



CARMEL CLARION

Discalced Carmelite Secular Order

Washington, D.C.



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CARMEL CLARION

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CARMEL CLARION

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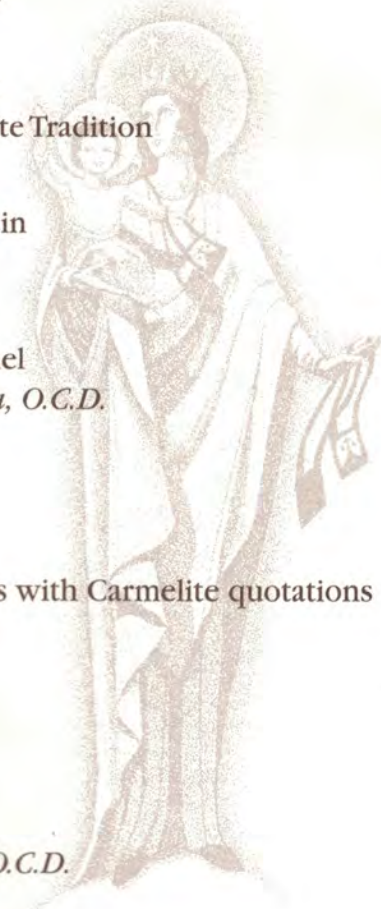


CARMEL CLARION

Discalced Carmelite Secular Order, Washington, D.C.

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About the cover: This icon was written by Sister Mary Grace, OCD, of Terre Haute, Indiana. See the ad on page 8 for information about ordering any of the many icons Sister Mary Grace has created.



As you will read in the articles of this issue of the Clarion, the prophet Elijah has played a significant role in the spirituality of the Carmelite Order.

Carmel, the birth place of the Order, was also the site of the prophet Elijah's exploits in the Old Testament. In I Kings 17-19 we are told about this great prophet; how he was fed by ravens, how he raised the widow of Zarephata's son from the dead, and how he confronted King Ahab and overcame the priests of Baal. He showed himself to be a man of prayer, zealous for the Lord, God even in the face of death.

Because of his zeal and his fidelity to Yahweh he is rewarded with a unique experience of God on Mt Sinai. Fleeing from Jezebel who seeks his life he is told by an angel to go the mountain of God. There a voice asks him what he is doing there. He answers, "I have been zealous for the Lord God of Hosts..." He is then told to go out of the cave for the Lord is going to pass by. The story goes on to tell us that Yahweh was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the foe, but in the sound of sheer silence.

The cry of Elijah: "I have been zealous for the Lord God of Hosts" was taken up very early in the Order's history to be its motto. It is the zeal of Elijah that we are to imitate. The zeal which enabled Elijah to stand before Ahab, enabled him to put his complete trust in Yahweh as he confronted the priests of Baal. A trust that moved him to follow the voice in the desert to go to Mt. Sinai and to listen, listen in sheer silence to the Lord our God.

We all know and experience how difficult fidelity and trust in our God is in today's world. So many images and ideas assail us daily trying to draw us away from God and our commitment to Him. In the prophet Elijah we have set before us an example of how we must persevere in the Lord, especially in our prayer. And like Elijah we too will come to experience God, not in the noise and clamor of the world, but in the sheer silence deep within our hearts. ■

Fr. Regis, O.C.D.

The Mountain of Elijah

The Bible and Carmelite Tradition



“Your head is like Carmel” affirms the spouse of the Song of Songs, praising the beauty of his beloved. Effectively, in the Bible, Mount Carmel is used as a symbol of beauty and fruitfulness: “to her is given the glory of Lebanon, the splendor of Carmel.”

Carmel is a sacred mountain. To the God of Israel, to Baal, to Zeus. . . A cultic tradition that existed throughout the course of the centuries gave to the mountain an evocative character.

Carmel is the location of the acts of Elijah, greatest of the prophets, through whom is made manifest, on the very summit of the holy mountain, and in opposition to the impotence of the idols, the power of the true God.

Carmel is the mountain of Mary. The attribution of beauty and of sanctity typical of Carmel converge, through the comments of the Fathers of the Church and the Ecclesiastical writers, in the person of the Mother of God, exalted above all creatures because of her place in the history of salvation.

When, in the period of the Crusades, the group of Latin hermits established themselves on the slopes of Mount Carmel, they collected these elements and elaborated on them, meditating at length and integrating them into a project for their lives. ■

The Statue of St. Elijah in St. Peter's in Rome



In 1668 the Superior Generals of the major Religious Orders asked permission of the Congregation for the Construction of Saint Peter's to place the statues of the Founders of their respective Orders in the niches of the Basilica's pillars that were still empty. The request was accepted and the Officials of the Construction reserved themselves the right to allocate the niches. The first statue to be placed was that of Saint Dominic de Guzman, founder of the Dominicans; that of Saint Francis followed, placed in 1725, and then that of Saint Elijah. On the June 26, 1725 Benedict XII gave permission to the Carmelites to place the statue of Elijah in the Vatican Basilica, between that of Saint Dominic and Saint Helena, putting on the pedestal the inscription: "Universus Ordo Carmelitarum Fundatori suo S. Eliae Prophetae erexit" (The entire Carmelite Order erected [the statue] to its Founder). The necessary expenses for the making and placing of the statue would have been borne by

the Carmelite Order. For the execution of the work, the Carmelites turned to the sculptor Agostino Cornacchini, an artist well known in Rome in the early years of the eighteenth century. He was born in Pescia, Tuscany, on August 26, 1686, and began working in Rome in 1712.

The contract with the sculptor was drawn up on July 23, 1725. The Carmelites were represented by the Procurators General of the Observants and of the Discalced Congregations of Spain and Italy. The artist took it on himself to sculpt and put the statue in its place within two and a half years. The expenses, a total of 3,800 Roman Scudi, were distributed in equal parts between the Calced and Discalced Carmelites. Halfway through July 1727 the



