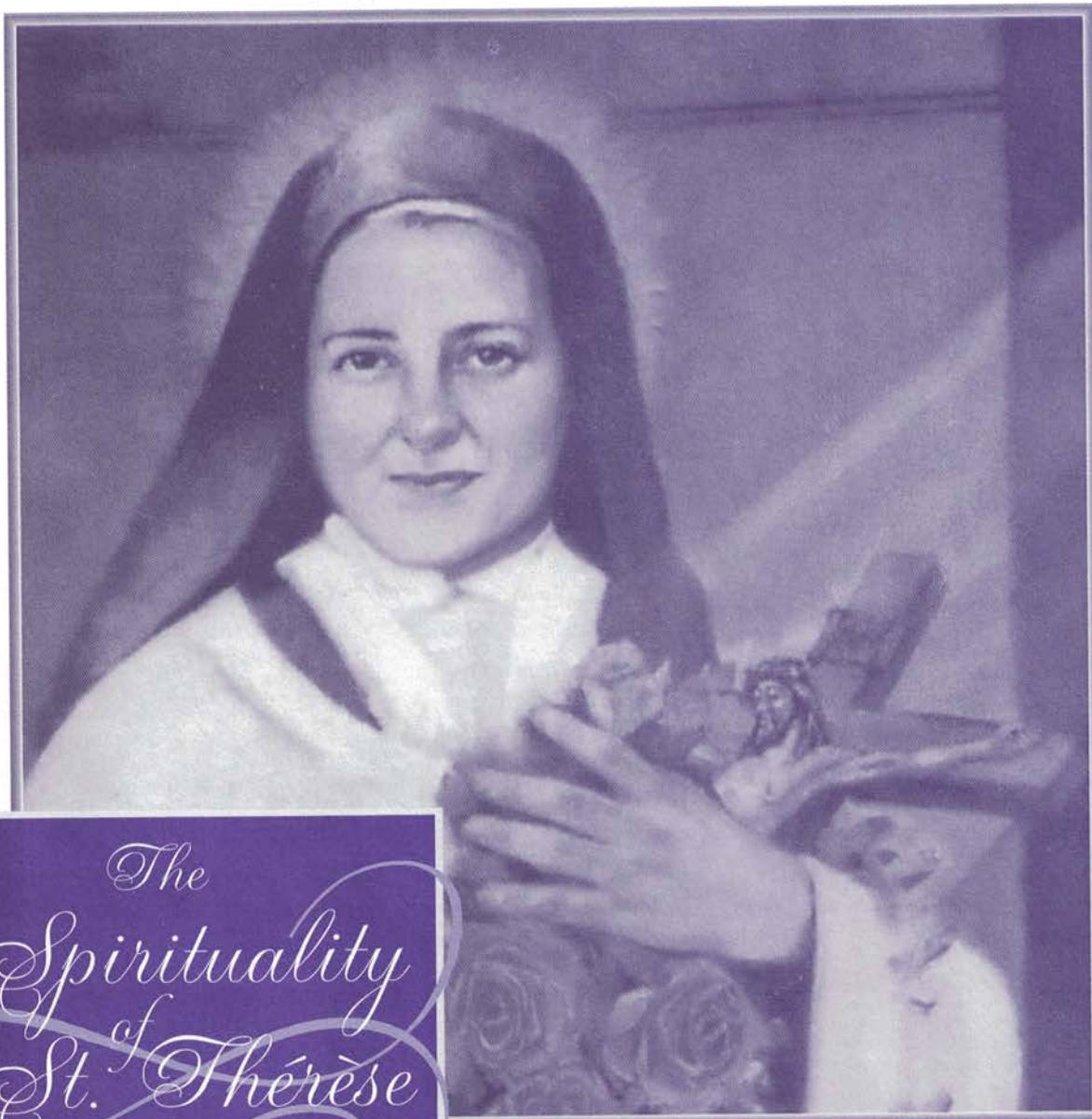


CARMEL CLARION

MAY — JUNE 2008 VOLUME XXIV NO. 3



*The
Spirituality
of
St. Thérèse*

CARMEL CLARION

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Discalced Carmelite Secular Order, Washington, D.C.

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Editorial

The planning of the 2009 OCDS Congress is moving forward. The theme is *Embracing All Challenges with Zeal, Prayer and Action*. We hope this Congress will help the Province to identify and explore solutions to the challenges facing our Secular Carmelites now, and in the future. Some of these challenges are: new and better ways of interacting with the Friars; understanding and putting into practice the OCDS Constitutions, developing strong community leadership; and establishing guidelines for administering a Secular Carmelite community. During May we sent a Questionnaire to each Secular Carmelite community in the Province asking for input on the challenges it sees itself facing. We ask that you discuss this Questionnaire at your next community meeting and return it to us no later than June 30th.

Because May is traditionally the month of Mary, our Mother, we thought it would be good to feature Fr. François-Marie's article on *Thérèse and the Mystery of Mary*. As François-Marie points out, Thérèse's poem entitled "Why I Love You, O, Mary" (Poetry, 54) is her Marian testimony. It is a true Marian doctrine based on the Gospels, the teachings of the Church, its Saints, and Carmel. François-Marie shares how Thérèse avoided the false exaggeration of her day that promoted excessive admiration rather than imitation of the Virgin, her simplicity and poverty. François-Marie's article will certainly deepen our understanding of Thérèse's devotion to Mary. I also recommend you reflect upon the poem.

The article *The Origins and Spirit of Carmel in France* shows us just how difficult it was to bring the Teresian Reform to France. It brings out how even good people with good intentions do not necessarily agree. It shares how misunderstandings can lead to deep divisions and even scandal. It also introduces us to a Blessed of Carmel we do not hear too much about, Blessed Marie of the Incarnation (Barbe Acarie). She, along with Venerable Anne of Jesus and Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew (cf, *Clarion*, Sept/Oct, 2005, vol. XXI, 5), were very influential in founding Carmel in France. Years later Thérèse would dream of Venerable Anne of Jesus.

In the short biography of Sister St. John the Baptist of the Heart of Jesus, we see how enduring was the influence of Cardinal Bérulle, mentioned in the article on Carmel in France.

On the inside back cover you will find suggestions about taking community and Council minutes. These are offered to the secretaries of our communities to help them in fulfilling their dual secretarial role for the community. These suggestions were first published in the Oklahoma Province newsletter, *Flos Carmeli*, (Sept. 2008, Vol. XIX, 2). We thank them for their insight.



