



CASA GENERALIZIA CARMELITANI SCALZI

CORSO D' ITALIA, 38, 00198 ROMA

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE
TERESIAN CARMELITE FAMILY

20 October 1997

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I write to you I am moved with great happiness. This morning the Holy Father, John Paul II declared our sister Thérèse of Lisieux a Doctor of the Church. This was a solemn ceremony which took place before more than sixty thousand people from all over the world gathered in St Peter's square.

It was an extraordinary ceremony transmitted by television to many parts of the world. It was a universal liturgy in which many languages were heard. East and West mingled to thank God for the gift of our sister Thérèse and for her doctrine and experience so enlightening for the people of God whose pilgrimage lies between "the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God" (Lumen Gentium, 8) on the threshold of the third millennium.

While I was gazing at the photograph of Thérèse displayed on the balcony of the Basilica and the urn containing her relics which had become a pilgrim and evangelizing presence I thought about all of you acclaiming St Thérèse and our great responsibility as the Teresian Carmelite family. Thérèse of Lisieux was the Lord's free gift to us. In acknowledging this gift we should feel the need for a generous and loving reply that commits us to serving God and our neighbour with a dynamic and creative fidelity to our charism.

In thinking about the life of Thérèse of Lisieux and our saints "Let us adopt the holy presumption that with the Lord's help we will be like them... Let us set aside these things that in themselves are nothing, using only those that lead us to this end without end, so as to love Him and serve Him more, for He will live forever and ever (Foundations 29:33).

In the sacristy after the Mass, I thanked the Holy Father in the name of all the Carmelites throughout the world for having declared Thérèse of Lisieux a Doctor of the Church. The Pope asked me to tell you all that you were in his thoughts and that he sends you all a very special blessing.

Thousands of Carmelites and Christians from all over the world thronged the streets of Rome. We had prayer vigils, conferences, concerts and fraternal meetings. Tomorrow we will meet the Holy Father. On the 22nd the celebrations will come to a close with an intimate family Mass in our Parish, San Pancrazio. A special number of our SIC Newsletter will help us to savour these unforgettable and challenging events.

May our little sister reveal to us her delicate and loving presence so that where God has placed us we may be signs and instruments of a Merciful God in a world that suffers from the vacuum and fear of the unknown and that has grown tired of groping for ways leading to peace.

Fr. Carmilo Maccise, O.C.D., Superior General



Love was the key to her vocation

Pope John Paul II proclaims Saint Thérèse a Doctor of the Church on World Mission Sunday

"Fulfilling the wishes of many Brothers in the Episcopate and of very many faithful throughout the world, after consulting the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and hearing the opinion of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith about her eminent doctrine, with certain knowledge and after lengthy reflection, with the fullness of Our apostolic authority We declare Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, virgin, to be a Doctor of the Universal Church. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

With these solemn words delivered in Latin, Pope John Paul II bestowed the title "doctor of the Church" on St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, the world-renowned French Carmelite who was born in 1873 and died at the Carmel of Lisieux in 1897. The proclamation was made during a solemn papal Mass celebrated in front of St Peter's Basilica on Sunday, 19 October. The square, bathed in brilliant sunshine, was filled with thousands of pilgrims who participated in a liturgy that was enhanced by a number of special elements.

At the beginning of Mass, the saint's relics, which had been brought from Lisieux for the centenary of her death, were carried in procession and put in a place of honour before the altar. After the proclamation, repre-

representatives from the six continents showered the reliquary and the crucifix with rose petals, as the choir and assembly sang verses taken from St Thérèse's poem "*Jeter des fleurs*".

After the Gospel had been chanted in Latin, the same text was sung in Old Slavonic by a Russian deacon, recalling the fact that Pope Pius XI had proclaimed the young Carmelite patroness of the Pontifical Russian College in Rome. The Gospel was followed by the chanting of a special *troparion* and *kontakion* in the saint's honour.

The Scripture readings for the liturgy (Is 60: 1-6; Eph 3: 2-12; Mt 11: 25-30) reflected St Thérèse's role as patroness of the missions and her doctrine of the "little way", which formed the theme of the Holy Father's homily. After Communion, a passage from the saint's *Story of a Soul* was read in French, in which she wrote her famous words: "In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be Love".

Here is a translation of the Holy Father's homily, which was given in Italian and in French.



1. "Nations shall come to your light" (Is 60: 3). The echo of Epiphany already resounds in the words of the prophet Isaiah as a fervent expectation and luminous hope. It is precisely the connection with this solemnity that enables us to perceive more clearly this Sunday's missionary character. Isaiah's prophecy, in fact, broadens the perspective of salvation to all humanity, and thus anticipates the prophetic act of the Magi who, coming from the East to adore the divine Child born in Bethlehem (cf. Mt 2: 1-12), proclaim and inaugurate the adherence of the nations to Christ's message.

All persons are called to accept in faith the saving Gospel. The Church is sent to all peoples, all lands and

cultures: "Go ... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28: 19-20). These words, spoken by Christ before ascending into heaven, together with the promise he made to the Apostles and their successors that he would be with them until the end of the world (cf Mt 28: 20), are the essence of the missionary mandate: in the person of his ministers, it is Christ himself who goes to the nations, to those who have not yet received the proclamation of the faith.

A woman, a young person, a contemplative

2. Thérèse Martin, a Discalced Carmelite of Lisieux, ardently desired to be a missionary. She was one, to the point that she could be proclaimed patroness of the missions. Jesus himself showed her how she could live this vocation: by fully practising the commandment of love, she would be immersed in the very heart of the Church's mission, supporting those who proclaim the Gospel with the mysterious power of prayer and communion. Thus she achieved what the Second Vatican Council emphasized in teaching that the Church is missionary by nature (cf. *Ad Gentes*, n. 2). Not only those who choose the missionary life but all the baptized are in some way sent ad gentes. This is why I chose this missionary Sunday to proclaim St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face a doctor of the universal Church: a woman, a young person, a contemplative.

3. Everyone thus realizes that today something surprising is happening. St Thérèse of Lisieux was unable to attend a university or engage in systematic study. She died young: nevertheless, from this day forward she will be honoured as a doctor of the Church, an outstanding recognition which raises her in the esteem of the entire Christian community far beyond any academic title.

Indeed, when the Magisterium proclaims someone a doctor of the Church, it intends to point out to all the faithful, particularly to those who perform in the Church the fundamental service of preaching or who undertake the delicate task of theological teaching and research, that the doctrine professed and proclaimed by a certain person can be a reference point, not only because it conforms to revealed truth, but also because it sheds new light on the mysteries of the faith, a deeper understanding of Christ's mystery.

The Council reminded us that, with the help of the Holy Spirit understanding of the "deposit of the faith" continually grows in the Church, and not only does the richly contemplative study to which theologians are called, not only does the Magisterium of pastors, endowed with the "sure charism of truth", contribute to this growth process, but also that "profound understanding of spiritual things" which is given through experience, with the wealth and diversity of gifts, to all those who let themselves be docilely led by God's Spirit (cf. *Dei Verbum* n. 8). *Lumen Gentium* for its part, teaches that God himself "speaks to us" (n. 50) in his saints. It is for this reason that the spiritual experience of the saints has a special value for deepening our knowledge of the divine mysteries, which remain ever greater than our thoughts, and not by chance does the Church choose only saints to be distinguished with the title of "doctor".

St. Thérèse intensely lived the truth of love

4. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face is the youngest of all the "doctors of the Church", but her ardent spiritual journey shows such maturity, and the insights of faith expressed in her writings are so vast and profound that they deserve a place among the great spiritual masters.

In the Apostolic Letter which I wrote for this occasion, I stressed several salient aspects of her doctrine. But how can we fail to recall here what can be considered its high point, starting with the account of the moving discovery of her special vocation in the Church?

