed communities of Jewish and Gentile Christians began to form their own worship groups apart from the synagogue community.

50-100 AD - By 100 AD missionaries like Paul and Peter had spread the Good News and founded Christian communities throughout the Roman Empire. Paul in particular had success among the Gentiles, who were attracted to the message that God's saving love was for all people. Paul established communities in Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus. Peter traveled extensively and as head of the church, reaffirmed the ministry of this convert, Paul, when he visited communities Paul had started and when he met with the brothers in Jerusalem who continued to be suspicious of this person who had once been their greatest enemy.

Where possible, Jewish followers of Jesus met

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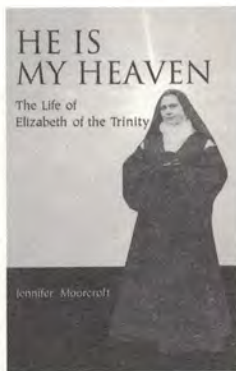
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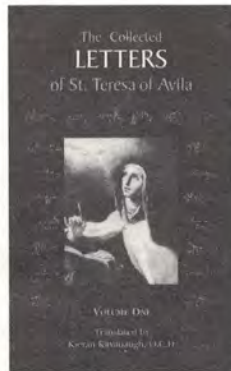
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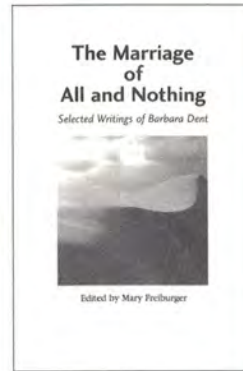
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in the morning at the synagogue for prayer, then celebrated the breaking of the bread and shared stories of Jesus in the evening in member's homes, with the head of the household officiating at worship. As more and more Gentiles and Samaritans became part of the community, and a final break with Judaism approached, worship became more separate and gained more of its own Christian identity.

A dispute arose over what was necessary before one could be baptized. The question came with Paul's growing numbers of Gentile converts. Did they need to first convert to Judaism, follow Jewish law and be circumcised before they could be baptized, as the brothers in Jerusalem led by James thought — or — was "faith in Jesus Christ, followed by baptism" enough, as Paul taught? The Council of Jerusalem was called to reconcile the question. It was the first council held in the new church and set a pattern for resolving and clarifying that is still used today.

During the second of his three missionary journeys, Paul began writing letters of advice, concern, and instruction to the Christian communities he founded. These letters, as well as some letters written later by other leaders, were treasured, copied, and circulated among the communities. After the deaths of Peter and Paul, Christians began to put Jesus' life story into written form to preserve firsthand accounts about Jesus that had been passed on orally for 30 years. These accounts became known as the Gospels. The letters of Peter and Paul, accounts of life in the earliest Christian community preserved by Luke and other writers, and the Gospels formed the basis of the New Testament. Tradition and early church historians tell us that both Peter and Paul died in Rome, in Emperor Nero's persecutions. The stories of their deaths are not included in scripture.

Separation between Jewish Christians and Jews in Jerusalem became more pronounced

when James, leader of the Christians in Jerusalem, died at the hands of Jewish leaders. A few years later, Jews at the Temple officially rebelled against the Romans, but the rebellion was crushed and the Temple leveled in 70 AD. In order to maintain their identity as a people and Judaism as a religion, Jews required conformity of belief, and they no longer welcomed Christians as a sect of Judaism. This break caused many centuries of misunderstanding and persecution.

Was there structure and institutionalizing of the church from the beginning? Probably not. No ordination rites are preserved in the New Testament but Christ was clearly central. Baptism was central to the Christian life, or "sacerdotal" as we would call it today. Eucharist and Baptism were celebrated ritually in that first century church. By about 150 or 160 AD, the charisms and ministries of bishop, priest and deacon were fully established, nearly a hundred years after the deaths of Peter and Paul. The church as we know it today has formed gradually, building on what has preceded.

* * *

Our next issue will contain the second half of the talk of Dr. Nancy Thompson and a condensed version of Fr. Deeney's talk on The New Legislation of the Secular Order. ■

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