*With Zeal I have been
Zealous for the Lord God
of Hosts*

Fr. Regis

Thérèse and the Mystery of Mary

François-Marie Lethel, OCD



Our Lady of Good Counsel
Painted by Celine

In May 1897, shortly before her death, Thérèse revealed in its entirety the place Mary held in her life, in a long poem entitled: “Why I Love You, O Mary” (*Poetry*, 54). It was her last poem, and was like her Marian testament, written at the request of Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart, her own sister Marie, for whom she had already drafted her masterpiece, the second autobiographical manuscript, some months earlier (September 1896).

There is a deep relationship between these two texts. They are prayers addressed to Jesus (*Manuscript B*) and to Mary (*Poetry*, 54); they are animated by the same great refrain: “I love you.” This act of love, which Thérèse desired to renew “with every beat of her heart... an infinite number of times” (cf. *Prayers*, 6; SOS 277), was her last word, expressed in a last breath. Thérèse died while saying to Jesus: “My God, I love you.” This fundamental “Jesus, I love you,” which

illuminated all of Thérèse’s writings, isn’t a sentimental expression but the same act of charity by which the Holy Spirit introduces her into the inner life of the Holy Trinity. It was thus that she wrote: “Ah! Divine Jesus, you know I love you. The Spirit of Love sets me aflame with his fire. In loving you I attract the Father” (*Poetry*, 17).

Inseparable from this “Jesus, I love You” is the same act of love addressed to Mary: “I love You, O Mary.” Such is the great refrain of Thérèse’s Marian poem. Already expressed in the title, and repeated untiringly in the threads of the stanzas, the other refrain is clear: “I am your child.” This poem is thus like the Marian complement of her autobiography, and it is from there that one can try to discover the place of Mary in the life of Thérèse and in her spiritual teaching.

The Relevance of Thérèse’s Marian Teaching

Hers is a true Marian doctrine, a great event of our time, because she is in line with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council (*Lumen Gentium*, ch. 8) and Popes Paul VI (*Marialis Cultus*) and John Paul II (*Redemptoris Mater*). Deeply rooted in the Marian spirituality of Carmel, Thérèse’s teaching was also in harmony with those of other saints, particularly Saint Francis, Saint Clare, and Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort. Jesus is always at the center, and Mary is entirely relative to him as his Mother. Such is Mary’s greatest title: “She is more Mother than queen,” affirmed Thérèse (*Last Conversations*, 161).

It is a doctrine founded on the Gospel, emphasizing the littleness, poverty, and simplicity of Mary; and above all, it is a doctrine oriented entirely toward sanctity,

the maternal mission of Mary being to lead all her children “to the summit of the mountain of Love.”

It is also important to notice the balance of this teaching, which carefully avoided the two opposing excesses denounced by the Council as it simultaneously urged theologians and preachers to abstain from “all false exaggeration as from too summary an attitude” on the subject of Mary (*Lumen Gentium*, 67).

Poverty and Love

The preachers of Thérèse’s time generally fell into the first Mariological excess, that of “false exaggeration,” according to her own testimony reported by Mother Agnes:

She was telling me that all that she had heard preached on the Blessed Virgin hadn’t touched her: ‘Let the priests, then, show us practicable virtues! It’s good to speak of her privileges, but it’s necessary above all that we can imitate her. She prefers imitation to admiration, and her life was so simple! However good a sermon is on the Blessed Virgin, if we are obliged all the time to say: Ah!... Ah!... we grow tired. How I like singing to Her: “The narrow road to Heaven you have made visible (she said: easy) When practicing always the most humble virtues.”’ (*Last Conversations*, 166).

Thérèse, citing two lines of her poetry here, was resolutely opposed to “triumphalistic” preaching that spoke only of Mary’s greatness and privileges and that often stressed apocryphal gospels filled with the marvelous and the extraordinary. The Carmelite responded to this excess with the Gospels, which show us on the contrary that Mary was very simple, very small, near to us, and imitable. She discovered in this way the great privileges forgotten by these preachers: the privileges of poverty and littleness that characterize the entire earthly lives of Jesus and Mary. In that, she coincided exactly with what Saint Francis wrote in his last testament to Saint Clare: “As for me, Brother Francis, very little, I want to follow the life and poverty of our very great Lord, Jesus Christ, and of his very holy Mother.”

For little Saint Thérèse as well as for the “Poverello,” the words “littleness” and “poverty” fundamentally expressed the same reality: it is the heart of the Gospels, the meeting place and the most intimate communion with Jesus and Mary.

Although preachers rendered Mary distant and inimitable in showing only her “sublime glory,” Thérèse on the contrary found her to be very near to us in the Gospels—near to us in her littleness and poverty:

In pondering your life in the holy Gospels,
I dare to look at you and come near you.



St. Francis

It's not difficult for me to believe that I'm your child,
for I see you as human and suffering like me. (Poetry, 54)

Thérèse would then re-read all the passages of the Gospels where Mary is present, always using the act of love as a key for reading: "I love You." In this way, the Holy Spirit allowed her to dwell in the Gospels, making her immediately attentive to all the mysteries that are revealed there, from the Incarnation to the cross. These are precisely the mysteries of poverty, where "the poor Virgin embraces the poor Christ," "loving Him totally," according to the expressions of Saint Clare.

It is from this viewpoint of love that Thérèse rediscovered the true meaning of the proverb *numquam satis de Maria*, that is, "Of Mary, there is never enough." She gave us a wonderful expression during her novitiate when she wrote to her cousin Marie Guérin, who was very scrupulous: "Have no fear of loving the Blessed Virgin too much, you will never love her enough, and Jesus will be very pleased since the Blessed Virgin is His Mother" (*LT* 92). Such was exactly the response that Saint Louis de Montfort gave to the "scrupulous devout" who were afraid of displeasing Jesus by loving Mary too much: one never loves Mary enough because it is always Jesus whom one loves in her and with her. Such, then, is the meaning of this "never enough." It's a matter of love, and not of inventing new privileges.