"Charity", she wrote, "gave me the key to my vocation. I understood that if the Church had a body composed of different members, the most necessary and most noble of all could not be lacking to it, and so I understood that the Church had a heart and that this heart was burning with love. I understood that it was love alone that made the Church's members act, that if love were ever extinguished, apostles would not proclaim the Gospel and martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. I understood that love includes all vocations.... Then in the excess of my delirious joy, I cried out: 'O Jesus, my Love ... at last I have found my vocation; my vocation is Love!'" (*Manuscript B*, 3v).

This is a wonderful passage which suffices itself to show that one can apply to St Thérèse the Gospel pas-



sage we heard in the Liturgy of the Word: "I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes" (Mt II: 25).

5. Thérèse of Lisieux did not only grasp and describe the profound truth of Love as the centre and heart of the Church, but in her short life she lived it intensely. It is precisely this convergence of doctrine and concrete experience, of truth and life, of teaching and practice, which shines with particular brightness in this saint, and which makes her an attractive model especially for young people and for those who are seeking true meaning for their life.

Before the emptiness of so many words, Thérèse offers another solution, the one Word of salvation which, understood and lived in silence, becomes a source of renewed life. She counters a rational culture, so often overcome by practical materialism, with the disarming simplicity of the "little way" which, by returning to the essentials, leads to the secret of all life: the divine Love that surrounds and penetrates every human venture. In a time like ours, so frequently marked by an ephemeral and hedonistic culture, this new doctor Church proves to be remarkably effective in enlightening the mind and heart of those who hunger and thirst for truth and love.

An eminent model and guide for Christians today

6. St Thérèse is presented as a doctor of the Church on the day we are celebrating World Mission Sunday. She had the ardent desire to dedicate herself to proclaiming the Gospel, and she would have liked to have crowned her witness with the supreme sacrifice of martyrdom (cf. *Manuscript B*, 3r). Moreover, her intense personal commitment supporting the apostolic work of Fr Maurice Belliere and Fr Adolphe Roulland, missionaries respectively in Africa and China, is well-

known. In her zealous love for evangelization, Thérèse had one ideal, as she herself says: "What we ask of him is to work for his glory, to love him and to make him loved" (Letter 220).

The way she took to reach this ideal of life is not that of the great undertakings reserved for the few, but on the contrary, a way within everyone's reach, the "little way", a path of trust and total self-abandonment to the Lord's grace. It is not a prosaic way, as if it were less demanding. It is in fact a demanding reality, as the Gospel always is. But it is a way in which one is imbued with a sense of trusting abandonment to divine mercy, which makes even the most rigorous spiritual commitment light.

Because of this way in which she receives everything as "grace", because she puts her relationship with Christ and her choice of love at the centre of everything, because of the place she gives to the ardent impulses of the heart on her spiritual journey, Thérèse of Lisieux is a saint who remains young despite the passing years, and she is held up as an eminent model and guide on the path of Christians, as we approach the third millennium.

7. Therefore the Church's joy is great on this day that crowns the expectations and prayers of so many who have understood, in requesting the title of doctor, this special gift of God and have supported its recognition and acceptance. We would all like to give thanks to the Lord together, particularly with the professors and students of Rome's ecclesiastical universities, who in recent days have begun the new academic year.

Yes, O Father, we bless you, together with Jesus (cf. Mt 11: 25), because you have "hidden your secrets from the wise and understanding" and have revealed them to this "little one" whom today you hold up again for our attention and imitation.

Thank you for the wisdom you gave her, making her an exceptional witness and teacher of life for the whole Church! Thank you for the love you poured out upon her and which continues to illumine and warm hearts, spurring them to holiness. Thank you Father, for making her close to us today with a new title, to the praise and glory of your name for ever and ever. Amen!

The desire Thérèse expressed to "spend her heaven doing good on earth" (*Opere Complete*, p. 1050), continues to be fulfilled in a marvellous way.



St Thérèse lived filial abandonment to Mary

Before imparting the final blessing of the Mass he celebrated on Sunday, 19 October, to proclaim St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face a doctor of the Church, the Holy Father led the recitation of the Angelus, which he introduced with a brief reflection on St Thérèse's relationship to Our Lady. He also greeted the various pilgrim groups attending the solemn celebration. Here is a translation of his address, which was given in Italian, French, English and Spanish.

Today, World Mission Sunday, we turn our attention especially to St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, whom this morning I am proclaiming a doctor of the universal Church. She is a model of missionary commitment and the patroness of the missions, although she never left the cloister of the Lisieux Carmel.

It could be said that Thérèse made her own the exceptional missionary vision of Mary most holy, who inspired the first apostolic community with her prayerful presence and perfect charity, so that the dynamism instilled by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost would carry the proclamation of the Gospel to the very ends of the earth.

From early childhood there was a deep bond between St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and Mary. She attributed her miraculous healing at the age of ten to the unforgettable experience of Mary's smile, seen on the face of the statue placed in her room (cf. *Manuscript A*, 30r). The "Madonna of the Smile" would also stand in front of the infirmary bed where the saint ended her brief life consumed by illness. The spirit of filial abandonment to Our Lady, which marked little Thérèse's whole life, is offered to us today as an example to imitate. May St Thérèse of the Child Jesus help us to love,

follow and imitate the Blessed Virgin, Mother and Queen of All Saints.

The Holy Father then greeted the various groups in their own languages.

I greet the Italian-speaking pilgrims who have come to take part in this solemn celebration. In particular, I wish to extend a cordial greeting to the professors and students of the Roman ecclesiastical universities at the start of the new academic year. Dear friends, the "lesson" that little Thérèse offers the Christian people is particularly significant for you: indeed, all who are called to contemplate and transmit the truths of the faith must cultivate that deep intimacy with God which belongs to the "little" and the "humble". Treasure this teaching!

I warmly greet the French-speaking pilgrims, especially those from the Lisieux region where St Thérèse of the Child Jesus lived. Her spiritual figure and message have inspired many institutes involved in proclaiming the Gospel, particularly the *Mission de France* founded in 1941 by Cardinal Suhard, who started many missionary activities among the poor and in the scientific world. May everyone take the new doctor of the Church as a model of spiritual life and apostolic courage!

I welcome the English-speaking pilgrims who are here to honour St Thérèse, patroness of the missions and now a doctor of the Church. I commend to you her example of a life dedicated to the love of God, which she expressed in contemplative prayer, in community life and in her concern for the spread of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Through the intercession of St Thérèse, may God grant you and your families every grace and blessing.

I cordially greet the Spanish-speaking pilgrims attending this celebration in which St Thérèse of the Child Jesus was proclaimed a doctor of the Church. May the Virgin Mary help us to see ourselves as the beloved children of God and to come before him with the simplicity and trust that the new doctor of the Church taught us in her spiritual way. My heartfelt blessing to all.

Lastly, I greet all the Carmelites present here and throughout the world. □

(Taken from *L'Osservatore Romano*, Oct. 22, 1997)

DISCALCED CARMELITE RINGS A few years ago some industrious persons had done the research and planning to engage a company to manufacture some rings with the seal of the Order of Carmel. They are still available by dealing directly with the company. Mine, below, 11 and a half, is a little worn from constant use.

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CARMELITE DIGEST is a 64 page Catholic quarterly published seasonally by the California-Arizona Province of the Discalced Carmelite Friars. Fr. David Centner OCD, Editor. Editorial Consultants: Frs. James Geoghegan and John Melka OCD.

The logo represents the sources of all things Carmelite. Along the range of Mt. Carmel there is a small valley, the *Wadi es Shiah* (Valley of the Martyrs), indicated by the two hill peaks. In this valley, opening to the Mediterranean, the first Carmelites (12th c.) lived as hermits in the available caves. In their midst they built their first chapel, St. Mary of Carmel (13th c.). The stylized chapel is shown reflecting on the nearby "fountain of Elijah," for in their Rule the Carmelites are described as located "*iuxta fontem Eliae*."



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A Doctor for the Third Millennium

Rome, 1 October, 1997

Fr. Camilo Maccise, OCD

Fr. Joseph Chalmers, O.Carm.