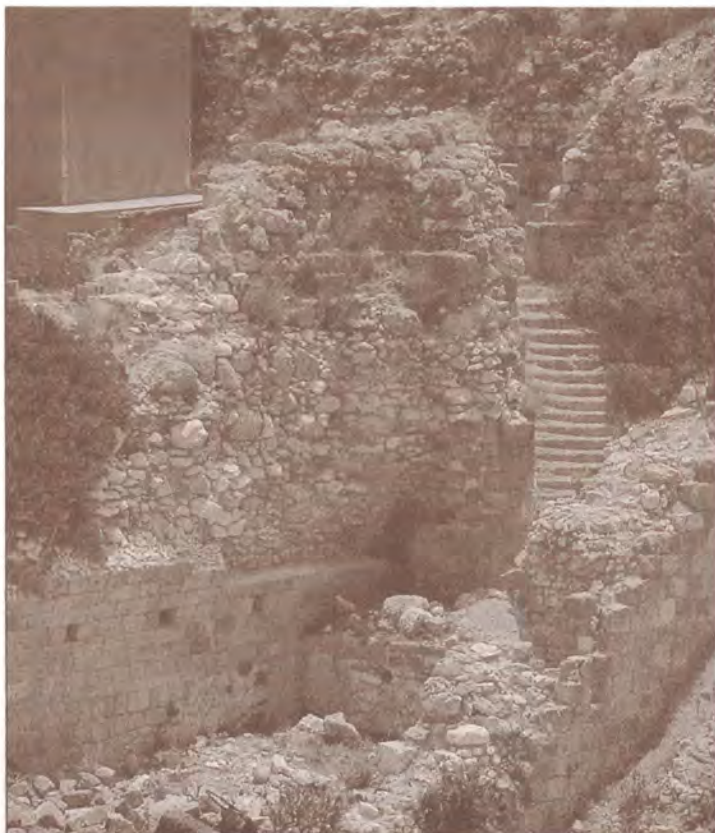
statue was put in its place and solemnly unveiled. The Carmelites celebrated the event from July 13th to the 20th, the liturgical feast of the Prophet. The placing of the statue in the Basilica was, ideally, to close a long controversy in which the Order had been occupied. In the seventeenth century the historical tradition of the Order had already firmly established the direct descent of the Carmelites from Elijah, and the uninterrupted succession from the time of the Prophet onward. However, the first examples of historical criticism applied to the hagiographical sources, had placed the theory in crisis and this was particularly true of a group of Jesuits, the Bollandists, who in 1643 began to publish the *Acta Sanctorum*, with the view to discerning the authentic from the legendary texts. In the April volume, dealing with Albert of Jerusalem, the Bollandist Daniel Papebroeck expressed all his doubts concerning the origins of the Carmelites, in 1691

they denounced his work to the inquisition. There followed a period of polemic, conducted through lawsuits, which concluded in 1695 with the condemnation of the fourteen volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum* by the Spanish Inquisition. The decision did not put an end to the polemics, in the course of which the Carmelites and the Bollandists both appealed to the King of Spain, Charles II. Seeing the impossibility of deciding in favor of one of the two parties, on November 20, 1698 Pope Innocent XII published the Bull *Redemptoris*, in which he imposed silence on both, without taking a position in favor of one or the other.

Permitting the positioning of the statue of Elijah in the Vatican Basilica, Benedict XIII expressly repealed the provision of his predecessor Innocent XII. His doing so appeared to many of his contemporaries as an implicit approval of the opinion traditionally sustained by the Carmelites. ■

Elijah And Mount Carmel

By Fr Roberto Fornara, O.C.D.



When the prophet Elijah lived on Mount Carmel – narrates a Hebrew legend – he was in the habit of leaving his grotto every so often to walk along the mountain and to pray to God. He never carried food with him, fully confiding in Divine providence. One day - continues the story - he found himself passing through a field of delicious melons. Having asked the proprietor permission to taste one, he received in reply only mockery: These aren't melons, said the owner making fun of him, but loose stones! In reply the prophet angrily pronounced a curse on the field and immediately the fruits were transformed into many tiny oval stones, scattered on the ground.

The legend, which explains in this fantastic way the origin of certain character-

istic mineral forms still visible today on the slopes of Mount Carmel, is only one of the many examples of how the Hebrew tradition would have known to keep alive its relationship with the figure of the prophet Elijah, often viewed in strict relation to the geographical environment of Carmel. The New Testament is already a witness to the process that attributes to the prophet an increasingly greater importance in the history of the Hebrew people, but it is followed and then largely surpassed by the rabbinic traditions of the first centuries. The liturgy - as one can still see today – has definitively consecrated this link.

In the Old Testament the so-called Elijan cycle was incorporated into I and -2 Kings (I Kings 17-19; 21; 2 Kings 1-2). These chapters narrate the various events that saw the prophet as protagonist, from his sudden appearance almost from nowhere, to his equally myste-

rious rapture into heaven in a chariot of fire. In the whole of this literary production, the only episode explicitly set by the bible on Mount Carmel is the celebrated contest with the prophets of Baal, in which Elijah assumes the role of defender of the Yahwist religion against every possible contamination and every form of syncretism (the attempt or tendency to combine differing philosophical or religious beliefs).

The Historical Context

Elijah, originally from Tishbe in Transjordan, lived in the ninth century before Christ in the Northern kingdom. Already the memory of David - first king of Israel, who made Jerusalem the capital of his kingdom and the



center of unity for all the nation – is a distant one. Far away also is the memory of his son, the wise Solomon, under whose leadership the unity of the people had been reinforced, and Israel had known a period of great splendor and military strength. At his death, in fact, the kingdom divided itself in two: the North and the South took diverse roads.

The Northern kingdom thus begins to experience a rather turbulent and painful epoch: the reigns of Jeroboam I and his immediate successors cannot be described as examples of peace, transparency and political stability. With the ascension to the throne of Omri (a usurper, like his predecessors), the situation begins to change. Seizing power around the year 882, he constructs a new city, Samaria, in a strategic position close to the road to the sea, and there transfers the capital of his kingdom. From the military point of view, now begins for Israel a period of consolidation and of great power, which will endure for a long time (cf. I Kings 22,39 regarding the son of Ahab). Omri is able to fortify the frontiers, to hold the Arameans at bay and to reconquer Moab, as testifies the celebrated Stele of Mesah. Although the Bible does not furnish us with much documentation regarding this king, because it is not interested in transmitting a faithful and detailed chronicle of the history of Israel, we must suppose his figure to be important, if after some decades the Assyrian annals still speak of Israel as the land or house of Omri.

The politics of Omri provide a vast program of alliances that secure for the country an era of peace and stability. To this end, some marriages are celebrated between members of the diverse royal houses. The niece of the king, Atalia, will become the bride of Joram, king of Judah (the Southern

kingdom), solely to ratify a pact of alliance. More important from our point of view is the marriage of Ahab, son of Omri, with Jezebel, the Phoenician princess, daughter of the priest of Tyre, Ithbaal. In this way the kingdom of Israel assured for itself peace and help on the part of a neighbor that was particularly uncomfortable and insidious – but a high price was paid for all this from the religious point of view. In fact, in a sacralized society like that of the time, the various powers are not rigorously distinguished, and if the king is at the same time priest, it is clear that diplomatic and political interests will become inextricably interwoven with those of religion, until they seriously influence and dictate the religious behavior of the people.

This will show itself to be particularly true when the young Ahab ascends to the throne (around the year 874), and shows a certain weakness in comparison with his wife. The stubbornness and political influence of Jezebel permitted the religion of the Phoenicians to penetrate Israel in a fairly intimate fashion. We know that in Samaria, the new capital, a temple in the honor of Baal was erected (cf. I Kings 16,32), and that an altar dedicated to him existed on Carmel.

In such a situation of confusion and religious syncretism, Elijah is the prophet chosen by God to lead the people back to the truth of their relationship with Him and to restore fidelity to the Alliance, or Covenant. The famous episode of the confrontation with the prophets of Baal, narrated in chapter 18 of the First Book of Kings, is also the only Elijan account which is expressly set by the Bible on Mount Carmel. The choice of this locality can be easily explained by the historical context and by its geographical position. Placed exactly on



the border between the kingdom of Israel and the territory of the Phoenicians, the sacred mountain summarized well the situation of the people, still faithful to the religion of their Fathers yet at the same time attracted to the new cults of Baal. The south-eastern part, which opens onto the plain of Jezreel, knew a more pure Yahwist cult while the north-west promontory, which descends into the Mediterranean, was orientated to the cult of Baal. Like the heart of the people in that particular historical moment, the mountain was also divided between Yahweh and Baal.