Symbols of Mary's Maternal Love



Virgin of the Smile

So, after having read the last passage of the Gospel portraying Mary near the cross of Jesus, Thérèse ended her poem by saying to her:

Soon I'll go to beautiful Heaven to see you,
You who came to smile at me in the morning of my life,
Come smile at me again... Mother,... It's evening now!...
I no longer fear the splendor of your supreme glory.
With you I've suffered, and now I want
To sing on your lap, Mary, why I love You,
And to go on saying that I am your child! (Poetry 54)

These lines were written in May 1897. Days later, in the first pages of *Manuscript C*, Thérèse wrote about her terrible test of faith which began more than a year beforehand, and which touched upon the existence of heaven. While speaking of her poems, she wrote: "When I sing of the happiness of Heaven...I sing simply what I WANT TO BELIEVE" (*C* 7v; *SOS*, 3rd ed., p. 214). Such was the heroic affirmation of heaven that we find here. Thérèse affirmed that in the glory of heaven, she would remain always the child of Mary, on her knees singing eternally this "I love You." At the same time, she summed up all her own life on earth, from the morning to the evening, as lived under Mary's maternal smile. For Thérèse, Mary was truly the smiling Virgin, and Thérèse's own smile that came to light up the whole world is one of the most beautiful reflections of Mary's smile.

In her *Manuscript A*, the Carmelite told of this “smile” of Mary “in the morning of her life.” Deeply affected in her childhood by the death of her mother, then by the loss of her “second mother,” her sister Pauline who left her to enter Carmel, Thérèse was cured by the maternal smile of Mary, a cure that became complete with the “grace of Christmas” and with her final confirmation at Our Lady of Victories in Paris:



The Blessed Virgin made me feel that it was really herself who smiled on me and brought about my cure. I understood that she was watching over me, that I was her child. I could no longer give her any other name but Mama’ as this appeared ever so much more tender than Mother. How fervently I begged her to protect me always, to bring to fruition as quickly as possible my dream of hiding beneath the shadow of her virginal mantle! This was one of my first desires as a child. When growing up, I understood it was at Carmel I would truly find the Blessed Virgin’s mantle, and toward this fertile Mount I directed all my desires. I prayed Our Lady of Victories to keep far from me everything that could tarnish my purity. (A 56v-57r; SOS, 3rd ed., p. 123).

So, without any new extraordinary manifestation, Thérèse experienced Mary’s maternal love in the most profound way, and she responded to it with all her filial love. This love of a child who preferred the name of “Mama” to that of Mother wasn’t in any way sentimentalism or infantilism. It was the same love with which Thérèse called God “Papa,” and spontaneously rediscovered all the power of Jesus’ word “Abba.”

In order to express this intimacy between the child and her Mother, Thérèse used the symbol of Mary’s mantle or veil. She entered Carmel in order to hide herself beneath the shadow of the virginal mantle of Mary. She was going to live that most intensely during the course of several days during the time of her novitiate: “I was entirely hidden under the Blessed Virgin’s veil” (*Last Conversations*, 88). A little while afterward, she invited her sister Céline to entrust herself totally to Mary: “Hide yourself well in the shadow of her virginal mantle in order that she may virginize you!” (*LT* 105).

The Most Intimate Union with Jesus

For Thérèse, this life hidden under the mantle of Mary was the occasion for the most intimate union with Jesus in the simplicity of daily life. She expressed this beautifully in one of her first poems:

O Immaculate Virgin! You are my Sweet Star
Giving Jesus to me and uniting me to Him.
O Mother! Let me rest under your veil Just for today.
(Poetry, 5)





St. Louis de Montfort

In the same sense, it was Mary herself who said to Céline:

I will hide you under the veil
Where the King of Heaven takes refuge....
But to shelter you always
Under my veil beside Jesus,
You must stay little. (*Poetry*, 13)

Like a Mother, Mary gives Jesus to us and gives us to Jesus. Here again, Thérèse's teaching coincides with that of St. Louis de Montfort in showing how Mary is always relative to Jesus. She never keeps her children to herself, but "She unites them to Him with a very intimate bond" (*Treatise of True Devotion*, 211).

From Her Profession to the Offering to Merciful Love

It was precisely in this Marian climate that Thérèse made her religious profession on September 8, 1890, the feast of the Birth of Mary. After telling how Mary had helped her to prepare her bridal "dress" for the great day of her wedding, she cried out: "Mary's nativity! What a beautiful feast on which to become the spouse of Jesus! It was the little Blessed Virgin, one day old, who was presenting her little flower to little Jesus" (A 77r; *SOS*, 3rd ed., p. 167).

With childlike simplicity, these words of Thérèse express the most essential aspect of her spirituality, which is evangelical littleness. Thérèse repeated and underlined the word "little" three times, showing how her own littleness was enveloped by the littleness of Jesus and Mary. It was the "little" Mary who presented her to Jesus so that she could become his spouse. Thus, it was with Mary that Thérèse could truly espouse the littleness of Jesus, just as Saint Francis and Saint Clare had espoused his poverty, intimately partaking in the Mysteries of his abasement from the Incarnation to the cross. With Mary, all these saints have shared in this staggering mystery of God's poverty and littleness. Thérèse contemplated Jesus as "a God who makes Himself so little for me" (*LT* 266). Likewise, Saint Clare recognized in him "the love of this poor God who was laid in a manger as a poor child, lived poor in this world, and hung naked and poor on the Cross."

So she who called herself Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face was going to identify always more deeply with this love whose "nature it is to humble itself" (cf. A 2v; *SOS*, 3rd ed., p. 14), from the poverty of the Incarnation to the total privation of the cross.

In living hidden under the mantle of Mary, Thérèse was going to enter more and more into the mystery of Jesus' littleness and poverty, because the discovery of evangelical littleness has a progressive character.

After her profession, in her letters to her sister Céline, the young Carmelite above all revealed her spousal heart, this fundamental spousal dimension of her love for Jesus. In this light, littleness identified itself in a practical way with virginity. We find the most beautiful expression of this in her letter of April 25, 1893. Through the symbol of the flower of the fields, which represents Jesus in

his earthly life, and that of the drop of dew, which represents his spouse in the same condition, Thérèse showed how littleness is the indispensable condition of this virginal union between the bride and her Spouse. In order to be for Jesus and for him alone, “one must remain little, little like a drop of dew!” (LT 141). It is virginity of heart, like undivided love, which led Thérèse to espouse the littleness of Jesus by giving herself totally and exclusively to him, like this little drop of dew that alone could respond to his thirst for love.