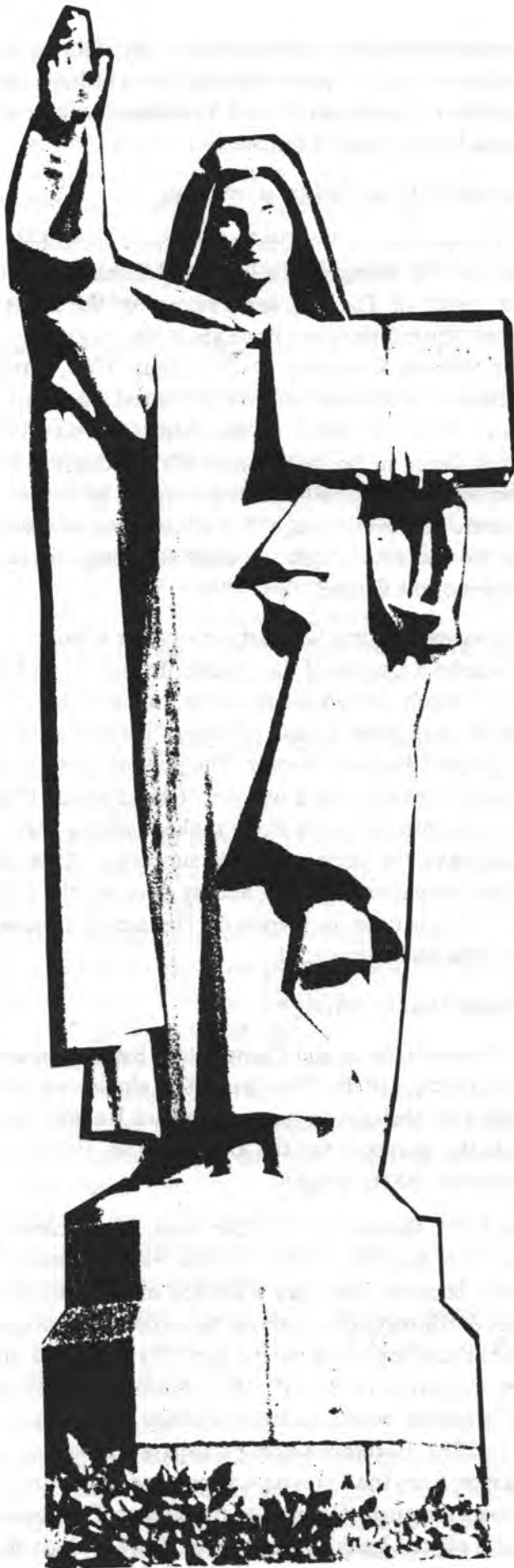
Dear brothers and sisters in Carmel:

1. Little over a year ago we wrote to you to reflect upon the message of our sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, on the occasion of the Centenary of her death. We had no idea then that we would be writing another circular letter about her so soon. This time it is to consider the meaning and significance of the title Doctor of the Church which, as Pope John Paul II announced recently in Paris at the International Gathering of Youth, he will officially bestow on her in Rome, on 19th October, 1997, International Mission Sunday.

2. On the morning of 24th August, at the closure in Paris of the International Gathering of Youth, the Pope described the character and doctrine of our sister, and the motives for declaring her a Doctor, after a "careful study" and many petitions received from the Universal Church. He called Thérèse of Lisieux a young Carmelite who was filled with the love of God, who offered herself completely to this love, and who knew how to practice love of neighbour in the ordinary things of daily life. She imitated Jesus as she sat at the table of sinners, his brothers and sisters, so that they would be purified by love, since her ardent desire was to see everyone enlightened by faith.

She discovered, the Pope continued, that her vocation was to be love in the heart of the Church, and walked the "little way" of children who take refuge in God with bold confidence. The core of her message is her child-like attitude, which can be proposed to all the faithful. "Her teachings, a veritable science of love", are the radiant expression of her knowledge of the mystery of Christ, and her personal experience of grace. She will continue to assist the people of today and the future to understand better the gifts of God and to spread the Good News of infinite love.

3. The Pope called her: "a Carmelite and an apostle, a teacher of spiritual wisdom for numerous consecrated and lay persons, patroness of the missions". He mentioned that she occupies a place of primary importance



in the Church, and that her doctrine merits to find a place among the most effective." He concluded by stating that he wished to announce the Doctorate of Thérèse of Lisieux during the gathering of the youth since she, a young saint, so close to our times, has a message particularly suitable for them.

In the school of the Gospel she leads the way towards Christian maturity for young people, "calling them to unlimited generosity and inviting them in the heart of the Church to be apostles and ardent witnesses of Christ's love". He prayed, along with the young people, to Thérèse of Lisieux that she may lead the people of this age along the way of Truth and Life. He ended his discourse with these words: "with Thérèse of the Child Jesus, let us turn to the Virgin Mary, whom she honoured and prayed to with child-like confidence during her life".

I. A Long Road towards the Doctorate



First steps

4. Already from the time of her canonization, there was no lack of bishops, preachers, theologians, and faithful from different countries who sought to have our sister Thérèse of Lisieux declared a doctor of the Church. This flow of petitions in favour of the doctorate became official in 1932 on the occasion of the inauguration of the crypt of the Basilica at Lisieux, which was accompanied by a Congress at which five cardinals, fifty bishops and a great number of faithful participated.

On 30th June, Fr. Gustave Desbuquois, S.J., with clear and precise theological argument, spoke of Thérèse of Lisieux as Doctor of the Church. Surprisingly, his proposal had the support of many of the participants, bishops and theologians. This positive reaction to the suggestion of Fr. Desbuquois spread universally. Msgr. Clouthier, bishop of Trois Rivières (Canada), wrote to all the bishops of the world in order

to prepare a petition to the Holy See. By 1933 he had already received 342 positive replies from bishops who supported the proposal to have Thérèse of Lisieux declared a Doctor of the Church.

The obstacle of being a woman

5. The petition of Fr. Desbuquois was presented to Pope Pius XI, along with a letter of Mother Agnes of Jesus, sister of Thérèse, and Prioress of the Lisieux Carmel. She informed the Pope about the great success of the Teresian Congress. On 31 August 1932, Cardinal Pacelli, Secretary of State, replied to Mother Agnes' letter on behalf of the Pope. He was very pleased about the positive results of the Congress, but added that it would be better not to speak of Thérèse's doctorate yet, even though "her doctrine never ceased to be for him a sure light for souls searching to know the spirit of the Gospel".

However the time was not yet ripe for a woman to be declared a Doctor of the Church. In fact, Pope Pius XI had already replied negatively to the Carmelites' petition to have Saint Teresa of Jesus, "Mother of spiritual people" declared Doctor. The petition was turned down because she was a woman. "Obstat sexus" ("her sex is an obstacle"), the Pope replied, adding that he would leave the decision to his successor. After the Vatican's negative response, and by its order, the gathering of signatures in favour of Thérèse of Lisieux's Doctorate was interrupted.

Circumstances change

6. Teresa of Jesus and Catherine of Siena's declaration as Doctors of the Church in 1970, eliminated completely any obstacle to name a woman Doctor. As a result, the proposal for the Doctorate of Thérèse of Lisieux was taken up again.

In 1973, the centenary of her birth, Msgr. Garrone stated the question anew: "Could Saint Thérèse of Lisieux become some day a Doctor of the Church? I respond affirmatively, without hesitation, encouraged by what has happened to the great Saint Teresa and Saint Catherine of Siena". On subsequent occasions the Carmelites proposed the possibility of the Doctorate. In 1981, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, following up a petition from the Teresian Carmel, and after consulting the Permanent Council of the French Episcopate, sent an official letter to Pope John Paul II asking him to declare Thérèse of Lisieux Doctor of the Church.

On different occasions the Discalced Postulator General and the Bishop of Lisieux, Msgr. Pierre Pican, wrote official letters to this effect. The General Chapters of the Teresian Carmel in 1991 and the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance in 1995 also sent petitions. In addition, more than 30 Episcopal Conferences and thousands of Christians, priests, religious and lay people of 107 countries pronounced themselves in favour of the Doctorate.

