

Flos Carmeli

Oklahoma Province
Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites

Winter 2018

Volume XXVIII No. 1

From the President's Desk

By Claire Bloodgood, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council

Hello Carmelites, Praised be Jesus – now and forever.

I hope you and yours had a blessed Advent and Christmas. Lent is just around the corner, with its call to detachment from self and greater generosity to God and neighbor. God's grace be with you as we enter this holy season.

Congress follow-up:

A tremendous thank you to everyone for your participation in the 2017 Congress. Many of you were attending your very first OCDS Congress. Others had been to nearly every Congress for the last 15 years.

It was awe-inspiring to see how our Communities and Study Groups came together to make the Congress truly a Province-wide event. So much talent, so much heart! All of you are greatly appreciated.

The talks! The workshops, talks, and homilies were amazing. In the interest of saving space, I won't list the speakers, but they were all very good. As promised, we're including Fr. Alzinir's presentation in this issue of the *Flos Carmeli* (Pages 22-33). Enjoy!

DVDs and CDs are available here:

<https://www.gotruth.com/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?search=action&category=1632>

IPC update. Several action items came out of the **Inter-Provincial Council (IPC)** meetings preceding the Congress:

- Fr. Alzinir informed us that Superior General Fr. Saverio Cannistrà is requesting that the three US Provinces develop a more unified formation program. I'm pleased to say that all three are eager to work together. We will keep you posted.
- Another action item is to develop a better formation plan for praying the Liturgy of the Hours. Our good friars noted that most OCDS pray the hours *much* too fast and lose the sense of reverence and reflection that are so important to opening the soul to God.
- The third item was whether to change the frequency of the Congresses in the US. Our main concern is relieving the burden on the Provinces and especially on the individual Communities who work on the Congress. You should have received a survey in early January asking for member input.

The **Plenary Council meeting** had over 50 representatives from Communities and Study Groups. Topics included council functioning, formation, discernments, liturgy of the hours, apostolates, and conflict resolution. Concerns raised were aging membership and fostering new vocations.

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From the President's Desk

By Claire Bloodgood, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council—

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The **Provincial Council's panel session** on the 2016 Statutes was also well-attended. After a short presentation by the PC, the rest of the session was driven by the attendees' questions. They ranged from long-distance apostolates with an eye to founding a remote GID, to dismissals, to isolates, to community splits, to formation and discernments. We're sharing most of the questions and answers in this issue of the Flos, (See **Pages 15-18**)

Leadership workshops – save the date!

We are working on the details for the **September 20-23, 2018** leadership workshops. **The venue will be the Oblate Retreat Center in San Antonio, TX.** The focus will be on formation: methods, materials, choosing and training formators, discernments, and so on. Send us your formation-related concerns for the agenda.

The **Oklahoma Legislations** are now in print, both in coil-bound and hard cover. Here's the link to order:

Hard cover – <http://www.lulu.com/shop/st-th%C3%A9r%C3%A8se-province/ocds-legislation-for-the-province-of-st-th%C3%A9r%C3%A8se-oklahoma/hardcover/product-23400734.html>

Coil-bound – <http://www.lulu.com/shop/st-th%C3%A9r%C3%A8se-province/ocds-legislation-for-the-province-of-st-th%C3%A9r%C3%A8se-oklahoma/paperback/product-23400740.html>

Of special note: Fr. Alzinir has given us an updated *OCDS Ritual*, which is both on the OCDS Provincial website and in the print edition of the legislations.

Legislations in Spanish. Enilda Reyes of the St Elizabeth of the Trinity Study Group, Tulsa Oklahoma, has very generously translated our Statutes into Spanish. Many thanks, Enilda! The next step is to have one of our Spanish-speaking friars double-check them. Once that is done, we will publish the entire legislations in coil-bound and in hardcover Spanish editions.

The statutes in Spanish will also be available on the provincial website. The other legislations in Spanish are already there.

<http://www.thereseocds.org/legislation/>

My prayers are with you for a grace filled 2018.

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



Report from the Provincial

By Father Stephen Sanchez, O.C.D.

Dear Fellow Carmelites,

You may have heard about a major restoration project at our Basilica of the Little Flower in San Antonio. You may have also heard by now some rumors of a reorganization of the Province. We'd like to begin clearing up any questions and share with you the bigger picture of a mission-driven renewal and restructuring in progress in the Province of St. Thérèse.

A central administration office was established in San Antonio in 2011, an investment that brought financial stability and structure to the Province. More recently, the Provincial Council approved a business plan to include hiring lay leadership. This plan takes into consideration our life as a religious contemplative order, the current and future needs of individual members and our existing apostolic work that supports our Carmelite mission.

Stepping into the position of Executive Director of Administration and Finance last fall was Susana Cantu. With the Carmelites since 2006, she had served as Business Manager since 2011. She directs a small leadership team in development, business management and facilities project management. The leadership provided by the administration office is helping us tackle the many challenges ahead, including moving through the strategic planning process of the reorganization needed so that the Province can continue its mission well into the future.

We continue to invest in the future of our organization this year, with the help of strategic planning consultants. A major capital campaign is also in the works for the Basilica restoration as we work to enhance its significance as a Carmelite shrine. To be successful in this undertaking, solid planning ahead is essential.

The OCDS is crucial to making this happen. In December, Susana met with the OCDS Provincial Council to discuss how we can collaborate more effectively and fruitfully with you. We want to ensure that your role within this Province is considered as we continue the reorganization of our Province.

Funds are needed now to support the administration of our Province and to plan and conduct the fundraising campaign for the Basilica. We invite you as a member of the Province to join us in this process and hope you will consider ways you might support these efforts this year. Donations to the Province can be made at carmelitefriarsocd.org/donate/.

We want to keep you updated on our efforts. To be included on our email list, please email Anna Migeon, our Development Director, at amigeon@littleflowerbasilica.org.

Together, we can thrive in our mission to the Church.

In Him,
Stephen Sanchez, OCD
Provincial

Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

Happy New Year! The year just past did have its moments and developments well worth giving thanks for. But then, each and every day, each and every sunrise, each and every breath drawn thoughtfully, are moments to give thanks. May the coming year bring you many such moments, and an ever-lingering gratitude of heart to go with them.

It's been a heavy year for me. I was hoping for a casually paced autumn, one where I could make my move to San Antonio—a development I'm thankful for, it being my favorite city—and then, once installed here like a phone app, unpack my boxes of things and spread them out around and before me. It was not to be. I did make the move and am now in San Antonio, as you know, although it seems I've been gone more than I've been home. Thus, I'm still working on stage two, unpacking my things. But the end is in sight.

Advent came and went in the blink of an eye. For one, this year it was as short as it can be, three weeks and a day. Moreover, the simplicity and liturgical quiet of the season were broken up by the two great Marian feasts of the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe. But this infusion of a Marian spirit into Advent is not exactly a distraction, right? Luckily, our Pastor and Shrine Director here at the Basilica, Fr. Luis Gerardo, had the good sense not to have a full-fledged novena in preparation for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, although that's kind of *de rigour* here in San Antonio. Yet he resisted the norm and simply mounted a moving celebration on the feast day itself, gaining my appreciation.

[The photo to the right depicts the altar at the Basilica done up with the famous Guadalupe image of Mary. Holy Mother—to the altar's right—has gladly stepped back and to the side for the occasion.]

You know, since many of you got to visit the Basilica during the Congress, and had a memorable time of it, I can now talk about the Basilica and its spiritual grandeur and physical needs, and you'll be able to follow me graphically in your heads. So it makes my job easier.

By the way, this past week I was part of a meeting and, depending on how the money comes in, it seems we may actually start up a significant repair project at the Basilica this coming year. (Knock on wood—the wood of the door of St. Therese's heavenly studio, that is.) Now that's a bright promise to start the new year with.

Where was I? Oh, yes, Christmas at the Basilica. If you haven't experienced it, you really must do so some year. Life is too short not to at least try.

Letting myself get distracted from my topic for a moment, as you may have heard or read, since it seems to have made the national news, we had snow in San Antonio this December. It came down starting around 11:00 PM on the 7th and was even thick at times, gloriously so. I was thrilled. The next morning, though—which was Immaculate Conception—I had the 7:00 AM mass at the Carmelite nuns and was worried I might not make it. But the roads were fine. And I was treated for my efforts with a trip up the long driveway from the gate to the chapel of the Carmel. Trees line the “boulevard” on both sides, and of course they were holding up armfuls of snow to greet me.



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Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

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It was still dark, but the whole scene was radiant and magical. What a lovely sight the Sisters unveiled for me. [Photo at left—not snow gracing the monastery of the nuns, but the lawn in front of the Alamo.]

Back to Christmas at the Basilica. I had the 5:30 Vigil mass and so got to read the gospel from Matthew that opens with the genealogy. It's like reading from the phone book. But it allowed me to show off my skill at mispronouncing biblical names. Anyway, I preached on how, through the Incarnation, God has consecrated our humanity such that, for each and all of us, singly and collectively, our humanity is now our royal road towards holiness.

I thought I did a decent enough job, on a non-controversial theme, and there were those who, after mass, also thought I did a decent enough job. But one woman came up to me in the vestibule, rather heated in her expression, and said, for starters, that, although I'm a priest, I should be careful about the words that come out of my mouth, a sentiment I'd be the first to agree with.

I was curious, though, to learn what exactly were the unguarded words that escaped my lips, and so I asked her. (Of course, throughout this conversation I was greeting people after mass as they left the church and was, therefore, a little distracted while speaking with her.) Well, the long and short of it was that it seemed I had put too much emphasis on the humanity of Jesus at the expense of his divinity, which is surely a subtle distinction, a bit overmuch so given the fact that it was, after all, Christmas.

The woman, let me remind you, was quite upset by this imbalance in my speech, even to the point of visibly shaking. I felt bad for her. That was the last thing I wanted to do was spoil somebody's Christmas, and I told her so.

I should have then and there simply apologized and left it at that. But the impish spirit perched on my shoulder pressed me on to say to her, "Well, ma'am, I guess you just don't believe in the Incarnation." (I thought of saying further, although I didn't, "Your problem, ma'am, isn't with me; it's with Christianity.")

At these words from me, words that should not have come out of a priest's mouth, the woman stormed off into the night. Oh, well, what's a body to do?

Our Christmas Eve mass at the Basilica is at 9:00 PM. It's preceded by a retelling of the Christmas story, with anthems from the choir interspersed. The choir throughout the night was in rare form which, as those of you who attended the mass at the Basilica during the Congress will know, is saying a lot, the choir being always in good form. But the Spirit especially inspired them this Christmas, and we the listeners enjoyed the fruits.

Fr. Luis, Shrine Director and pastor, recently purchased a new Book of the Gospels [Photo above]. It's a lovely thing, with color artwork inside, and probably cost a pretty penny. But it's worth it, if you ask me. The book, though, is heavy, and our deacon will need to hit the gym in order to buff himself up sufficiently to carry it in procession.