Close to Mary, Thérèse learned “to live on love,” and it was in contemplating her that she would give the best definition of love: “To love is to give everything. It’s to give oneself” (*Poetry*, 54). And it was precisely in this dynamic of total giving that Mary was present at the heart of the Offering to Merciful Love on June 9, 1895. Thérèse offered herself then to the love of Jesus in which she came to discover the entire Trinitarian reality: “This year, June 9, the feast of the Holy Trinity, I received the grace to understand more than ever before how much Jesus desires to be loved” (A 84r; *SOS*, 3rd ed., p. 180). In giving herself totally “as a victim of holocaust” to the fire of his love, which is the Holy Spirit, she abandoned her offering into the hands of Mary (cf. *Prayers*, 6; *SOS*, 276).

Here, Thérèse joined particularly with Louis-Marie de Montfort, who invited the poor and the little ones to live fully the grace of their baptism in giving themselves totally to Jesus by the hands of Mary. The symbol he used, that of “the slave of love,” had in its depths the same sense as the Theresian symbol of the “holocaust to love,” each one signifying the same extremity of love, the same total gift of self.

Communion in the Mystery of the Incarnation

At the same time that she gave herself entirely to Jesus, Thérèse received Jesus who gave himself entirely to her, in the infinite greatness of his love, symbolized by the ocean. She wrote to her prioress: “You permitted me, dear Mother, to offer myself in this way to God, and you know the rivers or rather the oceans of graces that flooded my soul” (A 84r; *SOS*, 3rd ed., p. 181). So, Thérèse, like Mary, “can contain Jesus, the Ocean of Love” (*Poetry*, 54).

Evangelical littleness then took on a maternal nature, typically feminine. It was in this way that Saint Clare invited Agnes of Prague to “attach herself to the very gentle Mother,” who carried at her breast “him whom the heavens couldn’t contain,” to share her maternity: “Just as the glorious Virgin of virgins carried him maternally, so you also, following her footsteps of humility above all and of poverty, you can always without any doubt carry him spiritually in a body which is chaste and virginal, holding him in whom you and all things are contained.”

Thérèse expressed this beautifully in her Marian poem in which she contemplated the same mystery of Mary carrying Jesus on her maternal breast. Thérèse was not only the child of Mary, but even more profoundly, she was mother with Mary, sharing her maternal intimacy with the child whom she carried. Like Francis and Clare, Thérèse referred to the Eucharist:



St. Clare

O beloved Mother, in spite of my littleness,
 Like You I possess the All-Powerful within me.
 But I don't tremble in seeing my weakness:
 The treasures of a mother belong to her child,
 And I am your child, O my dearest Mother.
 Aren't your virtues and your love mine too?
 So when the white Host comes into my heart,
 Jesus, Your sweet Lamb, thinks He is resting in You! (Poetry, 54)



One of Thérèse's deepest desires was to keep the presence of the Body of Jesus within her. This is what she asked Jesus in the Act of Oblation: "Remain in me as in the Tabernacle" (*Prayers*, 6; *SOS*, 276). In this way, she asked to be like Mary, "the Tabernacle who veils the Savior's divine beauty!" (*Poetry*, 54).

In her littleness, Mary carried Jesus, and it was in poverty that she gave birth to him in Bethlehem. It was there that Thérèse contemplated all of Mary's greatness, her greatness as the Mother of God close to her Child:

No one wants to take in poor foreigners,
 There's room for the great ones....
 There's room for the great ones, and it's in a stable
 That the Queen of Heaven must give birth to a God.
 O my dearest Mother, how lovable I find you,
 How great I find you in such a poor place!...
 When I see the Eternal God wrapped in swaddling clothes,
 When I hear the poor cry of the Divine Word,
 O my dearest Mother, I no longer envy the angels,
 For their Powerful Lord is my dearest Brother!...
 How I love You, Mary, you Who made
 This Divine Flower blossom on our shores! (*Poetry*, 54)

For Thérèse, as for Francis, this mystery of the manger always remained very present; in it was manifested the union of the Mother with her Son in poverty, exemplifying our union with him in the Eucharist, where He is again "much more little than a child!" (*Plays*, 2). In this light, Thérèse wrote to Céline: "This year we must form many priests who love Jesus! and who handle Him with the same tenderness with which Mary handled Him in His cradle!" (*LT* 101). This was exactly what she asked Mary on behalf of a future priest, the seminarian Maurice Bellière, her first spiritual brother: "Teach him even now how lovingly you handled the Divine Child Jesus and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, so that one day he may go up to the Holy Altar and carry in his hands the King of Heaven. I ask you also to keep him safe beneath the shadow of your virginal mantle" (*Prayers*, 8).

Mary's Pilgrimage of Faith

This intimate relationship between Mary and her child was lived in faith. Thérèse emphasized this point very much, like Saint Louis de Montfort before her. Following the Second Vatican Council, Pope John Paul II developed this particular theme of "Mary's pilgrimage of faith": "Happy are those who have believed" (*Redemptoris Mater*, 1220). Jesus was at the same time her child and her God, the fruit of her womb and her creator and savior. Thus, the relationship between Mary and Jesus is inseparably the relationship between the mother and her child, and the relationship between the believer and her God. While preachers, stressing apocryphal legends, filled the life of Mary with extraordinary graces, Thérèse by contrast showed the spiritual poverty of Mary in the Gospels while affirming that "she lived by faith just like ourselves" (*Last Conversations*, p. 161). And for her as for us, faith was obscure and sometimes sorrowful, put to the test by Jesus himself.

Thérèse affirmed this with respect to the Gospel episode in which Jesus is lost and found again in the Temple:

Mother, your sweet Child wants you to be the example
Of the soul searching for Him in the night of Faith. (*Poetry*, 54)

For Thérèse, this was the climate of Mary's spiritual life in Nazareth:

Mother full of grace, I know that in Nazareth,
You lived in poverty, wanting nothing more.
No rapture, miracle, or ecstasy,
Embellish your life, O Queen of the Elect!...
The number of little ones on earth is truly great,
They can raise their eyes toward You without trembling.
It is by the ordinary way, incomparable Mother,
That you like to walk to guide them to Heaven. (*Poetry*, 54)

This verse is particularly important, because it reveals the Marian nature of the "little way." Thérèse went to the heart of the mystery of Mary's poverty as a spiritual poverty of faith, stripped of all extraordinary graces.

