



# Flos Carmeli

Oklahoma Province  
Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites

Summer 2018

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## From the President's Desk

By Claire Bloodgood, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council

### Hello Carmelites,

Praised be Jesus Christ – now and forever.

Here's what's happening lately –

**Formation workshop** at the Oblate Retreat Center in San Antonio, TX. September 21-23, 2018.

The workshop will focus on various aspects of OCDS formation, and is recommended for Formation Directors, formators, and members the Council wants to bring into the community's formation team.

We tried to keep it affordable. The whole weekend (Friday through Sunday) is only \$100 per person for a single room, and only \$60 per person if you double up. Meals are included. We are reserving two rooms for each community and study group. The rooms hold up to two persons. Which means communities can send up to four members.

OCDS members may ask to be put on a wait list. Unclaimed rooms will be available after August 1st, first come first served.

The registration form may be printed from the provincial website. <http://www.thereseocds.org/2018-formation-workshop/> See you there!

### US OCDS formation program

The inter-provincial formation team continues to work on the concrete goals for each level of formation. They've finished their first pass on Aspirancy and Formation I. Now they are busy with Formation II and Ongoing. The Inter-Provincial Council will discuss these at their meeting this October.

### Oklahoma Province OCDS Congress

We have a Congress Coordinator for our next OCDS Congress. Laura Durant is a member of the OCDS Community of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross in Austin, Texas.



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## From the President's Desk

By Claire Bloodgood, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council

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Here's what Laura's Community's Council has to say:

Laura has coordinated events and conferences with attendees of up to 200 people including participating on a planning committee for a state-wide conference for a professional organization, coordinating events for her graduate school honor society, and coordinating company events, summits and meetings that brought together attendees from across the country and at various levels of the organization at her previous position as an Operations Coordinator at Sport Clips Haircuts. Laura was a Business Office Manager for a small marketing firm for eight years where she oversaw accounting, business operations (contracts, IT, proposals, etc.), human resources, office general management and coordinated small client projects.

Laura has experience working with large and small teams, both virtually and in-person, with diverse skills, backgrounds, experience and at all levels of an organization.

Our council acknowledges the efficiency Laura displays in completing any task that has been asked of her (our Community Retreat Coordinator for 3 years). She is excellent at prioritizing and delegating, surely two necessary skills for this task. Laura has accepted whatever responsibility we have requested of her and contributed more than anticipated.

Laura has listened steadfastly to the Holy Spirit and is ready to selflessly offer her talents for the benefit of the Province.



We feel very blessed to have Laura offer herself in service to God and her fellow Carmelites. Thank you, Laura!

Next is to find a venue. We are open to suggestions. More to follow.

You are in our prayers as always.

*Claire Bloodgood, OCDS*

**President, Provincial Council for the OCDS Oklahoma Province**

**On Behalf of the Council Members:**

*Jo Ann Murphy, OCDS, John Stevens, OCDS,  
Anna Peterson, OCDS and Mary Therese Bellman, OCDS*



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## Report of the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

When I was in fourth grade, we were asked to write a (for a fourth-grader) lengthy report on a country of our choice. I chose the wee country of Andorra, nestled between France and Spain high up in the Pyrenees. Why did I choose Andorra? I'd like to say it's because my ancestors are from there—truly wonderful people others call Andorrans. (Or is it Andorrese?) Thus, I could brag about being part Andorran, a rare accomplishment in this world. But the real reason for my choice was undoubtedly the sheer oddball-arity of it. Let others choose China or Brazil, I'm going with Andorra.

Recently, for some reason lodged deep in the darker, more mysterious regions of the brain, I remembered this fourth-grade assignment, which in turn set me to thinking fondly of little ol' Andorra. So I googled the place, then googled images of it—and among many such images found this one above. Now there's a reason to research Andorra and maybe even someday visit it. Truly beautiful, and



quaint, and like something from a postcard, serenely peaceful, and dream-like. I could spend my life there, breathing the air, walking barefoot on the grass, listening to the quiet all around me, feeling the soft sunlight on my face. We Andorrans—although in actual fact I'm no part Andorran—have won the birthplace lottery, don't you think?

### *Saying goodbye to Fr. Raphael*

As you know, our beloved Fr. Raphael Kitz died this past June, after a fullness of years (aged 87) and of life and love and longing for the divine. Yes, he was a truly, sincerely, beloved friar of the Province. I was fortunate enough to have known him and called him my brother in Carmel.

We two used to be able to talk pretty freely between us since we lived, more or less, in the same world—something one can't say about everyone. (It's not like you don't *want* to talk freely and personally; it's that you have to make up so much ground to do so, and it's not worth it.) Anyway, that was never the case for me with Fr. Raphael. We enjoyed each other's company. We talked freely about current events, history, personal things, goings-on in the church, matters of Scripture or theology, our respective visions of Carmel, etc. It was all good.

So, then, we laid Fr. Raphael to rest. There was a vigil Thursday evening, in the large chapel at Marylake—the monastery where Fr. Raphael spent the last 25 years of his life. The vigil was led by Fr. Sam Anthony, who gave a fine eulogy. (I think you should be able to find a recording of it on the Provincial Website's audio page.) It was terribly hot. But we had fans stationed here and there about the chapel to stir up the air and keep it from wrapping itself around you too unforgivingly, like a sweaty bear hug. Despite the heat, many dared the day and came out to give their final respects to Fr. Raphael. It was a fine farewell, as he deserved.

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## Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

(Continued from page 3)



Fr. Raphael's brother, his only sibling, came from Minnesota. He was accompanied by his daughter-in-law, son, and a nephew—who was quite wowed by the whole experience and asked if he could maybe come back and spend a few quiet days at Marylake. (You know the answer we gave him.) The photo to the left shows the family.