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Report from the Provincial Delegate

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

(Continued from page 5)

At the Christmas Eve mass, then, this Book of the Gospels stood prominently at the head of the church, with candles on either side, and when Fr. Luis brought in the Christ Child, he placed it first before this book, itself a symbol of the Word of God. It was a nice gesture representing the Word made flesh. I would have been tempted to forego further decorating the church with a nativity scene of any sort, instead leaving this display alone to depict the Incarnation. But, of course, there would have been a general revolt among the faithful had we done so.



As for a nativity scene, Fr. Luis always does it up grandly, and this year was no exception. You can see what he did this year [in the photo at left]. But the photo hardly does it justice. It's part of what being a Basilica is all about—namely, creating a symbolically rich worship space. Fr. Luis delights in the task, and, to my mind, does a superb job. He has the gift.

The next day, Christmas Day itself, I had mass with the Carmelite nuns. We've served as chaplains to this Carmel since, well, the beginning. The community is a foundation from Durango, Mexico, the sisters having had to flee Mexico into the US at the time of the Revolution. (I'm not sure of the exact date, sometime around 1930.) Sr. Celine, who is 105, was part of this founding group of exiles. Today she loves watching reruns of the Lawrence Welk Show on PBS every weekend. Life is strange, right?

After a stint in Tucson, this original group of sisters came to San Antonio and took up residence in the basement of the then newly constructed Basilica. There they lived until they could have a monastery of their own built for them. Later, in the 1980s, they moved to their present monastery, located further west along Culebra St., near I-410, which highway loops around the city. This monastery sits atop a hill of rough terrain, where rattlesnakes and feral cats lurk. It overlooks the western suburbs of San Antonio and, beyond that, the Texas Hill Country. A long drive winds up the hill to the monastery entrance—hence, the tunnel of snow-draped trees that greeted me on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

So, I celebrated Christmas mass with the Sisters, always a delight. All of us friars are very close to them, and I am no exception. Mass with them, therefore, unfolds at a relaxed, happy pace, and that's fun. A fair number of faithful join them for mass and, on Sundays and Holy Days, come close to filling the chapel. Since on these occasions I'm preaching to the nuns, who are pretty well-schooled in things biblical and theological, I can presume understanding whenever I delve into such intricacies as the prologue to the Fourth Gospel—which is the gospel reading for Christmas Day, as you know.

Before dropping the curtain on this report—and refusing an encore, of course—I have to leave you with a couple final photos from our monastery's recreation room. It's where we gathered as a community after the Christmas Eve mass, which ended around midnight, in order to wish each other a Merry Christmas, lifting a glass to life and vocation and the person most important to them both, namely, Jesus of Nazareth. Then we brought out trays of snacks, imbibed a bit more, put smiles on our faces, and joked around with each other relentlessly.

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Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

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One photo [right] is a close up of a simple, yet tender nativity scene set out on a long, low bookcase which lines the far wall of the room. Then, turning around, one is greeted by the view captured in the second photo [below].

Notice the Christmas tree, the luxurious lounging area, and, in the distance, the snacks laid out on a table. But where are the friars, you ask? Well, I didn't think to take photos at the time. These two photos, rather, are from minutes after, once everyone had cleared out and gone off to let sugarplums dance in our heads.

Merry Christmas to all of you—belatedly, bemusedly, be-boundlessly.



PC Channel—Spotlight on the Ratio—Mary and Carmel

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

The Blessed Virgin Mary

17. Intimately united with the action of the Holy Spirit is that of the Virgin Mary. Mother of Christ and our Mother, she is involved in the spiritual life of everyone, but especially in that of one called to life in Carmel. Under her protection, expressed in Carmel by the scapular, all those in formation in the Order are spiritually protected and formed. Mary, the Mother of believers, is for us a model of committed and prophetic contemplation. She welcomed the Good News with enlightened discernment, and promptly undertook its demands. She treasured the Word, pondering on it prayerfully in her heart, and proclaimed it freely and courageously in the Magnificat. This contemplative-apostolic example of hers should be stressed in the course of formation, to help the students understand and practice what it really means to follow Christ. Mary is the perfect model of a disciple of the Lord.

The entire *Ratio Institutionis* may be found on the [OCDS Provincial website](#) under the legislations tab.



In Appreciation

The Provincial Council would like to publicly recognize the Formation Guidelines Revision Team (FGRT):

Nan Starjack
Susan King
Barbara Tinervia
Paul Schubert
Michelle Steiner
Barbara Basgall
and Mary Bellman

for the many, many hours they put into updating the Oklahoma Province's formation guidelines these past few years.

We and the whole province are deeply grateful for the time, effort, and love these dedicated and hard-working individuals have given in service to God and their fellow Carmelites.

Fr. Saverio Canistrá, our Superior General, has directed the three US provinces to create a standard formation program. The goals and resources the FGRT developed will be the basis of our province's contribution to this new project.

Again, our sincere thanks.

your servants in Carmel,

the Oklahoma OCDS Provincial Council

Claire Bloodgood, Jo Ann Murphy, John Stevens, Anna Peterson, Mary Bellman

PC Channel—Communities' Questions about Statutes, Part 5

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

Transfers within the Province

- What if a member moves but wants to remain a member of the original community and not join the nearby community – would that be possible if the original community is agreeable?

Community life being central to the vocation [Constitutions art.24], every effort should be made to transfer to a nearby community. If there are extenuating circumstances that might justify not transferring, it would be best to consult the Provincial Delegate.

Saying goodbye to our Carmelite brothers and sisters is sad, and the new community will be a bit different. That's to be expected. After a while we get used to the new community's ways and begin to feel at home. As they say, "bloom where you're planted."

- Is there a time span as to how long a member who moves away has to establish contact with a new community?

We didn't like to set an exact time frame – reasonable for one person might be impossible for another. We would expect a member to be as prompt as practical.

- Shouldn't a member remain in contact with their existing community until transfer is complete?

That is not a bad idea. The Council of the originating community would want to be sure that the member has contacted a nearby community and is attending meetings. Until then, the member is responsible to stay in contact as an Isolate. It might be helpful for the originating community's Council to touch base occasionally until the transfer is complete.

- What if there is more than one community in the area? Can they try more than one?

A person moving into an area with multiple communities can try them all out (if he/she wants to) before choosing one to focus on.

- "Transfers for reasons other than distance require prior consultation with and approval of the Provincial Delegate." Does that refer to transfers to a community in same area?

Yes, it does.

- Why does someone have to have permission from the Provincial Delegate to transfer between communities in the same area?

The underlying purpose of this provision is to give stability. The Promise is made to the community [art. 12, 24.c] and that commitment should not be taken lightly.

A transfer would be permitted if there is a good reason for it, such as a change in work schedule or family duties that conflict with the meeting day.

A great benefit of requiring permission is that it ensures that the Provincial Delegate is made aware of communities that need help with internal conflicts. It is preferable that problems are resolved and not run away from.

Transfers of Lay Members of the O.Carm. (TOC) to OCDS

- Shouldn't the OCDS community request records of the individual from their TOC community prior to end of the six month period?

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PC Channel—Questions about Statutes, Part 5

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

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The local Council should at least verify membership in the O.Carms. It would be wise to look into why the person is leaving (or has already left) the O.Carms.

- Going through formation over again would take such a long time. Why would it be necessary, especially since they have already been living Carmelite spirituality, maybe even for many years?

A change from TOC to OCDS is a change in vocation. Formation is more than studying the spirituality; it is learning to live this particular vocation to this particular Order. Formation shouldn't be seen in the same light as taking a college course to earn a degree.

As for taking a long time – what's the hurry? The goal is not the Promise itself, but laying the foundations for living the vocation. Even if some of the materials have been studied before, there are always new depths to discover. Formation is life-long.

Vows

- What are vows in the OCDS?

It's best to refer you to the Instruction of the Superior General for the OCDS Ritual, paragraphs 7 through 11 and footnote #17. The vows are an individual response to a personal call from God. The vows don't make an OCDS into a nun or friar, but neither are they a purely private matter. The full Ritual with the Instruction is included in our legislations book and is also on the provincial website under the legislation tab. <http://www.thereocds.org/legislation/>

- If the local Council makes a discernment not to allow a member to make vows, is a second attempt allowed?

It's not the same as discernment for the Promise (which determines a person's membership in the Order) and so might be revisited. The local Council would want to consult with the Provincial Delegate if a member's request was turned down before.

- What is the purpose of the vows?

That's a good question. A person who is not called may feel that there is no "purpose" to the vows. It's not a matter of purpose, but of response to God's call.

- Why do some people make vows and others do not?

Some feel called and others do not. Vows should not be understood as the "next step" in the OCDS vocation.

- What do the vows add to the Promise?

The vows add the virtue of religion to the Promise, making their fulfillment an "act of worship." Depending on the circumstances, vows bind under the pain of sin.

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PC Channel—Questions about Statutes, Part 5

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

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- What are the expectations for a member who has made vows?

As far as the community and the Order are concerned, there are no added responsibilities. The vows do not create a different level of Carmelite. They don't change a member's status in the community, the Order, or the Church.

As far as the individual is concerned, there should be a more conscientious living of chastity, obedience, the Beatitudes, and the virtues – especially detachment and humility. This is a matter for on-going self-examination and spiritual direction.

- Why is there not something more specific in the statutes on formation for vows?

Because the Promise is central to the vocation (while the vows are optional) we believed that the section on formation ought to focus on the Promise. The section on the vows gives some general direction for formation for the vows.

- What happens to vows if a member leaves the Order?

Statutes Section XX.5: "A Carmelite Secular who has made vows and wishes to leave the Order and/or be dispensed from the vows must request dispensation from the Provincial Delegate." Vows are binding until the person who made them is released from them.



PC Channel—Invalid Marriage

Father Bonaventure, O.C.D. (originally published in the fall 2009 Flos Carmeli)

Invalid marriage—an impediment to making profession in the Secular Order

At some point in a person's formation process prior to first profession, and probably sooner rather than later, you need to determine whether a candidate is in a valid Catholic marriage. This question is relevant simply because you cannot approve someone who is not in a valid marriage to make their promise (first or final) as a Secular Carmelite. This is not a judgment on the state of the person's soul, or their personal holiness, let alone their eternal salvation. It has only to do with their relationship with the church—or, as we say, with their being in "good standing" in the church.

Other questions about a person's marital life or status—questions such as, for example, **Are you divorced?**—while they are certainly pertinent to a candidate's life story, and so to that extent relevant to their formation, yet are not really relevant to the matter at hand—namely, the candidate's good standing in the church, and so their freedom to make profession as a Secular Carmelite. Thus, all these other questions about married life and status are to be left for the usual process of self-disclosure that happens progressively during formation and is for the most part determined by the candidate's own comfort level in such matters.

Let me underscore this point. There is no problem with a person being divorced, for example, and so there is really no reason to inquire into whether or not a candidate has ever been divorced. He or she can reveal such things in their own good time, when they are ready. Of course, most of the time an invalid marriage results from someone having divorced and then re-married without first having had the prior marriage annulled. The issue, of course, is not the divorce but the remarriage "outside the church." In the same way there are those instances when someone has simply married "outside the church," without there being a prior marriage at all. That marriage, too, is invalid and needs to be convalidated, or "blessed," by the church.

