



*The Rule of Carmel:
A Rich Treasure of Our Spiritual Tradition*



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Cover Photograph: Pietro Lorenzetti, St. Albert giving the Rule to the Hermits on Mount Carmel. The work was commissioned by the Carmelites of Siena between 1327 and 1328. The painting represents different episodes of the Carmelite tradition.
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From the Provincial Delegate

The first Carmelites were hermits on Mt. Carmel. They, pilgrims and crusaders, had come from the west. They were on a quest for holiness. These men were distinct in that, though hermits, there was some communal structure to their lives. After some time they petitioned Albert, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, for a Rule of life. Some direction, some structure would be beneficial to them.

Albert could have simply given them an already established Rule. Instead he provided them with a Rule of Life that fit their unusual circumstances. We date the Rule of St. Albert around the year 1208. This holy Rule is short, balanced and contains many beautiful quotations from Sacred Scripture.

Albert encouraged his sons to live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ, and be pure in heart; they were to be unswerving in the service of their Master. They were to choose a prior, live in separate cells, and have a common refectory. Each was to stay in his cell pondering the Law of the Lord day and night. They were to pray the Canonical Hours and were to attend daily Mass. Their oratory was dedicated to our Lady. No one was to claim anything as his own; they were to possess everything in common. They were to gather on a weekly basis to discuss matters of spiritual welfare.

Following these directives is a series of holy admonitions intended to strengthen the spiritual life. Gird you loins with chastity. Holy meditations will save you. Put on holiness as your breastplate; it will enable you to love God and neighbor. Faith must be your shield. On your head place the helmet of salvation. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, must abound in your hearts.

Basing himself on St. Paul, Albert encourages these Brothers of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel give themselves to work of some kind. They are to earn their bread by silent toil. He then speaks of the importance of

silence and the danger of too much speech. Silence is the way to foster holiness, he states, and your strength will lie in silence and hope.

Albert reminds the prior that he is the servant to the rest and asks the brothers to hold him in reverence. Implied here is the notion of mutual respect and cooperation. He concludes: when the Lord returns he will reward anyone who has done more than he is obliged to do. Yet he insists on common sense and discretion as the guide of the virtues.

Some observations: The Rule of St. Albert fosters our relationship with Jesus Christ. Allegiance to Christ is the beginning of the Rule. Christ in the Eucharist is the very center of the Rule. Christ's return at the end of time is the conclusion of the Rule.

The Rule emphasizes the importance of prayer, both personal and liturgical. The Rule recognizes the values of both solitude and community. Community life is fostered by regular meetings. The Rule prescribes the interaction of leadership and membership. It is likely that St. Albert had in mind the Jerusalem community of the early church where all were one in heart and mind.

The Rule is composed of many texts from Sacred Scripture and Albert encourages those who follow it to meditate on the Word of God. The living out of the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love is included in Albert's composition.

While some of the practices and situations noted in the Rule are no longer applicable today, the spiritual values and principles in it remain relevant. Our respective Constitutions, Norms, and Statutes help us interpret and apply the Rule. The holy Rule of St. Albert remains the living inspiration for all Carmelites, friars, nuns and seculars, to this very day.

Fr. Salvatore Sciorba, O.C.D.

Incentives Towards

a New Understanding of The Rule

When any text is presented to me to read, in terms of its origins, its structure, the meaning intended by the author, its influence on its listeners, I may completely understand that text, yet not have that text really function in my own life. I may comprehend it very well, but for the rest, it does not touch me. I have no relationship with it; it remains "outside" me.

I may approach a given text from another point of view: I may come to a text thinking that *I already know what that text contains*. In that case the text no longer offers a challenge to me because I have silenced it by my *predetermined pattern of thought*. The text no longer functions because it will only say what I *already* know.

Both of these reasons coalesced and caused the Rule to become a *dead text* within our Dutch Carmelite community. On the one hand, practically everyone *knew beforehand* what the Rule contained without really reading it. One simply assumed that it concerned "Carmelite life" as one experienced it—Carmelite life at the decline of the Reform of Touraine, that is. On the other hand, newly gained insights into the historical origins of the Rule did not really permeate our province in the Netherlands. However, one can see a turning point in our province halfway into the 1970's: 1975-78 to be precise. One finds an intense confrontation between the Rule and the province, an encounter that was also occurring in other provinces. One

need only witness this Congress on the Rule, which some decades ago would have been unthinkable!

Questions are once again being put to the Rule. What position did the first generations of Carmelites take in their world? What value systems directed their lives? How did they build community? What formed the core of their spiritual lives? Some even more critical questions are: Does the Rule still have anything at all to say to us? Is it not a relic of the past, out of the extinct, dark Middle Ages? These are questions enough.

The reading of the Rule created a readiness in our province to abandon our image of the Rule and take a new, fresh look at it. Supported by research that had already been completed,² we at the Titus Brandsma Institute had the opportunity to study the Rule anew. Based on this study,³ we came to a new, rough translation of the Rule. During a two year period the "Religious Dimension Committee" of our province read the Rule from the perspective, "What does the Rule mean?" as well as with the question, "What does the Rule call forth in us today?" From all this came a living give-and-take between the Rule and ourselves. Sparks began to fly! The text was being given a new chance. We were being given a new chance. In the reading the Rule appeared, not as a *law*, but as a *letter*. A *letter* written by Albert to us. A *letter* is to be read and answered. We wrote back to Albert.

Our learning process became verbalized in a new translation, provided with an introduction and a commentary.⁴ We took it to all the groups and commissions once again with the dual question: "What does the Rule mean?" and "What does it call forth in us?" Thus the Rule received its place in our renewal process.

Now, almost ten years later, I am being asked to look back. What were the most important incentives that led to a renewed understanding of the Rule? And how does this new understanding function in the process of renewal that is going on among us? I have discovered three incentives and would like to give you a brief explanation of them.

1. THE RULE AS THE JOURNAL OF OUR FOUNDATION-HISTORY

The first incentive contributing to a new understanding of the Rule was the insight that the Rule did not just fall from heaven, but came into existence within an historical process. This perspective was primarily formed by the study of spirituality. Michel de Certeau in 1965 had already demonstrated rather convincingly that every genuine spirituality arises: 1) within a concrete historical context, 2) with its concrete historical challenges, 3) with its own language and 4) with its own questions. All genuine spirituality meets these questions and searches for the answers in the language of the historical context itself.⁵ Within the Titus Brandsma Institute we consistently applied this approach.⁶ Those who are able to see "contextually" discover that the Rule is the result of a growth process that covers at least 50 years. Only in 1247, when Pope Innocent IV gave the Carmelites mendicant status, was this process concluded.⁷ Three important phases mark this *process of becoming*. All have left their mark on our Rule.

The first phase is that of the *Proto-Carmelites* on Mount Carmel. These Proto-Carmelites were called

"hermits" by Albert.⁸ They were lay hermits. In the twelfth century a growing number of persons distanced themselves from the established culture. They turned away from society and from the church. The established religious life according to the classic rules (Basil, Benedict and Augustine) did not offer an alternative for them. They left house and home and journeyed into the wilderness. They took upon themselves a sober and serious life. Some of them were *eremitæ peregrini* —solitary wanderers. The goal of their wanderings was to visit the "holy places," *visitare loca sacra*. The Proto-Carmelites on Mount Carmel were just such "lay hermits" with Western European backgrounds who had made the pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The spiritual structure of these twelfth century hermits is clearly delineated. They were individuals who wanted to live significantly different lives (*conversio*). They detached themselves from the establishment (*mutatio loci*). They turned towards a life of holy earnestness and frugality (*in sancta penitentia*).

We, who look at our own culture from this spiritual structure, discover that we, too, have our "lay hermits" and our Proto-Carmelites. They are the ones who have decided for themselves to live differently, counter-culturally: they relate differently to others and to possessions. They relate differently to food, drink and health. They search for an alternative lifestyle on all levels: in personal relations, as well as in their social and religious life. Their *conversio* is marked by clear, "distancing" gestures: they are against placement of nuclear missiles in the Netherlands, in Europe and in the world; they protest against exploitation of the environment; they turn away from an authoritative, male church; they reject consumerism.

This “turning away” is simultaneously a “turning towards.” A “turning towards” a responsible relationship with nature; working for peace; relating more carefully to their own bodies, respecting the Source of Life. The established orders and congregations do not offer a real alternative to these modern “lay hermits.” They belong too much to the established culture. Even our present-day Carmel finds itself in the position of leading an “established religious life.” We will have to begin to recall our origins among the lay hermit movement if we are again to become accessible to the Proto-Carmelites of our culture.

The second phase in re-understanding the Rule brings us once more to the Carmelites who lived on Mount Carmel. The hermits on Mount Carmel were solitaries: they lived out their personal life-choice in a personal life-style. A change entered their lives when they gathered together their personal lived experiences, when their personal *conversio* was inserted into a bonded life (*oboedientia*), when they faithfully bound themselves together in community, when, together, they chose the already lived life on Mount Carmel. Next, they asked Albert of Avogadro to give them a “formula for living” (*formula vitæ*) so as to gather together their lived, religious experience, and to insert that into the messianic movement (*in obsequio Jesu Christi*) as it was taking shape in a variety of ways. They asked for a “formula for living” corresponding to their chosen and practiced way of life.⁹ Albert responded to their request and gave them the “formula for living,” which we later called the Rule, sometime between 1206 and 1214. He gathered the already existing life-style of the hermits into one body; he brought it together into community; he incorporated it within the broader stream of the messianic movement; he strengthened it with supportive structures and regulations.

The spiritual structure of this second phase is one of creativity. The hermits consciously rejected adopting existing “rules” or adapting to “established religious structures.” Albert and the brothers followed the strengths of their ‘lived life’ and attempted to faithfully incorporate them, as one body, into the greater messianic movement. From a spiritual point of view this engenders a never-ending process: the individual *conversiones* gathered together into a community-*conversio*, the personal design inserted into a common design; ones own pilgrimage inserted into the great caravan following in the footsteps of Jesus. This is the dynamic meaning of *oboedientia* which Albert recommended both before all else (Chapter 1) and after all else (Chapters 17-18) to the brothers: to involve oneself totally in the community. It is not surprising that the first thirteen chapters of the Rule consider the building up of the hermit community.¹⁰

This second phase leads me to think that if Carmel wants to be born anew, as the first Carmel was born, then it needs to creatively search for the strengths that lie in the modern hermit life, in the Proto-Carmelites of our culture. We should not work with a pre-conceived, pre-established “Rule.” We need to do the patient, handmade work of a real “prior”—a “first brother” or a “first sister”—discovering areas of unity, building community from the concrete Proto-Carmelites, inserting this community into the broader messianic movement.