Fr. Raphael's brother is second from the right, with his nephew sitting beside him.

To the right is a photo I took during the wake. Fr. Sam Anthony is seated beside the ambo, with the altar behind him. You can see the coffin in front of the altar. For a few years now we've ordered our coffins from the monks at the New Melleray Trappist monastery near Dubuque, Iowa. They are simple and tasteful, but also really beautiful, a fine container to take one's body back to the earth from which it came.

The funeral mass and burial were the next day, of course—early in the morning, before the day could fatten itself and drop on us with a thud. It was nicely attended, with a number of priests from the diocese as well. They were those who knew Fr. Raphael as their spiritual director, a ministry with which he served the priests of the diocese through all his many years at Marylake.



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## Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

(Continued from page 4)



Fr. Stephen Sanchez, our Provincial, presided at the funeral mass and graveside service. Fr. Ralph preached, a homily which, for the most part, simply proclaimed the gospel of Christ's saving death and resurrection—as homilies at funerals are supposed to do.

In the first photo [to the left], you can see Fr. Stephen and Fr. Ralph, having placed a white chasuble on the coffin at the opening of mass, then place the Book of the Gospels over it. In the second photo [below], we are gathered at Fr. Raphael's grave. This is our provincial cemetery, where we all will end up in due time. I have my spot figured out, although I'm very willing to be surprised.

The sisters adorned in white are, as you might guess, Missionary Sisters of Charity, Mother Teresa's group. They have a community in Little Rock, attached to a house they run, Alba House, for female victims of domestic abuse—a difficult ministry on top of a pretty difficult lifestyle, with way too much vocal prayer, if you ask me. Anyway, we have for years gone to this community every other week to give them a short talk and then hear their confessions. (Most of the sisters are from India, of course, and speak their own brand of English. Usually it involves a peculiar use of gerunds—as in, "It is being two weeks since my last confession.") Anyway, Fr. Raphael was ever faithful to this ministry through the years. And so the sisters were there "to be offering their condolences."



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## Report from the Provincial Delegate

By *Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.*

*(Continued from page 5)*

### *Our Lady of Mt. Carmel at the Basilica*

Most of you probably have little chance to celebrate Our Lady of Mt. Carmel with the solemnity and festivity any Carmelite would naturally aspire to. I was at the Basilica this year and can say—lucky me. It's like Christmas in July. We had our good cheer together in community the night before—while all of you were fasting—then invited the Basilica staff to join us for a lavish banquet at 1:00 on the feast day itself. I was a bit late for this banquet because I had the noon mass, which I did up the best I could—including a lengthy homily (blah, blah, blah).

The real mass, the grand and solemn one, was in the evening, at 6:00. The church was nearly full. The choir was there and sang majestically. I recorded Fr. Luis Gerardo's homily, which is on the Provincial Website. If it's not there yet, it will be soon.

We concluded mass with a procession around and about the interior of the church accompanying a statue of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Here's a photo of one of its passing-by moments. The taller of the two altar servers, the one with a face—I had to smudge out the face of the younger one because he's a minor, and I don't have the permission of his parents to post a photo including him online—well, the talker one is one of our two postulants.

His name is Jose, with an accent over the final e. (I can't figure out how to insert such an accent in the program.) He grew up in Michoacán—look, an accent, the program inserted it for me—but comes to us from Miami. Like our other postulant, whose name is Alejandro, Jose is a most promising vocation, intelligent, community minded, dedicated, devout, eager, teachable, an impressive list of traits, don't you think? Pray for them—for Alejandro and Jose, our two postulants. And continue to pray for new vocations throughout the province, to the nuns, the friars, and for yourselves, the Seculars.



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## Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

*(Continued from page 6)*

I took some days of vacation in late June/early July, visiting, first, one of my brothers, who lives in Indiana, and then my youngest sister, who stayed closest to home and lives in Illinois. Decatur, the town in central Illinois where I grew up, is nestled around a lake. Here is a photo of it, the lake, taken from a park along its shoreline. The lake is not so wide, but rather long. As a teenager I used to go sail-boating especially on this particular stretch of the lake. And it was there that I got in a boating accident and nearly drown. But I was rescued in the nick of time by the lake patrol. It was one of those moments where you say, “Well, this is how I die.” But then God answers, “No, not yet.”



The second photo (below) is simple. It’s me up ahead, and my sister and her husband and their son behind, out for an afternoon stroll. Seriously, though, when I was a student, they used to call me *jirafa*, which is Spanish for giraffe. I was flattered.

Lastly, I leave you with the following quotation from the encyclical on marriage and family life by Pope Francis— “The Joy of Love.” I liked it.

“Develop the habit of giving real importance to the other person. This means appreciating them and recognizing their right to exist, to think as they do, and to be happy. Never downplay what they say or think, even if you need to express your own point of view. Everyone has something to contribute; because they have their life experiences they look at things from a different standpoint and have their own concerns, abilities and insights. We ought to be able to acknowledge the other person’s truth, the value of his or her deepest concerns, and what it is that they are trying to communicate, however aggressively. We have to put ourselves in their shoes and try to peer into their hearts, to perceive their deepest concerns, and to take them as a point of departure for further dialogue. Keep an open mind. Don’t get bogged down in your own limited ideas and opinions, but be prepared to change or expand them. The combination of two different ways of thinking can lead to a synthesis that enriches both. The unity that we seek is not uniformity, but a “unity in diversity,” or “reconciled diversity.”