Probably the simplest and gentlest way to get an answer to this question is to include on the guest form—the one to be filled out either before or early on during the aspirancy—a single twofold question: **Are you married? If so, are you married in the church?** There might be another way to phrase it. But to ask whether someone is married "in the church" seems to me clear and straightforward, and most Catholics know what is meant. Obviously, if there's any uncertainty in a particular situation, it would be appropriate to consult your spiritual assistant (or a pastor or other priest) as needed.

When should the question be asked? As I said above, probably sooner rather than later. In theory there's no reason a person in an invalid marriage cannot be admitted to formation for first promise and continue up to the point of first promise. But that's where it would have to stop until the invalid marriage were convalidated or "blessed." Thus, both you and the candidate would do well to know about and have thoroughly discussed this potential obstacle **sooner rather than later.**

What should you do if a candidate is in an invalid marriage? Well, to some extent it's up to you—that is, to the local council. There's no single, one-size-fits-all approach or solution. If a person has already initiated an annulment process, and the process is well underway, and he or she intends to have their marriage "blessed" once the process is complete, and it seems there's good reason to expect the annulment to be granted in the near future, then you might decide to let them continue in the aspirancy for the time being, although you should be very clear with them about the situation and the potential problem. On the other hand, if a person has not even begun an annulment process, then you might ask them to do that, of course, while in the meantime discontinuing formation. Thus, you and they can better determine just what and how long a time the annulment process might

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PC Channel—Invalid Marriage

Father Bonaventure, O.C.D. (originally published in the fall 2009 Flos Carmeli)

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require. You can then offer to stay in touch with the person and, depending on how things unfold, invite him or her to return and begin formation at some point in the future.

Lastly, there will no doubt be those situations where you have no choice but to ask the person to discontinue with the community indefinitely and very possibly forever, as difficult and disappointing as that may be. Needless to say, any such discussions and decisions are to be conducted and made by the full council, being always subject to the **confidentiality** that holds for all such council deliberations.



PC Channel—Reminder to Study Group Presidents

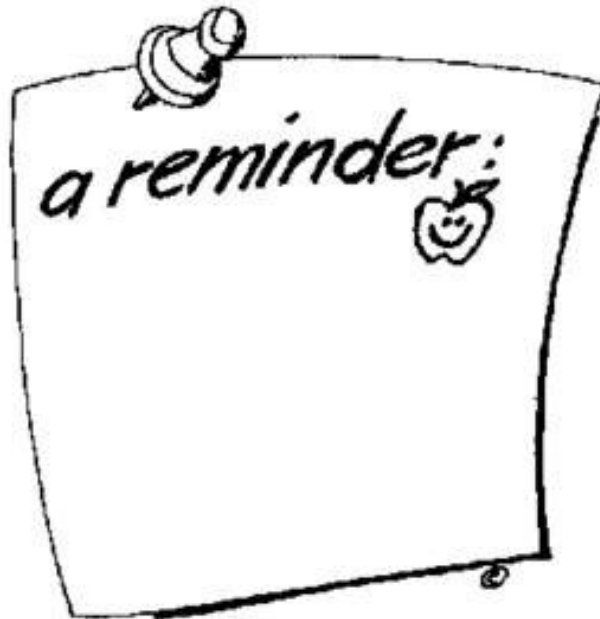
Submitted by the Provincial Councilor

Reminder to Study Group Presidents

Please remember to send both your community meeting minutes and your council meeting minutes to Central Office Administrator Barbara Tinervia each month.

Thank you,

Your Provincial Council



PC Channel—Panel Session with Provincial Council

Submitted by Provincial Council

Questions from the 2017 Congress PC General Session

There were so many interesting questions, we thought it a shame not to share them with the whole Province.

Vocations in remote areas

Certain areas of the country are isolated by definition. If we cannot accept individuals into aspirancy as Isolates, how can the Order grow?

Answer:

We don't accept individuals into formation as isolates because community life is central to the OCDS vocation. Study may be individual, but formation is communal.

However! If there are a number of persons in a remote area who are interested in "becoming Carmelites" there is a way.

To begin with, they need a canonical Community willing and able to accompany them through formation in Carmelite spirituality and community life. A Community needs no special permission to help these people study Carmelite spirituality. In fact, it is an excellent apostolate.

Ideally the group would meet monthly for study, discussion, and social time. They would be guided by one or two (or more) professed members of the Community, under the guidance of the local Council. These members might like to use Skype or something similar to be with the group and lead the discussions.

So, now they've been meeting for a while and love learning about Carmel, and the Council has gotten to know them, and they want to be Aspirants. Super. At this point, the local Council needs to talk with the Provincial Delegate. Is there potential? Are they serious about it? As we said, we're talking about a group of people, not one lone individual. If all but one drop out, that is a problem.

Also consider whether the *Community* is committed to helping the group. Future Councils will be responsible for their formation and discern for Promises, and eventually mentor them as a GID (Group in Discernment), so there needs to be a general willingness to see it through.

Isolates in the borderlands

May a person belong to another Province if the closest community is there?

Answer:

It's been done.

We're assuming you mean a person who is not in reasonable driving distance of a community in his/her own Province. Yes, the person may be admitted to a nearby community in another province.

Technically, they belong to the Province they live in, but in practice they would be accountable to the Province their community belongs to.

Members who want to be "inactive"

Can a member be "inactive" per his/her own choice? No contact with the Community "their wish"?

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Submitted by Provincial Council

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The short answer is, no, they can't. A member may ask for a leave of absence, but it can't be indefinite. [cf. Statutes section VIII: Community Life]

The community and its members are accountable to each other and to the Order. We really don't have a provision for free-range Carmelites.

Probably the best answer is this paragraph from the Constitutions:

#24c): A person, loyal to their Christian faith, begins to be part of the Secular Order through the promise made to the Community before the Superior of the Order. **With the promise, a person is committed to live in communion** with the Church, with the Order, with the Province and **especially with those who are part of the Community**, loving them and encouraging them in the practice of the virtues. In smaller communities it is possible to establish a true and deep relationship of human and spiritual friendship, as well as mutual support in charity and humility.

Interviewing definitively professed members

Carmelites in formation for clothing and the Promise are interviewed periodically by the Council to see how they are doing.

Would you consider extending these periodic interviews even for the definitively professed? This might be helpful to keep the vitality of our communities and stay faithful and steadfast to our charism.

Answer:

Let's start with the Constitutions:

#46: The Council, composed of the President and three Councilors and the Director of Formation, constitutes the immediate authority of the community. **The primary responsibility of the Council is the formation and Christian and Carmelite maturing of the members of the community.**

Obviously, there needs to be communication. Each community being unique, it's up the local Council to decide how to best do this. A community Council may decide that they want to try out periodic interviews with definitively professed members. If so, please be careful to not make it feel alarming to the interviewees.

A member with dementia

Our community has a member in First Promise who is developing dementia. Her spouse is close to making his Definitive Promise, and they attend together. This dear lady is not able to understand the materials we are studying, but she is prayerful, pleasant and enjoys being with us. Do we have to discern her out? If

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we do, her husband will need to be released because she cannot be left alone for very long. What can we do for this lovely couple?

Answer:

That would be up to the local Council. The Council needs to determine what is best for the Community as well as for the member. If she is not disruptive, it would be okay to let her continue attending with her husband, even if she is not able to make the Definitive Promise. The Council can reassess if the situation changes. While not very common, it's been done before.

Dismissals from First Promise

I understand about the Provincial Delegate needing to be involved if a Council is dismissing someone who has made the Definitive Promise.

Does that apply to someone in First Promise? Does the Provincial Delegate have to be involved?

Does this release the person as a member of the Order?

Answer:

The Provincial Delegate does not have to be involved to dismiss a member in First Promise.
[see Statutes IX.6-9]

Yes, dismissal from the Community is dismissal from the Order and nulls the Promise. The Council does not have to wait till the end of the formation period if it becomes obvious that it is best for the member (or for the community) that he/she leave the community.

Follow up question

Would it be possible to re-enter the Order if dismissal is due to excessive absences after a leave of absence?

Answer:

A person who is dismissed is not eligible for readmission, whatever the reason. See Statutes section VIII for alternatives to dismissal.

Visitors

Are there any rules (or guidelines) for the visitor phase before a person is admitted to aspirancy? For instance, there was a six-consecutive-meetings rule before you could start formation.

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Answer:

The short answer is the Province does not specify a set period of time or number of meetings for inquirers. We assume that Councils will use common sense and good judgment.

Most local Councils have inquirers come for several meetings just to see how they get along and give the person an idea of what Carmel is like. Some have a set number of meetings. Others are more flexible depending on how sure they feel about the person.

We're not sure where the arbitrary six-consecutive-meetings rule came from. It's not in the Statutes or any published policies (past or present). The Constitutions require a six-month minimum *aspirancy* period [cf. Art 36.a], and that may have been misunderstood to mean the inquiry period.

In any case, the only real “rule” is that the Council decides together whether to admit to aspirancy.

There are a lot of Best Practice articles on the Provincial website about pre-screening and discernments. They aren't binding – just offered as a help if needed. <http://www.thereocds.org/best-practices-2/discernment/>

We hope you enjoyed reading a bit of what we talked about at the Congress. We hope very much to see you at the next Congress.



News from around the World—2018 Congress in Columbus, Ohio

2018 Washington Province OCDS Congress in Columbus, Ohio, Oct. 18-21, 2018

The 2018 OCDS Congress will take place from **Thursday, Oct. 18 to Sunday, Oct. 21, 2018** at the Polaris Hilton in Columbus, Ohio. **Registration is now open.** We expect the Congress to quickly sell out, so please register early to reserve your spot. The Congress Website includes information regarding speakers, hotel and other details: <http://www.2018ocdscongress.com>

SPEAKERS

Speakers at the Congress will include:

- Fr. Daniel Chowning, OCD (Member of the Washington Province of Discalced Carmelite Friars and currently serving in Rome as a Definitor of the General Curia of the Discalced Carmelite Order)
- Mark Danis, OCDS (Co-host of the Carmelite Conversations Radio program on Radio Maria)
- Fr. Alzinir Debastiani, OCD (Delegate General for the OCDS since 2012 and from the St Joseph Province in South East Brazil)
- Fr. Marc Foley, OCD (Author of several books on St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and St. John of the Cross; currently publisher for ICS Publications)
- Gina Loehr (Author of The Four Teresas and delegate for the Pontifical Council for the Laity's 2013 Vatican study on women and the Church)
- Fr. Jude Peters, OCD (Provincial of the Washington Province of Discalced Carmelite Friars and a gifted story-teller)
- Marie-Paul Stevens, OCDS (Whose healing was accepted as the miracle for the canonization of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity)

DOOR PRIZE

One lucky attendee will win a trip for two to Avila, Spain on 206 Tours! Each Congress attendee will automatically be entered in the door-prize drawing. See the Congress Web site for more details.