Examination and Approval of the Positio

7. In the first months of this year 1997, the Teresian Carmel was asked to prepare the "Positio", i.e., the presentation of proof required by the Church to demonstrate a person's suitability to be declared Doctor of the Church. Because the time allowed was limited, collaboration was necessary. At the beginning of May, a 965 page volume was printed. It was divided into four parts and thirteen chapters which presented the facts of Thérèse's life, her doctrine and the prominence, influence and present day impact of her message.

Ch 1. A brief history of the Causes for beatification and canonization.

Ch. 2. The process of the Doctorate

Ch. 3. A small but compact biography of Thérèse

Ch. 4. An analysis of her personality

Ch. 5. A chronology

Ch. 6. A presentation of her writings

Ch. 7. From the doctrinal point of view, it offers a general view of Thérèse's doctrine

Ch. 8. A synthesis of her theology

Ch. 9. A study of the sources of her teachings

Ch. 10. The impact of Thérèse of Lisieux is examined from three different perspectives; the acceptance and presentation of her doctrine by the Magisterium of the Church

Ch. 11. Its spread and influence

Ch. 12. The importance of her doctrine for the Church and world of today

Ch. 13. The final chapter of the Positio highlights the "eminence" of the doctrine of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face

It concludes with the transcripts of the Letters proposing the Doctorate from Episcopal Conferences and ecclesiastical and lay personages. A selected bibliography (130 pages) is also included, as well as the opinions of the five theologians chosen by the Congre-

gation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and the two by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. There is also an Iconographic Appendix which shows Thérèse as Teacher and Doctor.

After studying the Positio, the Congregations for the Doctrine of the Faith and for the Causes of Saints, along with the Consistory of Cardinals, gave their approval that our sister could be declared Doctor of the Church. Pope John Paul II, as we said, agreed to the proposal, announcing it to the Universal Church at the end of the International Gathering of Youth in Paris.



II. Thérèse of Lisieux,

Doctor for the Third Millennium

8. To speak of the third millennium is to speak, in the first place, of God's time and action. God manifests himself and works within human events. Teresa of Jesus told us that "it is always a suitable time for God to grant great favours" (p 4,5). Two thousand years of Christian history are about to conclude. In celebrating this historical event "it is certainly not a matter of indulging in a new millenarianism, -- as occurred in some quarters at the end of the first millennium --, rather, it is aimed at an increased sensitivity to all that the Spirit is saying to the Church and to the Churches (cf. Rev 2:7 ff.), as well as to individuals through charisms meant to serve the whole community.... Despite appearances, humanity continues to await the revelation of the children of God, and lives by this hope"(Tertio Millennio Adveniente 23). God calls us today, as he did yesterday and will always, to construct our personal and community existence through a reply that is free and responsible.

Doctors of the Church	Lived	Age at death	Proclaimed a Doctor
St. Albert the Great	c. 1200-1280	80 years old	1931
St. Alphonsus Liguori	1696-1787	91 years old	1871
St. Ambrose	c. 340-397	57 years old	
St. Anselm	1033-1109	76 years old	
St. Anthony of Padua	1195-1231	36 years old	1946
St. Athanasius	c. 297-373	76 years old	
St. Augustine	354-430	76 years old	
St. Basil the Great	c. 329-379	50 years old	
St. Bede the Venerable	673-735	62 years old	
St. Bernard of Clairvaux	c. 1090-1153	63 years old	1830
St. Bonaventure	c. 1217-1274	57 years old	1588
St. Catherine of Siena	c. 1347-1380	33 years old	1970
St. Cyril of Alexandria	c. 376-444	68 years old	1882
St. Cyril of Jerusalem	c. 315-386	71 years old	1882
St. Ephraem	c. 306-373	67 years old	1920
St. Frances de Sales	1567-1622	55 years old	1877
St. Gregory Nazianzen	c. 330- c. 390	60 years old	
St. Gregory I, the Great	c. 540-604	64 years old	
St. Hilary of Poitiers	c. 315-368	53 years old	1851
St. Isidore of Seville	c. 560-636	76 years old	1722
St. Jerome	c. 343-420	77 years old	8 cent.
St. John Chrysostom	c. 347-407	60 years old	451
St. John Damascene	c. 675- c. 749	74 years old	1890
St. John of the Cross	1542-1591	49 years old	1926
St. Lawrence of Brindisi	1559-1619	60 years old	1959
St. Leo I, the Great	c. 400-461	61 years old	1574
St. Peter Canisius	1521-1597	76 years old	1925
St. Peter Chrysologus	c. 400-450	50 years old	1729
St. Peter Damian	1007-1072	65 years old	1828
St. Robert Bellarmine	1542-1621	79 years old	1931
St. Theresa of Jesus (Avila)	1515-1582	67 years old	1970
St. Thomas Aquinas	1225-1274	49 years old	1567

9. With regard to the celebration of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, God has awakened in the Church the awareness of a need for a new evangelization in order to respond to this special time of grace, and to renew faith, hope and love, by centering them on Jesus, who is the only Saviour and centre of history. He reveals to us the true face of God, and helps us discover the presence and action of the Spirit in people and in the world.

History, our world, is the place where the saving presence of God is at work and the place where the responsibility of persons lie. "The Church emphasizes the importance of history as the place in which God manifests himself... But it is precise to say as well that the Church understands that time, liberty and history are the place in which mankind constructs human existence. Both need to be present, not in an incommunicable parallel, rather in a dialogue which, on God's part, is gratuitous and initiates and, on the part of mankind, is open to transcendental meaning". (A Olival Junior, Uma reflexao sobre o tempo; sentido do tempo milenar, in: AA.VV. Rumo ao Terceiro Milenio (Sao Paulo, 1997), p. 30.)

The time of new evangelization is also a time of great trials and challenges for the world. We cannot separate these two things. The Gospel of Jesus, confided to the Church to be proclaimed and realized in the world around us, challenges us by its content and all that is in contrast with it. The Gospel throws its fight on these challenges, claiming our total attention.

Leaving aside the constancy of it let us direct our words solely to the demands presented to us directly in the field of evangelization itself.

A) Demands of the New Evangelization

10. To make the proclamation of the Gospel ring out requires following in the direction pointed out by the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*: witness, proclamation, communion, and service. (RM Cf. nos. 41-60) It is handy to keep these in mind in order to understand the heart and relevance of the message of Thérèse of Lisieux, Doctor of the Church.

Witness

11. To evangelize is not to transmit a doctrine, but an experience transformed into life. This experience is precisely what is shared: "Something which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have watched and touched with our own hands... We are declaring to you so that you too may share our life" (1 in 1:1-3). At the threshold of the Third Millennium the world to which we must give witness, is largely one of unbelief and injustice. Christians are called to "always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Pt. 3:15).

The question is how to make this hope and witness clearly intelligible. It must lead the faithful to revise their personal life and the way they participate in the Church because "people today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories" (Ib., 42) "The evangelical witness which the world finds most appealing is that of concern for people, and of charity toward the poor, the weak and those who suffer", (RM. 42) along with a commitment to peace, justice and human rights (Ib.)

Proclamation

12. As well as witnessing by their lives, Christians fulfill their evangelical mission by proclaiming the Good News of salvation: Christ has died and is risen, and He has transformed us into sons and daughters of God; He has set us free from the slavery of evil, sin and death. We must proclaim the love of God, our Father, who calls us to union with Him. The Good News is addressed to all. There are some areas which need our particular attention in our day: big cities tend to foster individualism, anonymity, cultural disintegration, pluralism and indifference. Young people in particular need to be evangelized. They are the future of the world. There is also an urgent need to proclaim the Gospel among the masses of non practising Christians. Of perennial importance is the need for a first proclamation to those who have never heard the Gospel or who do not know Christ.