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## Report from the Provincial Delegate

*By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.*

*(Continued from page 7)*

Fraternal communion is enriched by respect and appreciation for differences within an overall perspective that advances the common good. We need to free ourselves from feeling that we all have to be alike. A certain astuteness is also needed to prevent the appearance of “static” that can interfere with the process of dialogue. For example, if hard feelings start to emerge, they should be dealt with sensitively, lest they interrupt the dynamic of dialogue. The ability to say what one is thinking without offending the other person is important. Words should be carefully chosen so as not to offend, especially when discussing difficult issues. Making a point should never involve venting anger and inflicting hurt. A patronizing tone only serves to hurt, ridicule, accuse, and offend others. Many disagreements between couples are not about important things. Mostly they are about trivial matters. What alters the mood, however, is the way things are said or the attitude with which they are said.”





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## Communities' Questions about the Statutes (part 7)

*Compiled by Claire Bloodgood, OCDS, on behalf of the Provincial Council*

### Plenary Council Meeting

- Why isn't it specified that the Plenary Council Meeting is held at the OCDS Congress?

*We wanted to have the flexibility to meet outside the Congress if needed.*

- How is the "elected representative" chosen? Do you mean someone who was elected to the Council?

*The "elected representative" is a member of the community who is elected by the community to send to the Plenary Council meeting as a voting member. It is not necessarily someone who is on the local Council.*

*How the person is elected is up to the local community. The community could ask for volunteers and/or for nominations. The vote could be by ballot or a show of hands. Though a ballot would be less likely to cause ruffled feelings, there's not "one best way."*

*It is usual for the community to pay the expenses of their representative. That way the choice is not limited to the more "well-to-do" members of the community.*

### OCDS Provincial Council

- Why was information regarding appointment of the PC secretary removed from the Statutes?

*We have a paid Central Office Administrator now, and so did not need a statute provision to appoint a secretary.*

- How are National Council members selected?

*The name has changed to Inter-Provincial Council (IPC). The Provincial Council chooses among themselves who will represent the Province as voting members of the IPC.*

- Where is the Administrative Assistant job description?

*The Central Office Administrator job description is kept in the PC's files. We're happy to share it if anyone wants to see it.*

- Can you give us some details about how the selection of new PC members is made?

*A list of nominees is made from the recommendations of the Communities, the PC, and the Provincial Delegate. The nominees who meet the criteria (these are described in the recommendation instructions) are interviewed and asked if they are willing to serve. The Provincial Delegate and the PC discuss the recommendations and submit the list of names and their opinions to the Provincial. The Provincial decides whom he will appoint.*

- What are the reasons or conditions for replacing a member of the Provincial Council?

*It has always been because the member was not able to finish his/her term. We've never removed a member of the Provincial Council. Possible reasons for removal would be the same as for removing someone from a local Council.*

- Since the Provincial selects the members of the PC, why isn't he the one to replace members as necessary?

*The OCDS Constitutions give that responsibility to the Provincial Council.*

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## Communities' Questions about the Statutes (part 7)

*Compiled by Claire Bloodgood, OCDS, on behalf of the Provincial Council*

*(Continued from page 9)*

- Who keeps tabs on PC expenses? To whom do they answer?

*The Provincial Council answers to the Provincial Superior of the friars. The PC maintains a three-year ongoing budget. The members of the Provincial Council submit all receipts with their expense reports. These go to the OCDS Central Office and from there to the Friars' Central Office. The PC makes a financial report to the province, just as the local Councils make a yearly report to their communities. This financial report is published in the Flos.*

- We're curious why you don't do visitations using Skype and other modern technology. It would make it easier to find members to serve on the PC if they didn't have to travel so much.

*We do much of our routine work by email, phone, and conference call. Visitations are another matter though. We really need to be there in person to get a sense of the community. You just can't make eye contact with everyone in the room via computer.*



We hope you've enjoyed this series of Statutes Q&A's. It was fun writing them. Your questions make us reflect and better understand. They also help other communities who may be wondering about the same things.



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## PC Channel—New on the Provincial Website! - Summer 2018

*Submitted by the Provincial Council*

### New on the Provincial Website (Summer 2018)

Please visit the website to see these documents.

**Study Group Policies** <http://www.thereocds.org/policy/study-groups/>

*Study Group Profession Request Procedure* – updated and simplified. This was sent to the Study Group presidents May 5, 2018.

*Procedure for Petitioning for Canonical Status* – updated to reflect current practices.

*Provisional Election Process* – edited for clarity.

### Best Practices

**These are not binding as policy, they are given by way of example.** Communities are encouraged to use what works well for their local circumstances. <http://www.thereocds.org/best-practices-2/>  
We've removed "Notes on Discernment" "More Tidbits on Discernment" and "Other Discernment Tidbits from the Provincial Council" from Best Practice – Discernment. But they are not gone. We consolidated and updated those recommendations into two documents, "Annual Check-in and Addressing Concerns" and "Councils and Formation" and added them to Best Practices – Formation.

Other updates are:

*Community Meeting Minutes* – under Best Practices – Community

*Council Meeting Minutes* – under Best Practices – Councils and Developing Leadership

*Self-evaluation for Local Councils* – under Best Practices – Councils and Developing Leadership

The document *Accountability* was removed because it is taken mostly from the OCDS of Canada handbook. While helpful in some ways it was not especially applicable to our province.



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## OCDS Spiritual Corner— Resting In God

Submitted by Marcia Edwards, OCDS - Atlanta Community

A brief reflection based on a letter from St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross to a group of working women. (January 12, 1932) Source: *Edith Stein Essential Writings*, Modern Spiritual Masters Series, Orbis books

There is, I believe, a universal distraction for anyone attempting to approach living in a spirit-based way. Simply put it is the pull of the activities necessary to daily navigate the world in which we now live.

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross says, “The duties and the cares of the day crowd about us when we awake in the morning (if they have not already dispelled our night’s rest)”.