REGISTRATION

You may register online and pay by credit card or check: <http://www.2018ocdscongress.com/registration>
The registration fee is \$310. You may also purchase a ticket for a guest to attend the banquet dinner for \$60.

HOTEL

A block of hotel rooms has been reserved at the rate of \$145/night. You may make a hotel reservation by clicking on the link at <http://www.2018ocdscongress.com/hotel>

The phone number for the hotel is also located on that page. The hotel has a free shuttle from the airport.

DONATIONS

Each Congress asks OCDS communities to donate money to help friars attend the Congress. Donations can be made by credit card or check: <http://www.2018ocdscongress.com/donate>

Jubilee celebration: 125 years of foundation at the Monastery of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Haifa - Israel

"Let us live on the holy mountain for the glory and honor of God"

We sang the hymn of the jubilee with full voice to thank the Lord who, in his love and Providence, wanted and supported this presence throughout our history, despite the wars and in the midst of difficult circumstances, peculiar to the blessed Land where we are. The foundation dates from January 1, 1892, when eight Carmelites from France settled at the foot of Mount Carmel.

To tell this holy story, we published two books. The first, entitled **Near the Source**, is published in French. In four main chapters, we present the vocation and mission of our community and situate it in the whole of the contemplative life present in the Holy Land. We recall past events from archival documents and, finally, we express the meaning of our current presence within the local Church and in the social and political context that is ours.

The second book is entitled **The Guardians of the Vine**, a title that refers to a biblical verse from the Song of Songs. It is published in Arabic. It is an abridged account of our history, geared toward Arabic-speaking Christians and intended to present our monastery to them.

The Jubilee Year culminated in the celebration of the Eucharist on November 4, 2017, in the monastery chapel. It was presided by Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the apostolic administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and concelebrated by Bishop Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo, Vicar in Palestine, Father Hanna Kildani, Vicar in Israel, Father Enrique Castro OCD, General Delegate for Israel, several members of religious communities, local clergy as well as Discalced Carmelite fathers and brothers.

The Christian people were present in all their diversity: Catholics of Maronite and Greek-Melkite rite and Orthodox. We also enjoyed the presence of Jewish, Baha'i and even Druze friends. All, as children of the same Father, participated in the Jubilee Mass, led by the choir of the New Life ecumenical community. It was a powerful moment, an eruption of the Spirit in an atmosphere of joyous and festive communion, something of a messianic moment that overwhelmed us all.

To prepare for this jubilee, we have benefited from numerous collaborations in all fields, and everything made us feel that, despite our weakness and our poverty, we are at the heart of the ecclesial community, that Carmel belongs to the people of God; we are theirs and for them. It was a strong experience, part of the essential missionary character of our vocation.

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News from around the World—Jubilee Celebration of Mount Carmel Monastery

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This event was lived under the sign of internationality and interculturality. Such is the characteristic of the Mother Church of Jerusalem. During the celebration, we used three languages following the dynamism of the Spirit! A long procession of entry preceded the Eucharist: above all, the processional Cross carried by a Carmelite brother, followed by the entire community of sisters with some symbols: the Founding Infant Jesus, the same that Mother Mary of the Sacred Heart brought on the day of the foundation, **125 years ago**. Then, the icon of Our Lady of Mount Carmel with our Holy Mother Teresa; a notebook from our Annals, and the light of the jubilee; behind these, the other sisters who bore lights, signs of fidelity. Our sisters on the council of the Association of Our Lady of Mount Carmel also participated in this procession while coming for their regular meeting.

After the Introductory Rites, there was the special rite of the Jubilee Year when we presented our symbols to the people. In the end, Archbishop Pizzaballa read the blessing that Pope Francis sent to our community on the occasion of the jubilee.

During his homily, Bishop Marcuzzo reminded us of the biblical meaning of jubilee, which, according to the book of Leviticus, is a time of repose, not for rest, but to return to the roots, to return entirely to God. What are our roots? He reminded us of our origins here at Wadi'ain es-Siah. Carmelites were born near a spring, as our Rule of Life says, 'juxta fontem,' near the spring of the prophet Elijah who, by his prayer, brought back the pagan people to the true God. He also recalled the important place that the Virgin Mary has in our Order.

"How can we return to God?" the bishop asked us. Saint John of the Cross tells us: we must go out, climb the mountain of Carmel by detaching ourselves from all that is old to enter a new way of thinking and acting, doing this with patience like Elijah did hoping for rain after years of drought. This is the newness of jubilee.

So what does it mean to go back to the source? We can respond as St. Therese of Lisieux answered: "In the heart of the Church, my mother, I will be love". I wish that you might make this holy decision, to be love in the heart of the Church of the Holy Land.

After the homily, we renewed our vows in the presence of the whole assembly: a powerful moment of communion with our pastors and also a moment of communion with all the consecrated men and women present.

At the end of Mass, the whole assembly was invited for a fellowship hour.

VIDEO: <https://youtube/-tyt1qduzl4>



“The essentialness of charity; living in small things.

CHARITY MUST NOT CONSIST IN FEELINGS BUT IN WORKS”

(St. Therese, MC 13v)

Fr. Alzinir Francisco Debastiani OCD

(Translation from Portuguese to English by Lucienne Delaquiz OCDS)

The subject of this conference leads me to look upon Saint Therese and perceive the practical orientations she offers us for living “our vocation is love,” the theme of our 2017 OCDS Congress.

I wish to recall that 20 years ago the Church proclaimed Therese Doctor of the science of love (October 19, 1997).

Today, Therese of Lisieux continues reminding us with her example of the centrality of love. Love lived in the small things of everyday life, giving us liberty to follow Jesus and develop a constant trust in the Merciful Love of Jesus’ Father for us.

I intend to point out the interconnection between some central moments in the life of Therese of Lisieux and the doctrine of agape love present in Benedict XVI encyclical *Deus caritas est*. Therese’s life tells us exactly what Benedict XVI wished to demonstrate in his first Encyclical Letter, “love is possible, and we are able to live it because we were created in God’s image.” Living thus helps “the light of God enter into the world”, a world so many times in darkness and without hope. As he himself had said some years before, when still a cardinal: “Starting from the wisdom of a heart burning in love for Jesus, Therese reaches mystical intelligence... she knows the type of wisdom which reveals itself only to those who have found in the cross the key to their existence”.

With an incredible realism in front of the fugacity of all things, she concentrates in the essentialness of love, “an existence rooted totally and only in the love of God” and sings “My life is but an instant, a passing hour. / My life is but a day that escapes and flies away. / O my God! You know that to love you on earth / I only have today!...” (Poetry 5,1).

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Introduction

As well known, we are living in a post-modern culture – at least, in the West and in our developed countries – there is a shift in the order of values: technology and nature have been placed in the center of interest. The human being and his search for truth have lost their place to a *post-truth*, which generates a mentality characterized by fast and virtual. According to some people, all this has provoked real anthropological mutation”. A mentality which exalts emotions and intends to have people keep up appearances, in a continuous euphoria, unable to keep silence, at the mercy of immediacy in fulfilling unbridled desires for goods and pleasures.

Regardless of such technological advance in information and communication, from a social point of view, individualism and loneliness increase. Market economy leads to “the globalization of indifference” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 54).

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OCDS Spiritual Corner — Father Alzinir's Presentation

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When it comes to affective relationship and love, many “heresies” are being promoted: abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage, consumerism, etc. Religious symbols are being eliminated from public places, etc.... Everything done “in the name of love”!

In view of this reality we ask ourselves: is it still possible to live the commandment of love today? What is the sense of Christian love? How can we live this virtue, so essential to human life, in deeds and not only virtually?

St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face (1873-1897) helps us, with the example of her life, to answer these questions. During her short life, she came to understand that “*Charity must not consist in feelings but in works*” (Ste. Thérèse MC 13v). She became a privileged witness to the science of love (MB 1f). Living it radically in her daily actions. (cf. MA 32 f). She learned that love has wings, it is free and freeing: “with love, I do not run, I fly...” (MA 80v). She lived intensely and heroically “fought” to live it. (MC 12v-13v).

1. “... I felt charity enter my heart, the need to forget myself to make others happy, and from that time I have been happy!” (MA 45v).

Without doubt, the genius and originality of Therese’s wisdom in the science of love is due to her docility to the Holy Spirit, granted to those who are small and humble (Lk 10, 21-22). Following the interior Master of sanctification, she lets the unconditional Love of God transform her in a very short period of time.

Woman of radical choices, even as a little girl, Therese “chooses everything”; she does not want to be half a saint (cf. MA 10f-v). This, thanks to the education she received in her family by her saintly parents Louis and Zélie and by her sisters. She is continuously looking for truth and thus lives her surrender and abandonment to Love in the Carmel of Lisieux, fulfilling her vocation: “In the heart of the Church, my mother, I will be love” (MB 3v). At the end of her life she can exclaim: “I do not repent having surrendered myself to Love” (Yellow Notebook=YN, September 30, 1897).

Benedict XVI had this same awareness of the centrality of love in the life of each human being when he wrote his first Encyclical Letter, *Deus caritas est*. It came to fill in a gap existing on this subject in the Magisterium of the popes. In *Deus caritas est*, the themes “God”, “Christ” and “Love” are fused together as the central guide of Christian faith”. His concern is to clarify the meaning of love. One of the most used and distorted words in current culture, with far-reaching and very different uses and meanings. Benedict affirms that the foundation of human life is *the love of God* for us (agape). To understand this truth is to catch a glimpse of *who God is and who we are* (cf DCE 2). It is interesting to note that the essential elements of Benedict XVI were already present in the life and teachings of the saint of Lisieux.

On Christmas of 1886, Therese lived in a situation which marked her parting from childhood, “the grace of Christmas” (cf. MC 44v; 86f; CT 201). Since then, she recovered the strength of soul she had lost when 4 years old, due to the trauma of her mother’s death. She was entering the third period of her life, starting “to run a giant’s course” in the perfection of love. (MA 44v). Here is how she puts it:

“On that night of light began the third period of my life, the most beautiful and the most filled with graces from heaven. ... He made of me a fisher of souls. I experienced a great desire to work for the conversion of sinners, a desire I hadn’t experienced so intensely

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before...In short, I felt charity enter into my soul, and the need to forget myself and to please others; since then I’ve been happy!” (MA 45v).

She will experience in the following months an incredible human and spiritual growth: “Now that I was free from scruples and morbid sensitiveness, my mind developed. I had always loved what was noble and beautiful, and about this time I was seized with a passionate desire for learning”. (MA 46v) She took up “special classes of History and Science” and also some drawing lessons with Celine (MA 52f). From the spiritual point of view, Jesus was instructing her “sweetly in the secrets of His love” (MA 49f).

We can see that this grace provoked in Therese an openness to others. It arouses love as a gift of oneself, “an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God” (DCE 6).