The excavations conducted in the city of Ugarit have yielded abundant material for the understanding of the deity. The constant ele-

ment seems to be that in Baal is seen the god of the storm, of the rain, of the great meteorological phenomena, and above all of fruitfulness. It is he - for the peoples of Canaan - who gives the rain and the fruits of the earth; because of this, in Canaanite mythology, his name and his cult are associated with the world of nature and the cycles of life and death: when Baal dies the earth dies too; when he returns to life, with the autumn rains, he gives fertility back to the earth and the productive cycles can recover their vitality.

It is against this background that one should understand the episode of the struggle of Elijah against the prophets of Baal, certainly based on a story dating back to the end of the ninth century before Christ, but narrated with profound dramatic art by a redactor of the Deuteronomistic school in the period of Babylonian exile (after 587 B.C.). The setting of the account in I Kings is also datable by the dramatic situation, provoked by a long

famine and drought, of which we have information from the historian Flavius Josephus. It is precisely this urgent need of rain and of a good crop, and the dilemma about who might be their true dispenser, which raises the curtain on this confrontation - staged by Elijah - with his adversaries.

The Sacrifice on Carmel

The account in I Kings 18,20-40 begins with the convocation of the people on Carmel. How long will you go limping with two different opinions?, is the prophet's provocation to the people. If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him! (I Kings 18,21). The danger to be fought is syncretism. The practice of a determined religion is expressed in Hebrew by the following language: to go behind a god, to walk in his presence (cf. I Kings 18,18; Jer 2,23): here the invitation is to walk in the truth, avoiding having a foot in each camp. The proposal of the prophet, which finds itself in confrontation with 450 prophets of Baal (perhaps also to signify the unity of the God of Israel against the multiplicity and proliferation of idols), is to prepare two holocausts for the respective divinities, and to invoke them in turns; "and the God who answers by fire, he is God (v.24): the confrontation is not therefore between two gods, but between the true God and a nothing, between the God of Israel and an illusion! With this aim, the narrator is pleased to present - with a smile on his lips - the useless efforts that the prophets of Baal make, from morning until the afternoon, invoking their god, crying out in loud voices, jumping and dancing and even slashing their flesh with swords and spears, according to an established custom, as we know from various

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texts. Increasing their efforts produces nothing more than the impression of their futility: "but there was no voice, and no one answered" (v.26), until even Elijah begins to make fun of them (cf. v.27).

In opposition to this convulsive and frenetic agitation, the calm and serene description of the details of Elijah's preparation makes a striking contrast (vv. 30-37). First of all the prophet rebuilds the altar of the Lord that had been demolished, taking twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. In reality, he is acting in an age when the unity of the tribes which had given life to the nation had already been broken: to a shattered people he addresses a prophetic gesture of unity; to the roots of their own history he takes his bewildered people, lost among many new divinities, without sure points of reference anymore. The God of Elijah, in fact, is not a novelty, like the idols recently introduced into Israel, but is the God of the people, is the God of the Covenant with their Fathers.

After preparing the holocaust, Elijah sprinkles water abundantly until it surrounds the altar in a small channel. The prophet's certainty of obtaining the victory appears in all its radicality if we place his gesture in the context of the prolonged drought in which it is performed. The Elijan prayer of invocation, simple, bare and essential, contrasts with the long dance rituals and loud cries of the prophets of Baal; and then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench (v.38). The fire of the Lord is almost certainly lightning, announcing a storm nearby, and therefore the end of the drought, but it is also a symbol of the God Baal: not only

has the Lord won, but he has openly mocked his nonexistent adversary by choosing as a victory display that god's own characteristic expression! There is, further, an assonance between the expression fire of the Lord (es ha'elohim in Hebrew) and Elijah's epithet, man of God (is ha'elohim): Elijah, the man always guided by the Word of God (cf. I Kings 17,2-5.8-10.24; 18,1-2), the prophet who burns with zeal (zealously) for the Lord God of hosts (I Kings 19, 10.14), for the zealous God" (Ex 20,5), appears here like the true fire that illumines the people in the midst of the darkness of idolatry, consuming, purifying, and igniting the enthusiasm of the faithful. And as such the book of Ecclesiasticus will imagine him: Then the prophet Elijah rose like a fire (Ecc 48,1-11).

*By now the truth has imposed
itself, and those present are
constrained to admit and to
recognize their blindness of
heart and the foolishness of
their disposition:
The Lord is God!
The Lord is God!*

By now the truth has imposed itself, and those present are constrained to admit and to recognize their blindness of heart and the foolishness of their disposition: The Lord is God! The Lord is God! (v.39). The very name which the prophet bears is a description of his role (Elijah means my God is truly the Lord) and imposes itself in the facts and by force of evidence. The following massacre of the prophets of Baal, described with impres-

sive and cold forthrightness in v.40, so repugnant to our sensibilities, must be understood in the light of the entire event. It is modeled on the mentality and the laws of the age and above all on the story of Moses. The prophets faithful to God had been massacred by the queen Jezebel; cf. I Kings 18,13 and the zeal of Moses was even more pitiless and bloody than that of Elijah (cf. Ex 32,25-29; Num 25,1- 5).



The reestablishment of the people in the truth of their relationship with God allows them also to see the happy ending of the problem of the drought. This, which had made the people suffer for so long, was nothing other than the external consequence of a more profound evil: the breakdown of their relationship with God in order to place their trust in vain and fruitless idols. The verses 41-46, which immediately follow the account of the sacrifice on Carmel, describe in fact the return of the rain. The small cloud which rises from out of the sea like the hand of a man (v.44) – interpreted by the Carmelite tradition as a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary, as the liturgy seems to do as well, reserving the reading of this passage for the Solemnity on the 16th of July – is the same hand of the Lord that lifts and guides Elijah, almost in an ecstatic state, on his miraculous passage before the chariot of the king (v.46): under the certain guidance of this hand – the one hand that guides the destinies of history, the only one capable of giving a true benediction, that can render fruitful the efforts of man – the itinerary of the prophet continues. ■

Vocations Flyer

Dear sisters and brothers in the Secular Order of Carmel,

The vocation office of the Washington Province of Discalced Carmelite friars needs your help! On the following pages we have provided a master copy of the front and back sides of a vocation flyer. The layout is by Rosemary Moak, and is designed to work especially well when reproduced on attractive pastel-colored papers. You can use these pages on any photocopier to produce flyers on 8.5 x 11 inch sheets, which can be folded into thirds and distributed among your local parishes, Catholic schools, and other appropriate sites. Be sure to ask permission first, however, since parishes and schools often have policies governing the distribution of such materials. And thank you for whatever assistance you give us. Please continue praying for vocations to the friars, and remember that the more vocations you help us to find, the more friars we will have to serve your needs.