With Mary Near the Cross

This poverty reached its height in the total privation of the cross. It was there that Thérèse ultimately identified with Mary, reading the last text of the Gospel where she is present close to Jesus:

Mary, at the top of Calvary standing beside the Cross
To me you seem like a priest at the altar. (*Poetry*, 54)





Breviary Card composed by
Thérèse

As a mother, she participated in the redeeming sacrifice of her Son in a unique way. Like Abraham, she consented to the sacrifice of her only son; and her son Jesus Christ then extended her motherhood to all humanity redeemed by his blood.

Thérèse shared very deeply in this mystery while sharing in Mary's motherhood near the cross. She experienced it for the first time before her entry into Carmel. While looking at an image of Jesus Crucified, contemplating his blood poured out, she had made one of the most fundamental decisions of her life: "I was resolved to remain in spirit at the foot of the Cross to receive the divine dew. I understood that I was then to pour it out upon souls" (A 45v; SOS, 3rd ed p. 99).

Her spiritual motherhood began immediately with this decision; she obtained eternal salvation for the man she called "my first child" (A 46v; SOS, 3rd ed., p. 100): the criminal Pranzini, who was sentenced to death and guillotined.

In Thérèse's feminine heart, which she often compared to a lyre, this "lyre-string" of motherly love was essential, vibrating with that of her spousal love: "*To be Your Spouse....*, and by my union with You to be the *Mother of souls*" (B 2v; SOS, 3rd ed., p. 192). For Thérèse, these are the two most beautiful aspects of this "treasure" of love which is virginity: to be spouse and to be mother. Her virginity became fruitful by her communion with the blood of Jesus poured out in his passion. In contemplating this "dew of love" in his agony, Thérèse said to Jesus:

Remember that your fruitful Dew
Made the flowers' corollas virginal
And made them able even in this world
To give birth to a great number of hearts.
I am a virgin, O Jesus! Yet what a mystery,
When I unite myself to You, I am the mother of souls. (*Poetry*, 24)

We notice above all the beauty and the power of the affirmations: "I am a virgin.... I am a mother." Like Mary, Thérèse was inseparably virgin, spouse, and mother, and her motherhood found all its strength, all its fruitfulness, in the most intimate communion with Jesus Crucified. For Thérèse as for Mary, this communion with the annihilation of Jesus, with his total privation on the cross, characterized the very deep trial of faith that Pope John Paul II was not afraid to call a "Kenosis [i.e., total self-emptying] of Faith" (*Redemptoris Mater*, 18) Clearly it isn't a question of the loss of faith, but on the contrary of a more heroic faith that continues to endure even in the most total privation, in the deepest obscurity, supported by love and hope.

In fact, the passion of Thérèse, which began during Paschaltide in 1896, was above all characterized by this very difficult "test of faith." It was while Thérèse shared in Mary's most extreme spiritual poverty that she also shared in her universal motherhood. Thérèse's spiritual motherhood extended then to all people; she

(continued on page 15)



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130-AU	The Revolution of Therese	Kieran Kavanaugh OCD
131-R	St. Thérèse: Her Life and Spirituality	Kieran Kavanaugh OCD

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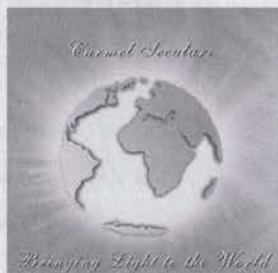
CD #	CD TITLE	Speaker
ST THERESE (continued)		
133-AW	The Little Way	Kieran Kavanaugh OCD
134-T	St. Thérèse: Her Influence on Contemporary Theology and Spirituality	Dennis Read OCD
135-Q	St. Thérèse and the Mission of the Church	Michael Dodd OCD
137-AX	St. Thérèse: Doctor of the Church	Keith Egan TO Carm
138-D	St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Your Personal History as a Narrative of Hope	Sr Margaret Dorgan DCM
139-AC	This Child: Words of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, With Reflections/Prayers/Chant/Song	
140-AY	The Discovery of Merciful Love	Keith Egan TO Carm
144-BC	St. Thérèse and Priesthood	Mary Frohich RSCJ
154	Reflections on the Doctorate of St. Therese	Steven Payne OCD
152	Therese: Mission Saigon and Beyond	Constance FitzGerald OCD
153	Therese: Child, Girl, Woman	Vilma Seelaus OCD
164	Story of a Soul: A New Arrangement of the Texts	Kieran Kavanaugh OCD
165	Dark Fire: The Prayer of St. Therese	Daniel Chowning OCD
BLESSED ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY		
108-V	The Message of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity	Steven Payne OCD
122-Z	Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity: Mary in her Interior Life	Emmanuel Sullivan OCD
127-AJ	Elizabeth of the Trinity: Life in the Trinity	Sr Margaret Dorgan DCM
171-G	The Apocalyptic Dimension in Elizabeth of the Trinity: Eternity	Sr Margaret Dorgan DCM
181-AN	The Prayer of Elizabeth of the Trinity	Daniel Chowning OCD
194-BN	Elizabeth of the Trinity and Baptismal Spirituality	Daniel Chowning OCD
193-AK	Elizabeth of the Trinity and Silence	Kieran Kavanaugh OCD
ST EDITH STEIN (ST TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS)		
112-L	Edith Stein: Finding the Cross in Everyday Life	John Sullivan OCD
145-BD	Edith Stein: Contemplative Scholar	Constance FitzGerald OCD
190-AM	Edith Stein and Renewal	John Sullivan OCD
OTHER CARMELITE SAINTS AND BLESSEDS		
110-B	Br. Lawrence of the Resurrection: The Practice of the Presence of God	Salvatore Sciorba OCD
187-AF	Br. Lawrence: Saving Private Herman	Marc Foley OCD
161	Praying with Brother Lawrence: The Practice of the Presence of God	Gregory Klein O Carm
117-O	Carmel in the French Revolution (Martyrs of Compiègne)	Salvatore Sciorba OCD

\$8.95 each CD

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Carmelite Seculars Bringing Light to the World

OCDS Regional Congress 2008 September 11 - 14, 2008 Houston, Texas



Speakers:

Fr. John Michael Payne, OCD

Fr. Johannes Gorantla, OCD

Dr. Susan Muto

Dr. Nancy Thompson, OCDS

Deacon John Pelletier, OCDS

Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD

Archbishop Daniel DiNardo

Archdiocese of Galveston Houston

Elda Maria Estrada, OCDS

The registration fee for the Congress is \$245 per person if you register by May 31, 2008. After May 31, the registration fee is \$275. This fee includes all of your meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) at the Congress. The Congress will begin at 5:00pm on Thursday, September 11, 2008 (Registration will be from 3:00pm – 6:00pm) and will end at noon on Sunday, September 14, 2008.