2. “Was it not at the sight of the wounds of Jesus... that my thirst for souls entered my heart?” (MA 46v)

Shortly after the conversion of Christmas, upon looking at the picture of Our Lord on the Cross, Therese received another grace, she awoke to the apostolic dimension (MA 45v; July 1887). Here is how she describes it:



“One Sunday, looking at a picture of Our Lord on the Cross, I was struck by the blood flowing from one of the divine hands. I felt a great pang of sorrow when thinking this blood was falling to the ground without anyone’s hastening to gather it up. I was resolved to remain in spirit at the foot of the Cross and to receive the divine dew. I understood I was then to pour it out upon souls. The cry of Jesus on the Cross sounded continually in my heart: “I thirst!” These words ignited within me an unknown and very living fire. I wanted to give my Beloved to drink and I felt myself consumed with a thirst for souls.”

At this moment Therese, as does the “theologian pope”, sees Christ on the Cross as a concrete manifestation of the invisible Love of God. “His death on the Cross is the culmination of that turning of God against himself in which he gives himself in order to raise man up and save him. This is love in its most radical form. By contemplating the pierced side of Christ, as John puts it, (cf. 19:37), we can understand the starting-point of this Encyclical Letter: “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8). It is there that this truth can be contemplated. (DCE 12).

Therese is then 14 years old. Moved by the desire to save souls, she said: I “wanted to give my Beloved to drink and I felt myself consumed with a *thirst for souls*... As yet, it was not the souls of priests that attracted me, but those of *great sinners*. I burned with the desire to snatch them from the eternal

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flames..." She dedicates herself with all her might to the conversion of Pranzini, her "first child" (MA 45v/46v).

After her discovery of the Love of Christ on the Cross, Therese finds the direction for her life and love in contemplative life. However very young, her entrance into the Carmel of Lisieux (April 9, 1888 - MA 69r), before the required age, is a manifestation of her audacious, intense and apostolic love. She thus wants to respond to the call of Jesus.

"The reason I came to Carmel was stated at the feet of Jesus in the Host during the canonical examination which preceded my profession" (September 2, 1890): "I came to save souls, and especially to pray for priests" (MA 70f). "... I came to Carmel, solely to respond to the call of Jesus" (MC 8v); she wishes to fight within a family "for the glory of the King of Heavens" (MC 9f).

In Carmel Therese unites herself to Jesus' surrender and she is drawn into Jesus' act of self-oblation perpetuated in the Eucharist. She is sustained by "the communion in his body and blood," and it "becomes union with Him" (DCE 13). A union which had begun when she made her first communion (May 8, 1884), as she recalls: "it was no longer simply a look, it was a complete fusion" between Jesus and Therese (MA 35f). From then on, she understands that "Eucharistic communion includes the reality both of being loved and of loving others in turn," that "a Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented." (DCE 14). This is what she highlights in her poem *The Sacristans of Carmel*.

At the same time "Union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself". Eucharist communion projects her outside herself toward Jesus and "unity with all Christians... Love of God and love of neighbor are now truly united: God incarnate draws us all to himself." (DCE 14).

3. "Yes, I feel it, when I am charitable, it is Jesus alone who is acting in me, and the more united I am to Him, the more also do I love my Sisters". (MC 12v)

On Trinity Sunday, June 9, 1895, Therese accepted "the infinite love" of Jesus and offered herself to Him as a "victim in holocaust to merciful love" (Or 6; cf. MA 84f). A year later she receives the "grace of understanding what charity is" (MC 11v). She is living in the night of faith which she calls the "dark tunnel" (MC 4v-7v).

In these circumstances, she was advised by her confessor to pray the Creed many times. She goes so far as to write it with her own blood and carry it on her heart. These are moments of intense interior suffering when she "sings what she wants to believe" (MC 7v). As for her body, tuberculosis moves on and provokes hemoptysis (the night from April 2 to 3, 1896). Everything tells her that her end is near.

Upon request of Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart, she writes Manuscript B on September 1896. It is the most profound testimony on the Mystery of Christian love in which she explains her "little doctrine" and recalls the graces received during the previous months and the discovery of her personal vocation in the Church.

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Explaining her “little doctrine”, (MB 1f), Therese starts from the principle that only love can “make us agreeable to God” and that it is the sole object of her desires. “... for love to be fully satisfied it must lower itself, and lower itself down to nothing and transform this nothing into fire ... Oh, Jesus, I know, love is only paid with love; this is why I looked for and found a way to relieve my heart paying back Love with Love” (MB 3v-4f). And the road that leads to the “divine furnace” is that of charity and abandonment, “the trust of a little child who falls asleep without fear in his Father’s arms” (MB 1f). Jesus needs only our love and our gratitude.

So, how are we to love in deeds according to Therese?

Above all with a humble acknowledgement of her weakness. Afterwards, with bold offering of herself as a victim of Love (MB 3v). In daily life, this means “she refuses no sacrifice, however small, a sight, a word, she seizes the opportunity of the smallest things to perform them for love ...” (MB 4f-v), even in the midst of sufferings and storms (cf. MB 5f). If she gives in to imperfections, she keeps on trusting in Love for He never turns his back on her. To Him she trustingly exposes “her infidelities in detail”. Should she slumber, waking up she “keeps on with her work of love” (MB 5f).

Allowing the flame of charity to enlighten the night of faith through which she is living, Therese comes to understand the meaning of living Jesus’ commandment passed on to us at the Last Supper: to love even as he has loved us, to the point of giving his life for us. Her awareness of being helpless and incapable of loving as Jesus has led her to allow herself to be attracted by His love, just as the butterfly by the light of the flame: “I ask Jesus to draw me to the flame of his love which so closely unites me to Him so He might live and act in me” (MC 36r). She thus unites “the love of God to the love of others”, since “in the least of the brethren we find Jesus himself, and in Jesus we find God” as Benedict XVI would later put it. (cf. DCE 15; MA 14f).

With respect to fraternal love, she does not consider only the natural qualities of the sisters. She knows that “perfect charity consists in bearing with the faults of others, in not being surprised at their weakness, in being edified by the smallest acts of virtue we see them practice”. She has a special understanding that “charity cannot remain hidden in the depths our hearts” ... (MC 12f). We all know her charitable actions towards Sister Therese of Saint Augustine or other gestures which are unnoticed by the Community. She is aware that “love of neighbor is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and that closing our eyes to our neighbor also blinds us to God.” (DCE 16). Because “love is not merely a sentiment. ... love is never “finished” and complete; throughout life, it changes and matures, and thus remains faithful to itself”. Therese loves “in God and with God, the person” for whom she has no sympathy or whom she does not even know (cf. DCE 17-18).

Her loving knowledge of Jesus translates into fraternal love for the sisters of her religious Community and overflows into a mission contemplating time and eternity. We are all well aware of her missionary zeal and her desires to leave for China. We also know that as a spiritual godmother she offered constant prayers and sacrifices for Father Bellière, entrusted to her by Mother Agnes in 1895, and Father Roulland, entrusted to her by Mother Gonzaga on May 30, 1896. As for eternity, she wants to keep on working for the salvation of souls till the end of time (MB 3f). Her profound desire to “love Jesus and make him loved” is her ambition for after her death, as we can read in some of her letters. Life or death is indifferent to her: “What matters life, what matters death? Love is my peace, my happiness!”

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4. “I feel especially that my mission is about to begin, ... of making God loved as I love Him, of giving my little way to souls”. (CJ 17 July)

This was the desire of Therese of Lisieux expressed in the last days of her existence on earth. How, then, does her testimony help us live the virtue of charity which “will never end” (1 Cor 13: 8), without which “*I am nothing*” (1 Cor 13,2) and by which we will be judged in the evening of life (cf. St John of the Cross, Quotes 58)?

While today's society compels us to face innumerable challenges to remain consistent in our lives as Christians and Carmelites, the example of the saints leads us to allow the desire of Therese of Lisieux to inspire us: “I would like to enlighten souls as did the Prophets, the Doctors...” (MB 3f).

In the Church “the saints are the true bearers of light within history, for they are men and women of faith, hope and love”. (DCE 40). In their lives “one thing becomes clear: those who draw near to God do not withdraw from men, but rather become truly close to them.” (cf. DCE 42). Therese of Lisieux testifies to this clearly.

It is urgent to learn from Jesus as did Therese. Being a man, He taught us to be humans and to love with all our being: body and soul, *eros* which ends up in *ágape*. The wisdom springing from Christian charity rejects spiritualism altogether and manifest itself as Incarnation spirituality. “The real novelty of the New Testament lies not so much in new ideas as in the figure of Christ himself, who gives flesh and blood to those concepts—an unprecedented realism” (DCE 12). The Gospel shows us Jesus concretely loving each and every one of those for whom he surrendered his life. It is the experience of this Love which moves us to follow the Person of Jesus (cf. DCE 1). If we allow Him to attract us we necessarily will walk together with others. “I understand, Lord, that when a soul allows herself to be captivated by the odor of your ointments, she cannot run alone, all the souls whom she loves follow in her trail; this is done without constraint, without effort, it is a natural consequence of her attraction for You”. (MC 34f; cf. 35v).

Charity, as a divine gift, requires me to be aware of the real and concrete existence of each person. Only thus can I like and love my neighbor. When I notice my neighbor, I perform an act of charity towards him; I see him as someone created by the love of God, redeemed by Christ. It is only on this condition that the one and same love, present in each action performed in charity, is in truth participation in divine charity.

Therese lived charity radically and heroically with concrete attitudes in her community life; and she did it with a “smile” even when it was difficult to do so. (Ms C 14f, 28v, 29v). It was charity similar to that of the Good Samaritan, the one taught by Jesus: compassionate and in concrete acts. This reminds us that the virtue of charity permeating our daily relations expresses our participation in the royal “munus” of Christ and allows us to live integral ecology.

5. “I understood that love comprised all vocations, that love was everything, that it embraced all times and places.... in a word, that it was eternal!” (MB 3v)

Therese writes out of obedience and it is through her writings (MA; MB; MC, Poems, Recreation, Letters and paintings) that her doctrine is made known to us. They also are other examples of concrete love

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in her life. She is “an *authentic teacher of faith and Christian life*”. How many people and institutions of charity exist on the face of the earth who have been inspired by her life and doctrine!

When she lived in her family, Therese used to give alms to the poor in the name of her family or even save her coins and offer them for the Works of the Propagation of Faith, (cf. MA 11v; 15f; 22v). In Carmel, it was different. Living in absolute poverty, her only resources, besides fulfilling faithfully and the best she could the tasks confided to her by the Community, were “prayer and sacrifice” for sinners, priests and missionaries. (MA 50f; MC 31v).

Those are examples in which I detect the social aspect of *Christian charity*. It is what is evident in the second part of DCE. Benedict XVI ponders over the social aspect of charity in the Church, “Community of love”, and which needs organization. It is a consequence of loving our neighbor practiced as a service (*diaconia*), which is part of the “fundamental structure of the Church together with the proclamation of the word of God *and of the witness to the word and the liturgy* (cf. DCE 21.25). The Church does not replace the duties of the State. However, it should contribute, through the activities of lay people, in establishing an order of justice in Society, including political activity to be performed as “social charity”. “The Church can never be exempted from practicing charity as an organized activity of believers, and on the other hand, there will never be a situation where the charity of each individual Christian is unnecessary, because in addition to justice man needs, and will always need, love.” (cf. DCE 29).