Fraternally,
Fr. Steven Payne, OCD

HOW

The Discalced Carmelite friar's entire life is at the service of the Church. He spends two hours each day in personal prayer, in addition to the community's daily celebration of the Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours. Though focusing on the promotion of spirituality, his ministries may range widely, from community services (such as cooking and maintenance) to parish work, chaplaincies, teaching, writing, retreats, and spiritual direction, depending on his interests and aptitudes and the needs of the people of God. Many work with other members of the Carmelite family, especially with the Discalced Carmelite nuns and the rapidly growing Secular Order, laity who incorporate into their daily lives the essential elements of Carmelite spirituality and prayer.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

- Usually 22 to 40 years of age
 - College degree preferred
 - Debt-free, without dependents
 - Certificate of baptism and confirmation
 - Visit to monastery
 - Live-In Retreat
 - Letters of Recommendation
 - Physical Examinations
 - Other background information as requested
-

Except for the requirements of Canon Law and the legislation of the Order, the vocation directors have discretion to consider exceptions in matters of age and education. Men who are seriously interested should inquire and discuss any special circumstances or needs.

For further information
visit our website
(www.ocdfriarsvocation.com)

or contact

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2131 Lincoln Road, NE
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JUST THE FACTS

The Discalced Carmelite Friars
Washington Province
of the
Immaculate Heart of Mary

WHO

The friars of the Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCD) were founded in sixteenth-century Spain by St. Teresa of Avila with the help of St. John of the Cross. Though the Discalced Carmelite nuns are purely contemplative, St. Teresa intended from the beginning that her friars combine ministry with an intense commitment to personal and common prayer. The Discalced Carmelites are traditionally known for their strong emphasis on prayer and spirituality and have produced many saints and blessed, including three Doctors of the Church: Sts. Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Thérèse of Lisieux.

We are present in more than 75 nations and have about 4050 members distributed in some 500 houses. There are over 2500 priests and 300 religious brothers, with a few permanent deacons and the rest still in various stages of initial formation. Of the 250 Religious Institutes of Pontifical Right, we are among the 15 largest. There are 20 Discalced Carmelite bishops worldwide.



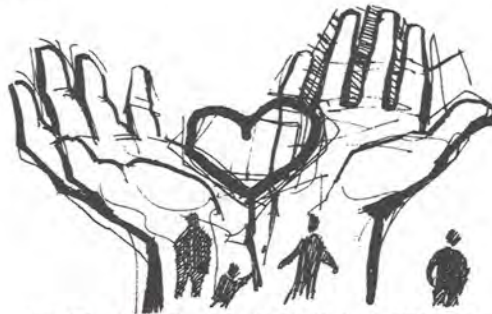
WHEN

The Washington Province was founded in 1947 and is dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It grew out of communities founded in the United States in the early part of the 20th century by friars of the Bavarian Province of Germany and the Catalonian Province in Spain.

WHERE

At present, the Washington Province includes about 75 friars distributed among seven communities, located in the mid-west and eastern United States and in Kenya.

Holy Hill is our oldest community, founded in 1906 at the site of the National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians, outside Milwaukee. The Shrine attracts over half a million visitors a year. The monastery also serves as the novitiate. There is a small rural parish attached, as well as a retreat house.



St. Florian Parish (1914) is in West Milwaukee. The Provincial Offices are located adjacent to the parish and school.


The monastery of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (1916) in Washington, DC, is a center for the province's publication ministries, including the books and tapes of ICS Publications and our quarterly journal, *Spiritual Life*. The Washington monastery hosts the provincial office for ministry to the Secular Carmelites. Friars in Washington also assist in the Carmelite Studies program at the Washington Theological Union.


The monastery of Mary and Joseph (1942) in Brighton (Boston), MA, serves as the postulancy house where candidates receive their first formation in the Order.

The monastery of Christ on the Mountain (1968) is our "desert" or hermit community in Hinton, WV. Friars assigned there live a life of prayer and simplicity like the earliest Carmelites.

The Edith Stein House of Studies (1995) is the Chicago residence for our theology students preparing for ministry at the Catholic Theological Union.

Friars of the Washington Province also staff the Carmelite Community in Nairobi, Kenya, which serves as a house of studies and formation for our African Carmelite seminarians and includes retreat facilities for the public. Other friars of our province work in the Philippines and the Vatican.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>7th Sunday of Easter</p> <p>O my God, you surpass all my expectations. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i></p>	<p>2</p> <p>Sts Marcellinus and Peter</p> <p>Prayer is looking into the face of the eternal. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p>St Charles Lwanga & Companions</p> <p>Let us draw courage from our union with him. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i></p>	<p>4</p> <p>Faith means seeing God face to face in darkness, possessing Him though He is hidden. <i>St John of the Cross</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>St Boniface</p> <p>Living on love is imitating Mary (Magdalene) <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i></p>	<p>6</p> <p>St Norbert</p> <p>Let us live our lives as true daughters of the Virgin Mary and keep our vows... <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i></p>	<p>7</p> <p>Bl Anne of St Bartholomew, OCD 1549-1626</p> <p>I do not fear, my virtue is You. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i></p>
<p>8</p> <p>Pentecost Sunday</p> <p><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</p> <p>St Ephrem</p> <p>St Therese offers herself to Merciful Love in 1895.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Cause of St Therese is introduced to the Holy See in 1914.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>St Barnabas, Apostle</p> <p>The essential is to accept with love all it pleases God to send. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i></p>	<p>12</p> <p>In all things we see Him, for we carry Him within us and our life then becomes an anticipated heaven. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i></p>	<p>13</p> <p>St Anthony of Padua</p> <p>Each hour we can offer Him a little bouquet of love. <i>St Teresita of the Andes</i></p>	<p>14</p> <p>The Blessed Virgin is my mother and little children ordinarily resemble their mama. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i></p>
<p>15</p> <p>Holy Trinity Sunday</p> <p>With silence and joy God sustains us. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i></p>	<p>16</p> <p>If Jesus seems asleep, let us rest near Him; let us be calm and silent and not wake Him, but wait in faith. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i></p>	<p>17</p> <p>To humble ourselves, to suffer our imperfections with patience, this is true sanctity, the source of peace. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i></p>	<p>18</p> <p>How great is the goodness of God, since He had us in His mind from eternity & afterward drew us forth from nothingness. <i>St Teresita of the Andes</i></p>	<p>19</p> <p>St Romuald</p> <p>The Lord can give us what we need at any time. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i></p>	<p>20</p> <p>The life of a Carmelite is a communion with God from morning till night and from night till morning. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i></p>	<p>21</p> <p>St Aloysius Gonzaga</p> <p>You (Mary) have protected me here below. <i>The Little Flower</i></p>
<p>22</p> <p>Corpus Christi</p> <p>To ravish my heart, you became man. <i>The Little Flower</i></p>	<p>23</p> <p>Do not look at the neighbor without looking at the Lord, or you will fall into a very deep hole. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i></p>	<p>24</p> <p>Birth of St John the Baptist</p> <p>Dying of love is a truly sweet martyrdom. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i></p>	<p>25</p> <p>Love of God consists in serving Him with righteousness, fortitude of soul and humility. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i></p>	<p>26</p> <p>In all our necessities, trials and difficulties, no better or safer aid exists for us than prayer and hope... <i>St John of the Cross</i></p>	<p>27</p> <p>Most Sacred Heart of Jesus</p> <p>The humble heart is the chalice holding God. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i></p>	<p>28</p> <p>Immaculate Heart of Mary</p> <p>St Irenaeus</p> <p>The Bl Virgin loves us truly as Jesus loves us. <i>Little Therese</i></p>
<p>29</p> <p>Sts Peter and Paul, Apostles</p> <p>God cannot inspire unrealistic desires. <i>The Little Flower</i></p>	<p>30</p> <p>First Martyrs of the Church of Rome</p> <p>I have shared your cup of sorrows. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i></p>	 <h1 style="margin-left: 20px;">June 2003</h1>				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <h1>July 2003</h1>		1 Bl Junipero Serra Abandonment! It is this which sets us free for God! <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	2 The divine knowledge of God never deals with particular things, since its object is the Supreme Principle. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	3 St Thomas, Apostle The destiny of women comes from eternity. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	4 St Elizabeth of Portugal Charity is bearing with the faults of others. <i>St Therese of the Child Jesus</i>	5 St Anthony Mary Zaccaria It is the acceptance of our difficulties that delivers us. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>
6 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time Listen to the prayer of my exiled soul. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	7 Let us love the divine little Child who suffers so much without finding consolation in His creatures. <i>St Teresita of the Andes</i>	8 Love is always stirring and thinking about what it will do. It cannot contain itself. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	9 There is no way of life in the world more agreeable or delightful than continual conversation with God. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>	10 In this mortal life no supernatural knowledge...can serve as a proximate means for high union with God through love. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	11 St Benedict It is simplicity that, hour by hour, increases our resemblance to the divine. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	12 Spiritual persons must exercise care that in their heart & joy, they do not become attached to temporal goods. <i>St John of the Cross</i>
13 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>St Teresita of the Andes, Virgin, OCD 1900-1919</i>	14 Bl Kateri Tekakwitha We revere Elijah as our leader and father. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	15 St Bonaventure Perfect obedience. To obey by taking account that it is God to whom I submit my will. <i>St Teresitas of the Andes</i>	16 Our Lady of Mount Carmel The brown scapular unites many of the faithful to us. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	17 Bls Teresa of St Augustine & Companions, Virgins and Martyrs, OCD, 1974, Compiègne, France	18 St Camillus de Lellis Be deeply sorry for any time that is lost or that passes without your loving God. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	19 To watch in prayer is the same as to stand before the face of God. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>
20 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>St Elijah, Father of Carmel</i>	21 St Lawrence Brindisi <i>Bl Elizabeth Catez (of the Trinity) is baptized in 1880.</i>	22 St Mary Magdalene By living penitentially Elijah atoned for the sins of his time. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	23 Our Lady, Mother of Divine Grace St Bridget of Sweden Stay near me till the last night. <i>Little Therese</i>	24 Bls Maria Pilar, Teresa and Maria Angeles, Virgin Martyrs, OCD, 1936, Guadalajara, Spain	25 St James, Apostle I advise you against long discourses during mental prayer, for they often foster distractions. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>	26 Sts Joachim and Anne Virgin Mary, I want to sing a canticle of gratitude. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>
27 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>Bl Titus Brandsma, O.Carm, Priest, Martyr, 1881-1942</i>	28 Bl John Soreth, O.Carm, Priest, 1400-1471	29 St Martha St Therese's Father died in 1894	30 St Peter Chrysologus In our self-denying we follow Elijah, strongly and zealously. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	31 St Ignatius of Loyola When God looks, he loves and grants favors. <i>St John of the Cross</i>		