We wake up having hit the snooze button too many times, and we realize that if we are going to get to work on time, if the kids are going to get a hot breakfast, if we are going to get to the bus stop on time, Morning Prayer is in jeopardy. We are in mental turmoil as to what we need to do this day, what needs to be done first, if we have forgotten anything that should be on the to-do list, and how will we get it all done. And in the hustle and bustle of getting dressed and throwing lunches together we may speak to God briefly, if at all, and move out into the world even more agitated than when we woke up.

For St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross the answer is not to let the thoughts and disturbances of what needs to be done, prevent what must be done if we are to be able to rest in God. She tells us we must say to ourselves “... *take it easy! Not any of this may touch me now. My first morning’s hour belongs to the Lord. I will tackle the day’s work which he charges me with and he will give me the power to accomplish it.*”

This does not have to be taken as a literal sixty minutes, although I think that all of us who value our prayer lives feel that almost that amount of time is necessary to break from our eye-opening panic about what is waiting for us in the next 16 hours, and to claim the peace that is restored from speaking to the Lord, giving him praise for his existence, and petitioning him for his guidance and blessing as we step out to encounter all which is outside of our space of prayer.

Since none of us is perfect, I believe that if we miss the opportunity to attend daily Mass, then that lost hour can become twenty-minutes for Morning Prayer. If we have cut into the time we would normally give the Liturgy of the Hours before we leave home, then we at least acknowledge our heavenly protectors with a sincerely prayed Lord’s Prayer, Salve Regina, Hail Mary, and invoke the Holy Spirit’s wisdom to send us on our way. In other words, we put all activity, troubles, and expectations into other hands.

This doesn’t mean that all will be champagne and roses as we walk through the day, but that we will be able to do what is necessary, as it comes to us, knowing that in essence, “God has our back,” as the saying goes.

As Seculars, there are few of us who do not have jobs, obligations, schedules to meet, which we have chosen to accept, or that are ours because of uncontrollable circumstances. There are few of us who do not encounter people we would rather avoid, annoyances, interruptions of our plans; the multitude of things that press down on us until we are so compressed we feel that we are going to explode.

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## OCDS Spiritual Corner— Resting In God

Submitted by Marcia Edwards, OCDS—Atlanta Community

(Continued from page 12)

Again, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross gives us wise counsel. *“Each one must know, or get to know where and how she can find peace.”*

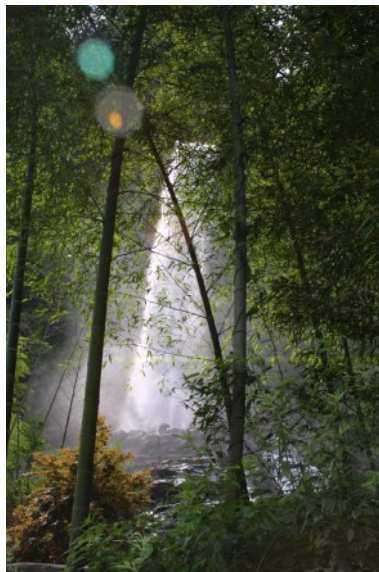
She is telling us that Jesus wanted peace for all who love him. “My peace I leave you; my peace I give to you.” Our Lord and God does not wish us to be in turmoil. He did not build us as destructible containers; he made us in his image and so we are resilient if we seek and accept the peace he means for us to live, and to rest in his presence.

This peace is available at all times, but it is we who lose sight of it, who become walled off from it in the way we cope with everyday living. We begin to feel that there is no outlet valve. Our thinking is clouded and we forget that there is relief for us.

St. Teresa continues her counsel. *“When no outer rest whatever is attainable, when there is no place in which to retreat, if pressing duties prohibit a quiet hour, then at least she must for a moment seal herself off inwardly against all other things and take refuge in the Lord. He is indeed there and can give us in a single moment what we need.”*

If we take refuge in the Lord, we will surround ourselves in a cloak of peace and rest. The briefest touch from God will rejuvenate us in a way that only a second ago seemed non-existent. We can rest, and God will carry us onward.

There are so many occasions when we need to look inward to find the God who dwells there, and turn over the stress, the frustrations, the disappointments, the anger and all the emotions that come from being busy and never allowing ourselves to rest with him. If we are honest, all of life is like this; where many times we forget that there is someone who has a plan and a will for our existence, the One who can keep us from living chaotically. And, as each day comes to an end, and we see how much remains undone, how well we have behaved, and how badly as well, it is time to turn to him. Or as St. Teresa says, *“...take all as it is, lay it in God’s hands, and offer it up to him. In this way, we will be able to rest in him, actually rest, and begin the new day like a new life.”*



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## OCDS Spiritual Corner

*Forming God's Precious Stones – A Secular Carmelite's Guidance on Teaching Children Mental Prayer*  
Submitted by Michelle Estep, OCDS—Austin Community

There is no treasury more precious in our world than that which holds our children. Our children, each like a precious gemstone, were formed by that great fire and heat – the Love of the Holy Trinity. They have been placed in our midst, raw and unrefined, so that through that great dance between nature and nurture a shining soul full of God may be revealed. Our treasures, our children, are not meant for us, but were given to the human family to be God's presence in a world that desperately needs them. We—parents, teachers, aunts, grandfathers, friends—are the hands that hold, cut, polish and set these precious stones so that God's revelation of Love may live.

What are we to do with such a responsibility? Trust, listen, pray and act; the Holy Spirit never leaves our side and is always ready to give us the words, presence, and love needed at just the right time. With an experienced ear, one can delicately perceive the promptings from the Holy Spirit and have a hand readier and steadier for the great forging that lies ahead. The following reflections are the fruits of many years of contemplation over how one tiny 'gem cutter' can help form the precious stones that God sends her way through their time in her second-grade classroom.