Concrete means to practice charity as mentioned in DCE can take up various forms, such as, cooperation with civil and philanthropic institutions, with non-profitable organizations, voluntary work, participation in services for the benefit of life (against drugs, human traffic, helping refugees and immigrants, etc.). In this respect, it is important to have professional competence for the services to be performed and equally important is to be moved right from the beginning by an “encounter with God in Christ” which “awakens love and opens spirits to others”. As a result, “love of neighbor will no longer be a commandment imposed, so to speak, from without, but a consequence deriving from faith, a faith which becomes active through love (cf. *Gal 5:6*)”. (DCE 31 a).

We must go beyond political partisanship, since “We contribute to a better world only by personally doing good now, with full commitment and wherever we have the opportunity, independently of partisan strategies and programmes. The Christian’s programme—the programme of the Good Samaritan, the programme of Jesus—is ‘a heart which sees’. This heart sees where love is needed and acts accordingly,” voluntarily. (DCE 31 b-c).

Facing the immense needs of so many people and nations who overcome the capacity or the possibility to correspond adequately: “In all humility we will do what we can, and in all humility we will entrust the rest to the Lord” (DCE 35), without falling into an arrogant contempt for man. “Immersed like everyone else in the dramatic complexity of historical events, they remain unshakably certain that God is our Father and loves us, even when his silence remains incomprehensible.” (DCE 38).

Therese lived the helplessness of faith trusting and believing in the Merciful Love of the Father. She accepted a place around the table with sinners and atheists and there believed and loved. She loved in a creative way in circumstances of absence, and also with respect to people who were naturally antipathetic; in them she saw Jesus...

Thus, Therese continues being an inspiration for social and charitable activities.

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“Ah! it is Jesus alone who can give such a value to our actions; let us love Him with all our strength....” (LT May 22, 1894)

In Therese's life “the love story between God” and her grew with her. It gradually accomplished the “communion of wills,” “of thought and sentiment,” making them increasingly coincide with those of Christ. It was a communion of life born from her “self- abandonment to God” (cf. DCE 17; MA 61v; 67f; 82f; MB 1v). He became her “joy” manifesting itself even in the midst of many sufferings (cf. MC 4v). Her understanding of love is valid for all times, for she knows that “I understood, too, that Our Lord's love is revealed as perfectly in the simplest soul who resists His grace in nothing as in the most excellent soul” (MA 2v).

During her short life among us Therese walked towards the definite encounter of the One whom she had so much loved and at the end pronounced her last declaration of love: “My God... I love you” (CJ September 30, 1897). Therese was then beginning another “giant course” in eternity, where she contemplates, free from veils and in an eternal face to face, The One she had infinitely loved on Earth. She now can be missionary to “the end of times” (MB 3f), interceding and helping so many friends with her prayers and presence .

“Charity gave me the key to my vocation” (MB 3v). Living faith which works through love. (Gál 5,6) in concrete deeds, as did Therese of Lisieux, we establish a contact point between time and eternity, we bring into this world Light and Love which is God. Only being transformed by Love will we live the so beautiful theme of our Congress: *Our vocation is love*. This will guarantee the survival of the person, the family and any community. Love which becomes service is a condition to be recognized as true disciples of Jesus. (Jo 13,34-35).

Living on Love is sailing unceasingly,
Sowing peace and joy in every heart.
Beloved Pilot, Charity impels me,
For I see you in my sister souls.
Charity is my only star.
In its brightness, I sail straight ahead.
I've my motto written on my sail:
“Living on Love.”
(St. Therese, Poetry 17, 8)

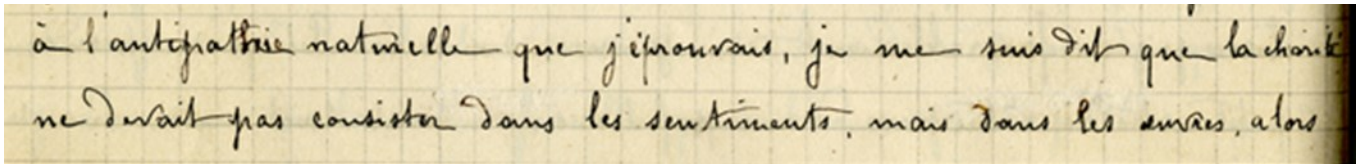
Quotes from the writings of were taken from site: <http://www.archives-carmel-lisieux.fr/carmel>
Church documents were taken from site: www.vatican.va

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The capacity Therese de Lisieux has to lead people to Jesus was acknowledged by John Paul II when he proclaimed her Doctor of the Church : “Thérèse of the Child Jesus possesses an extraordinary wisdom and with her doctrine helps so many men and women of every state in life to know and love Jesus Christ and his Gospel.” (DAS 4).



Picture 1: (<http://www.archives-carmel-lisieux.fr/english/carmel/index.php/c11-20/c13/c13v>): “charity does not consists in feelings but in deeds” (MC 13 v)



Footnotes:

1. Benedict XVI *Deus caritas est* – December 25, 2005 (=DCE) 39. Francis, *Evangelii gaudium* = EG; I Quote Therese Writings: MA = Manuscript A; MB= Manuscript B; MC= Manuscript C; P= Poems; LT = Letters; YN = Yellow Notebook
2. Conference published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 7, 1998, on the 50th anniversary of John Paul II doctorate thesis.
3. Edith Stein, Conference “*Education of Young People in light of Catholic Faith*”, Berlin, January, 1933.
4. Word chosen by the *Oxford Dictionary* as the word of the year in 2016 and which means: “Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” cf. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/post-truth>.

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5. Bento XVI, *Homily for Vespers October 9, 2011*, Chartreuse Serra San Bruno.
6. Address of his Holiness Benedict XVI to the participants at the meeting promoted by the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum" . 23 de janeiro de 2006. cf. http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/pt/speeches/2006/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060123_cor-unum.html.
7. Benedict XVI writes in the *first part of DCE* (nn 1-18) "some essential facts concerning the love which God mysteriously and gratuitously offers to man, together with the intrinsic link between that Love and the reality of human love". *The second part* (nn. 19-39) is more concrete since it deals the ecclesial exercise of the commandment of love of neighbor. And here he insists on some fundamental elements of love of neighbor, so as to "generate in the world a renewed dynamism of commitment in the human answer to divine love" (DCE 1). The courses of charitable actions in the institutions of the Church and of society will be posteriorly developed in his social encyclical *Caritas in veritate* (2009).
8. "But his love has chosen us.
He is our Spouse, our Friend.
We are also hosts
Which Jesus wants to change into Himself.

Sublime mission of the Priest,
You become our mission here below.
Transformed by the Divine Master,
It is He who guides our steps.

We must help the apostles
By our prayers, our love.
Their battlefields are ours.
For them we fight each day" (P 40, 6-8).

9. "To be Your Spouse, to be a Carmelite, and by my union with You to be the Mother of souls, should not this suffice me? And yet it is not so. No doubt, these three privileges sum up my true vocation: Carmelite, Spouse, Mother, and yet I feel within me other vocations. I feel the vocation of the WARRIOR, [35] THE PRIEST, THE APOSTLE, THE DOCTOR, THE MARTYR. Finally, I feel the need and the desire of carrying out the most heroic deeds for You, O Jesus. I feel within my soul the courage of the Crusader, the Papal Guard, and I would want to die on the field of battle in defense of the Church. I feel in me the vocation of the PRIEST. With what love, O Jesus, I would carry You in my hands when, at my voice, You would come down from heaven. And with what love would I give You to souls! But alas! while desiring to be a Priest, I admire and envy the humility of St. Francis of Assisi and I feel the vocation of [45] imitating him in refusing the sublime dignity of the Priesthood. (MB 2v).
10. "Jesus made me feel that there were really souls who have no faith, and who, through the abuse of grace, lost this precious treasure, the source of the only real and pure joys. He permitted my soul to be invaded by the thickest darkness, and that the thought of heaven, up until then so sweet to me, be no longer anything but the cause of struggle and torment. This trial was to last not a few days or a few weeks, it was not to be extinguished until the hour set by God Himself and this hour has not yet come. I would like to be able to express what I feel, but alas! I believe this is impossible. One would have to travel through this dark tunnel to understand its darkness. I will try to explain it by a comparison". (MC 5v).
11. John Paul II conferring Therese of Lisieux with the title of Doctor of the Universal Church (1997), in his letter *Divini amoris scientia* (=DAS), recognizes that in her *autobiographical Manuscripts* (Ms ABC) we find " the most beautiful pages she devoted to trusting abandonment into God's hands, to unity between love of God and love of neighbor, to her missionary vocation in the Church." (DAS 6). Further on, stressing her wisdom, the Pope also highlights the unity between a trusting faith in God and the practice of fraternal charity. She herself recognizes this and asks Jesus : "To love You as You love me, I must borrow your own love" (MsC 35r); and confesses: "the more I am united to Him, the more I love my sisters" (Ms C 12v). Acknowledging this truth, John Paul II adds: "Enlightened by the revealed Word, Therese wrote brilliant pages on the unity between love of God and love of neighbor (cf. *Ms C*, 11v-19r); and she identified with Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper as the expression of her intercession for the salvation of all (cf. *Ms C*, 34r-35r). (DAS 9).
12. "There is in the Community a Sister who has the faculty of displeasing me in everything, in her ways, her words, her character, everything seems very disagreeable to me. And still, she is a holy religious who must be very pleasing to God. Not wishing to give in to the natural antipathy I was experiencing, I told myself that charity must not consist in feelings but in works; then [14r^o] I set

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myself to doing for this Sister what I would do for the person I loved the most. Each time I met her I prayed to God for her, offering Him all her virtues and merits. I felt this was pleasing to Jesus, for there is no artist who doesn't love to receive praise for his works, and Jesus, the Artist of souls, is happy when we don't stop at the exterior, but, penetrating into the inner sanctuary where He chooses to dwell, we admire its beauty. I wasn't content simply with praying very much for this Sister who gave me so many struggles, but I took care to render her all the services possible, and when I was tempted to answer her back in a disagreeable manner, I was content with giving her my most friendly smile, and with changing the subject of the conversation, for the Imitation says: "It is better to leave each one in his own opinion than to enter into arguments."

Frequently, when I was at recreation (I mean during the work periods) and had occasion to work with this Sister, I used to run away like a deserter whenever my struggles became too violent. As she was absolutely unaware of my feelings for her, never did she suspect the motives for my conduct and she remained convinced that her character was very pleasing to me. One day at recreation she asked in almost these words: "Would you tell me, Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus, what attracts you so much toward me; every time you look at me, I see you smile?" Ah! what attracted me was Jesus hidden in the depths of her soul; Jesus who makes sweet what is most bitter. I answered that I was smiling because I was happy to see her (it is understood that I did not add that this was from a spiritual standpoint)". (Ms C 13v- 14f).