✉ Letters to the Editor

Greetings and all good wishes for 2003. I just want to say "Thank you" — we certainly appreciate the "guidance for formation", especially — along with all Clarion news. Look forward to every edition, as director of formation
With much appreciation,
E. C. Galway Ireland.

"Obtained the copy of Newsletter at a meeting but did not get an order form. Enjoyed the articles so much I want a copy of the Carmel Clarion of my own. I will share it with the community after I have read it."
Yours in Christ
D. G., Arlington TX

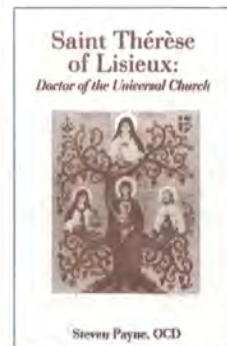
Your Carmel Clarion change is excellent. I can relate to Jessica Powers — Sister Miriam of the Holy Spirit — her life and worth.

In the past, Clarion articles have been very difficult to relate to a spiritual life. So deep in thought — I can't think!! Thanks for the change
C. M.

You did an excellent job in editing the articles. It is so well done. Thank you so much. Sister Miriam (Jessica Powers) was my wisdom figure when I entered the Carmel in Milwaukee. Her Parting and her sharing this with the novices is something I will never forget. She was a powerful, gentle influence on me. So thank you for the gift this issue will be to others. Thanks and God bless.
Sister Carol, OCD, Milwaukee, WI

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux:

Doctor of the Universal Church
Steven Payne, O.C.D.



On World Mission Sunday, October, 1997, Pope John Paul II declared St. Thérèse of Lisieux a "Doctor of the Universal Church." This event marked not only the culmination of an unprecedented series of honors bestowed on "the greatest saint of modern times," as

St. Pius X called her, but it also represented a watershed in the evolution of the understanding of this ecclesiastical title bestowed on only thirty-three saints in the history of the Church.

Certainly, at the time of her death in 1897, no one would have guessed that this 24-year-old Carmelite nun, with such a limited education and imperfect literary style, who never wrote a treatise or published an article and who died virtually unknown in an obscure French Carmel, would one day come to be ranked alongside such eminent personalities as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas as a doctor ecclesiae. Her selection did not come about in a vacuum, nor did it happen easily.

About the Author. Steven Payne, O.C.D., is a priest of the Washington Province of discalced Carmelite friars. He is past editor of *Spiritual Life* magazine and ICS Publications and the author of numerous works in philosophy of religion, theology, and Carmelite spirituality. He has taught at the Weston School of Theology in Boston, at the De Sales School of Theology and Washington Theological Union in Washington, DC, and most recently at Tangaza College and the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. He is the current president of the Carmelite Institute in Washington, DC.



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The Elijan Tradition

Fr. Silvanio Giodano, O.C.D.



In the early years of the thirteenth century, the Patriarch Albert of Jerusalem gave a *Rule of Life* to a group of Latin hermits living near the spring called the "Spring of Elijah." It is permissible to think that their decision to live in that particular site, that had a centuries old hermitical tradition, was in response to a conscious choice that identified in Elijah an archetype and model of the Religious life. In this they were in the company of the Patristic tradition that, beginning with Athanasius, Jerome and Cassian, presented Elijah as an exemplary realization of the Monastic Life. One can therefore reasonably affirm that the imitation of Elijah is found at the origin of Carmelite ideology.

The transferal of the Carmelites to Europe, happening due to Muslim pressure, constituted a critical moment. They - under the impulse of the provisions taken by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), promulgated to control the proliferation of new religious groups, and more still by those of the Second Council of Lyons (1274), that in fact suppressed numerous communities and put themselves in serious danger - wishing to demonstrate the legitimacy of their own existence, were led to reflect on their own origins. In fact they were not able to point to a universally known founder, as could the Franciscans or Dominicans, and for this reason it was necessary to return to the sources of their inspiration.