Communion

13. "God, however, does not make men and women holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather has it pleased Him to bring mankind together as one people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness" (LG: 9.) With these words the Second Vatican Council stressed that faith is lived in community, that the fruit of evangelization and the action of the Spirit is the creation of fraternal communities forming the new family of God.

The coming of Christ manifests itself in this communion. "By this we know that we have passed from death to life (cf. 1 in 3:14)... and from communion emanates a source of great apostolic energy" (PC: 15). Communion comes about as a result of faith and the sacraments of faith which lead us to a *koinonia* open to all, especially to those who believe in Christ, through an ecumenism that is active and in solidarity. Communion demands a sincere and fraternal dialogue.

Service

14. Faith needs to be expressed in deeds because in Christ Jesus "only faith working through love" (Gal 5:6) has value. To serve God and people is the best proof of love. Christian *diakonia* is nothing else than following Jesus who "came not to be served but to serve" (Mt. 20:28), and who lived among us "as one

who serves" (Lk. 22:27). From the beginning Christian service has been notable towards the poor, the outcasts and the suffering. For this reason, at the threshold of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, John Paul II, in his Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, did not hesitate to state: "Indeed, it has to be said that a commitment to justice and peace in a world like ours, marked by so many conflicts and intolerable social and economic inequalities, is a necessary condition for the preparation and celebration of the Jubilee" (TMA: 51).

B) Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Doctor for the Third Millennium



15. We should begin by first saying a word in connection with the tradition or spiritual patrimony which nourished the experience and doctrine of Thérèse of Lisieux. Carmel -- the "desert" where she wanted to go with her sister Pauline -- is the soil in which she sank her roots from early years. It must be said she "lived" Carmelite spirituality with the precocity that marks all her "career as a giant" a long time before she read it formulated by Teresa and, above all, by St John of the Cross. We see a profound harmony in the vocation of Thérèse which cannot be explained simply by her reading their writings. It is much more the fruit of the Spirit, which along with her vocation to Carmel, makes her a true daughter of Teresa and John and helped her to live a similar yet clearly defined spiritual experience, which would find its confirmation and enrichment in contact with the experience and doctrine of Teresa and John.

16. By examining Thérèse of Lisieux's experience and delving deeper into her teachings which have a universal and timely quality, we are able to understand that aspect of her experience and doctrine which makes her a teacher and doctor in the Church which contemplates its evangelical role for the Third Millennium. Her doctrine can be summarised in the words: God's paternal and maternal love.

Guided by the Spirit, she was led to understand the revelation of God's merciful love which summarises the whole of the Gospel. God is love who reveals himself to the poor and humble. God who is love invites us

to live in communion with Him and with others, and to serve our brothers and sisters as Jesus did in order to bear witness to the Good News and proclaim it.

**Doctor of the
experience of
a God both
merciful and
near to us**



17. The rediscovery of the paternal-maternal face of God was the starting point of a new path to holiness which our sister trod especially from 1894, experiencing more and more her own weakness. Jesus showed her, as she says, that the road to follow is that of surrender to God with the confidence of a child sleeping fearlessly in it's Father's arms:

"Whoever is a little one, let him come to me. So speaks the Holy Spirit through the mouth of Solomon. This same Spirit of Love also says: For to him that is little, mercy will be shown. The Prophet Isaiah reveals in His name that on the last day... As one whom a mother caresses, so will I comfort you; you shall be carried at the breasts and upon the knees they will caress you... Jesus does not demand great actions from us but simply surrender and gratitude." (*Manuscript B 1 r-v.* (John Clarke translation Ch. IX, p.188)

This experience of Thérèse of Lisieux is one of a God who is both Father-Mother, who has love even for the unjust and evil (cf. Lk. 6:35); who knows what we need before we ask; who forgives our sins and asks us to forgive; who protects and looks after us (cf. Mt. 6:8-9, 14-15, 26). Here we see the change from fear to confidence. We stand before God as sons and daughters before a father and a mother. God makes everything work together for our good, even our deficiencies and faults. Getting to know a God who is both Father and Mother requires a child's heart which chooses to remain small:

"What pleases Him (Jesus) is that He sees me loving my littleness and my poverty, the blind hope that I have in His mercy.... It is confidence and nothing but confidence that must lead us to Love" (*Letter 197, to Sr. Marie of the Sacred Heart 17/9/1896* John Clarke translation Volume 2, pp.999, 1000)

God's initiative is at the root of every Christian voca-

tion. Responding to God's invitation, those who are called trust in God's love and give their life unconditionally, consecrating everything, present and future, to God, abandoning it all confidently into his hands. All this is of capital importance in Christian spirituality for the Third Millennium.

**Doctor of the
experience of God's
love expressed in
communion and service**



18. Experience is the key in a technical and scientific world. Everything must be experienced, seen in some way. Christian spirituality is no exception to this trend. Experience and testimony are fundamental in the Christian life, being particularly important today when we see a reaction against an exaggerated intellectualism in the matter faith and religion. Despite the danger of subjectivity and a certain spiritual infantilism, this search for experience cannot be rejected out-of-hand. Spiritual experiences are a source of knowledge and deepening in the revelation of God.

Thérèse of Lisieux is a teacher of an authentic experience of God which contains within it a commitment to following Jesus. She teaches us about the experience of contact with the Word of God, the meaning of the community which Christ communicates to us, and the necessity of giving a real response guided by love.

19. The ecclesial trend in spirituality today speaks of the communion of all in Christ and in the Spirit. We need to place all the gifts we have at the service of the community of believers. Traces of the experience and doctrine of St. Thérèse, can be clearly seen in this dimension of today's spirituality of evangelization. She lived for the Church, the Body of Christ. She desired to live in it all possible vocations in order to bear witness to the Gospel and proclaim it to the most distant places on earth, until, while meditating on chapters 12 and 13 of the first letter to the Corinthians, she discovered her vocation and mission in the Church: "O Jesus, my Love.... my vocation, at last I have found it.... my vocation is love! Yes, I have found my place in the Church and it is You, O my God, who have given me this place; in the heart of the Church, my Mother, I shall be Love. Thus I shall be everything, and thus my dream will be realized" (*Ms. B: 3v* (Ch. IX, p. 194)

20. Thérèse, who lived strongly centred in God as the sole absolute, conversed with him in prayer that took into account the needs of her brothers and sisters. Inspired by this encounter, she devoted herself to others, and lived her vocation for the salvation of the world. In *Manuscript C* Thérèse gives a precious direction for an authentic spirituality committed to the new evangelization "Just as a torrent, throwing itself with impetuosity into the ocean, drags after it everything it encounters in its passage, in the same way, O Jesus, the soul who plunges into the shoreless ocean of Your Love, draws with her all the treasures she Lord, You know it I have no other treasures than the souls it has pleased You to unite to mine" (*Manuscript C: 34r* (Ch. XI, p. 254).

This conviction Thérèse had that the authenticity of our love for God is demonstrated in the quality of our love for others has truly influenced the spirituality of our century, particularly in the area of commitment to evangelisation. Her experience and doctrine have taught Christians that like concentric circles, the dimension of fraternal love opens us to ever new and wider horizons, all this set in motion by the impact of the love of God. The first circle reaches those nearest us; the wider ones embrace the whole of humanity. Confidence and surrender to God, our Father-Mother, are in Thérèse of Lisieux the source of fraternal charity and the apostolate, an expression of love for all by seeking to share with them the good news of salvation.

Thérèse of Lisieux translated into life the gospel demand for service to those of least importance in the world's eyes and those who are poorest, in whom we discover the face of Christ (cf Mt 25:31-45). God reveals Himself to them in a special way (cf. Mt 11:25-27). In the service of God, we must be ready to give our lives for others, like Christ, who asked the Father if it were possible to take away the chalice of suffering, but who nevertheless clearly accepted his Father's will and desired to fulfill it.

Doctor of the evangelical path to holiness

21. In the conclusion of the encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, which seeks to explain the permanent validity of Christ's missionary mandate, John Paul II states: "The call to mission derives, of its nature, from the call to holiness... The universal call to holiness is closely linked to the universal call to mission. Every member of the faithful is called to holiness and to mission....