The third phase in the formation of the Rule began when, around 1238, the occupants of Mount Carmel journeyed in groups to Europe, a process that took several decades. In Europe they were confronted with fundamental shifts within society and within church relationships. The social and economic center of gravity was shifting from rural to urban life. The urban culture developed: home-industry came into existence; city schools were founded;

citizens strove for freedom of trade and possessions; city dwellers demanded political independence, as opposed to the arbitrary will of feudal lords; the citizens organized themselves into trade unions and corporations. Within this developing urban culture there immediately arose three classes: the patricians (*maiores*), the middle class (*mediocres*), and the skilled workers (*minores*).

In keeping with the mendicant movement, the Carmelites engaged themselves with the *minores*. Along with them, they had chosen a critical stance towards the church: resolutely they distanced themselves from the non-evangelical practices of the higher clergy and the established monastic life. Dominic and Francis had already designed their model-for-living that gave religious form to the spiritual power of all who wanted to live Gospel lives in this new context. Fundamental elements of their model are: mendicant itinerancy (*mendicari*), choosing the social position of the "poor," forming a community of brothers and sisters who become brothers and sisters to ordinary people (*fraternitas*), being itinerant preachers of the Gospel in word and deed, imitating Jesus and his disciples (*vita apostolica*). The Carmelites aligned themselves from the inside out with this mendicant movement. They recognized its spirituality from their own experience because they themselves had come forth from the aforementioned lay movement of the *eremitæ*, *pænitentes* and *peregrini*. Furthermore, Albert was well aware of this growing mendicant movement.

The most important structural difference between the old monastic systems and the Rule of Carmel is that the Carmelite community explicitly situated itself in the power play within church and society on the side of the poor. The already existing messianic orientation takes the shape of a socio-ecclesial stance. A democratically structured

community becomes meaningful in an urban culture that has emancipated itself from feudal relationships within a feudally ruled church. That persevering lay spirituality organized a structural counterpoint against church power holders. The spiritual structure of the third phase was a process of continual, communal transformation: the community chose a structural position in the midst of the lower class people by its housing, its religious practices and its social relationships. This process of taking a stand eventually found its juridical expression in the changes Innocent IV made in the "formula for living" in 1247. Thereby the Carmelites received their official mendicant status.¹¹

If Carmel wants to really pursue this third phase of her foundation-history, which found its expression in the Rule, then the Carmelite community, precisely as Carmelite community, will again have to determine its position within ecclesial/societal power structures, especially where the poor are to be found. Moreover this entails, as we shall see further on, a never ending process of solidarity.

Thus, in its coming into existence, the Rule reflects the foundation-history of the Order. 1) Lay persons distanced themselves *personally* from the established church, the established religious life and the established society. They *personally* opted for a serious and sober life. 2) On Mount Carmel they found one another in their decision to form a community which was incorporated in the messianic movement. 3) This community situated itself in the upcoming, urban culture among the lower class people, there to form a messianic community: themselves living as brothers and sisters who became "brother" and "sister" to the bottom layer of the developing culture.

From this understanding of the Rule, I will now look at the renewal process that has taken place in the Dutch Province during the past twenty years. The starting point in that process of change was, and still is, abandoning the established religious life. These are *personal* processes. During the Provincial Council of 1969 personal stories surfaced for the first time: it seemed that many had already taken personal leave of the established "Order."

The Order had become too clerical. In a certain sense we have returned to our lay stance, to our origins. This process of "distancing" moved parallel to, or sometimes was caused by, a sharpened awareness of the signs of the times. On the one hand this awareness was confirming (*e.g.*, insofar as there occurred the breakthrough to a culture-of-dialogue). On the other hand this awareness was critically "distancing" (*e.g.*, insofar as the industrial, technical culture continued to destroy human life and the environment). *Personal* choices were demanded. It was as if the first lay hermits had arrived again on Mount Carmel! There was no real cohesion. That grew only gradually. During the 1970s, one by one, dialogical communities began to take form. In mutual brother—and sister—hood they determined to place themselves in the service of the Messiah: living "around the Gospel." Gradually these communities learned to determine their position within the cultural power play, a process that is still going strong. By going through the process of becoming Carmelites ourselves, we pursued the Rule, as it were, with our own lives, and "reversed" the Rule. Its coming-into-being gave the language and the direction for our renewal process.

If read from a process orientation, I think the Rule also provides a blueprint for persons seeking affiliation with the Order. Some already live as lay hermits of Mount Carmel: these have distanced

themselves from the culture, and *personally* chosen a *conversio*: they have turned towards a sober and earnest way of life. They are the brothers and sisters who, today, group themselves around "Brother B." Some of them have decided to form "community." Here we need to be careful. We need to do as Albert did: bring together the strengths of these lives, while giving form, formulation and orientation to the lives that they live. Only afterwards does the never ending process begin: the process of determining one's position within the power play of our culture, the preferential option for the poor. At the core of all this is the fact that all three aspects (*viz.*, *personal* choice, brother-sisterhood, and determining one's position), discovered *together* in their dynamic ensemble, are continually relived. Only then can one speak of a real growing-into Carmelite life, a never ending process of transformation.

2. THE RULE ENVISIONS A PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

The second incentive that brought about a new understanding of the Rule was the slowly regained insight that spirituality envisions a process of change in which the chosen, central values touch and transform the deepest layers of the person. Much of spirituality existed in the fact that the basic values of Carmelite life were only accepted cognitively. One harbored a "perfect" value system, but a closer look revealed it to be only a "veneer" poured over one's personhood.

One had not struggled with it, as had Jacob with the angel. One did not carry the scars on his body; it remained external. It is essential for spirituality that the basic values become flesh and blood, entering into the deeper psychic layers of the person.

It is not only the content of a spirituality which is important, but also the way it is given shape in life. In other words, spirituality is really to be the deepest reality out of which a person lives, the life-model

offered is to be internalized completely. It is not sufficient that the 'truth' and 'value' of the content are assented to intellectually, anymore than that the person's outer actions are adapted to the requirements of this spirituality.¹²

The concern of spirituality is that the basic inspiration works so deeply into the kernel of my being that it transforms my actions from the inside out, creating new forms. Only thus can "central values" work deeply into my being, and vice versa: only thus can my unique contribution further these central values.

Whenever I read the Rule again from this regained, new insight, I begin to see that the purpose of the Rule is not really aimed at bringing about the formulation of a value system. That value system has already been determined, in a certain sense, for "everyone, to whatever state of life he may belong or in whatever form of dedicated life he may have chosen."¹³ One has to "live in the footsteps of Jesus." But that, strictly speaking, is not the Rule. Albert takes us further after this general orientation: "But since you ask us to give you a formula for living in accordance with your way of life, to which you are to hold fast from now on (*propositum*), we ordain..." Then follows the Rule, or rather, the "formula for living."

Albert wants to provide a formula for living by which the already-chosen way of life can be permanently exercised. He wants to articulate a process of transformation which precisely stimulates, orients and structures the practices already chosen by the hermits. As he says at the end of the Rule: "These things we have briefly written to you, thus laying down for you a formula according to which you are to live." A dynamic way of reading this Rule brings us closer, I think, to the very purposes of Albert. I want to highlight this with three passages from the Rule. They have been chosen so as to present once

again, and more deeply, the afore outlined area of tension: *personal* decision, community building, and cultural positioning.

1. The first passage that has begun to speak anew is Chapter 14. In it one talks of the armor of God: Carmelites must make an effort (*studeatis*) to clothe themselves with the "armor of God" (*indui armatura Dei*) with the greatest care, to accept it as their new form. The basic symbol of the armor will now be further elaborated in the various symbols. To begin with: "Your *loins* are to be cinctured with the *girdle of chastity*." The loins are the symbol of our human needs. These deeper layers, where our needs and desires move, have to be purified. The Rule does not ask that we "retain purity," but that we *become purified* unto the deepest levels of our emotions. The Rule continues: "Your *breast* (must be) fortified by *reverent reflections*." The breast is the seat of the most contradictory emotions: anger, jealousy, excitement, calculation—but also, tenderness, respect and true compassion. The Rule wants us to clothe ourselves with the breastplate of selflessness, of purified intentions. Furthermore, our spontaneous defense mechanisms, our "harness," our "shield" and our "helmet," must be transformed into "justice in love", "trust" and "liberation." Apparently it is possible to be armed with egocentrism, distrust, oppression. The Rule envisions a transformation process: to transform our defense mechanisms in order to be disarmed and to become dis-arming. Finally, our offensive weapon - the "sword"—needs to be transformed by continual intimacy with scripture.

What do I learn from such a passage? I learn that the Rule does not want to place upon me a "value system" that is designed for me, as it were, from the outside. It wants me to *become* that value system; that I really clothe myself with it (*indui*), that it

become *part of me*: unto my loins, unto my breast, unto my aggressions, unto my defense mechanisms. The *personal* choice of the hermit now appears to have been a first step on a never ending road: to allow my total personality to be transformed by God. It is God with whom I have to be clothed, through whom I am to be purified, directed and transformed into justice, love, trust and liberation. I am to allow divine "patterns" to enter my person, so that they give orientation to all my activities from the inside out.

If I look back upon our lives with this in mind, then I see the importance of training directed towards the deeper layers of the person: intensive spiritual direction, counselling and personal therapy; retreats, personality training, ongoing formation, etc. All these means call for patient handiwork: to allow our "value system" to really enter into the deeper layers of our person.

2. The second passage that has begun to speak anew is Chapter 11, in which Albert advises us to discuss weekly "the preservation of your life together and the well-being of the individuals." Already in the first monastic rules there is a format for religious dialogue (the *collatio*). These "conversations" form a definite framework within which religious life and community life are deepened and, if necessary, corrected. In the words of the Rule: "Excesses and shortcomings of the brothers, if these be found in anyone, should be corrected with becoming charity."