Elijah, the Founder

The need to show the younger friars an answer to give to those who might question them about their origins becomes plain in the *Rubrica prima*, the text that began the Constitutions of the Carmelite Order of 1281. Its origin was probably older, and it may be possible to date it back to the fourth decade of the same century, during the time of the first migrations to Europe. If the hypothesis is true, one could be dealing with a response created for those who were asking for information about the origins of the Order.

"In order to give witness to the truth, we affirm that there, from the time of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, who lived devoutly on Mount Carmel, holy Fathers of the Old and New Testaments, as true lovers of the solitude of that mountain favorable to the contemplation of heavenly things, close to the spring of Elijah, lived praiseworthy in holy penitence, continuing without ceasing through successive holy generations. At the time of Innocent III, Albert, Patriarch of the Jerusalem Church, gathered them in a group, writing for them a Rule that Pope Honorius, successor of Innocent, as well as many of their successors, approved this Order, piously confirming it with their Bulls. Professing this Rule we, their followers up to today, serve the Lord in various parts of the world."

The text presents in a clear and concise manner that which will be a constant factor in the consciousness of the Carmelites: commencing from the time of Elijah, an uninterrupted series of his religious followers perpetuated the presence of the prophet on Mount Carmel until present times.

Uninterrupted Succession

The text of the *Rubrica prima* responds only to the question of origins, leaving obscure an interval of about 2000 years, from Elijah to the Pontificate of Innocent III. The chronicle *Universis christifidelibus*, the work of an anonymous author at the beginning of the fourteenth century, directed at all who wanted to know more about the origins of the Carmelites, tries to fill this large historical gap. He does it effectively, by adapting for its own purpose a disparate series of documents, filling the gaps in a completely arbitrary manner.

According to such a document the history of the Carmelites is divided into three parts: from Elijah to the coming of Christ; from Christ to Albert of Jerusalem; from Albert to the time of the writer. Being in the location, the followers of Elijah, who as true Israelites were waiting for the coming of the Messiah, would have rushed to hear the preaching of Jesus, establishing themselves near the Gate of Saint Anna. When the Holy City suffered destruction at the hands of Vespasian and Titus, they, would have been honored by the Romans out of respect for Christ. Their successors, to whom is applied a text from the letter to the Hebrews (11,37-38), referring to them as the just of the Old Testament, would have been dispersed throughout the world: "they went about in the skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth until the year 1200. In particular, they would have established themselves at Antioch, when the apostle Peter had his episcopal chair.

A certain John, Patriarch of Jerusalem, friar of the same Order, would have ordered them to observe a Rule written by the Father of the Church, Paulinus and Basil. In this state they would have remained up until the time when Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, gathering together the dispersed brothers, placed them under obedience to one of their number.

A text contemporary to the previous one, also anonymous but coming from Dominican circles, clarifies that half way through the twelfth century the Frenchman Ayrneric of Malafayda, Patriarch of Antioch, would have gathered together the hermits who were living dispersed on Mount Carmel, and his or-

ganization would have later been perfected by Albert Patriarch of Jerusalem.

These scarce elements, in good part purely fictitious, formed the basis from which the Carmelite authors, with a constant preoccupation, tried to demonstrate the connecting link between the Order and Elijah, which wound through the Old and New Testaments. This procedure lead them to affirm that in Elijah they had their Founder.

Elijah and Maria

In his work *Speculum de institutione ordinis*, written in the first decades of 1300s, the English Carmelite John Baconthorpe tried for the first time to unite the Marian and Elijan traditions of the Order. Considering two texts in Isaiah - the first (7,14) in which the prophet announces the birth of the Child by the Virgin and a second (35,1-2) in itself addressed to the city of Jerusalem, but applied by many spiritual authors to the Virgin Mary in which it is affirmed that "to her is given the splendor of Carmel" – Baconthorpe made the Madonna the Lady of the Mount.

King and prophets performed their actions on Carmel, which the Carmelite presumed were done in honor of Mary. For this reason the Order of Carmel would also have arisen there at the time of Elijah and Elisha with the aim of perpetuating there the veneration of the Virgin, Lady of the Mount. Furthermore, Elijah and Elisha with their actions and miracles, prefigured Christ, the

Son of Mary. And since these prophets lived on Carmel, dedicated to the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, the Carmelites must justly bear the title of the Blessed Mary.

Jean de Cheminot, a Carmelite from Lorraine, who wrote *Speculum fratrum ordinis beatae Mariae de monte Carmeli* about 1350, juxtaposed the Elijan theme with the Marian theme, linking together the two personages by means of their relation to Mount Carmel. According to Cheminot, Elijah and Mary would have been members of the tribe of Aaron and would have both professed virginity; as Elijah lived on Carmel, Mary also would often have

been present among the Religious living there, her presence favored by the proximity of Nazareth to the mountain. In remembrance of this the hermits, after the Ascension of the Lord, constructed a church in the honor of Mary near a spring, where Elijah had lived. Centuries later, they drew their name from the mountain.



Departing from texts taken from Jerome and Cassian that made Elijah and Elisha initiators of the Religious Life, Jean de Cheminot constructed a succession in which the prophet Jonah, identified with the son of the widow of Zarephath resurrected by Elijah, the prophet Obadiah and John the Baptist all play a part. By applying to the Order in concrete that which Jerome I and Cassian had said of Religious Life in general, he opened the way to affirm that any figure in the Old or New Testament who in some way had connections with monasticism belonged to Carmel.

From ICS Publications

The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein translated by Josephine Koepfel, O.C.D



To help celebrate the fourth centenary of the birth of St. John of the Cross in 1542, Edith Stein received the task of preparing a study of his writings. She uses her skill as a philosopher to enter into an illuminating reflection on the difference between the two symbols of cross and night. Pointing out how entering the night is synonymous with carrying the cross, she provides a condensed presentation of John's thought on the active and passive nights, as discussed in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night*. All of this leads Edith to speak of the glory of resurrection that the soul shares, through a unitive contemplation described chiefly in *The Living Flame of Love*. In the summer of 1942, the Nazis without warrant took Edith away. The nuns found the manuscript of this profound study lying open in her room. 408 pages, index, bibliography, paper, \$14.95 SC

Finite and Eternal Being by Edith Stein Translated by Kurt F. Reinhardt

This volume bears the imprint of the extraordinary intellectual and spiritual journey of its author, one of the most remarkable women of the twentieth century. Born in Breslau into a practicing Jewish family in 1891, Edith Stein abandoned her faith as a teenager. In 1921, however, she underwent a profound conversion and the following year she was baptized into the Catholic

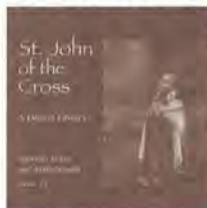
church. As a prominent German Catholic laywoman, she continued her teaching, writing and promotion of women's rights and began directing her attention toward a deeper encounter between the phenomenology she had helped to develop and the modern scholastic tradition of the church she had embraced. In 1933 she left the academic milieu and entered the Carmel of Cologne. Yet, she soon took up her intellectual labors again to produce the present text which remained unpublished at the time of her death in 1942 at the hands of the Nazis. This is her master work, the culmination of her lifelong search for truth in all its philosophical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. 664 pages paper \$19.95 FEB



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The Mantle of Elijah

The French Carmelite Jean Fillons de Venette, who wrote in the second half of the fourteenth century, enriched the proceeding tradition with new details. From Jean de Cheminot he inherited the symbolism of the mantle with white and gray vertical stripes, worn by the Carmelites for almost all of the thirteenth century and substituted in 1287 by a completely white one that is still in use today. The two colors indicate the double state of the Carmelites, chaste and penitent; the seven stripes symbolize the three theological virtues (the black ones) and the four cardinal virtues (the white ones). Jean de Venette then



goes on to explain the origin of the stripes. When Elijah was rapt into heaven in the fiery chariot, he threw his mantle to Elisha. Passing through the flames the exposed part of the folds would have been burnt. With this mantle, according to the Biblical account, Elisha divided the waters of the Jordan; and it was the sign that the spirit of Elijah, had been transmitted to him, and from that day on his disciples began to wear it.