The missionary spirituality of the Church is a journey towards holiness (RM:90). Thérèse of Lisieux transformed this doctrine into a lived experience. As a result she was proclaimed Universal Patroness of the Missions together with the great apostle Saint Francis Xavier.



...Her experiential doctrine is of great relevance to the new evangelization. She entered Carmel to reach holiness by means of a contemplative life: God "made me understand my own glory would not be evident to the eyes of mortals, that it would consist in becoming a great saint" (*Manuscript A 32r* (Ch.4, p.32). From the beginning she was convinced that she entered Carmel not to flee from the world, but to enter it more profoundly. Her spiritual experience was not a search for refuge from a hostile world, but a conscious offering of herself as a martyr.

22. "Today a renewed commitment to holiness is more necessary than ever. It is therefore necessary to inspire in all the faithful a true longing for holiness, a deep desire for conversion and personal renewal in a context of ever more intense prayer and of solidarity with one's neighbour, especially the most needy (VC: 39). Thérèse of Lisieux admirably unites holiness and mission, authentic contemplation resulting in commitment, within her own personal vocation to evangelization. Thus, without equivocation, she proposes a gospel way to give witness to the Good News and proclaim it confronted by the challenges of modern times.

By emphasising the centrality of love in holiness, Thérèse helps to close the gap between contemplation and action, because love unites both. She entered the contemplative life to become more effective in her apostolic life. She revolutionised in this way the relationship between asceticism and mysticism, emphasising the asceticism that demands evangelical self-denial lived one day at a time. Hence more than corporal

mortification, she preferred service to others, such as being welcoming, understanding, forgiving, helpful and standing in solidarity with others, all great lessons for putting into practice the spirituality of the new evangelization.

Doctor of personal wholeness

23. Thérèse of Lisieux, like anyone else, was subject to the human condition. She experienced a liberating process from a psychological point of view which led her to an acceptance of herself, thereby enabling her to welcome her own limitations with maturity.

Strongly in evidence in today's world are internal tensions, spiritual wounds, and all sorts of other influences which hinder people from personal realization. Thérèse of Lisieux learned to accept herself with her limitations, imperfections, as conditioned by her family, social and religious environment. In this way she liberated herself from them to become, with God's grace, a free person who discovered the God of Jesus Christ, one who is faithful and merciful. She teaches us to profit from everything so that we may grow and mature, both as human beings and as Christians.

24. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face struggled to overcome all that hindered her from being herself. On the way to human maturity she experienced the trauma of her mother's death which affected her badly (Cf. *Manuscript A:13r* (Ch. 2, p.34). Her love for God and friendship with him awakened in her a liberating process which enabled her to use all these influences to achieve personal wholeness.

From the age of four to fourteen was a painful period in her life. She faced difficulties at school, which seemed aggressive to her. Then her sister and second mother, Pauline, entered Carmel. As a result of this separation she became seriously ill. It was a psychosomatic illness. Later on she was tormented by scruples (Ib. 39r (Ch. 4, p. 84).

All these sufferings were due to her hypersensitivity: "when I began to cheer up, I'd begin to cry again for having cried" (Ib. 44v. (Ch. 5, p. 97). She lived trapped in a vicious circle not knowing how to get out of it. Only when she began to tread the path of love and surrender to Jesus was she completely healed of her hypersensitivity on Christmas Eve 1886. After that she was set free of these interior bonds. She was then able to enjoy life fully: studies, contacts, nature, travels...



25. For the men and women of today, tormented by so many negative experiences within the family and social environment, which lead to anguish and insecurity about the future, Thérèse of Lisieux demonstrates that the fear caused by the uncertainty of each day can be resolved by being receptive to the love of God and to others. Thus we attain peace and joy, knowing there is a God who is a merciful Father and who surrounds all of us with his love and providence. Thérèse presents to a world sick with fear and anguish the therapy of love and confidence in God, and of service and commitment to others. She has discovered and passed on to us the profound truth of a merciful God who wants to give Himself fully to all those who open themselves to Him.

Doctor of faith for an unbelieving world

26. The relevance of the doctrine of Thérèse of Lisieux appears very clearly in regards to atheism and unbelief. The Second Vatican Council in analysing contemporary atheism, indicated that this word covers quite different realities: "For while God is expressly denied by some, others believe that people can assert absolutely nothing about God. Still others use such a method to scrutinize the question of God as to make it seem devoid of meaning... Again some form for themselves such a fallacious idea of God that when they repudiate this figment they are by no means rejecting the God of the Gospel... Moreover, atheism results not rarely from a violent protest against the evil in this world" (GS: 19).

God, through Thérèse of Lisieux's spiritual experience, desired to speak tangibly to the world of unbelief. She struggled with her faith in the midst of a world which, in the name of science and rationalism, denied the existence of God and led to atheism.

27. In today's world non-believers are different from those in the time of Thérèse. After having experienced the collapse of atheistic and materialistic systems and the frustration of modern life, agnostics and those who are simply indifferent are searching for something which will give meaning to life. They experience vaguely a call to the absolute which can fill their existential emptiness and satisfy their aspirations.

Thérèse of Lisieux confronts the problem of anguish in the face of death which was basically also one of atheism which questioned the existence of God and the after-life. She was all of a sudden submerged in the abyss of anguish, and experienced in the trial of faith the distress of nothingness. She was deprived of what she calls "the joy of faith" or "to enjoy this beautiful heaven on earth" (*Manuscript C 7r* (Ch.X, pp 215, 226). She entered a place of deep darkness which surrounded her and threatened to overwhelm her. She seemed to hear the darkness say: "You believe that one day you will walk out of this fog which surrounds you! Advance, advance; rejoice in death which will give you not what you hope for but a night still more profound, the night of nothingness" (Ib. 6v. (Ch. X, p. 21 1).

28. In the midst of this situation Thérèse of Lisieux was able to keep alive her faith and love. Her experience of the dark night of purification transformed her so that she was in a real and fruitful solidarity with those who live submerged in unbelief. Before the trial of faith she stated that she could not accept that there were people who did not believe: "I was unable to believe that there were really impious people who had no faith. I believed they were actually speaking against their own inner convictions when they denied the existence of heaven". After her painful experience she was convinced of the opposite: "During those very joyful days of the Easter season, Jesus made me feel that there were really souls who have no faith" (*Manuscript C:5v.* (Ch. X, p.211).

Submerged in the most profound darkness, Thérèse did not stop loving the One in whom she trusted. Her drama sprang from the fact of living at the same time in the light of faith and the darkness of unbelievers. It was then she understood that God wanted her to offer lovingly for unbelievers her own sufferings, seated at the table of sinners and eating the bread of affliction with them (Ib. 6r. (Ch .X, p. 212).

There are some eloquent testimonies of conversions to the faith after reading of Thérèse's experience. Many have discovered in her writings the true face of God and also a light which has helped them in their search for God in the midst of darkness and in the temptation to unbelief. This makes her message relevant for those who are estranged, who disbelieve or are indifferent.

**St. Thérèse
of Lisieux
the Woman,
Doctor of
the Church**



29. The experience and doctrine of Thérèse of Lisieux become especially significant in our day when new horizons are opening up for the presence and action of women in society and in the Church, Women are called to be "signs of God's tender love towards the human race" (VC: 57) and to enrich humanity with their "feminine genius". The young Carmelite of Lisieux accomplished both things in her life and we can see this clearly in her writings.

Thérèse of the Child Jesus transmits her spiritual experience with her evident feminine style which is direct and intimate. Despite being conditioned by her times, she manifested her Gospel conviction on the equality of men and women, and the importance of mutual collaboration as disciples of Jesus. We can see this especially in her letters to her missionary brothers where she shares her human and spiritual experiences, not hesitating to express her point of view on theological issues and Christian experience: her concept of God's justice, the way of spiritual childhood, trust in divine mercy.