The first Carmelites apparently operated from the assumption that "life together" (community building) and "personal well-being" needed to be *preserved*. Therefore they gathered together weekly. Probably the critical questions were: Is our community *still* a sacrament of the Reign of God? Is

our messianic character *still* visible? Is the Eucharist *still* a true expression of the breaking and sharing? The one who says that the community needs to be "preserved" is completely aware of its vulnerability. Albert knows that a community is a living organism, prone to decline and to disintegration. Community is never finished!

The one who "preserves" acts as a shepherd or as a breeder, envisioning growth, taking no satisfaction in the actual manifestation and the beautiful appearance, but always raising up possibilities and searching for authenticity. Those who "preserve" know that religious community is a vulnerable and continually threatened ensemble of structures and personalities. Those who "preserve" know that the concern is to become community, to grow towards community from week to week.

What counts for the community, counts for the individual person as well. The Rule wants the full growth of the person, the freed wholeness of the psyche (*salus animarum*), to be the object of dialogue. Am I still going the way of continuous transformation into God without exaggerating or weakening? The one who speaks about well-being—the essential liberation of persons—reveals a knowledge of our vulnerable psychic structure, of our broken entity, of a possibility of hardening to the core of our being. Well-being, wholeness and liberation are not products of nature! They need to be freed, in a continual wrestling, from our psychic structures.

This concern for the life of the community, and for the liberation of the person, is being practised in a number of dialogical communities which have grown up within our province since 1972. At this moment about ten of these dialogical communities exist. In these communities life together and the

growth of each individual is carefully discussed by means of “facilitated conversation,” through common meditation on Scripture, in days of reflection, in house meetings and in weekly exchanges. This dialogical life-style determines also the manner in which we, on a provincial level, speak with one another about the well-being of persons, of groups and of our province.

3. The third passage that began to speak anew is Chapter 3, the “added chapter” about dwelling places. When the Carmelites were still in the Holy Land, they chose to abide in solitude, in places often difficult to reach. However, when the Carmelites returned to Europe and took up the mendicant way of life, their place was thereby already given to them: with the poor. This change in the way of life is expressed in Chapter 3, approved by Innocent IV in 1247. In an earlier letter from Innocent we learn of the motive behind this addition. The Carmelites wanted to live in such a way as to “serve, not only themselves, but their neighbor.” As was mentioned before, the passage towards a mendicant way of life meant openly determining one’s position within the developing urban culture. The Carmelites left their position of community-in-solitude (the wilderness) and consciously situated themselves among the poor in the developing urban culture so as to be accessible to ordinary people in their need.

This change in position of the community as a whole is also reflected in the other alterations made by Pope Innocent.¹⁴ These can be summarized as: the community of brothers (and sisters) expresses in word and deed the brotherhood (and sisterhood) of all people; it does that not by demanding or dictating, but through begging, asking, receiving and being available to the most ordinary city dwellers.

Whenever I reflect on this additional chapter concerning our dwelling places, I am confronted with the tension between the group itself choosing the place to live in solitude, and allowing the place where one is to live to be “determined,” to have a place “be given,” to have a place “appointed.” This tension is inherent in our lives. On the one hand, we ourselves, are choosing where to live; on the other hand, we have our place appointed by the poor (in the urban culture). In other words: to choose our position from out of the group, or to allow our position to be determined by the needs of the poor. This tension involved a process of transformation for the first generations of mendicant Carmelites: from a community that determined its own place in solitude to a community that received a place within the cultural power structure of an urban community among the poor.

There is a comparable transformation process occurring, not without great tension, within our own province, just as it is in the whole Order. There is a powerful movement afoot! I point only to our Filipino brothers and the related Filipino groups in the Netherlands, who emphatically see that our place within our capitalistic culture must be the position of the poor. For them it is the Lord himself who, through the poor, gives them their *place*. A “place” here includes the whole architecture of our life: housing, life-style, use of possessions, relationships, etc.

If I view this tension (between determining my own place and having my place appointed) from the perspective of transformation, then I mean to say that each moment—even if I live among the poorest of the poor!—I have to allow my “chosen position” to be transformed into my “received position.” The one who says, “This is my place,” overestimates him/herself and gambles away the

mendicant spirit. We go back to a place "in solitude." "The way chose me," said Dag Hammarskjöld. That meant for him that the call, "Farther!" forced him at each moment to leave the "known patterns" and his own initiatives. To make our "home" (*domus*) as community among the poor calls for a continual transformation: our "home" is more and more open to others; our possessions are seen as "begged;" we are made more and more into "brother" and "sister" by others. We change from place to place (*mutatio loci*) because we are moved by others!

3. THE RULE: A MYSTICAL WAY

It may seem strange that I connect the Rule with mystical processes. Yet this connection is less arbitrary than it may appear at first glance. Mystical processes concern a dynamic transformation that is so profound as to completely transform the inmost core of the person through the central symbol that has permeated one's life: through God, or whatever name we give to the One who is all-transcendent/immanent. Being touched and transformed by God is so overwhelming that it appears to the consciousness of the mystic that absolutely nothing of one's earlier life survives.

When looking at the Rule from the perspective of this mystical transformation, one does not necessarily look for the word "mystical." The Rule can very well envision a mystical transformation without using the word "mystical" or "contemplation." The question rather is: Does the Rule envision a dynamic transformation that operates so profoundly that the core of one's being is completely and radically transformed by God in such a way that one lives out from God? When I attune myself to the Rule in this way, I begin to see its mystical power of expression and discover its mystical orientation. Here one will discover the central value of the Rule. I want to illustrate this approach with two passages from the Rule.

1. The first passage is the well known chapter 7: "Let each one remain in his own living quarters or nearby, pondering day and night the Word of the Lord, keeping vigilant in prayer, unless engaged in other lawful occupations." I want to concentrate on the core of this passage: "*pondering* day and night on the Word of the Lord." These words have been taken from Psalm 1. In the context of the Psalm and against the background of the time in which it was written,¹⁵ *meditari* (*hagahin* Hebrew) points to a process of mystical transformation. One "murmured" the Torah, "ruminating" it until the text had completely become one's own, and began to "sigh from within" as the cooing of a dove. One made the Torah his own bodily, emotionally, cognitively, memorizing it so that he ultimately became one with Torah. One motive for this was not simply the holiness of Torah. One experienced this transformation so as to become one with the One who forms the "Be-ing" of Torah: Yahweh, the Lord.

In clothing oneself with Torah at all levels of existence, more intimately than one's own body can, one becomes, as it were, Torah oneself, and thereby "language of God," "body of God." *In lege Domini meditantēs* means: allowing oneself to be clothed with his Word, so as to be clothed by him, to become his language until he speaks in the individual from the inside out. This Torah-mysticism, retained unbroken in the Jewish mystical tradition up to Hassidism, remained alive within Christianity until far into the Middle Ages. For persons in the Middle Ages, meditation was not one or the other abstract form of prayer. They meditated with the whole person. They read the text with their whole existence: murmured it aloud, learned it by heart, deliberated with their understanding, and with their will ready for action.

"In this manner, meditation absorbed the whole individual and planted scripture in the whole person."¹⁶ Meditation is not only saying the Psalms, but saying and saying them until their power of expression speaks precisely in my saying them. A love experience wherein my activity (speaking, reflecting, considering) is transformed into a deep passivity: it is not I who speak, but he speaks in me. Thus, meditation is not just the study of scripture in order to be able to help the faithful by teaching and preaching.¹⁷ It is primarily a mystical transformation in God.

2. The second passage I want to speak about in relation to this theme of the Rule from the perspective of mystical transformation is the chapter about silence, Chapter 16. If you read this text carefully, several times, you will notice that the *silentium* functions on various levels in the Rule. The most tangible level is the nightly quiet (*silentium nocturnum; silentium summum*). Here "silence" suggests an atmosphere of rest and quiet. All noise is to be avoided. This atmosphere of rest and quiet must also be preserved as much as possible during the day (*silentium diurnum*).

However, *silentium diurnum* brings forth a second level of meaning: silence during the day serves not only to create an atmosphere of rest and quiet in the physical sense, but it fosters a manner of relating with one another, creating an atmosphere of respect within the community, an atmosphere in which each person can come to his or her rights. This level of *silentium* envisions a culture of justice, of respect among us (*cultus justitæ*). *Silentium* is broken wherever one opens wide the door for injustice, whenever one offends others and, thus, oneself. *Silentium* forms an attitude of caution and respect.

When this attitude has permeated ones activities, then we come upon the third level: ones actions are stilled; stillness is the soul of my behavior. Certain statements, especially from Isaiah, call this level to mind. They point to a stillness that forms the inner side of work: patient and stable activity, not short of breath, but carried on by the deep breath of Yahweh himself. Having come to an inner rest, all our activities are permeated with intense concern for one another, for the future and for remaining soberly true to one another.¹⁸

This third level of a completely internalized *silentium* takes us, finally, to the mystical level: "*In silentio et spe erit fortitudo vestra.*"¹⁹

To comprehend the real meaning of this reference to Isaiah, we need to recall the dynamic structure of biblical "stillness," *doemia*.²⁰ Biblical *doemia* covers a whole process. *Doemia* primarily means the "deep shock" that comes from being taken by an overwhelming experience. One is petrified, struck dumb. Next, *doemia* is a consciously held silence to enable one to come to own the shock, silence as a means of processing shock. One works with this overwhelming experience, accepts it, interiorizes it. One practices this silence so as to allow the shocking experience to enter more deeply. Finally this *doemia* becomes "stillness:" a quiet outlook, a quiet awaiting. This is the essential, inner side of silence.

This is the fourth mystical phase. Silence is totally interiorized: I am merely "watchfulness" in the night, sensitivity for the other, discerning that which is different, quiet attention for the amazing fact of life, for that ever surprising event. I become simply an eye, an ear, an open being: awaiting. It is this mystical stage that Isaiah has in mind with his *silentium et spes*: silently expecting, quiet that is

only awaiting. This process of quieting is a mystical process because the all-overwhelming experience was caused by Yahweh himself. He upsets us with his incomprehensible presence. Quiet interiorizes this "still-shocking" presence: a quiet that finds its flowering in a pure reaching-out-towards-him; becoming quiet because of him, and finding therein only quieting. Becoming quieted by being-desire only. This naked ecstasy (the only way to union with him) is experienced and intensely verbalized by our mystics, John of the Cross and John of St Sampson. They saw that the very core of *silentium* is quiet, as completely lived-through detachment; as pure and essential love, as "the night that unites the lover with the beloved." It is this "quiet" that constantly transforms our actions from within to selflessness, justice and respectful patience. It is this "quiet" which flowers into justice among our brothers and sisters. It is this "quiet" which truly fills the quiet of the night.