The affirmations of these authors constitute the central nucleus of the Elijan Tradition proper to the Carmelites, according to which

there existed an uninterrupted succession of hermits from Elijah until Albert of Jerusalem. Developing this doctrine the Carmelites acquired the conviction of being sons of Elijah in a way that is completely different to that of the other monks who looked to the prophet as their initiator and model.

Carmelite Monasticism

A later deepening of the tradition is due to the Catalan Carmelite Philip Ribot, who, towards the end of the fourteenth century wrote the *Libri decern de Institutione et peculiaribus gestis religiosorum carmelitarum*. This work attempted to unite history and spirituality, even though it uses a completely particular concept of history. Following the example of his brothers, and basing himself on an assertion of Saint Isidore of Seville, in which the Monastic life was derived from Elijah and his followers, and establishing a series of his own personal criteria, Ribot allowed the Carmelites to include among their number all the personages who in some way had connections with monasticism.

Successive authors enlarged the field even more, transforming into Carmelites all the monks, who, precisely because of their profession of the Monastic life had been disciples of Elijah, or alternatively because of their imitation of him, or even because of imitation and descent together, were therefore Carmelites. Thus Saint John the Baptist, the Fathers of monks Antony and Hilarion, the bishop of Alexandria Cyril, who at the Council of Ephesus in 431 had been among those who promoted the idea that the Madonna be known by the title Mother of God, all became members of the Order.

The doctrinal tradition reached complete formulation in the historical works of the

seventeenth century, which, in describing the fortunes of the Carmelite Order, always began from Elijah. A special place was occupied by the so-called *Prophetic Histories*, which managed to construct the presumed complete succession of Superior Generals, listed without break from Elijah up until the times of the author.

The application of the incipient historical criticism to hagiographical legends, occurring in the work of the Bollandists of the seventeenth century, gave the first serious blow to the credibility of such constructions, even if one had to wait until the twentieth century to assign them to the place waiting for them - that of pure legend.

The Spirit of Elijah

Nevertheless, the "historical" scaffolding, constructed of dubious elements and therefore destined to come crashing down, had sustained an ideal of life, a point of reference, that impelled the first hermits to gather together near the spring of Elijah. For this reason, alongside the writings with historical pretensions, there exists another type, of a doctrinal nature, that presented the spirit of Elijah as inspiration for the life of the Carmelite.

In this perspective the work of Ribot referred to above, retains a great importance.



The first book of the collection, with the title *De Institutione et peculiaribus gestis primorum monachorum*, occupies an important place in

the Carmelite tradition, to the point of having been considered for a certain time as the original Rule of the group, by which Albert of Jerusalem would have been inspired.

The writing is presented as the work of a certain John XXXIV, Bishop of Jerusalem and already hermit on Mount Carmel, who turns to Caprasius, Superior of the hermits and his old companion, with the intention of describing to him the beginning of the way in which, and the place where the institution

arose. Elijah is placed at the center of the work and is considered the first monk from whom the origin of the Monastic life is drawn. Utilizing the methods proper to Mediaeval exegesis, the author comments on the text with which the Bible begins the narration of the epic of Elijah: "And the word of the Lord came to him, *Depart from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook of Cberith, that is east of the Jordan. You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded ravens to feed you there* (I Kings 17,2-3)."

The journey and hiding of himself by the torrent are interpreted as human effort, operating by means of the virtues and accompanied by Grace, through which the monk

offers to God a heart holy and pure from every mark of sin. Arriving at this point the gift of God allows him to “drink at the torrent”, that is to taste the Divine presence in the soul.

The instructions given to Elijah, head and prince of monks, had an exemplary value for all his imitators. The Biblical words addressed to him were commented on and became the supporting structure of the monk’s journey: “Depart from here (that is from fallen reality and the world that will pass), and turn eastward (that is work against the native concupiscence of the flesh), and hide yourself by the brook of Cherith (you must not live in the city with people), that is east of the Jordan (be separated through charity from every sin). If you climb to the summit of prophetic perfection crossing through these four gradual stages, “You shall drink from the brook”. And so that you will be able to persevere, “I have commanded ravens to feed you there”.

Thus the itinerary is constructed, composed of four stages that the author describes in detail according to the example of Elijah. This course unwinds, commencing with the renunciation of earthly goods, continuing through mortification of the passions and the search for solitude, conducting the monk to live in charity according to the demands of love of God and neighbor, and enabling him to arrive at a clear knowledge of God.

The Meaning of an Evolution

In the prologue to the *Life of Saint Paul, First Hermit*, Saint Jerome, reporting the discussion about the origins of monasticism, refers to the theory of those who hold that Elijah and John the Baptist were initiators of

monasticism. John the Baptist is in fact presented by the Gospel as a hermit: clothed in camel-skin and eating locusts and wild honey, he lived in the desert until his manifestation to Israel. From the moment that John the Baptist was indicated by Jesus as the new Elijah, one cannot doubt that Elijah too must have in some way lived in the desert, understood in a broad sense as a place of solitude. Since the *Book of Kings* associates Elijah with Mount Carmel, it was immediately identified with the site of his hermitage as well. By the fourth century the tradition was already fixed; Cassian, speaking of the hermits who live in profound solitude, affirmed that “these are imitators of Saint John the Baptist who remained in solitude for the whole of his life, following the example of Elijah and Elisha.”

The development of monasticism studied the places connected with the presence of Biblical personages with cenobia, and for this reason, together with the region of Jericho and the desert of Judea, Carmel became well populated. These inhabitants quickly developed a sacred topography that localized episodes, real or imaginary, from the life of Elijah along the sides of the mountain. The anonymous author from Piacenza, for example, writing around 570, situated the visit of the Shunamite to Elisah in the monastery that bears his name on Carmel.

The Elijan tradition elaborated by the Carmelites demonstrates a coherent internal logic: impelled by the necessity to justify its existence it underlined with force its links with the proceeding monasticism utilizing the criteria of uninterrupted succession, finally arriving at him whom all held to be the common Founder - Elijah the prophet of fire. ■

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Clarion Printing	20,620.61
Clarion Returns	425.00
Subtotal for Clarion	\$31,900.86

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Delegate at Main Office	8,400.00
Delegates Mid West & NE	5,100.00
Executive Secretary	27,840.00
Subtotal for Personnel	41,787.00

Office Bank Charges	\$336.12
Office Computer Support	124.49
Office Equipment	297.05
Office Postage	608.30
Office Printing	665.33
Office Supplies	1,130.16
Office Telephone	1,007.14

Subtotal for Office	\$4,168.59
Charity	\$1,202.00
Seminars & Congress	1,448.50
Subtotal for Miscellaneous	\$2,650.50

Total Expenses for 2002	\$97,493.74
Positive Balance for 2002	\$7,064.32

Secular Carmel Rejoices

In the Rome Vicariate the cause for Beatification of the married couple Ulisse Amendolaggine (1893-1969) and Lelia Cossdente (1893-1951) has been introduced. Cardinal Ruini's decree was signed on July 15, 2002. The Vice-Postulator is Dr. Luca Pasquale.