The first step is to *trust*. Trust that each stone, no matter how raw and unrefined they may be, is destined to pass through your hands in this place at this particular time in human history. It is God's work that is before us, and one must trust that we have something to offer, something to teach, or something to share with each soul. This is where the phrase God gives us only that which we can handle is turned on its head, for in truth, God sends us those souls because it is us who need them, just as they need us. Those little stones have a way of teaching you more than you can ever teach them. They have, in their eight years of life, the aura of heaven still about them!

The second step is to *listen*. You must be diligent in listening to God and the only way to do that is to make Him first. The enemy is a master at placing ten-thousand gnats buzzing about your ears to make hearing our Lord's voice a weary task. This is our cross as ones who want to always be in the presence of the Lord but who must live within the daily confines of the duty of the moment. When we start our day in meditation, God often makes Himself known within each duty of the moment and suddenly the gnats are no longer noticeable because Our Lord has revealed His presence through all we meet.

This listening to God's still, small voice is a skill that can be built, much like mastering addition and subtraction, all it takes is time and practice. The first step towards teaching little ones to sit still and hear God is to first introduce them to the routines of a formal prayer life. The Gospel, or a selection from the readings from the day, is all you need to establish a prayer routine.

When praying with my students, I often open up the prayer session by first telling them in child-friendly words what they are about to hear. Sometimes this requires some background knowledge or a brief history lesson so that they can get a sense of the context of the reading for the day. I will then begin the formal prayer with the Sign of the Cross. Then I will sing a short Psalm, followed by the reading for the day. Immediately following the reading is a moment of reflection. Usually I will ask them to reflect on one aspect of the reading or ask them to ponder what Jesus is teaching us in the Word. This reflection time should start off extremely short, thirty-seconds-to-one-minute maximum. Every week I challenge the students to "beat their record" by trying to sit still for 30 more seconds than the previous week. Students love a good challenge and before you know it, we are meditating for 10-15 minutes stretches.

It is here in the longer stretches of meditation that you must become the guide in each child's journey to listening to God's voice by breaking up the silence with guided meditation. When we reach the four-to-five-minute meditation mark, I introduce them to Sacred Music through Gregorian Chant. I explain that the chants are holy songs sung in Latin with the sole purpose to praise God, and they are immediately drawn to it! During

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## OCDS Spiritual Corner

*Forming God's Precious Stones – A Secular Carmelite's Guidance on Teaching Children Mental Prayer*  
Submitted by Michelle Estep, OCDS—Austin Community

(Continued from page 14)

longer meditation sessions I turn on the Gregorian Chant and the children will disperse and lay or sit comfortably in their own space a good distance away from other distractions. It is here that you must teach them to protect their time with God by not allowing any disruptions to occur, no matter how small or insignificant they may seem. Immediate and firm redirection is needed so everyone understands the significance of this time.

Once the children are accustomed to sitting still with the Gospel for at least five minutes, it is here that I teach them *Lectio Divina*. After a reading from the day's Gospel, I will pray aloud a short prayer to the Holy Spirit asking Him to dwell with us in this time. I then invite the children to welcome the Holy Spirit to their soul while they listen to Gregorian Chant. After about two minutes, I will then remind the children of the main teaching in the Gospel. I rarely reread the Gospel, as they usually don't understand the words completely. It is here that I rely on the Holy Spirit to give me the words to help connect Jesus' teachings to the children's lives. At times, I will surprise myself at what pours forth from my mouth and the teacher then becomes like a little child, a student of Christ.

The final two steps we must take to ensure that we are working with the Holy Spirit in forming these precious little stones are to *pray* and to *act*. I feel it is important to not only listen to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit through meditation, but to also offer up intercessory prayers for those He places in our path, especially the children in our care. Our good Lord never leaves us to the wolves; therefore, to model such a Sweet Shepherd, we too must remember that just as a stone can become scratched with the wear and tear of daily life, so too can these precious souls be marked. We must bring them to the Lord for continual polishing through intercessory prayer. Not just for the time that they are with us in person, but for the remainder of our lives.

Finally, we must *never grow weary* of our task. The enemy has a way of ever presenting before us our inadequacies; always trying to convince us that we don't have the steady hand of a proper "gem cutter" to partake in such an important task. The fact of the matter is that the enemy speaks truth. We will never be adequate vessels of the Lord, but we must rejoice in our happy fault and allow the Lord to provide for our weaknesses so that He may be all the more glorified through the precious souls he created. We are everything and nothing; but we must not become paralyzed by our nothingness and have the courage to hold, cut, polish and set these precious stones so that God's revelation of Love may live.



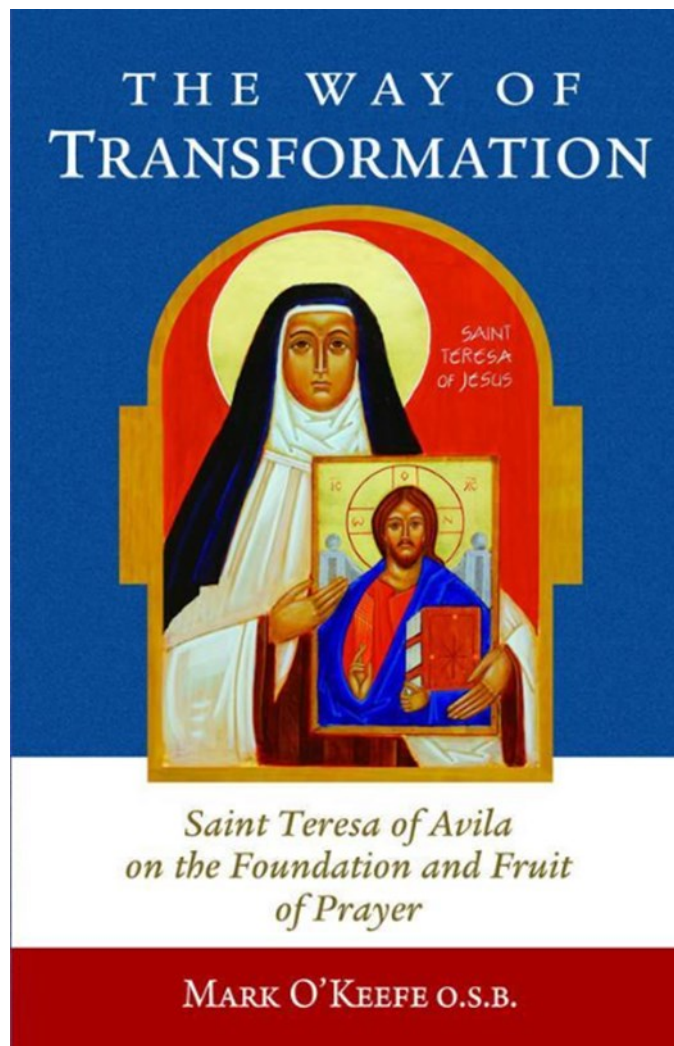
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## PC Channel—Book Review