CONCLUSION

I have brought forth the mystical dimension of the Rule by using these two passages. They are only two paradigms. Whoever reads the Rule in this way will never finish discovering unexpected aspects of it. The confrontation with the Rule is only just now starting. New aspects, which transcend the Rule as a formula or as a model, are continually being discovered. "Living in the footsteps of Jesus" (Prologue), "a dedicated life in Christ" (Chapter 14), now come to mean: becoming totally transformed in God, allowing oneself to be so disarmed as to be clothed only with God.

The "chastened heart" of the Prologue calls to mind the Beatitudes: "They shall see God." For God has "planted his eye in our heart."²¹ Moreover, to restrict oneself (through fasting, abstaining from meat, silence) no longer signifies "being

stuck" in mortification, but becomes a symbol of the annihilation of each and every external foothold. Vigilance in prayer (Chapter 7) turns into quietly watching in the night, without a foothold. This watching, which is night itself, is "more than necessary" (*supererogaverit*). In mystical transformation the Rule itself is transcended for its own completion: we lose all footholds so that he can give us a place. Yes! He is our "place" and we are beggars. We beg for him, the Fountain of our life.

Keeis Waaijman, O.Carm.

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Notes

- ¹ This article was translated from the Dutch by Martha Alken, O.P., and emended by Keeis Waaijman.
- ² Cf. Carlo Cicconetti, *La regola del Carmelo: origine-natura-significato* (Roma: Istitutum Carmelitanum, 1973). For the English version cf. *The Rule of Carmel*, (Darien, IL: Carmelite Spiritual Center, 1984). Cf. also Hugh Clarke, O. Carm., and Bede Edwards, O.C.D. (eds.), *The Rule of Saint Albert (Vinea Carmeli, 1, Aylesford & Kensington: 1973)*.
- ³ Otger Steggink, O. Carm., contributed his knowledge of our history; Jo Tigcheler, O. Carm., did the semantic research for the most important spiritual terms; Kees Waaijman, O. Carm., studied the uses of scripture in the Rule.
- ⁴ *The Carmelite Rule* (Introduction, translation and annotations by Otger Steggink, O. Carm., Jo Tigcheler, O. Carm., and Kees Waaijman, O. Carm. Almelo, 1978).
- ⁵ Michel de Cerleau, "Civilizations and Spiritualities," in *Concilium* 2 (1966), p. 9.
- ⁶ This reading is especially dependant on the contextual set up of the Dutch Carmelite periodical *Speling* and on the subsequent theory-forming done by Otger Steggink, O. Carm., and Kees Waaijman, O. Carm., in their book *Spiritualiteit en mystiek* (Deel 1 Inleiding, Nijmegen, 1985).
- ⁷ Cicconetti, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-207.
- ⁸ Cf. the Prologue to the Rule.
- ⁹ *Propositum* in the Prologue = *conversatio* in the Epilogue; and *ordo* in Chapter 11.
- ¹⁰ Cf. *Carmelite Rule*, Steggink *et al*, notes for #3-9.
- ¹¹ Cf. Cicconetti, *op. cit.*, 167-207. Also, Carmelite Rule, #5-9.
- ¹² Hein Blommestijn, "Spiritualiteit en hoe je jezelf kunt bedriegen," *Speling* 29 (1977), 99-114.
- ¹³ Prologue.
- ¹⁴ Cf. Chapters 2, 4, 9 and 13.
- ¹⁵ Cf. Kees Waaijman, O. Carm., *Psalmen bij het zoeken van de weg*. (Kamoen, 1982), pp. 8-18.
- ¹⁶ Cicconetti, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-310.
- ¹⁷ So Thomas Aquinas held.
- ¹⁸ Cf. Is 30.
- ¹⁹ Is 32:17.
- ²⁰ Kees Waaijman, *De profheet Elia*. (Nijmegen, 1985), pp. 67-68. Cf. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. by F. Brown, S. R. Driver, C.A. Briggs. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 198-199.
- ²¹ Sir 17:8.

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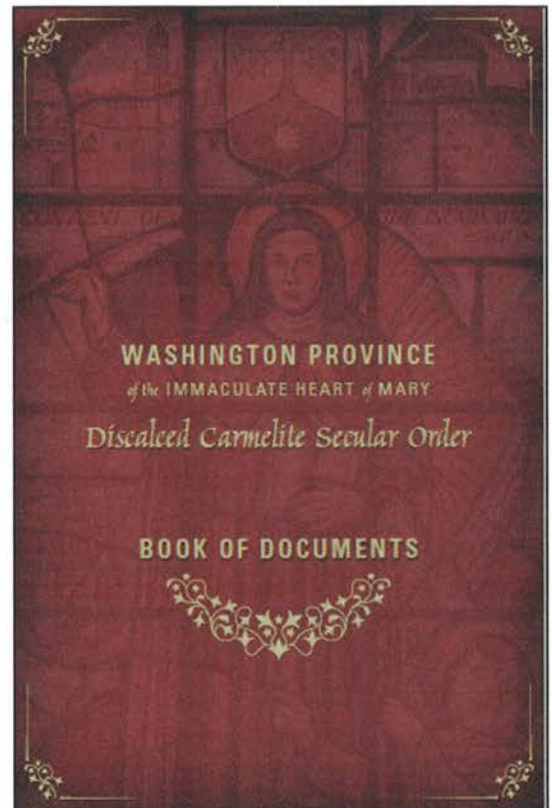
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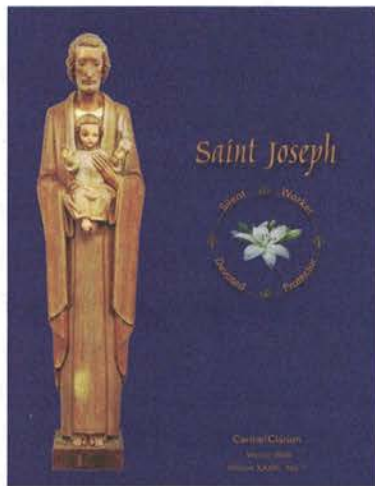
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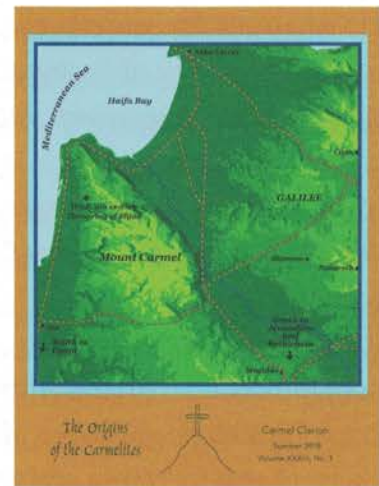
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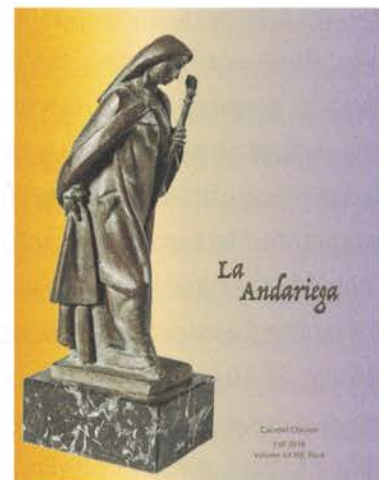
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The Spirituality of The Rule

Is Carmel's spirituality to be garnered from its Rule? It is not just an archeological oddity that for centuries the primitive Rule of the Order was considered to be the *Institution of the First Monks*.¹ Was this so because the Rule of St Albert was thought to be too concise and fragmentary? Actually it is an answer to a set of questions posed to the ecclesiastical superior, rather than a logically developed rationale of life as lived by the Latin hermits on Mount Carmel. The very fact that the nature of our text is not a Rule in the classical sense, but a *formula vitae*—a program of life set out in a hard-to-find order—could lead a person to question the validity of basing Carmel's spiritual striving on such a document. Moreover, various prosaic, practical, almost juridical injunctions could turn a person off the Rule as a source for the life of the Spirit which the name "Carmel" evokes in most Catholic minds.

Even more important than the written Word of God is the living Gospel, *viz.* the Word of God incarnated in the lives of the followers of Christ; is the spirit which animated and continues to animate those who live by Carmel's mystique. The fact that the Carmelite Rule was written by a non-Carmelite, by someone coming rather from the Augustinian tradition, should already warn us not to make of it a sacred cow. Undoubtedly St Albert formulated a way of life as dictated to him by the actual hermits living in the Wadi 'ain es-Siah on Carmel, but still it must be said that the Carmelite experience comes to us in filtered form. St Albert did not live on Mount Carmel; he could not have had the experiential knowledge of the life of the Latin hermits in the same way as is reflected in the often neglected work, *The Fiery*

Arrow of Nicholas the Gaul, written in 1271, some sixty years after the Rule. In this latter work, if one has the patience and wisdom to sift through some pessimistic and dire prophetic warnings, a vivid and even attractive spirituality emerges. However, this very work assures us that to take the Carmelite Rule as the basis of the Order's spirituality is a correct posture. The whole second part of the document is a commentary on the Rule, seen of course through the eyes of a staunch proponent of the eremitical dimensions of Carmelite life.

Although it would be erroneous to look for a full-blown spirituality in the Rule, it would be equally erroneous not to recognize the foundational principles of Carmelite life in it. Although it contains some very concrete prescriptions, still it contains no catalogue of the "do's and don't's" of Carmelite life. Although it contains some juridical pointers, it is not basically a juridical approach to Carmel's charism. The basic layer of the Rule's spirituality is eremitical: however it must be immediately added that the group (*collegium*) of hermits were desirous of ecclesiastical recognition. They wished to be able to elect their own superior, which would give them juridical status in the church. This entailed a decision on their part to forego some of their individual options, of which as hermits (mostly laymen) they could have availed themselves, in favor of a common bond which would necessarily entail coenobitical elements. In fact, intertwined with the first layer are the coenobitical elements which later papal interventions merely reinforced. The 1247 revision of the Rule, approved by Pope Innocent IV, never abrogated the eremitical elements, but it did add

coenobital elements which the hermits-gradually-turning-into-friars could adopt.