The event gives glory to Secular Carmel. The couple drew their spirituality from Carmel, living in the shadow of the Basilica of St Teresa of Avila in Rome. Ulisse was a member of Secular Carmel and Lelia belonged to the Carmelite Scapular Fraternity.

To celebrate their living contact with the Order, an evening to remember these parishioners, who are now candidates for the honors of the altar, was celebrated in St Teresa's Basilica on March 19, 2003, Feast of St Joseph, Patron of Carmel. The opening address of the Parish Priest, the first-hand testimony of people (particularly of their son Fr Raffaele Amendolaggine, a Discalced Carmelite) the reading of some of their writings and the outstanding conference by the journalist and writer Dr. Angelo Montonati on the life and spirituality of the couple, gave a clear idea of their sanctity, so marked by the spirituality of Carmel in the world. ■



Pondering Elijah

Helen Barrett, OCDS



Helen Barrett is a retired teacher and a member of the Carmelite Secular Order, based in Dundee, Scotland.

I recently realized that although I knew the stories of what Elijah did. I'd never read the story of Elijah right through, so I sat me down to remedy the situation. Reading and rereading the Bible narrative helped me to 'see' more clearly this giant among the prophets, this towering man of faith to whom, with Moses, it was given to talk with our Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration - and yet who ran for his life south to Mount Sinai, fearful and despondent.

What a scene it must have been in the palace when Elijah first faced the king; Ahab and Jezebel and all the courtiers splendidly garbed and bejewelled amid all the silk and silver, the gold and ivory; and suddenly this rough-clad countryman, with a 'cloak of animal skins and a leather girdle', strides into the hall with the unwelcome prophecy of drought, famine, and hardship to come.

Three years of drought, and then on Mount Carmel the tremendous confrontation with the priests of Baal - which of course the apostate king and his heathen queen also worshiped. Time passed; Jezebel engineered Naboth's murder to let the covetous king have his vineyard, so Elijah went once more to the palace, to prophecy the dire consequences awaiting the whole royal family.

What awesome courage, once and again deliberately to challenge a king who called him 'my enemy' and whose wife wanted him dead! But Elijah's only concern was to speak the message that had been laid on him; to obey the Lord he served and whose service was his life.

God watched over him, telling him, after prophesying the drought, to 'go east and hide near the brook Cherith'. First miraculously fed there by ravens, then the guest of the widow at Zarephath, Elijah was safe and, by another miracle, the widow and her son survived the drought. The Lord intervened again after the great triumph over the priests of Baal at Mount Carmel. Elijah, zealous to wipe out the false religion, had the Baal priests put to death; then

came the great rainstorm. Ahab was able to outrun it, galloping his chariot horses back to Jezreel - where he told the days events to Jezebel; but Elijah was only on foot. Despite that the Lord saved him; by a miracle he even outstripped those horses: The power of the Lord came on Elijah; he fastened his clothes tightly around his waist and ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.' Thirty kilometres, according to the map in my Bible!

His healing came from God's gentle but firm pointing towards the very future Elijah could not face: no soothing words of reassurance but precise directions.

I am awestruck by all that; but I warm to the gentleness that I glimpse here and there . . .

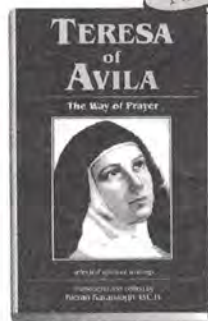
Elijah reached Jezreel safely, but to escape Jezebel's wrath he had to flee Israel. Furious that her priests and prophets had been killed, she vowed to have all those of Yahweh put to death in revenge; so Elijah had to run for his life. But he didn't go alone; he could not, and would not, leave his loyal servant behind, so the two of them headed south, leaving Israel and eventually reaching Beersheba in the south of Judah. The man was safe there, so Elijah left him there rather than take him over the two hundred miles of desert to Mount Sinai.

Caring, thoughtful - and always going the second mile, as when the son of his hostess at Zarephath died. Elijah could have prayed for his recovery from a hygienic distance; he could have knelt beside the boy; but no: he lay on top of the lad to give the warmth of his body as well as his breath.

Then at Sinai, in this humanness, he broke down - and no wonder, after the extraordinary events, the intense emotions, the outpouring of himself at Carmel and since; all, it now seemed, for nothing. True, God had miraculously fed him over the long miles; he had reached the spiritual root-place he so badly needed for both safety and solace; against all odds he was alive; but back in Israel paganism reigned supreme and there was still a price on his head. He had failed; where could he go, what could he do, what would become of him? He wailed to the Lord in an agony of doubt and despair, too low to respond even to the still small voice.

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Carmelite priest Kieran Kavanaugh has taught spiritual theology at The Catholic University of America and been a contributor to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. The translator of the works of Teresa into English, he lived in Avila and traveled Spain, tracing Teresa's journey to the towns and cities of her foundations. He currently lives in Washington, D.C.



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His healing came from God's gentle but firm pointing towards the very future Elijah could not face: no soothing words of reassurance but precise directions. Elijah the hunted, the fearful, was to go back the way he had come, trusting God to foil Jezebel's spies and hatchet-men and continuing north, right on to Damascus. There he was to do new work for his Lord, appointing rulers ready to take over when the time came and anointing Elisha to be his helper and, in due course, his successor. He was to be part of God's long-term planning for the future; this was what God wanted, so he arose and went.

It was some time later, perhaps much later, that Elijah confronted Ahab over Naboth's vineyard; the king's conscience was finally touched and he repented.

The Bible does not indicate at what point in his reign Elijah first appeared, but Ahab ruled for twenty two years and his successor for two; only after that was Elijah taken up into heaven; so his recorded great moments were actually brief appearances spread over a long period - days, months, years of hidden prayer-life, quietly waiting on God, content just to be available when or even if his Lord might call on him.

I saw more and more clearly that it was this dedicated availability that made the great

events possible, as if Elijah were a carpenter's tool, shiny and sharp in its rack and ready for whenever its owner might need it. Thus it wasn't Elijah doing things, it was God doing them through him and being able to do so because Elijah accepted the grace to be available As I pondered these things the story of Elijah became rather the story of a tremendous partnership, an intermingling, a continuous mutual giving and receiving; and how gloriously the Lord gave to Elijah whatever he needed from one moment to the next! - Elijah responding with grateful and ever-deepening trust and self-offering.

God's final gift was a magnificent accolade. Chariots were not for just anyone, and I think I'm right in believing that whereas officials had one horse to pull theirs, a team of two or more horses was only for the most important people. It was 'a chariot of fire pulled by horses of fire' that the Lord God sent to bring his servant home. ■

O.C.D.S. NEWSLETTER

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