30. Her femininity, like that of Teresa of Jesus, resulted in greater commitment to the Gospel, overcoming all the prejudices which emarginated women of her times. Thérèse of Lisieux experienced the situation of woman in society and the Church at the end of the XIXth century. In *Manuscript A*, she tells us clearly and humorously what she felt during her trip to Rome, before entering Carmel:

"I still cannot understand why women are so easily excommunicated in Italy, for every minute someone was saying: 'Don't enter here. Don't enter there, you will be excommunicated!' Ah! poor women, how they are misunderstood! And yet they love God in much larger numbers than men do and during the Passion of Our Lord, women had more courage than the apostles since they braved the insults of the soldiers and dared to dry the adorable Face of Jesus" (*Manuscript A: 66v.* (Ch VI, p. 140).

Her womanhood, which she expressed with the freshness and sincerity of a free person, led her to a reflection on the Gospel: the emargination of women makes them participate more closely in the mystery of Christ who was despised at his passion. "It is undoubtedly because of this that He allows misunderstanding to be their lot on earth, since he chose it for himself.... In heaven, He will show that His thoughts are not men's thoughts, for then the last will be first" (Ib). Jesus made women the first witnesses of His resurrection.



31. Today women find areas of greater participation in society and Church opening up for them and they can find encouragement in Thérèse of Lisieux to live as John Paul II said, "a culture of equality between men and women". Again Hans Urs von Balthasar noted on the occasion of the celebrations for the first centenary of Thérèse of Lisieux's birth, that she opened the whole field of theology to feminine reflection: "The theology of women has never been taken seriously nor integrated by the establishment. However, after the message of Lisieux, it must finally consider it in the present reconstruction of Dogmatic Theology" (Quoted by Guy Gaucher, *Actualité de sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, in *Thérèse de Lisieux et les missions*. Mission et contemplation (Kinshasa, 1996) p. 127.

This corresponds to what the postsynodal document *Vita Consecrata* presents as new perspectives for

women in the Church: "in the field of theological, cultural, and spiritual studies, much can be expected from the genius of women, not only in relation to specific aspects of feminine consecrated life, but also in understanding the faith in all its expressions" (VC: 58).

Conclusion

32. God surprises us anew with this sister of ours in whom so many patterns of human logic are broken in order to emphasise God's gratuitous initiative in choosing those he wants and seeking to realise his works and manifest the greatness of his power and action in those who open themselves confidently to his merciful love in order to accomplish his will.

With the proclamation of the doctorate of Saint Thérèse, the Lord confirms what the Old Testament states and the New Testament presents in its fullness: that God communicates Himself to the simple, giving them His wisdom and revealing to them the secrets of His life and workings throughout history. In effect, the book of Wisdom stated, at the threshold of Christ's coming: "Length of days is not what makes age honourable, nor number of years the true measure of life; understanding, this is grey hairs, untarnished life, this is ripe old age. Having won God's favour, he has been loved.... Having come to perfection so soon, he has lived long" (Wis. 4:8-10,13). In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus, full of joy in the Holy Spirit, proclaims divine logic so very different from ours: "I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it has pleased you to do" (Lk 10:21- 22).

33. The Lord, Father of all light, from whom comes all that is good, all that is perfect (Cf. Jm 1:17), has given Carmel yet another gift with Thérèse of Lisieux's Doctorate. It is a free gift which demands a response of love and generous commitment to our vocation and mission in the Church and in the world. May our sister Thérèse of Lisieux obtain for us from the Lord the grace to be His collaborators in bearing witness and proclaiming the Good News to our brothers and sisters of the Third Millennium. May we be authentic followers of Jesus, in communion with Mary, the first ones to receive the joyful news of salvation and who proclaimed it with the joy of those who have discovered that God gives Himself freely to the poor, humble, and simple. □



REFLECTIONS ON A PILGRIMAGE

Put two Carmelite priests, one Jesuit, a dozen Secular Carmelites and 21 other friends of St. Thérèse together for eleven sunny days in France and what do you get? Three dozen blessed and spiritually enriched pilgrims who never will forget that "the Almighty has done great things" for us "and holy is His name." (Lk 1-49). From September 16th to the 26th of this year, we traveled with three of the finest priests (and nicest people!) to be found anywhere: Rev. Anthony Haglof, OCD (Brighton, MA), Rev. Leonard Copeland, OCD (Milwaukee, WI) and Rev. Rene Van Hissenhoven, SJ (Bogota, Colombia).

Other pilgrims hailed from Texas, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. Our journey on this Marian pilgrimage of faith in honor of the Centenary Celebration of St. Thérèse took us from the northern coast of Normandy (Mont St. Michel) to the border of Spain and the Pyrenees Mountains (Lourdes) -- a journey of hundreds of miles and smiles!!

Our pilgrimage began with Mass at the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal in Paris, where Our Lady appeared to St. Catherine Laboure in 1830 and asked for a medal to be struck in Her honor. The chair Our Lady sat in during Her visit is displayed in this chapel, as is the beautiful incorrupt body of St. Catherine and the heart of St. Vincent de Paul. A surprise "heavenly favor" (only one of many!) was bestowed upon our

group: we were scheduled to have Mass in a small side chapel, but at the last minute the main altar became available, and so we celebrated Liturgy on the actual site of the apparations! Of course, we could not leave Paris without visiting the great Cathedral of Notre Dame and seeing Montmartre up close.

Another highlight of our trip was to the quaint and quiet Marian apparition site of Pontmain (1871). Here Mary's message was seen and heard only by seven children -- a message of HOPE: "But pray, my children, God will soon answer your prayer- My Son is willing to hear you." From there we traveled to Mont St. Michel, a magnificent 11th century abbey, set on an island off the coast of Normandy. No wonder the French call it "le merveille": it is truly a "marvel" of architecture and faith. (See photo at left)

Then it was time to "experience Thérèse." All those who have walked through her childhood home, meditated in her Carmel, and prayed in her Basilica will know what this means. A special event in the lives of two of our Secular Carmelite pilgrims occurred here in the Carmel of Lisieux: Linda Korpusik and Mary Clare Francis made their Definitive and First Promises respectively. What a thrill it was for all of us Carmelites in attendance!

In addition to visiting the tombs of Thérèse, her parents (Louis and Zélie), and her Carmelite sisters (Pauline, Marie and Céline), we were also privileged to visit Leonie's tomb at the Visitation Convent in Caen. Many pilgrims noted the study in contrasts existing between the glory and richness of the Basilica in Thérèse's honor and the quiet austerity of Leonie's resting place. Both, however, afforded opportunities for profound thought and prayer, and reflection of Thérèse's words: "I understood ... how the splendor of the rose and the whiteness of the Lily do not take away the perfume of the little violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy." (Story of a Soul)

After visiting the great Cathedral of Chartres, with its world-renowned stained glass windows and the relic of Our Lady's Veil, we drove on to Nevers and the Convent of St. Gildard. There, in the Chapel of St. Joseph, lies the visionary of Lourdes: St. Bernadette Soubirous (1844-1879). Truly the most beautiful of all the incorrupt saints, Bernadette appears as if she is merely sleeping in her glass coffin.

Another saint of love, Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690), awaited us in Paray-le-Monial. It was here, between 1673 and 1675, that Our Lord revealed to her the Devotion to the Sacred Heart that He wished promulgated. Mass was celebrated in the Chapel of the Apparitions, and we were invited to view the choir where the nuns gather daily.

Rocamadour was next on our itinerary: a medieval village located in a glacial valley, which has been a site of pilgrimage as far back as the ninth century. Here we celebrated Mass in the Notre Dame Chapel, housing the miraculous statue of the "Black Virgin of Rocamadour." This place was truly like stepping back in time -- many of us did not want to re-enter the 20th century!

Last, but certainly not least, was the great shrine of Lourdes. We arrived on the grounds exactly at 4:30 PM; unbeknownst to us, this was the time of the daily Eucharistic Procession and Blessing of the Sick. (Talk about Divine Providence!) You can imagine our awe as we wended our way down to the large, silent mass of people and found out our Jesus was about to pass in front of us in a monstrance! Many pilgrims were struck similarly and simultaneously by the symbolism: we were being greeted and welcomed to His Mother's Shrine by None Other than the Divine Master Himself!