This brief overview is necessary in order to understand the unique situation that Carmelites came to hold among the other mendicant orders as they were assimilated into that apostolic form of religious life. Out of a desire for survival, and also out of their desire of being useful to their neighbor, Carmelites came to be numbered among the friars of apostolic brotherhood, who had as their goal a simpler and more Gospel-oriented way of life, as compared with the opulent monks and career-bent clerics.

However, whenever a Carmelite would return to his Rule he encountered the original eremitical elements, intimately woven into the fabric of his *raison d'être*. Thus of all the groups of friars who aimed to return to the pristine simplicity and purity and zeal of the Gospels, the Carmelites have been those who could not help reevaluating the original elements of their charism. Of all the mendicants, the Carmelites, especially in their reforms and renewals, returned to their primitive ideal of *vacare Deo* (to leave oneself free for God, to enjoy the time spent with God; or as St Thérèse would put it, "*à faire plaisir au bon Dieu*").

1. THE CHRISTOCENTRICISM OF THE RULE

True to the medieval mentality, the Rule refers in the very first place to Christ Jesus when it speaks of God: "*in obsequio Jesu Christi*." A religious must "live in allegiance to Jesus Christ and serve him faithfully with a pure heart and a good conscience." St Albert immediately seizes on the essential: religious are *not* in the first place bound to a well-described, scheduled way of life, but they are bound to a person: Christ Jesus. In fact, the Rule is pervaded by this presence of the person of Christ both in word

and in sacrament. Although *obsequium* was used by St Albert in the obvious medieval sense, it is useful to recall the context in which it appears in St Paul's letters.² The fact is that Paul considers an authentic follower of Christ as a *doulos*,³ something of a slave or servant. Christ expects a total attachment to himself, exceeding attachment to any other person ("Do you love me more than these?")⁴ Captured on the road to Damascus by the overpowering presence of Christ Jesus, St Paul never ceased inculcating in most realistic and concrete terms the radical belonging to Christ which a disciple accepts. The thrust of 2 Cor 10:5, in which our text is found, is basically: faith requires that we submit our wills to the wishes of Christ. The context well suits the troubled and skirmish-filled existence of the Christians in the Holy Land, and certainly Carmel's hermits who were committing themselves to a fervent life in the land made holy by the redeeming Blood of Christ. In fact Paul assures the disciples that God makes the Christian strong in his service. God knows how to level the fortifications of enemy camps. Paul has concrete persons in mind as he assures the Corinthians that God will overturn the kind of sophistry that tries to repudiate and minimize the teaching of the Gospel. He will captivate all for the service and following of Christ.

This implies a *Weltanschauung* which absolutizes the person of Jesus, not just in one's thoughts but in the whole of one's existence. The self-surrender to the person of Jesus implies that he become ever more firmly the important person in one's life. As Lord of heaven and earth, everything is subordinated and relative to him. He is the Absolute, not in the sense of rules and regulations to be followed in obedience, but much more radically and demandingly in the sense of vital dependence on him for one's very life. Christ is not a mere ideal or exemplar or idea or archetype, but rather the sharer

with us of his very life as Son, well-beloved Son of God. St Paul seems to be at wits end to make this truth relevant; he seeks out various ways to express its radicality. He calls out in desperation that we are Christ's property: "You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God."⁵ It is the inner world of a disciple that is captured for and by Christ.⁶ And for the radical change (*metanoia*) which the yoke of obedience to Christ Jesus demands, a fleshy, worldly way of judging and acting must be transformed into a Christ-centered dynamic: "Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution so that you can put on the new self that has been created in Gods way, in the goodness and holiness of their truth."⁷

The medieval mentality within which St Albert would have been using the term *obsequium* gave it other overtones. In a feudal society everyone was expected to live in the service (*obsequium*) of someone insofar as he was bound to a sovereign: either to a temporal ruler or to God. There was a personal rapport, causing one's person to be regarded as a "bound" person with the promise of good and faithful service. This duty of "service" towards the patron demanded corresponding protection on his part for those who placed themselves at his disposal. These concepts were regularly applied to monks and clerics (and to all Christians) in their "duty" to regain the Holy Land for their Lord and King Christ Jesus. In this hallowed land a person became a special "subject" of the place by *hereditary right* because Christ was of the House of David; and by *the right of conquest* because he had shed his Blood to acquire it. The fact that Carmelites made their vows in the physical land which was the kingdom of Christ on earth meant that they were his vassals in a special way and wished to live on this land which was his very own.

This "allegiance" or "belonging" to Christ results in "serving him faithfully with a pure heart and a good conscience." In the rest of the Rule Albert spells out how this faithful service of the Lord should be lived out by the hermits of Carmel, given their particular concrete charism. On Mount Carmel this service would have been largely centered on prayer, both in the divine services, to be celebrated in the chapel to be built in the midst of the caves and cells, and in the prayerful atmosphere which meditation on the law of the Lord and vigilance in prayer⁸ implied. Had any of the hermits been crusaders, they would have served the Lord in a very different way: risking their lives in battle for the conquest of the Holy Land, Christ's heritage. Now their battles on Christ's behalf turned on the ways of peace: to prepare a pure heart and a good conscience in order to further the divine intimacy which prayer presupposes. The recitation of the Psalms (soon to be transformed into the choral recitation of the Divine Office in their chapel) was a potent means of putting on the mind of Christ. The medieval person did not look on the juridical obligation to the Divine Office as we do; for us it is often considered to be a dampening of the Spirit. In medieval times it was the attempt to serve Christ in a deeper way, to assimilate his thought patterns, his ways of praying. The Psalms and the scriptures were read aloud so that they might be riveted in the person's memory and serve as the normal way for expressing their experiences. Something that we might consider repetitious and uncreative, the medieval person considered inspired by the Holy Spirit. The words of scripture were more divine than human, and so would transform the inner person most surely into Christ, thus making it possible to serve him faithfully.

Christ is to be served "with a pure heart." So often we limit this reality to a being "free from sin," or to innocent spotlessness.⁹ Certainly this aspect is part

of the integral meaning, but for St Paul it would have broader connotations: "heart" designates more often than not the inner spirit. A pure heart connotes a spirit which is simple, upright, sincere, unswerving in the pursuit of good. It is opposed to teachers of false doctrines, who indulge in idle, sophisticated talk, and whose attitudes are too often merely external and superficial.

Christ is also to be served "with a good conscience." The New Testament uses this expression in other contexts¹⁰ to denote a positive attitude which spontaneously responds to the demands of the moral law. Conscience is the power to judge and evaluate, with emphasis on the interior dispositions. In fact these two expressions describe interior dispositions which express themselves in concrete manifestations of love and service of Christ Jesus and of one's neighbor. They orient the disciple to Christ—to his will and activity.

Christ Jesus is present in the hermit community in many ways, and according to the Rule he permeates the whole life of a Carmelite. His presence in his Word is paramount. The Rule is a concatenation of scripture texts, many of them Christ's own words by which he speaks to his followers. St Albert explicitly reminds the hermits that it is Christ who is speaking to them in the teaching of St Paul. In the context of the obligation to work assiduously, he states: "In this you have the teaching as well as the example of St Paul the Apostle, by whose mouth Christ speaks, who was constituted and given by God as the preacher and teacher of the gentiles in faith and in truth. If you follow him you cannot go astray."¹¹ Christ is present among his own in the Eucharist which is to be celebrated daily, as far as this is possible.¹² Reflecting the strong sense of hierarchical authority in medieval times, St Albert explicitly mentions Christ's presence in the superior.

The confreres are told to honor the prior "thinking more of Christ than of him. Christ placed him over you and told the superiors of the church: 'He who hears you hears me, he who despises you despises me.'"¹³ Hearts and minds should be fastened on "the one and only Redeemer" from whom they should "hope for salvation. He saves his people from their sins."¹⁴ And it is the Lord who will be the final judge, the searcher of hearts and minds, who will give judgement not according to appearances but according to one's authentic response to his call. "If anyone does more than here described, the Lord himself, when he returns, will reward him."¹⁵

The prophet Elijah and the Blessed Virgin Mary, who are such prominent archetypes in Carmelite spirituality, are only implicitly present in the Rule: 1) in the Prologue, when St Albert mentions the fountain (of Elijah) near which the hermits had congregated; and 2) in the chapter on the oratory which was to be built in the middle of the cells and which was dedicated (as we know from non-Carmelite sources) to the Blessed Virgin. Yet it is not so strange that the followers of Albert's Rule (which was simple, direct and aimed at the faithful following of Christ) should opt for symbolic figures who embodied all they were striving to live. The person of Christ Jesus was the model for every type of religious. Subordinate models such as Elijah and Mary would serve to concretize those elements of Christ's rich reality which Carmel's hermits found particularly described in their Rule. And so the prophetic dimension of their life was epitomized in the ideals of the prophet Elijah, while the embodiment of the perfect disciple and servant of the Lord was seen in his mother Mary.

The emergence of these two figures in Carmelite spirituality followed from the very realistic way in which the original hermits understood their

following of the person of Christ Jesus. His presence and his cause were dominant; the Carmelite family gradually came to appreciate how incisively Elijah and Mary gave flesh to the ways in which Carmelites pledged their allegiance to their Lord Jesus.

Recent studies on the Rule have stressed the fraternal and communal dimensions of the life described by St Albert. Without doubt the *propositum* ("project of life") given by the hermits to the Patriarch included coenobitical elements, symbolized by their vowed obedience to a superior or prior. In their quest for ecclesial recognition they were willing to surrender some of the independence inherent in a hermit's way of life: they would continue to live as a religious group marked, certainly, with elements of traditional heremital life, while at the same time intent on avoiding the perils of self-delusion which is only too real a danger for anyone living on his own and beholden to no one. The ancient Desert Fathers had much to say on this subject.