The Registration form is available on the Congress website www.ocdscongresshouston.com.

Please fill out the information requested on the form and mail it to the address listed with your **nonrefundable deposit of \$125**. Make your check (or money order) payable to "OCDS Congress". The fee balance of \$120 (or \$150 for those registering after May 31) is due when you check-in at the Congress if full payment has not been received before then.

The 15th Regional OCDS Congress is being hosted in Houston, at the Omni Hotel Westside. Please make your reservation by August 28, 2008 to obtain the special rate of \$94 per night – per room. You can make your reservation on-line on the Congress website or call the hotel at 281-558-8338. When making your reservation be sure and identify yourself with the group Order of Carmelites Discalced Secular to obtain the group rate. Please send any questions to: jeannice.theriot@gmail.com

(continued from page 15)

then became entirely missionary, “adopting” in a very special way the atheists of the modern world. With the greatest confidence she interceded for them, she prayed for their eternal salvation.

Thus, Thérèse lived her maternal love in a sorrowful faith and in a hope without limits, not only for herself but for others, for all. Like the poet Charles Peguy, her contemporary, Thérèse joined Mary in all the beauty of her motherly hope: the hope of a mother for the salvation of all her poor children.

Mary Is the Greatest Because She Is the Least

As Thérèse contemplates her, Mary is very simple in her faith and hope. She is “all Mother” by being “all hope,” and she is that fundamentally because she is very little, the “very little one par excellence, “overflowing with graces” in an unsurpassable manner, even more than Thérèse, because she was even more little.

Thus, Thérèse spoke of Mary without naming her when she said to Jesus, at the end of *Manuscript B*: “I feel that if You found a soul weaker and littler than mine, which is impossible, You would be pleased to grant still greater favors provided that it abandoned itself with total confidence to Your Infinite Mercy” (B 5v; SOS, 3rd ed., p. 200).

These lines were written on September 8, 1896, on the feast of the Birth of Mary, in the grace of the littleness of the one who became the Mother of God.

Abbreviations

A, B, C: Thérèse’s autobiographical manuscripts, ordinarily with indication of page number and recto (front) or verso (back) side (C 3v, for example, refers to the verso side of the third page of manuscript C.) This referencing system is incorporated into the ICS Publications third edition of SOS.

HLC: Last Conversations

LT: Letters

PN: Poetry

Pri: Prayers

RP: Pious Recreations (i.e., Plays)

SOS: Story of a Soul



CARITH SILENT RETREAT – WITH CARMELITE FRIAR Priest Field, West Virginia (one hour from DC)

September 26 – 28, 2008,

with option to stay through October 1.

Deposit: \$50 due by June 14, 2008; balance depends on number attending.

For further information and registration, CALL:

Carol Lisi at 703-765-0552 or Don DiJulio at 301-598-3176.

Thérèse Speaks: Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Retreat Remembrance of a Blessed Retreat — March 1897
To her little Sister



Dear Mother, from my tender youth
Your sweet picture has delighted my heart.
In your gaze I could read your tenderness,
And near you I found happiness.

Virgin Mary, after this exile I'll go
To the Celestial shore to see you forever,
But here below your sweet Picture
Is my Perpetual Help!

When I was a good girl and very obedient,
It seemed that you were smiling at me;
And if sometimes I was a little naughty,
I thought I could see you crying over me ...

In answering my simple prayers,
You showed me your maternal love.
In contemplating you I found on earth
A foretaste of the good things of Heaven.

When I'm struggling, O my dear Mother,
You strengthen my heart in the fight,
For you know, at the evening of this life
I want to offer Priests to the Lord! ...

Always, always, Image of my Mother,
Yes, you will be my happiness, my treasure.
And at my last hour I would like
To fix my gaze on you again.

Then flying away to the Celestial shore,
I'll go to sit on your lap, Mother,
Then I'll be able to receive
Your sweet kisses! ...

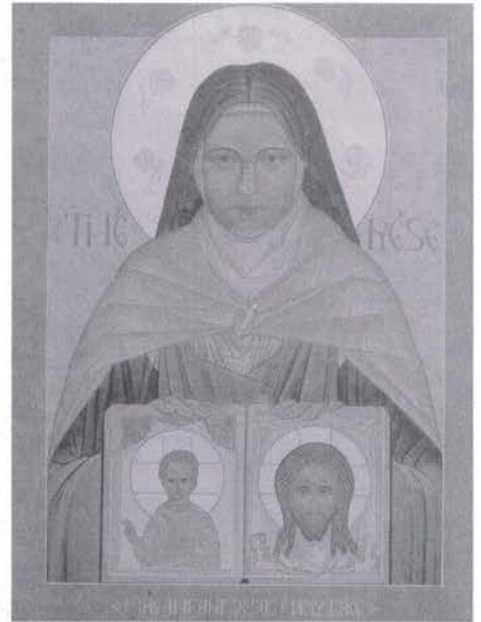
PN 49

Song of Gratitude to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

From the first moments of my life,
You took me in your arms.
Ever since that day, dear Mother,
You've protected me here below.
To preserve my innocence,
You placed me in a soft nest.
You watched over my childhood
In the shade of a holy cloister.
Later in the days of my youth,
I heard Jesus' call! ...
In your ineffable tenderness,
You showed Carmel to me.
"Come, my child, be generous,"
You sweetly said to me.
"Near me, you'll be happy,
Come sacrifice yourself for your Savior."

Close to you, O my loving Mother!
I've found rest for my heart.
I want nothing more on earth.
Jesus alone is all my happiness.
If sometimes I feel sadness
And fear coming to assail me,
Always supporting me in my weakness,
Mother, you deign to bless me.

Grant that I may be faithful
To my divine Spouse Jesus.
One day may his sweet voice call me
To fly away among the elect.
Then, no more exile, no more suffering.
The song of my gratitude,
Lovable Queen of Carmel.
PN 7



In Remembrance

The Mary Queen of Carmel Community in Lakeland, FL recently lost two members. **Albert Simmons, OCDS**, began eternal life on November 14, 2007. **Virginia Borsani, OCDS**, began eternal life on December 20, 2007. She made her Definitive Promise in February 1997.