As one of our pilgrims wrote, "It is impossible to describe or give an accurate account of what Lourdes is; it must be experienced to fully appreciate and comprehend Our Lady's presence here." And experience Lourdes we did! From the poverty of "Le Cachot" (the one-room jailhouse that housed the Soubirous family) to the grandeur of the three-tiered Basilica, our eyes and hearts took in much. The magnitude of faith in, and devotion to, the Blessed Mother and Her Son was poignantly evident in all languages, colors and ages the people prayed, sang, and wept. For many of us the Baths will forever be a highpoint among the spiritual experiences of our lives.

There we witnessed, and attested to, the living faith of all those who believe in a God Who promises to love us completely and unconditionally all the days of our lives. No matter what ill one brings to be cured -- mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological -- you know that God has touched you here through His



Mother and Her servants. How gentle and compassionate are the volunteers who assist the pilgrims in the baths!

Our dear priests were able to concelebrate Mass in the Grotto where Our Lady appeared and where the miraculous spring has its source. Another unexpected "heavenly gift" occurred here: apparently in the sacristy before the English Mass, a call went forth for three priests (out of forty) to concelebrate at the altar. They wanted one from Ireland, one from England and one from the USA. Our pilgrimage's Spiritual Director, Fr. Anthony Haglof OCD, was chosen to represent our country, and many of us pilgrims had tears in our eyes, seeing him assume this honor. (We're sure it was a "thank you" from Our Lady for his "Yes" in accepting to sponsor this pilgrimage in the first place!) Fr. Anthony also brought Communion to the sick who were attending Mass. What an awesome sight to see him bending over, under a large blue umbrella, bringing Jesus to row upon row of wheelchair-bound pilgrims... Truly an unforgettable memory for all of us.

And so we made our way back to the States with many more blessings and graces than any of us could ever "have hoped for or imagined" (in the words of St. Paul), not the least of which was our new-found friendships in the Lord. It was hard to say "au revoir" to each other at the airport, but comforting to know we carry one another in our hearts and can be united at the altar daily "through Him, with Him, and in Him." I know I speak for each and every pilgrim in thanking all the monasteries, convents, parishes, and individuals who prayed for us during this special time of grace -- may the many blessings we requested for you at each holy site be realized in God's perfect time and manner.

Loretta L. Gallagher, OCDS, Danvers MA

A CANONIZATION OF DESIRE

Sister Margaret OCD, Elysburg PA Carmel

On the 17th of May, 1925 the Holy Father enrolled Thérèse Martin (Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face) in the catalogue of the saints. Two and a half years later she was named equal patron with Saint Francis Xavier of all Missions and all Missionaries.

Today, Mission Sunday, in Rome, she is being proclaimed a Doctor of the Church by Pope John Paul II. It can be said with all truth that these three historic events represent a canonization of DESIRE.

Every human being knows the experience of desire: it is native to the human psyche. The newborn baby at its mother's breast, the restless pre-Christmas agitation of the child, the longing of lovers for intimacy, all speak of desire. Desire can be very painful, especially when all the energies of one's soul are concentrated on one object, and that object seems unattainable.

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus knew such desire. She said, herself, that her desires had become a veritable martyrdom for her. And what was the desire? Her desire was to love God, to give to God all the possible love of all creation. Her life had become a consuming fever. She wanted to be a missionary to every corner of the earth from the beginning to the end of time; a martyr to every kind of torture, a teacher and preacher, a doctor of God's love to the whole world.

As she lay on her death bed, tormented with pain both physical and spiritual, medical science diagnosed her as dying from tuberculosis. But when asked about her suffering, her response was, "I can only explain it by my consuming desire to save souls". Desire was the fever which was burning up her life.

And now her desires are fulfilled. She wanted to be a martyr: she was one, on that bed of pain. She wanted to be a saint: she was declared one -- in fact declared "the greatest saint of modern times". She wanted to be a missionary: she was declared one by the Roman Pontiff in 1927. She wanted to be a teacher, a doctor of the Church: today in Rome, to the joy of the whole Church, she is given the distinctive title: Doctor of the Church.

If there is one lesson that Thérèse teaches us today it is that desire, efficacious desire, is crucially important in our lives. There was never a day in which Thérèse

did not sift her desires, strengthening, deepening, directing them, doing all she could, even though she saw that all she could do was to offer small sacrifices and acts of love to Jesus. Thérèse will help us to move in this same direction, if we ask her. She said that her mission after her death would be to help persons on earth to love God as she did.

Today we, the Carmelite community, invite you to share our joy: do something special for yourselves today. It is a day to be remembered, a day when DESIRE is crowned, a day to celebrate the power which God has given to the human soul our soul -- the soul of each one of us. □



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

May God send a special grace this Christmas, just as Little Therese had received a special grace at midnight Mass on Christmas. It was a grace perfectly tailored to her particular needs. May this grace be the right one so each of us may hasten on our way to holiness, as a good Christian, a good Catholic, and of course as a good Carmelite. Then the New Year of the Lord will be quite different from any other year we have ever lived.

Fr Theodore N Centala OCD

OCDS EASTERN REGIONAL RETREAT

"Becoming Who We Are: The Identity of the Secular Carmelite"

Elda Maria Estrada OCDS, Retreat Master

Frs. Anthony Haglof OCD and Theodore Centala
OCD as Spiritual Assistants.

College of the Holy Cross, Worcester MA

This first-ever OCDS East Coast regional retreat has as its objective to lead the participants to discover, at a greater depth, their identity as Secular Discalced Carmelites. There will be presentations on the spiritual doctrine of the Great Masters of Carmel, as well as practical guidelines for translating these teachings into everyday living. Come and share with your fellow Carmelites this weekend of prayer, spiritual renewal and fellowship. Space is limited to the first 120 registered retreatants.

The retreat is scheduled for **July 10-12, 1998**. It begins Friday at 6:00 PM and ends Sunday at 1:00 PM. The fee of \$120 includes double accommodations, privates and five full meals: three on Saturday and two on Sunday. Some single rooms are available for a \$50 supplemental fee (total \$175). All rooms are air-conditioned. All buildings are handicapped accessible. Send in your \$50 non-refundable deposit to: Annette L'Italien OCDS, 2 Alma Terrace, Peabody MA 01960. The full balance is due by May 1, 1998.

Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Telephone _____

Letters to the Editor

I have just finished reading the last issue of the *Clarion* and could not put it down as each article kept my attention. It seems as if the trials of the last two weeks were so lovingly explained by the two saints who I admire so much, St. Teresa and St. Thérèse. My own mother had a great devotion to each of these saints and wanted me to have a portion of each of their anointings. Through the years I have jokingly said that this was responsible for my spiritual schizophrenia, thinking that they were such opposite souls. Your compar-

isons of their lives, their struggles, their passion for Jesus and their ecstatic union with Him helped me to see that they were more similar than previously thought and that perhaps there is a chance I am not really schizophrenic after all!

The two poems, *God Is A Strange Lover* and *The Flaming Heart* brought tears to my eyes. This indeed is the Carmel I have come to call my home. Its as if each of the hardships endured with as much courage as I could so weakly muster turned to a luster all its own and so I am grateful for the suffering due to the quality of joy it produced in the depths of my soul. I feel so clumsy as I go in search of Him and am reminded of the bride in the *Song of Solomon* who wandered the city streets in search of her beloved. And I found Him. T.M.S.

My sincerest thanks to my brothers and sisters at the Long Island Congress for your prayers and good wishes on the occasion of my Final Promise. How surprised and deeply touched I was by your beautiful messages! I pray for you, my dear brothers and sisters, for your continued faithfulness to your calling and for a continued deepening in holiness as you walk with Jesus in the Spirit toward the loving embrace of the Father. With love, your sister in Carmel, Natalie Wivczar.

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