In the 13th century various renewal movements called for a return to the Gospel pure and simple, without the centuries' overlay of human additions. The ideal community proposed was the apostolic one described in the first chapters of the *Acts of the Apostles* (hence the name apostolic fraternities was given to those new, charismatic movements). It comes, then, as no surprise that the Carmelite *formula vitae* also reflects this contemporary conviction. Chapters 7-11 of the Rule are intriguing parallels to Acts 2:42-47. With regard to sharing things in common and the abdication of property, verses 32 and 35 are also relevant.

Every reform movement in the church aims to present the Body of Christ as a true instrument of God's grace. Over the years various spiritual elements in the church become overshadowed—

and even contaminated. One of the principal thrusts of every religious family is to address this situation and to *restore* the church to the beauty it had when it came from the hands of the Lord himself. A large part of its witness has to do with the way in which fraternity is lived. Religious movements usually are concerned that a fresh, uncomplicated "style of life" be re-established; that in it the unique position of Christ as Head of his Body be clearly manifested; and that the fraternal bonds among the members of that family be not only established but also be a clear witness to the value of "brotherhood" both in the church and in society. In other words, reform or renewal movements are attempts to show that the Spirit of Jesus is indeed still very active in Christ's Catholic Church.

The "brotherhood" of Carmel, then, should be seen as part of the Christocentrism of the Rule. Christ Jesus is not found alone—he is inevitably found within the members of his Body. Christ Jesus did not appear in our lands for his own sake or glory, but "for us and for our salvation." By his very nature he is "for others," giving them, in the power of his Spirit, the Father's gifts of life and love. This is why the Second Vatican Council can teach that all Christian fraternity begins around the Eucharistic table of the Lord.¹⁶ Religious families are not in the first place fraternities such as we find on college campuses or among persons of a single intent. Apostolic fraternity is not man-made in its origins, nor is it sustained primarily by man-made laws and means. It is effective insofar as it lives by the life-giving presence and activity of the Spirit of Christ Jesus. Just as the church is not adequately distinguished from Christ (*i.e.*, the church is simply unthinkable without the dynamic presence of Christ the Head and of his Spirit), so a religious community finds the consistency and intensity of its communion in Christ and in his Spirit.

The physical presence of Carmel's hermits in the Savior's land would surely make a return to the spirit of the apostolic community of Jerusalem doubly congenial. Like the first generation of Jerusalem Christians, so Carmel's hermits were to be noted for faithfulness to the Word,¹⁷ community praise,¹⁸ sharing of goods,¹⁹ daily Eucharist²⁰ and "fraternal" communion.²¹ This "brotherhood," both in Jerusalem and on Mount Carmel, was based on the primacy of the Word: "whatever you are to do, it should be done in the Word of the Lord."²² Recalling the insights of Luke, Albert enjoins on the hermits a following of Christ by following the ideals and values of the apostolic Christian community. The conviction in both cases is that committed Christians are so filled with the Holy Spirit that they not only live the strongest bonds of communion with one another, but are also able to give wholesome witness to the gifts that animate them from within. Prayer was an extremely important and constant factor, but it reached its culmination in the effective and sacrificing practice of charity towards one's brothers.

Carmelite tradition is consistent with this principle: the authenticity of prayer can be measured by the effective charity which follows from it as a necessary complement. Both in the Acts and in the Carmelite Rule, the "brotherhood" is marked by an underlying, deep resolve to act for the common good. Insofar as the Spirit of Jesus is allowed to dominate one's life, a person becomes capable of letting go of individualistic hankerings and attachments and at the same time of committing oneself to a strong sense of responsibility for others. The love of God "poured forth into our hearts"²³ makes one desire to share one's goods—both material and spiritual—with one's "brothers." This is not the result of rules and regulations, but of the overwhelming desire to be conformed to the will of Jesus. Prayer, observance, charity: these cannot be legislated, at

least not in their deepest meaning; they must be the result of heart and will and mind, overwhelmed with the Spirit of Jesus.

The original Rule, while clearly for hermits, contains other community elements—which should not surprise us because St Albert himself was a religious (a canon regular) and had been commissioned as papal delegate for one of the original renewal movements, the Humiliati. In the Rule St Albert goes beyond eremitical, desert spirituality, though this is not lacking. Particularly in the first part he wishes to give a structure to community life, in contrast with the preoccupation of the Desert Fathers to build up the spiritual maturity and strength of the individual hermit. A superior is to be elected by the brothers themselves or at least by some of them.²⁴ The prior and community should *mutually* assign the places which the hermits are to inhabit.²⁵ Even the prescription that cells or caves are not to be changed unless the prior give permission has to do with the common good and the surrender of the individual hermits right to determine his own dwelling.²⁶ In Chapter 11 the weekly community meeting is described. Interestingly, the superior is not told to give a discourse, but rather all members are expected to come together to dialogue about the common life and the spiritual welfare of each member of the community.

In the original Rule these "fraternal" elements were harmonized with the eremitical elements. As time went on, and Carmelites entered the European scene, the communal elements were emphasized further as the men from Mount Carmel were more and more amalgamated into the growing mendicant movement. Interestingly, the additions of Pope Innocent IV in 1247 do not touch the eremitical thrust of Carmel, but they do strengthen the fraternal or coenobitical elements: foundations

no longer need be only in desert or solitary places, but could also be accepted in cities and towns.²⁷ Meals need not be taken in solitude, as seems to be the intent of the primitive Rule, but there is to be a common refectory. Meals are to be taken in common, accompanied by the reading of sacred scripture, as was the common practise of the day.²⁸ The question of possession of goods was resolved in the mendicant way: while individuals may not possess things, the community can.²⁹ Explicit mention is made of "begging" and of itinerancy, of having to eat outside one's own community³⁰—which again conjures up the rationale of the then vibrant mendicant movements, whose roots were in "brotherhood."

Tensions and conflicts inevitably accompanied the spreading adaptation to a more communal way of life. As witnessed by men like Prior General Nicholas of Gaul, there was a vocal element among those early religious who resisted the encroachment of this mendicant mentality. In fact the Rule as it stands today does not resolve that tension. It still bespeaks an eremitical, contemplative way of life—which is still incarnated in a few instances today—together with a strong "fraternal" strain that has usually been the more predominant thrust of the Order.

2. THE CONTEMPLATIVE DIMENSION OF THE RULE

In the popular mind, Carmel stands for a "fortress of contemplation."³¹ Largely because of the outstanding Carmelites who had contemplative experiences and were gifted with the ability to describe them, the name Carmelite evokes the image of prayer—and even of the highest degrees of mystical contemplation. Surprisingly, there is no mention of contemplation in the Rule. However, in the medieval context this would have been something redundant. It was taken for granted that eremitical life should be a life a loving communion

with the Lord, whose presence was discovered permeating all of creation and reaching even to the depths of the human spirit. The Rule, then, formulates the ordinary means to foster and facilitate the "contemplative attitude"—namely that of openness to the divine dimension.

Silence and solitude were not required in order to produce a vacuum for the elimination of earthly sounds and distractions. They were stressed in order to make it possible to go beyond the obvious externals to the deeper reality of things; in other words to highlight the "divine milieu" in which all things in heaven and on earth exist. One of the longest chapters in the Rule is the one on silence. In one scripture quote after another St Albert seeks to reinforce the need for quiet in order to achieve the goal of Carmelite life—*viz*, to allow every person, situation and thing to be appreciated in its rapport with God and his saving grace. In order to hear "the sounds of silence," a person must be able to stand back from the many and varied sounds which usually clamor for his attention and interest. What can be harmful to anyone (and doubly so to a hermit) is idle chatter, which dissipates the spirit and provides an escape into useless or peripheral matters. The silence required for the contemplative life stands opposed to muteness, just as solitude is opposed to isolation. Muteness and isolation cut off from others and so impede community life. True silence is awareness of the Other—and of others—with all the dignity and beauty that is theirs. It makes one discover the true face of the Other while at the same time evoking disinterested love for the "brother." Silence allows others to make themselves known authentically, without trying to dominate them by overriding loquaciousness or to reduce them to what one thinks they ought to be. Solitude provides for this sure milieu. Relationships between persons are adequate images of ones relationship

with God. Both silence and solitude allow one to identify the all-embracing and overwhelming sense of God's presence—which so often goes unheeded because of complex and attractive noises. These, then, are not the "passive" attitudes that an overly moralistic or juridical approach would make of them. Rather silence and solitude are the *humus* in which new and deeper experiences of God can flower.

The word "passive" evokes negative reactions today in a society that lives off the dynamic and the creative. But "passive" in the spiritual life implies openness and receptivity. When God wishes to share his gifts, and even himself, this note of openness and of receptivity is supremely important because God is neither limited nor chained down to human categories. He offers himself through the contemplative experience in ways that often stagger a person into "unknowing" when compared to the normal processes. In any case, one finds oneself unable to express his experiences adequately. In this sense the Carmelite Rule evokes the more "passive" virtues: obedience and humility are stressed insofar as the mind of Christ was centered on these attitudes. If a person wishes to follow Christ and serve him, these two basic attitudes of Christ's life cannot be lacking. Obedience allows him to attach himself wholeheartedly to the will of God, which was Christ's nourishment. Humility allows him to be true to himself and to accept himself *as God knows and loves him*. These attitudes are essential for the contemplative experience, for they demand that God be allowed to act freely. From the human viewpoint it means that the main initiative comes from "on high," while human collaboration becomes dynamic and creative only insofar as it gladly accepts and puts the divine initiative into practice.

The same might be said for the spirit of simplicity, and even for the spirit of austerity that obtains in the Rule. The important thing is not the absence of many

material things, but rather the cultivation of an atmosphere in which these material goods are not allowed to crowd out and distract from the more important spiritual realities that are the cornerstone of the Kingdom. The vows themselves³² are encompassed in this vision: they are meant to free a person from over preoccupation with self and leave the self open to the ever surprising and creative action of the Spirit of the Lord. A person's will, affections, material goods are all submitted to whatever God wills to do with them. The underlying attitude, made sacred by Carmelite tradition, is detachment—not in the sense of non-interest, but in the creative sense of letting the Lord be Lord-of-the-whole-person. It is not then a question of minimal prescriptions for how poverty, chastity and obedience are to be safeguarded, but rather a wholesome and contemplative attitude of spirit by which the person is able to become sensitive to the stirrings, guidance and fire of the Spirit of Jesus.