*From ICS Publications Website*

In *The Way of Transformation*, Benedictine Father Mark O'Keefe focuses on the first half of Teresa's *The Way of Perfection*. Here, she lays out the three core virtues that are the foundation for any real growth in prayer. These virtues—love of neighbor, detachment, and humility—are essential ingredients if we are to attain an honest, ever-deepening relationship with God. In the award-winning *Way of Transformation*, Fr. O'Keefe explains the importance of this framework of the spiritual life—and how we can keep growing in virtue and in the life of prayer.

We think Fr. O'Keefe's book is a great way to know St. Teresa's teachings on prayer and how we can apply them in our own life.





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## News from around the Province —

*Call for writers: The Apostolate of the Little Flower Magazine*

Dear *OCDS* members,

As the Director of Development for the Province since Sept. 2017, I'd like to invite you to join us as we form a greater collaboration among the friars, OCDS, and lay staff of the central administration office in San Antonio. We are working to develop programs that will enable us to more purposefully and effectively evangelize and form individuals in Carmelite spirituality, as our primary mission.

The first project we are collaborating on is *The Apostolate of the Little Flower*. This historic publication was established as part of the original efforts of the Province, reaching over 100,000 subscribers in 1923. Its purpose since the beginning has been to spread devotion to St. Thérèse. Published quarterly and mailed to over 2,000 subscribers and posted on the Basilica website, its production now supports the restoration project of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio. Subscription is free; donations are requested with each issue.

In each future issue, we hope to include a spiritual reflection or poetry by an OCDS member. We are scheduling writers now in advance for future issues for this year and the next couple of years.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Submissions Due</b>	<b>Mailing Date</b>
Lent/Easter	Jan. 15	Feb. 26
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	May 15	June 29
St. Thérèse	July 30	Sept. 14
Advent/Christmas	Oct. 30	Dec. 14

Your reflection should:

- Include a story: some account of your personal experience as an OCDS member,
- Set forth original and personal insights on Carmelite spirituality,
- Reference the spirituality of St. Thérèse,
- Relate to the theme of the issue,
- Include examples, explanations, and reflections on abstract ideas.

We invite you to coordinate these efforts within your own communities. Please send us notice of your interest in contributing to [amigeon@littleflowerbasilica.org](mailto:amigeon@littleflowerbasilica.org). I will work with you to answer all your questions and to edit your submission as needed. I look forward to getting to know you!

Sincerely,  
**Anna Migeon**  
**Director of Development**

- \* P.S. If you are not yet a subscriber to the magazine, please sign up online or email your request and mailing address to [sdehoyos@littleflowerbasilica.org](mailto:sdehoyos@littleflowerbasilica.org), or mail us at

**Apostolate Magazine**  
**824 Kentucky Ave.**  
**San Antonio, TX 78201**

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### **Community Apostolate Launched!**

Our San Antonio OCDS Community has spent much time examining, brainstorming, and discussing an apostolate that would meet the requirements set out in the Provincial Statutes. What began as independent activities evolved into Tours-Talks-Cameos as a community apostolate.

The goal of the apostolate is to formulate and implement a plan that will ultimately result in assisting the Province and the Friars in renewing the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio as a center for evangelization of the Carmelite charism and in promoting instruction in Carmelite spirituality.

The apostolate is three-fold:

**TOURS** titled “Get to Know Your Basilica” began on July 7 and 14, in anticipation of the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, were open to the public. Members greeted visitors and provided information about the history, art, and spiritual significance of the shrine. More than 150 visitors attended. The next tour is scheduled for August 25, prior to the 20th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Basilica.

**TALKS** on topics related to Carmelite spirituality will begin on September 8. The first series is focused on Prayer, specifically Teresian prayer.

**CAMEOS** will be displays in the Basilica on certain memorials and feasts of Carmelite saints. The display will include an image of the saint, a short biography, and a memento featuring a quotes or prayer related to the saint.

Our Community is excited and energized by this apostolate that provides an opportunity for all members to participate – leading tours, providing talks, assisting with gatherings, creating displays, and praying for the success of this endeavor.

Visit the Community website ([sanantonio-ocds.net](http://sanantonio-ocds.net)) or the Basilica website ([littleflowerbasilica.org](http://littleflowerbasilica.org)) for updates.





### Fr. Provincial's Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela

07/18/2018

On Friday, July 13—a day of good omen—our Fr. Provincial, Fr. Stephen Sanchez, OCD, left for Spain, with a few comrades, to begin the 500-mile

trek from southern France, across the Pyrenees and northern Spain, to the the shrine at Santiago de Compostela. [See the photo on the left to get a sense of the worthiness of this destination.]