13. cfr. LT 219, 220, 221; Poem 47 dedicated to Teófilo Vénard; Poem 48 (My weapons); Recreation 8.
14. P 45, de 21 de janeiro de 1897.
15. "We have seen that God's *eros* for man is also totally *agape*. This is not only because it is bestowed in a completely gratuitous manner, without any previous merit, but also because it is love which forgives. (DCE 10). "... on the one hand, the continuity between Christian faith in God and the search developed by reason and by the world of religions; on the other, however, a novelty appears that surpasses all human research, the novelty that only God himself can reveal to us: the novelty of a love that moved God to take on a human face, even to take on flesh and blood, the entire human being. The *eros* of God is not only a primordial cosmic power; it is love that created man and that bows down over him, as the Good Samaritan bent down to the wounded and robbed man, lying on the side of the road that went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. (Benedict XVI, Address January 23, 2006).
16. Pope Francis on occasion of the International Congress for the 10 years of the encyclical "*Deus Caritas Est*" on February 26, 2016, thus expressed himself: "How I wish that everyone in the Church, every institution, every activity would show that God loves man! The mission that our charitable organizations carry out is important, because they provide so many poor people with a more dignified and human life, which is needed more than ever. But this mission is of utmost importance because, not with words, but with *concrete* love it can make every person feel loved by the Father, loved as his son or daughter and destined for eternal life with him". (Francis to participants in the International Congress on the encyclical "*Deus Caritas Est*" of Benedict XVI on the tenth anniversary of its publication- Feb.26, 2016). In ChL 16. "We come to a full sense of the dignity of the lay faithful if we consider *the prime and fundamental vocation* that the Father assigns to each of them in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit: the vocation to holiness, that is, the perfection of charity. Holiness is the greatest testimony of the dignity conferred on a disciple of Christ".
Today as never before, it is urgent for all Christians to resume the path of evangelical renewal, accepting generously the apostolic invitation to "be saints in all deeds". The extraordinary Synod of 1985, 20 years after the Council, appropriately insisted on this urgency: "The Church, being a mystery, should be seen as a signal and instrument of holiness ... Saints have always been the origin and source of renewal in the most difficult circumstances during the whole story of the Church. Today there is a lack of saints for whom we should diligently ask." ... "But lay people are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way, they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity". (LG 31) Thus, living and working in the world is reality for lay people, not only in an anthropological and social sense, but also specifically theological and ecclesial because it is in their in-the-world situation that God manifests his plan and communicates them a special vocation to "seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God". (LG 31).
17. ChL n. 41: "Through charity towards one's neighbor, the lay faithful exercise and manifest their participation in the kingship of Christ, that is, in the power of the Son of man who "came not to be served but to serve" (Mk 10:45). They live and manifest such a kingship in a most simple yet exalted manner, possible for everyone at all times because charity is the highest gift offered by the Spirit for building up the Church (cf. 1 Cor 13:13) and for the good of humanity. In fact, *charity gives life and sustains the works of solidarity that look to the total needs of the human being.*". ChL 59: "every area of the lay faithfuls' lives, as different as they are, enters into the plan of God, who desires that these very areas be the "places in time" where the love of Christ is revealed and realized for both the glory of the Father and service of others. Every activi-

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- ty, every situation, every precise responsibility – as, for example, skill and solidarity in work, love and dedication in the family and the education of children, service to society and public life and the promotion of truth in the area of culture – are the occasions ordained by Providence for a “continuous exercise of faith, hope and charity”. (AA 4)
18. “Saint Therese of Lisieux invites us to practice the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. In the end, a world of exacerbated consumption is at the same time a world which mistreats life in all its forms”. (Francis, *Laudato si'*, 230).
 19. John Paul II, *Divinis amoris scientia* 8.
 20. “You know, O my God, I have never desired anything but to love You, and I am ambitious for no other glory. [35r°] Your Love has gone before me, and it has grown with me, and now it is an abyss whose depths I cannot fathom. Love attracts love, and, my Jesus, my love leaps toward Yours; it would like to fill the abyss which attracts it, but alas! it is not even like a [5] drop of dew lost in the ocean! For me to love You as You love me, I would have to borrow Your own Love, and then only would I be at rest” (MC 34 v-35f; cf. DCE 17-18).
 21. The capacity Therese de Lisieux has to lead people to Jesus was acknowledged by John Paul II when he proclaimed her Doctor of the Church : “Thérèse of the Child Jesus possesses an extraordinary wisdom and with her doctrine helps so many men and women of every state in life to know and love Jesus Christ and his Gospel.” (DAS 4).



OCDS Spiritual Corner — Be With Me

Submitted by Sarah – of the Resurrection – OCDS Dallas

When my youngest son was around seven, he would come to me in the kitchen or wherever I was working at the moment and ask me to come back in the playroom with him. I would often get frustrated, since there were so many other chores that needed attention. I finally asked him why he wanted me back there when I wasn't doing anything with him.

He said "Be with me, Mommy! I just want you to be with me." Then he would tug me down onto his bed and I would sit there and watch while he played games. He would be able to show me instantly all the cool things he was doing, and even though I wasn't really doing anything, just being there was what he needed. After about thirty minutes or so, he was satisfied, and would tell me I could leave.

Since coming to Carmel my son's words have often come to mind, especially in regard to our thirty minutes of daily meditation. Our Lord just wants me to be with him. Carmel is about being with Him. By being with Him, I am "letting myself be loved," (St. Elizabeth of the Trinity) even though I may not feel like much is happening.

However, slowly but surely that love is transforming me into the person I have always been meant to be from the moment I was a thought in God's mind. When we live together with Him, our love grows more perfect and complete. (I John 4:17)

Sometimes I can imagine the Christ child, tugging at my hand at home, or work, asking me to just "Be with me." So if only for a minute, I am with Him, and by that love entering in I am energized to return to the work that needs to be done.



OCDS Spiritual Corner — Kenosis Article

by Gardo G. Blado, St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face OCDS Study Group

“Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-7)

Kenosis is a concept in Christian theology which clarifies the Incarnation of Christ derived from the previous Bible passage. It is defined as the 'self-emptying' (or self-limiting) of one's own will and becoming entirely receptive to God's divine will. A common advice to people facing adversity is to transform their attitude by viewing the glass to be half-full rather than half-empty. In our present society, emptiness is viewed as something negative, a condition to be avoided. This explains why we have committed ourselves to making sure that our time is occupied with activity: entertainment, work, travel, reading, socializing, church activities, etc. It seems that we need a source of continual stimulation to “fill up” our lives. No doubt, these things are a part of God's blessings and can be good. However, there will be times in our lives when we will experience emptiness.

Our chief motivation to pursue the above endeavors is to be happy. As explained by Fr. Spitzer, there are four levels of happiness namely, External-Pleasure material, Ego-Comparative, Contributive-Emphatic, and Transcendent. It is only when we reach the fourth level of happiness (the Transcendent) can our emptiness be possibly satisfied completely. Since God is infinitely full, only He can satisfy our emptiness infinitely times over. In fact, St. John of the Cross in “The Living Flame of Love” stanza 3, paragraphs 18 and 22, talks about our soul's infinite capacity for an infinite God. When viewed through God's eyes, self-emptiness assumes a positive perspective—as we open ourselves and receive God's blessings, we give away these blessings to others, empty ourselves only to receive and be filled with God's new blessings. In this light, self-emptiness becomes a part of the transformative cycle of states of emptiness-fullness which benefits not only us but also the people around us.

Our Lord Jesus Himself is the model of this kenotic process. God created us in His image and designed us to love Him and our neighbors. He gives us His love but since we do not reciprocate this love completely, He sent us Jesus, His Son Incarnate. Jesus' death on the Cross was the ultimate kenosis. Being God Himself, His was a gift to us of infinite self-emptying which we can accept or reject. His hope is that all His creatures give back this emptying completely. We fulfill His plan for us as we give back His love through our self-emptying as we love Him and pass this love to others. We can see the plan of salvation as the completion of this kenotic process: God empties Himself to us and all His creatures empty themselves completely to Him.

In the talk given by Fr. Rolheiser during the San Antonio 2017 OCDS Regional Congress, he talked about three stages of life: Getting Our Lives Together, in which we give up things and bad habits to lead a good life; How To Give our Life Away in which through our activity, we strive to live more for others than ourselves; and finally, How to Give our Deaths Away in which through our limited activity and eventual inactivity we strive to empty ourselves of our desire to control and to totally submit to God so as to bless others. In each of these periods of our lives, there is an apparent self-emptying that can be glimpsed.

This self-emptying can also be seen in the writings of St. John of the Cross. St. John's stages of prayer comprise of the Active Night, Passive Night and Divine Union. Only when we are emptied through our efforts with God's grace in the Active Night and through God's effort in the Passive Night will He fill us up in Divine Union.

In conclusion, the concept of kenosis can be a helpful guide in our Christian walk. The different levels of happiness discussed by Fr. Spitzer, the different stages of our lives explained by Fr. Rolheiser and St. John of the Cross' stages of prayer can all be understood in view of the process of self-emptying that reciprocates God's kenotic love for us bringing us to union with Him.

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OCDS Spiritual Corner — Kenosis Article

by *Gardo G. Blado, St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face OCDS Study Group*

As we look forward to the new year with hope, may we reflect on what we can “empty ourselves” of to allow the Lord Jesus to fill our hearts with His kenotic love as He assumed human likeness for only when we are empty can we be truly full.

1. Ernest L. Simmons, “Towards a Kenotic Pneumatology: Quantum Field Theory and the Theology of the Cross”, in *Expanding Humanity's Vision of God: New Thoughts on Science and Religion*, ed. Robert L. Herrmann (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001) 239-250.
2. Kenosis. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenosis>.
3. Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D., *Finding True Happiness*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015).
4. *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D., rev.ed. (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 1991).
5. This is beautifully developed in terms of God’s thirst for us in Fr. Joseph Langford’s book, *Mother Teresa’s Secret Fire*, (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 2008).
6. See also Ronald Rolheiser’s *Sacred Fire*, (New York: Penguin Random House LLC, 2014).
7. James W. Kinn, *The Practice of Contemplation According to St. John of the Cross*, (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 2009).
8. Mark O’Keefe, O.S.B., *Love Awakened by Love*, (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 2014).