The Rule embodies this spirit in the prominence it gives to the *Word of God*. Brief as it is, the Rule contains about a hundred explicit or implicit biblical texts. The scriptures are the prime source of Carmel's contemplative mystique. How is one to know whether the experience of God, whether in prayer, in one's neighbor, in creation or anywhere else is authentic and not a self-projection of one's religious sentiments? The surest guarantee is to see how the experience squares with the sacred scriptures. Being the inspired Word of God, they are unique in the portrait of God which they provide. Better than any other witness they describe the authentic way in which God deals with his people. Since God is always the same, he deals with his people today as he did in biblical times. Openness to

the scriptures is basically a contemplative stance. A person must accept the Word as it stands; every effort must be made to avoid manipulation of the texts to suit one's own theories, prejudices or limited vision. God is truly encountered in his Word when the human spirit is free from unhealthy attachments both to material things and even to spiritual props.³³

The Rule has been called a prolongation of Christ himself, an irradiation of his mind, of his heart, of his perfection. The Rule is not a substitute for but a compendium of the Gospel; a fragment of Jesus Christ who is holiness itself. The Rule provides the quintessence of the words of Christ himself: faith, trust, charity, love of neighbor, worship of God, obedience, poverty, chastity, humility, abnegation, a spirit of sacrifice, the beatitudes. The Rule envisions that the Carmelite will have personal contact with the scriptures: day and night he is to commit himself to ferret out ever deeper meanings. Every day he is to use the Psalms as the ordinary nourishment of his prayer.³⁴ During meals the religious is to be nourished not only materially by food, but also spiritually by the reading of scripture. This immersion in the Word of God will make it possible for the Word "to dwell abundantly on his lips and in his heart." Carmelite spirituality is characterized by the Rule's strong biblical strain.

The Good News of Jesus Christ integrated all the truth of the Old Testament, completing its definitive message. All is centered on following authentically in the footsteps of Christ Jesus. Even the precept of meditating day and night on the law of the Lord, together with the prescription to watch in prayer, is but an echo of the Psalmist's insight.³⁵ The heart of the chapter on "spiritual arms" is the commandment to love. The Rule is thoroughly catholic in presenting an integral, theological life which penetrates even

the details of daily living by means of obedience: "He who hears you hears me." The lawgiver is not sparing in his demands for interior self-emptying which is authentically evangelical: not to own anything as one's own, to live in solitude, to avoid even the slightest useless word, to renounce one's own autonomy.

The assimilation of the Word of God is a wholesome experience which was meant to take in the entire person. Often the Word was read aloud so as to fix it in the ear and in the memory. Meditation proper followed, which was not necessarily prayer; it was what we today would call exegesis, hermeneutics, comparison of texts and arriving at the original meaning. Medieval spiritual writers warned that this stage, which was largely an intellectual appreciation of the biblical texts, should not be confused with prayer itself. True prayer must encompass the whole person—heart and will must come into play. The Word of God is assimilated, not just on a sensual level, nor even on an intellectual level, but also on a deep volitional and affective level; only this is capable of changing the person, of penetrating even to the inmost depths where motivations and convictions and intentions are harbored, reshaping these into Christ-like and Christ-inspired options. Finally, the Word of God is assimilated fully when it is put into practice in the charitable, forgiving, concerned living out of one's life. Authors point out this latter quality as the surest guarantee of prayer's authenticity.

Another essential element of the Carmelite's contemplative rationale according to the Rule is the celebration of the Liturgy. The *daily* Eucharist (something rare in the legislation of 13th Century hermits) should be seen in its normal context of the Divine Office, of which the Eucharist was understood to be the culmination. Even if the original hermits

did not have the obligation of reciting the Divine Office, but only recited the Psalms in the way proposed by their desert forefathers, nonetheless their desire was to serve the Lord Jesus in the first place by liturgical worship. Today we are wary of such juridical prescriptions that obligate religious to choral celebration of the divine praises; the medieval tendency would have been the opposite. Groups of religious people would have been anxious to be commissioned to perform what was considered the normal sign of being a full-fledged ecclesial entity. The group of Latin hermits on Mount Carmel, as attested by the papal bulls they were able to obtain, were anxious to be able to celebrate the liturgy in their chapels. Not only was this considered the moral duty and privilege of religious, but it also provided a regular source of sustenance.

The contemplative dimension of the liturgy has yet to be explored and explicitated. The Order has been challenged on more than one occasion to do just this in these days of greater liturgical awareness. What a grace it would be for the whole church, if this original, contemplative aspect were to become vital and incisive again! The liturgy is a "given" in the sense that it was left to the church by Christ Jesus to be elaborated by that church. The presence of Christ in liturgical celebrations is his guaranteed presence. The *ex opere operato* aspect of the sacraments does not make them magical, but it means that Christ is true to his word. He is present with his saving power in authentic, liturgical, ecclesial celebrations. This does not eliminate the need for collaboration, but it does mean that the deepest substratum of the liturgy comes from on high and, once again, needs a basic openness and availability if it is to be efficacious as the Lord wills. The present liturgy, with its immersion in the riches of the Word of God, with its space for sacred silence, with its official possibilities for adaptation

to the worshipping community, can be more of a meaningful contemplative event than ever.

Carmel's Rule points out the ordinary means and attitudes for the contemplative experience. This is why confreres like Blessed Titus Brandsma insisted so strenuously that mysticism is for everyone. It is truly a gift, but God offers it more often and more abundantly than we realize. The proof of all this is that the road to contemplation is no esoteric path reserved to elite souls, but is a wide avenue on which Catholics of every stripe are invited to travel. The means by which they may do so are the ordinary means available to all followers of Christ. Carmel's Rule aims to provide the right atmosphere that these means might reach their grace-filled and fulfilling goal: the summit of the mount which is Christ Jesus himself.

3. DESERT SPIRITUALITY AND THE RULE

Another layer of the Rule's spirituality is that of the Desert Fathers. The lay hermits lived elements that pre-dated the classical Rule of St Benedict. The hermit in the Christian tradition is one who must be ready to accept life as a trial and to engage in hand-to-hand combat with the forces of evil. This struggle would have made much sense to the crusading mentality which surrounded Carmel. The soldier of Christ arms himself with the disarming attitude of Christ³⁶ and is consequently able to work quietly and steadfastly.³⁷ A separate cell for each hermit³⁸ made it possible for him to spend day and night pondering the Word of the Lord.³⁹

The role of hesychasm in desert spirituality was indispensable: it denoted the quiet and peace that must envelop the person intent on living in the truly "real" or spiritual world and on experiencing "the real thing," with the same kind of awareness that earthly-minded people have for external realities.

It meant leaving the world, family, material goods which menace the quiet of the spirit needed to focus on the real, eternal world. The hermit left the company of confreres in his quest for hesychasm. The means used by the hesychast, which are found featured in the Carmelite Rule, were: abstinence, fasting, vigils, sleeping on the ground, manual labor. By means of this ascetical effort the hesychast was able to achieve a purity of vision and heart which escaped so many others; the simplicity and freedom of spirit which became his hallmark was the surest disposition for prayer and contemplation. The combat which he undertook against his unruly passions had as its scope union with Christ.

Chapter 14 of the Rule begins with a reference to "temptation," or to the spiritual battle which every monk or hermit must be ready to wage against the powers of evil, both within and outside of himself. Job (and Jesus even more so) was faced with the dark side of human life. Unlike external realities, these powers of evil cannot be easily pointed out; yet they are only too real, both in individuals and in communities. The deep-seated hankering for "having" and possessing, for manipulating and using others, for opting to "go it alone" are the object of the heart's combat. God himself is involved in this battle. The temptations of Jesus in the desert are often found in the lives of the Desert Fathers and in the lives of all those who follow Jesus Christ radically.

St Paul warns that "all who wish to lead a life faithful to Christ will suffer persecution."⁴⁰ In this same context St Paul speaks of those perilous times when man's evil inclinations will predominate—egoism, avarice, pride, calumny etc.⁴¹—although there will be a counterfeit religion in evidence.⁴² But these people will be found out.⁴³ Followers of Christ must persevere and suffer through these temptations.

Temptations are just part of being Christian.⁴⁴ St Peter evokes the image of "the devil, your adversary, prowling around like a lion, seeking out persons to devour."⁴⁵ He is writing to people who, through no fault of their own, must suffer persecution. They should not consider this as extraordinary—suffering goes hand in hand with being a Christian.⁴⁶ They must aid one another like members of one flesh.⁴⁷ The enemy will thus not be able to make a surprise attack on them like a lion.⁴⁸

Using imagery that would have made much sense to people in those war-saturated times, St Albert calls on the hermits to put on the "armor of God" because human defenses are not enough when waging war on "princedoms, powers, masters of this world of darkness, evil spirits in the heavens." John Cassian in his *Collationes* (VII, 5) uses 2 Cor 10:4-5 to describe the "arms of our warfare" and "walking in the footsteps of Jesus" as linked when he paints the picture of a soldier putting on the armor of God to fight the battles of the Lord. The medieval "pilgrimage to Jerusalem" was very much tied up with the need to do battle, sometimes physically but always spiritually, in order to reach the promised city which was the symbol of Jesus' patrimony, acquired at the cost of his blood.

The paradox of *God's weaponry* becomes immediately evident as St Albert lists the various pieces of *armor* required to protect a warrior-for-the-Lord's-sake. While even more courage is required for such a warrior than for a military man, still his fight is in an entirely different direction. By means of his spiritual arms he seeks to disarm the forces of evil which beset him from without as well as from within. The attitudes and values which God's "arms" represent are just the opposite of the armor used by the crusaders in their battle to recoup the Holy Land from the Saracens.