Fr. Stephen has agreed to send photos as he makes daily progress along the way of his pilgrimage. We'll be posting them regularly on this site. Thus, you can follow him along the way. He will be praying for Carmel, especially our Province—the nuns, the friars, and the Seculars. We can pray for him.

Here is the link to follow Father Provincial Stephen on the Friars' website:

<http://www.carmelitefriarsocd.org/news/camino-de-santiago/>



**A third of the way up the Pyrenees!**

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## News from around the Province —News from Birmingham, Alabama

*Submitted by Thais Serio, OCDS*

Blessings from Birmingham! Our community held its Spring Retreat April 13- 15th at Casa Maria. We had Fr. Adam Gonzalez, OCD as our retreat master and the theme was "Getting back to basics: Prayer, Silence, Elijah and Mary".



Pictured from the left are:

Michelle McKinney, Michelle Johnson, Carolyn Flagg, Thais Serio, Fr. Adam Gonzalez, OCD, Terry Yun, Margaret Goodrich, Janet Reid and Linda Dlugosz

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## News from around the Province —News from Georgetown, Texas

*Submitted by Marianne Gonzales, OCDS*

On July 14, 2018, the Triumph of the Cross Community, received into formation Geri Lynn who was clothed with the Brown Scapular during Morning Prayer. Father Will Straten, Pastor of Saint Helen Catholic Church in Georgetown, officiated over the ceremony.



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## News from around the Province —News from Mobile

*Submitted by Karina Schubert*

On May 5, 2018 a joyful event was celebrated at the Carmelite Monastery in Mobile Alabama as two members of the Holy Spirit Community, Karina and Paul Schubert, were joined in marriage (which made us the first couple in the community!). It was a blessing to have our closest family, friends, community and the sisters at the nuptial mass celebrated by Fr. David Tokarz and Fr. Frank Sofie. Also we have to make a special mention of Fr. Bonaventure Sauer who was able to attend! At the end of mass we gave the guests the option to go to the reception or to remain in the chapel with us for a 15 minute silent meditative prayer. Perhaps half of our guests remained, and it was a moving experience. The reception was held in the St Joseph the Worker building which was completed only about 3 years prior.

The Carmelite Monastery was where we had first met and it was the dream venue for us both, but securing it was not without adventure! There has never been a wedding here in the 75 years of the monastery's history prior to this, so there was some uncertainty in regards to obtaining permission from the sisters: many had asked before and were refused. This did not end up to be an issue: the sisters agreed and warmly welcomed us as fellow members of the Carmelite order. They were so very excited for us, and generously offered to provide the floral arrangements and decorate the chapel for us. At this point we believed it was a done deal! But since this was the first time for a wedding to be held there, we needed to have a parish assigned to keep the sacramental records, to which end Fr. Tokarz contacted the archbishop's office. The answer we received was the unexpected, "Who gave the authority?" It took several weeks before the matter was settled and the archbishop had no objections, and we definitely breathed a sigh of relief.

When we met with Fr. David prior to the wedding we got some homework from him. Some of it was fun, like selecting the reading for the mass, but one caused us a little trouble. Obtaining annotated baptismal certificates wasn't an easy task as both of us were baptized overseas: I in Latvia (a small country in northern Europe) and Paul at a military base in England. The problem was that I had almost completely forgotten Latvian, and the website of my old parish was defunct. After some research however I found out that the parish in Latvia is now being run by none other than Discalced Carmelite fathers, which for me was an exciting discovery/coincidence! Paul had to request the baptismal certificate from the archdiocese for military services and it took longer than mine even though there was no language barrier as in my case.

Another piece of homework was filling out a survey about a broad range of important topics that would be useful for couples to discuss prior to marriage. The survey consists of a phrase to which you would reply - "agree", "disagree" or "not sure". Paul and I did very well with scores in 80's-90's except for the questions about religion! Turns out it was due to the way the questions were worded: "We have discussed the role of God in our marriage" or "how our religious practices will change after marriage." But we haven't discussed it because we were already living it, sharing our daily prayers, and did not see a need for a change in our practices. In point of fact Fr. David used this story to embarrass us in the homily because "that's his job" -- all in good fun.

There were several humorous points like that. We enjoyed his inside joke about us being in the Discalced Carmelite order "even though both of them are wearing shoes". That was just for us, the community and the nuns!

*(Continued on page 23)*

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## News from around the Province —News from Mobile

*Submitted by Karina Schubert*



### **The Community of the Holy Spirit:**

Back row left to right - Fr Bonaventure Sauer, David McAleer, Karen White, Karina Schubert, Paul Schubert, Steve Orleans, Dan Davidson, Robert Gareri

Front row: Collette Bookman, Robbie Hayes, Vivien Hecker, Marie Langan, Gloria Schneider, Starr Turk, Maureen Sacramona, Sylvia Sullivan

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**News from around the Province —News from Mobile**

*Submitted by Karina Schubert*



**OCD nuns of Mobile**



**St Joseph the Worker building**



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## News from around the World

### *Help for Venezuela*

**June 12, 2018, from the Order's website:**

#### **Situation of Carmel in Venezuela**

A few days ago, we received from Fr Daniel Rodríguez, the General Delegate of Venezuela, a letter bearing the significant title "Venezuela, a country to mourn". In it, Fr Daniel informed us of the emergency situation the country is going through at the moment and how the Carmelites are trying to be of help to those who have suffered the most from the crisis.

In the letter, Fr Daniel has highlighted the moral and spiritual foundation of the political and social "night" into which the country has plunged. In our brother's opinion, the situation can be described as a "voracious anarchy", in which crime and delinquency are spreading through an increasingly impoverished society, in which no exit is seen from a situation in which so many lack a dignified sustenance, while necessary foods and medicines are scarce, as well as other means for developing a dignified life.