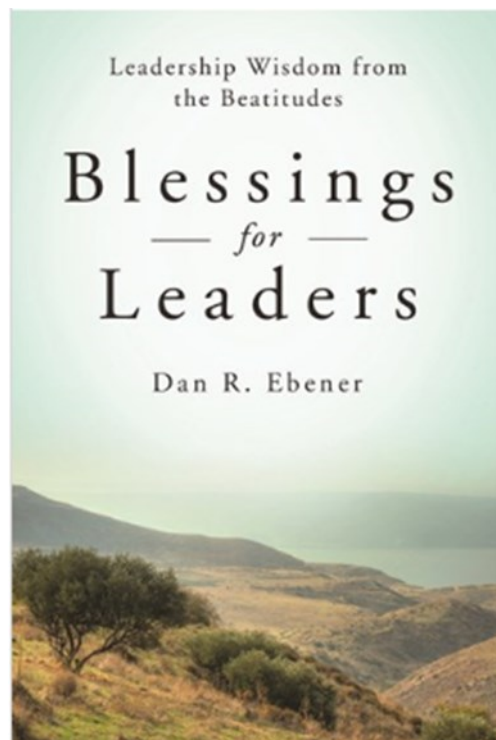
OCDS Book Reviews — Blessings for Leaders

Submitted by John Stevens, OCDS

The beatitudes are one of those difficult parts of Christianity which is often left untried. In **Blessings for Leaders: Leadership Wisdom from the Beatitudes** (Liturgical Press) Dr. Dan Ebener shows us how to try—how to apply the beatitudes to our daily life, especially if we are in positions of leadership. The author presents Jesus as the epitome of “servant leadership,” who trains His disciples during three years of Gospel ministry to be the future leaders of His Church. First, they must be followers: “Come, learn, follow.” Then they will be leaders: “Go, teach, lead.”

A full chapter is devoted to each of the eight beatitudes, and the author describes a particular virtue developed in that beatitude and how it relates to leadership. Wisdom, for example, is the leadership virtue discovered in poverty of spirit. Each beatitude is treated in a similar way. The author’s overview is followed by scriptural support from the Gospels and by engaging and memorable stories from his own work in the Archdiocese of Davenport, in Eastern Europe, and in Central America. Each chapter concludes with questions for study or discussion.

Dr. Ebener presently teaches organizational leadership at Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa. He approaches his subject as a teacher, analyst and activist; and he writes in the succinct, easy-to-digest style of the best business literature. Though the Secular Carmelite reader will not find a contemplative point of view, there is plenty of material here for fruitful reflection. I highly recommend **Blessings for Leaders** as a guide to leadership in Carmel according to the spirit of the beatitudes.



Carmelite Obituaries



Carmen Ileana Flores, OCDS
Community of Saint Mariam of Jesus Crucified
McAllen, Texas

Carmen Ileana Flores completed her journey on earth peacefully on December 21, 2017 at her home.

Ileana, known as Mama Ileana to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, was involved for many years in civic and cultural organizations, dutifully served her church community at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church and above all was a devoted and loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Ileana showered her children with unconditional love and support. She was fiercely protective, offered advice as needed and was always available with a compassionate ear and an open heart. She loved profoundly, lived with integrity, lead with grace and served with fidelity. Mama Ileana was a remarkable gourmet cook, appreciated fine dining, and good company. She enjoyed playing games with her children and grandchildren, had a ready and infectious laugh and is now dancing in heaven.

She was preceded in death by her grandson Jimmy Vogel, her sister Norma Yzaguirre, her brother Leonel Garcia Estrada. Ileana is survived by her sister, Thelma Sanchez and her brother Xavier (Jim) Guerra, eight children, Norma Vogel, Carmen Flores, Patricia Eder, Ana (John) Wallace, Rafael Flores Jr., Roberto (Maria) Flores, Rick (Sharon) Flores, Cecilia (Andy) Ramos, a plethora of grandchildren and great-grandchildren and so her legacy continues.

A private ceremony was held for Ileana in celebration and remembrance of her long and fulfilling life. The family would like to thank her caregivers and Renaissance Hospice and Palliative Care.

Ileana was one of the earliest members of the Community of Saint Mariam of Jesus Crucified in McAllen, Texas; and the first to be called home by the Lord. She was definitely professed on October 15th, 2006; and served one term as Councilor. We will miss her calm and loving presence. May she continue to watch over our community.



Julia M. Garrett, OCDS
St. Louis Community
Columbus, Ohio

Submitted by Candy Kunzelman, OCDS

Julia began her journey in Carmel in the Columbus, Ohio Community. She was Clothed on April 16, 1985 and made her First Promise on November 10, 1987, taking the religious name Julia of St. Jude. She made her Final Promise on November 13, 1990 in her Ohio Community. She then joined the Lafayette Community in Louisiana when she and her husband bought a farm. Upon the death of her husband, Hayman Garrett, Julia sold the farm and she and her daughter, Bethany, moved to O'Fallon, Missouri. She joined our St. Louis Community in 2003. She remained here for 14 years and just recently moved to Forney,

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Texas. Julia had a deep love for God and a wisdom that grew from that union. Her peaceful and serene spirit was a living example of the fruit that comes from surrendering to God's will and trusting in His love for us. She enjoyed reading and quilting in her spare time. In life, Julia was devoted to her husband Hayman, her children, and grandchildren as well as her Carmelite family.

Funeral services for Julia M. Garrett were held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 30, 2017, at the Concord Baptist Church in Dallas with Pastor Errol Coner officiating. Interment followed at Port Hudson National Cemetery in Zachary, Louisiana on January 2, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. May God grant you eternal rest dear Julia. Please pray for us as we pray for you



Mary Louise Craft Fusilier, OCDS

Community of St. Joseph and St. Therese of Lisieux
Jackson, MS

*Submitted by Dorothy Ashley, OCDS
President*

Mary Louise Craft Fusilier, affectionately known as “Louise,” went to receive her heavenly award on October 2, Feast of the Guardian Angels. Louise was an Infirm member of the Secular Community of St. Joseph and St. Therese of Lisieux in Jackson, MS. A beautiful funeral liturgy was given on October 6, 2017 in the Chapel of Hartman-Hughes Funeral Home in Tylertown, MS with Father Martin Gillespie officiating.

Louise was a resident of Terry, MS and passed away at Merit Health Hospital in Jackson on Monday, October 2, 2017. She was born November 14, 1939 in Walthall County, MS, the daughter of the late James “J. P.” and Kathleen Roberts Craft. In addition to her parents, she was also preceded in death by a brother, James Craft and sister, Marie Craft.

She was a member of St. Therese Catholic Church in Jackson, MS and was a very prayerful, faith-filled person who knew about the power, love and mercy of Jesus. Prior to becoming homebound, she loved to go to Mass and prayer services regularly. She was very fond of praying the Rosary and had a special love for Jesus and his mother, Mary. She became a member of the Secular Order of Carmel on October 11, 2003, taking the devotional name, "Mary Louise of Our Lady of Sorrows" and remained faithful to this prophetic "vocation of prayer and suffering" until her final days. Louise became an "Infirm" member of her local Carmelite Secular Community in November, 2009 after her health began to fail. In the latter years of her life, she was aided by the prayers and friendship of her Secular Community, family and friends and the many graces Jesus bestowed upon her. In turn, her sufferings became her prayers for her friends and family whom she loved very much.

Louise was a homemaker who enjoyed taking care of her family and she always put others first. She loved being outdoors, gardening, and hobby-farming with her chickens, turkeys, and guineas.

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Survivors include her husband, Mark Fusilier; daughters Kathy Hawkins (Mike), and Amanda Gibson; son Gregory Herr; grandchildren Bethany Hawkins, Joshua Hawkins, Javier Anda, and Isabella Fusilier; and nephews Ken Craft and Micah Craft.



Dolores Long, OCDS

St. Therese, the Little Flower, Study Group
Lawrenceville, GA

April 4, 1935 – May 4, 2017

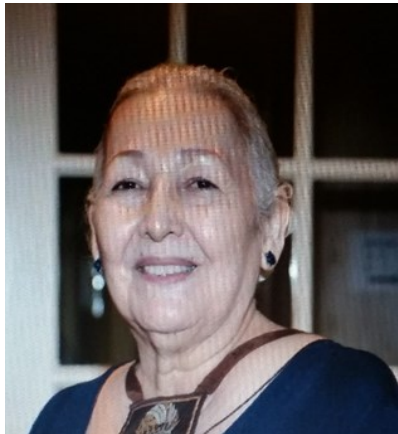
Dolores was 82 years old when the Lord, in His great mercy, called her home on the National Day of Prayer for 2017. She was the first member of our Community to die and was greatly loved by all for she was fondly called “dear Dolores.” She was a woman of great faith and prayer who lived her Carmelite vocation with great fidelity and love. Dolores was born on April 4, 1935 and we know almost nothing about her life before Carmel. She was a quiet, holy person. She married and gave birth to three daughters, and was the beloved grandmother of two granddaughters and three great grandchildren. For many years she worked in the labs at Gwinnett Medical Hospital, Lawrenceville GA. Dolores was a very active member of St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Lawrenceville, GA. Her ministries there included being involved with St. Vincent de Paul Society for many years as a caseworker. Also she was a Catechist in RCIA, and was involved in the Senior Ministry and volunteered many years in the Religious Education Office.

In 2004 she began her journey in Carmel when this Community was still in its infancy. She was Clothed on Oct. 30, 2004 and made her 1st Promise on Nov. 11, 2007 and took the name Dolores Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Her name became who she was. Her great joy was on Feb. 2, 2011 when she made her Definitive Promise. She served in the Community as our Treasurer from 2008-2011, then was the Housekeeping Coordinator from 2011-2014. She was full of profound insights in our small group discussions and was willing to do anything for anyone in Community. While on retreat in 2014 she fell and hit her head. This seemed to be the beginning of her physical decline. Shortly thereafter she asked to be an Infirm Member. About a year later she went into a Memory Impaired Assisted Living Facility. She was most welcoming to the Carmelites who visited her and brought her the Eucharist. She wanted to know all that was going on in the Community. She was a true Carmelite and very edifying to all who visited her. Dolores lived the Beatitudes even in her last years.

The Lord called her home on the National Day of Prayer, for she was truly a very prayerful person. May our dear Dolores pray for us.

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Tereza Jalomo , OCDS

San Juan de la Cruz

Houston, TX

2/12/1946 to 12/21/2017

Tereza Jalomo was a founding member of San Juan de la Cruz community in Houston, TX. Tereza was clothed August 9, 1987. Tereza made her first promise on July 16, 1989 and made her final promise on December 12, 1992 . From 1990 to 1996, she was the Formation Director. From 1996 to 1999, Tereza served the community as a Councilor. From 2005 to 2008, Tereza served as secretary for the community. Tereza was always available to the community by serving in formation of new aspirants or teaching the practice of prayer to others in the church community. Tereza had a vibrant personality and her beautiful smile made everyone feel welcome and loved.

Tereza was a very active member of Holy Name Catholic Church, singing in the choir and giving teachings on Carmelite Saints. Tereza also sang in the diocesan choir at the Cathedral. She taught Vida y Oracion (Life and Prayer) at St. Mark Catholic Church along with a couple of other San Juan de la Cruz community members.

Tereza leaves behind her husband Elpidio Jalomo, OCDS also a definitively professed member of San Juan de la Cruz community, and two sons and a daughter, 12 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. The Jalomo family, San Juan de la Cruz community, and Holy Name Catholic Church will miss Tereza deeply.



Parting Words

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



“I think that in Heaven my mission will be to draw souls by helping them go out of themselves to cling to God by a wholly simple and loving movement, and to keep them in this great silence within that will allow God to communicate Himself to them and transform them into Himself.”

- *Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity*

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