"Gird your loins with the *cincture of chastity*," St Albert begins. The hermit's constant struggle must be the purification of the whole inner man, a control of the concupiscence that is his heritage after Adam's fall. Only too often the lower instincts, in a crass and self-centered form, demand a dominant role. The chastity envisioned here certainly has to do with the correct use of sex and sexual powers according to God's will, but it goes beyond, to a wholesome freedom from subjection to base motives, to momentary, fleeting pleasures, to aberrant affections. Control of one's instincts in no way means to destroy them, but to channel them so that they contribute to the growing maturity of the whole person. St Albert, good pastor that he was, gives a positive means for achieving this: "Let your breast be protected by holy thoughts, as it is written: 'holy thinking will preserve you.'" Self-control and self-discipline are helped mightily by the positive effort to become vitally involved in good, holy, true things. Rather than allowing the mind to get mired in all the things that besmirch the inner person, St Albert has a far more effective means: fill your minds with good, holy thoughts, ideals and aspirations. The Carmelite practise of the presence of God⁵⁰ is a direct outgrowth and application of this injunction of the Rule.

"Don the *breastplate of justice*, so that you love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself." Paradoxically, the breastplate protects the main portion of one's body, covering the heart and other vital organs; yet in the spiritual armor it is linked with *justice* which has to do with others: giving their due to all of them. This is a profound insight. We can best protect our own deepest integrity by treating others as we should. Personal fulfillment is best served not by a refusal to turn in on oneself, thus tremendously cramping one's possibilities, but

rather by a resolute effort to reach out to all others. In another valuable insight, St Albert says that the process of self-fulfillment through attention to others will blossom into love for God and neighbor. How much could be made of the insight that true love and charity must be based on justice (the ramifications of this in the context of social justice are immense). It is also a warning that authentic love is the greatest of the commandments of Jesus. While this fraternal charity and love for God go beyond natural instinct (with a certain amount of passion attached), it is not an abstract, disinterested love. It is a share in God's *agape*, which is a love that is not self-seeking, and so allows a religious to keep giving even when love is not required—just as the Lord does.

The consecrated person gives of himself to others full-time, but with this difference: he renounces the right to possess anyone or anything, but vows himself to service and to the gifting of himself to others without expecting or asking for a return. The renunciation aspect of this kind of love witnesses to the fact that love in a purely human form is not definitive. Most of the time it does pass through the human, but it cannot be exhausted in it. Christ clearly proclaims that if a person does not love him more than others, he cannot be a disciple; but he teaches just as emphatically that he cannot accept love that is not extended to one's "brothers" as well. The human aspects of love and friendship are subsumed and included in the higher gift of charity.

"In all things take up the *shield of faith*, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; without faith you cannot be pleasing to God." This image is anything but static. Faith is not a calm, philosophical rumination over the niceties of dogmatic definitions. St Albert sees it as a battle against flaming darts of the *most* evil

one. The presence of these evil forces can, at times, almost be touched. Interestingly enough, our day has seen a new, even frightful, interest in the devil. Paradoxically, the Rule calls for a return to faith in order to defend oneself from the devil's cunning. Faith is seen in context of *violence*, of a battle against overwhelming odds, but also of a heart full of confidence in the object of our faith: the faithfulness of God who alone is one hundred percent faithful to his side of the alliance. In his description of the gradual, grace-filled purification of this faith, St John of the Cross is the world master.

Religious profession merely reinforces the pilgrimage of faith begun in baptism, but it also presupposes a dynamic with which our great brothers and sisters in Carmel were never done throughout their lifetimes. Faith means witnessing to the abiding presence of the living God—often in the desert, in the night, in doubt and temptation, when the battle with hedonism, materialism and consumerism rages around us. Pure faith implies the surest defence: letting go of all and allowing our “yes” to God to permeate every fiber of our being. This is what makes us pleasing to God, i.e., the closest we, on the pilgrimage of faith, can come to the image of Christ Jesus with whom all of us have been sealed in the sacrament of faith.

"You must also put on the *helmet of salvation*, so that you hope for salvation solely from our one Savior; it is he who frees his people from their sins." Salvation, in biblical terms, was the breaking out from the cramping limitations of the human condition, marred by imperfection, sin and eventual death, and the introduction to the work of God on our behalf. In Christ Jesus the precariousness of human existence is overcome by the triumph of his resurrection and his gracious sharing of this new condition with those who belong to him.

The helmet which protects and saves the head is precisely Christ the Head of his Body. He is Savior insofar as he guarantees for us a share in the Kingdom, in the resurrection of the body and in life everlasting. He continues (notice the present tense of the verb) his combat against sin until the end of time, *now*, through us his followers. This pardon of sins becomes all the more credible insofar as we are in solidarity with *those in need of pardon*, or as St Thérèse put it, we too "sit at the table of sinners." During her lifetime she prayed for those sinners *out there*; at the end of her life, her prayer became "have mercy on *us sinners*." We include ourselves among those who are weak, poor, imperfect and sinful, ever needful of the healing action of Christ in order to hear his call, respond to it and zealously persevere in it until death.

"Finally let the *sword of the Spirit*, which is the Word of God, dwell on your lips and in your heart with all its richness. All that you have to do, do it in the Word of God." The offensive weapon, the sword, is the Word of God, *made powerful* by the Spirit of Jesus. Familiarity with scripture is not a process by which a person becomes learned, but rather wise. Medieval people allowed the Word of God to become part of their own language, and it became their deepest conviction and motivation in order to know how to live in a way that related all of creation to its origin and end, God. Action by the hermit should follow from this immersion in the Word both by his lips and by his heart. In other words, the Word of God assimilated would allow the hermit to forge words and deeds into a life lived from scripture. In this context Col 3:12-17, St Paul describes what this new type of existence entails: "Clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another, forgive whatever grievances you have against one another, forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. Over

all these virtues put on love, which binds the rest together and makes them perfect. Christ's peace must reign in your hearts... Dedicate yourselves to thankfulness." This idyllic description of someone who has "put on the mind of Christ" demands the two-edged sword of God's Word in order to achieve the transformation into Christ which human nature resists, often in subtle, even in pseudo-spiritual ways.

One last "constant" of desert spirituality was work which is explicitly dealt with in Chapter 15 of the Rule. As did the Fathers of old, so St Albert recalled the great temptations of contemplative life—apathy and idleness, which often lead to loquaciousness, gossip bearing, restlessness. To counteract this very real danger St Albert proposes work, not as a sporadic means to straighten oneself out, but as a constant component of life in Carmel. He gives the concrete example of St Paul who, although he was called by God to be preacher and teacher of the Gentiles, dedicated himself to manual work—to his trade as tent maker. Manual work was considered servile, i.e. for the *servi* or lower classes. This would have led the hermits to choose this means in order to identify all the better with the emarginated segments of medieval society. It is interesting to note that in 1271 the great "traditionalist," Nicholas of Gaul, understands this chapter to refer first of all to spiritual activity (reading, meditation and prayer) and only secondarily to manual labor, such as the copying of the codices and farm work. When the mendicant elements came to predominate in the Order, there was an ever growing stress on the apostolate as "work."

Chapter 15 has particular resonance in our society where the poor, who used to beg, now work for a living wage. Religious, who before subsisted largely on the alms of the faithful, today are being challenged to follow the way of the poorer classes

and become "workers" themselves. In this context Albert refuses to see a dichotomy between work and contemplation; on the contrary, he sees that work can even be necessary in order to avoid certain pitfalls for the contemplative. Today the distinction between intellectual and manual labor is not stressed as much as in the past. Work, as such, has its own theology. It aims at human promotion both in motivating society to realize one's potentialities and in getting beyond one's present condition. Like all values, work too can become an escape or an idol; but this danger gives us no permission to neglect to make it, too, part of our Carmelite spirituality.

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Notes

- ¹ The *Institutio primorum monachorum* was written by the Catalonian Carmelite Philip Ribot (? - 1391) about the year 1370.
- ² St Albert explicitly calls on a dedication to St Paul in order to lead an authentic Carmelite life.
- ³ *Dou'lo* was a term used by Paul to describe himself and his associates in the ministry, cf., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, II: 261-280; esp. 276, section c.
- ⁴ Jn 21:15.
- ⁵ I Cor 6:19-20.
- ⁶ 2 Cor 10:5.
- ⁷ Eph 4:23-24.
- ⁸ Chapter 7 of the Rule.
- ⁹ *The Rule of Carmel*, ed., by Otger Steggink, Jo Tigcheler, and Kees Waaijman (Almelo, 1979), p. 15.
- ¹⁰ 1 Tm 1:19; Hb 13:18; 1 Pt 3:16.
- ¹¹ Chapter 15 of the Rule.
- ¹² Chapter 10.
- ¹³ Chapter 18.
- ¹⁴ Chapter 14.
- ¹⁵ Epilogue.
- ¹⁶ *Presbyterorum ordinis*, § 6.
- ¹⁷ Chapter 7.
- ¹⁸ Chapter 8.
- ¹⁹ Chapter 9.
- ²⁰ Chapter 10.
- ²¹ Chapter 11.
- ²² Chapter 14.
- ²³ Rom 55.
- ²⁴ Chapter 1.
- ²⁵ Chapter 3.
- ²⁶ Chapter 5.
- ²⁷ Chapter 2.
- ²⁸ Chapter 4.
- ²⁹ Chapter 9.
- ³⁰ Chapter 13.
- ³¹ Cf. the Constitutions of Montpellier from 1268.
- ³² Chastity and poverty were added to the single vow of obedience by Innocent IV
- ³³ Cf. the works of John of the Cross.
- ³⁴ Innocent IV made explicit the duty of choral recitation of the Divine Office, which the hermits were probably already celebrating as a normal part of their community's prayer life.
- ³⁵ Ps 1:2.
- ³⁶ Chapter 14.
- ³⁷ Chapters 15-16.
- ³⁸ Chapter 3.
- ³⁹ Chapter 7. Cf. also *The Rule of Carmel*, p. 4.
- ⁴⁰ 2 Tm 3:12.
- ⁴¹ 2 Tm 3:24
- ⁴² 2 Tm 3:5.
- ⁴³ 2 Tm 3:6-9.
- ⁴⁴ 2 Tm 3:10-12.
- ⁴⁵ 1 Pt 5:8.
- ⁴⁶ 1 Pt 4:12-14.
- ⁴⁷ 1 Pt 5:1-8.
- ⁴⁸ 1 Pt 5:8-9.
- ⁴⁹ Cf. *The Rule of Carmel*, p. 35.
- ⁵⁰ For a good example of this, cf. Kilian Healy's *Walking with God* (New York: McMullen; 1948).

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