Faced with this bleak panorama, our brothers and sisters try to multiply themselves in order to help others, even when they too have to endure hardships: even the minimum of fuel necessary for cooking is lacking; the outages of electricity are continuous and prolonged causing, for example, our sisters in Maracaibo to suffer temperatures of 108 – 122 degrees Fahrenheit without electric fans.

From the Curia General, as well as from the Teresian Carmelite family of Colombia, Brazil, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Chile, Spain, Argentina and CITEs (Avila), among others, they receive various kinds of help, that has allowed them to distribute food and medicines to the most disadvantaged. The Secular Carmel keeps open a dining room in Mérida in the "El Salado" slum, but they can only offer one dish of weekly food.

The letter, of which we have made a very short resume, can be read in full in Spanish in the Spanish news section. <http://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/es/situacion-del-carmelo-en-venezuela/>

If anyone wishes to help financially, checks can be designated with "Donation for Venezuela" in the comments section and made out to:

**Discalced Carmelite Fathers of Oklahoma**

**824 Kentucky Ave**

**San Antonio, TX 78201**

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## News from around the Province —Father Raphael Kitz, OCD

December 17, 1930 - June 10, 2018

Fr. Raphael (Richard Andrew) Kitz of St. Joseph, OCD, entered eternal life on Sunday, June 10, 2018. He was born December 17, 1930, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Fr. Raphael made his first profession of vows as a Discalced Carmelite Friar of the Province of St. Therese on September 30, 1954. He then made his solemn (lifetime) profession of vows on December 8, 1958. He studied theology at the International College of the Discalced Carmelites in Rome, Italy, and was ordained a Catholic priest there on September 19, 1959, in the church of San Marcello.

During his nearly sixty years of priestly, Carmelite life and ministry, Fr. Raphael served in many different capacities—confessor and spiritual director to various communities of Carmelite nuns and Carmelite seculars in the Province, professor at Dominican College in Houston, Texas, and superior and parochial assistant at our houses and parishes in San Antonio and Dallas, Texas. For the past 27 years, Fr. Raphael served at Marylake Monastery, in Little Rock, Arkansas, as novice master, being responsible for the initial formation in Carmelite spirituality of numerous young men pursuing a vocation in the Order of Discalced Carmelites.



Fr. Raphael was known also for his ministry to the Carmelite nuns and Carmelite seculars of Little Rock, as well as for his ministry of helping out at Catholic parishes across Arkansas.

Fr. Raphael was preceded in death by his parents, Andrew and Florence (Bergland) Kitz. He is survived by his brother Ronald Kitz, his nephew Darren Kitz, a niece Laura (Kitz) Smith, a great nephew and great niece, Nathan Himley and Leandra Smith, and by his aunt, Telka Jennings.

Fr. Raphael was gifted with exceptional talent as a classical pianist and was deeply learned and widely read in Sacred Scripture and in the writings of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross. He had a great love for animals, especially dogs, and was never without a pet cockatiel. He regularly fed the ducks and geese at Marylake.

His wisdom, kindness, and gentle humor made him beloved by his brothers in religious life and a treasured spiritual guide by those who benefitted from his priestly, Carmelite ministry.

A vigil service will be held in the evening of Thursday, June 14, at Marylake Monastery, Little Rock, AR. The Funeral Mass will be celebrated the next day, Friday, June 15, with burial in our Provincial cemetery on the grounds of Marylake Monastery.

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## Carmelite Obituaries



### **Nancy Jane Lowry, OCDS**

Community of Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew  
Little Rock, Arkansas

*Submitted by Tricia Cromwell, OCDS*

Nancy Jane Lowry went quietly to her eternal rest on November 30, 2017, after an illness. She was born December 6, 1944, to Vernon and Eva Treadway, and she was preceded in death by her husband of 38 years, Bob Gene Lowry, her parents, and two brothers. She is survived by three children, three grandchildren, two adopted grandsons, and two brothers and their families.

Clothed in the Scapular of the Order of Carmel on October 23, 1999, Nancy made her First Promise October 13, 2001, taking as her devotional title Nancy Mary Elizabeth of the Holy Wounds of Jesus. She made her Definitive Promise October 13, 2001, and vows of chastity and obedience October 9, 2010. Nancy served our community well for many years by recording and transcribing spiritual conferences, as a Council member from 2008-2011, as Aspirancy Formator from 2008-2014, and as Formation Director in 2017. She sent cards and copies of Father's talks to the Infirm members and all members who were ill. Nancy was beloved and is greatly missed by our community.



*Flos Carmeli* provides information for the Secular members of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in the Oklahoma Province, which has jurisdiction over O.C.D.S. members living in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas. For subscription information contact Jeannine Meaux at [jtmeaux@cox.net](mailto:jtmeaux@cox.net)



## Chaplet of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, assist me in this necessity. O Immaculate Virgin and Star of the Sea, help me and show me that you are my mother and protector.

O Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of heaven and earth. I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to help me in my needs for there are none who can withstand your grace. Pray for me and help me to obtain assistance in this life. Amen.

*Say three Our Father's, three Hail Mary's and Glory Be to the Father's...*

## Getting the Flos Carmeli to members

*Community presidents, please remember that the Province no longer mails out copies of the Flos Carmeli to communities. It is the community's responsibility to get a copy to each of your members, either via email or by print. This includes all isolate, aged, or infirm members. Thank you!*

### **Provincial Council for the 2017-2020 Triennium:**

**Claire Bloodgood, Georgetown, TX—President**

**Jo Ann Murphy, Austin, TX**

**John Stevens, McAllen, TX**

**Anna Peterson, San Antonio, TX**

**Mary Therese Bellman, Grand Prairie, TX**