Amelia Lichman, OCDS, Sr. Mary Theresa of the Cloth, began eternal life on December 1, 2007 at the age of 86. She was a member of the St. Joseph's Community in Havertown, PA and made her Definitive Promise in October 1962. She was the longest professed member in her community.

Arlyne Evans, OCDS, began eternal life on January 26, 2008. She was a member of Community of St. Joseph in Hampton, VA.

Albert Pohl, OCDS, began eternal life on February 1, 2008. He was a member of the St. Joseph's Community in Port Tobacco, MD.

Joseph Sailor, OCDS, began eternal life on February 19, 2008. He made his Vows in 1995 and served as Treasurer of the Our lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus Community in Cincinnati, OH for several years.

The Community of St. Teresa of Jesus in Philadelphia, PA also lost two members. **Jane O'Brien, OCDS, Sr. Jane Caroline**, began eternal life on April 8, 2008 at the age of 86. She made her Definitive Promise in June, 1983. **Joanna Watts, OCDS, Mary Therese of the Holy Spirit**, began eternal life on May 6, 2008 at the age of 90. She made her Definitive Promise in February 1958.

The Origins and Spirit of Carmel in France

Stephane-Marie Morgain, OCD

The arrival in Paris on October 15, 1604, of six Discalced Carmelite nuns from Spain ended the difficult birth of the first foundation of the Teresian Carmel in France and inaugurated an extraordinary adventure. The six nuns included four Spaniards (Anne of Jesus [de Lobera], Anne of St. Bartholomew [Garcia], Isabel of the Angels [Márquez Mexia], and Beatrix of the Conception) and two Flemish (Léonor of St. Bernard and Isabel of St. Paul [de Chavaira]).

The idea of founding a monastery of the Teresian Reform in France was not new. It was born by chance in the speakroom of Seville, between Mother Maria de San José (Salazar) and Jean de Quintanadueñas de Brétigny, a young man of Spanish extraction from Rouen. The project, encouraged in October 1585 by Nicolas of Jesus and Mary (Doria), then provincial of the discalced, came up against France's internal conflicts. Torn by religious wars, France was anxiously looking for a Catholic king who could reestablish the kingdom's unity and manage the bad relations with Spain.

Between 1601 and 1602, rather than definitely renouncing his foundation plan, Jean de Brétigny bided his time by translating the writings of Saint Teresa, published in Spain in 1588. Three volumes appeared in succession: the *Autobiography*, the *Way of Perfection*, and the *Interior Castle*. Finally, he published in French the life of Mother Teresa of Jesus written by Francisco de Ribera in 1590. Preceding her daughters, Teresa conquered the heart of France. The impact was immediate.

A group of Parisian Catholics, close to the Catholic League and hostile to the Edict of Nantes, united by convictions and often by blood, endeavored to promote the spiritual renewal of a France exhausted by religious quarrels. Barbe Avrillot, the wife of Peter Acarie, was the mainspring. In the salons of her mansion on rue des Juifs she used to gather about herself men and women—aristocrats, members of parliament, ecclesiastics, doctors of the Sorbonne, students—all driven by the same reforming zeal. Michel de Marillac mingled there with René Gaultier, André Duval, Philippe de Gamaches, François Tremblay, Dom Richard Beaucousin, Benet of Canfield, Philippe de Cospeau, the Marquise de Maignelay, and the young Pierre de Bérulle.



Bl. Anne kneeling before Holy Mother, St. Teresa



Barbe Acarie, Bl. Marie of the Incarnation

Sensitive to Saint Teresa's intuition, the little "areopagus" decided, with St. Francis de Sales's temporary assistance, to undertake the steps necessary for a foundation. In Paris, Madame Acarie (the future Bl. Mary of the Incarnation) was in charge of forming candidates who were already pressing to enter; meanwhile Catherine of Orleans, princess of Longueville, was looking for some buildings for the future monastery. In Spain, Jean de Brétigny was trying to convince the Discalced Carmelite friars to allow Sisters to leave who had known Mother Teresa and would be able to introduce into France the Reform from across the Pyrenees. In Rome, Denis de Santeuil obtained the bull for the foundation, a bull inspired by the one governing the monastery of Carmelite nuns in Rome,

founded in 1597. On July 18, Henry IV granted the patent letters for the establishment of the Carmelite nuns, and on November 13, 1603, the papal bull was dispatched. In accord with French demands, the Carmelite nuns would be governed by three ecclesiastical superiors (Jacques Gallemant, André Duval, and Pierre Bérulle); visitations would be done by the prior of the Carthusians while awaiting the arrival of the Carmelite friars. (This arrangement would be modified in 1606 and in 1616 when Paul V named Pierre de Bérulle perpetual visitor to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of France. The Discalced Carmelite friars of the Italian Congregation, arriving in Paris in 1611, were unable according to their *Constitutions* to take charge of directing the nuns.)

All was ready. Only the Carmelite nuns were missing! After many procrastinations, difficulties, subterfuges, and impatient moments that required the direct intervention of Pierre de Bérulle and repeated consultations with Madame Acarie, the nuns arrived in Paris, happy to bring there the Teresian ideal.

The clash of mentalities, habits, and spiritualities was brutal yet without becoming violent. The Spanish Discalced Carmelite nuns, convinced that they were going to die as martyrs in this heretical land, were amazed at the welcome accorded them. For their "viaticum," they brought with them the 1582 *Constitutions* of Alcalá (as modified by Anne of Jesus in 1588) as well as their exuberant and colorful baroque piety. They discovered the austere and classic devotion of the French, lacking in spontaneity but not in grace. The aristocratic iconography of the French School contrasted with the striking [Spanish] images of Christ or the Madonna covered with embroideries and brocades.

After the forced departure of the Jesuits (1594), the French candidates to the Order were placed under the direction of the Capuchins. The mystical orientation of

Laurent de Paris, Archange de Pembroke, Honoré de Champigny, Joseph de Tremblay, but especially Benet of Canfield left a strong impression on this period. They formed the future Carmelites in “experiential unity of the spirit” and “the essential will of God.” This mysticism of essence, derived chiefly from the Mystical Theology of Harphius and the writings of Ruysbroeck, prepared the French candidates badly for entering the world of Teresian spirituality, marked by the humanity of Christ, the “friendly conversation” of prayer, the simple and unceremonious relation between the soul and God. Neither did Pierre de Bérulle, formed in this same school but with an independent mind imbued with the theology of the Church Fathers and the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, have the means to grasp at first what the Spanish foundresses wanted to make him understand. Nevertheless, Anne of St. Bartholomew, with the help of other Carmelites, would lead Pierre de Bérulle to the contemplation of the mystery of the Word Incarnate. In exchange, he would give to Saint Teresa’s Christology a new and more expanded interpretation.



Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew

The spiritual difficulties could have been surmounted easily. Bérulle worked for the spread of the nuns and they collaborated freely with him. Anne of St. Bartholomew and Madeleine of St. Joseph (de Fontaines Marans) encouraged the prelate to found a congregation of priests, the Oratory of Jesus and Mary (1611), which could have looked after the Carmelite nuns. But Bérulle gave his congregation another mission. The conflict between Bérulle and some monasteries of Carmelite nuns flared up violently over juridical questions. The Discalced Carmelite friars of the Italian Congregation, in France since 1611, thought they could obtain governance of the nuns by virtue of the first article of the Alcala *Constitutions*. They were supported in their claim by certain prioresses who wished to see the letter of Saint Teresa’s wishes enforced on this point. But the *Constitutions* of the Italian Congregation of the friars, the bulls and papal briefs, the pope and the head of the Italian Congregation, favored Bérulle and confirmed him in his office. The dispute then shifted to a theological problem.

One June 5, 1615, Bérulle imposed on the Carmelites of Chalon a vow of absolute servitude to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Ignorant of theological distinctions and frightened by the formula’s complexity, the nuns were alarmed. Persuaded to introduce the Sisters for whom he was responsible into his Marian

spirituality, Bérulle became aware too late of his blunder. The scandal was immense. The ordinance was annulled. The Carmelite friars seized upon the defective formula in order to have it condemned and thus prove Bérulle's incapacity to govern the Carmelite nuns. The affair divided the monasteries, troubled the king, disturbed the pope who counted on the French Oratori-



Cardinal Bérulle

ans to reform the clergy, and provoked the bishops who were jealous of their authority over strictly enclosed monasteries. This devotion later spread more discreetly. Weighed down with calumnies, Bérulle nonetheless won the case, and the Discalced Carmelite friars were punished.



Venerable Anne of Jesus

Bérulle was unable to contribute to an authentic Teresian Carmelite formation. He had come to know the spirit of "Madre" Teresa too late. On the other hand, he had favored the introduction of the Order into France, and stimulated its growth despite the crises. It was in the cloister that the Carmelite nuns came to know their foundress. The role of the Spanish Mothers was irreplaceable. Moreover, Thérèse of the Child Jesus would dream of Anne of Jesus many years later, and would recognize her immediately.

Question of the Month

Question: What membership files should transition to the new Council?

Remember, respect of formation candidates' confidentiality is key. Information on those preparing for Temporary or Definitive Promise should be given to the new Formation Director. Only the dates of formation events (not worksheets or notes from interviews) should be forwarded to a new Council after Temporary and Definitive Promises are made. Candidate letters should be returned to the individual who wrote them. All other information collected during the preparation phase should be destroyed. And, of course, never discussed once the Council has accepted a candidate.

Therese's Sisters in Carmel

Sister St. Raphael of the Heart of Mary (1840-1918)

Laure-Stephanie Gayat was born on February 18, 1840. She was portress (receptionist) at the turn of the Lisieux Monastery, where Thérèse assisted her from 1893 to 1896.

Gentle and good, but with a multitude of little irritating ways, she had great devotion to St. Anthony of Padua. One day, filled with compassion for Thérèse's chilblains, Sister St. Raphael bound up all of Thérèse's fingers, leaving only the little finger on each hand free!

While deploring the fact that the provisor didn't serve Thérèse enough in the refectory, she failed nevertheless to share her bottle of

cider with Thérèse as she should have, since she sat next to her. In order not to humiliate her thirsty neighbor, however, Thérèse contented herself with water. Sister St. Raphael died on August 27, 1918.



Sister St. Raphael

Sister St. John the Baptist of the Heart of Jesus (1847-1917)



Sister St. John the Baptist

Marie-Estelle Dupont was born on October 10, 1847.

She entered Carmel on October 7, 1871. With spirituality totally opposite to that of Thérèse, who regarded her as the image of God's severity (LT 230), she wanted to conquer sanctity by sheer hard work and penance. She thought that Thérèse counted too much on God's divine mercy. Sister St. John was in charge of the linen room and always gave Thérèse garments that were the most mended, not realizing that Thérèse would happily have claimed the shabbiest garments for herself!

Considering it a mistake to entrust the formation of the novices to such a young Sister, she said to Therese one day during recreation: "You should be tending to your own direction instead of directing others!"

A fervent devotee of Cardinal Bérulle, Sister went about with her head in the clouds, forgetful of the things of earth. One day, when it came time to serve the soup in the refectory, she could not remember where she had put it. It was later discovered in a cupboard! (cf. CG 1174). She died on October 27, 1917.

News from the Northeast Region

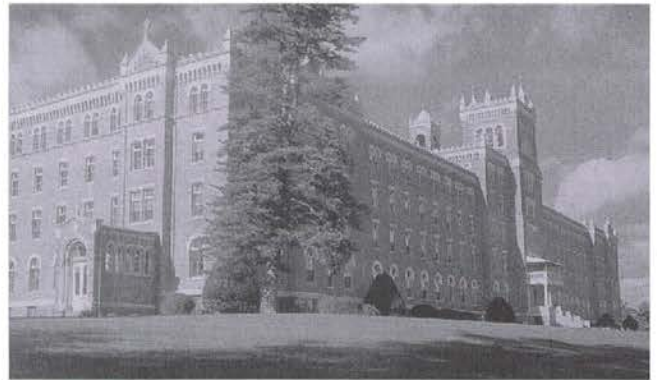


The six Northeast Districts are planning the following regional programs for the remainder of 2008. OCDS members from outside the Northeast can register later if there is room on these dates:

July 25-27 2008 District I: "Foundations for Spiritual Life" by Fr. Paul Fohlin, OCD at San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Beach, NJ. COST: \$190. Please make

checks payable to: OCDS District I. Mail to: Martha Stefanchick, OCDS (Treasurer) 151 Hamilton Avenue, Princeton, NJ 08540. For questions and registration, please call: (Home) 609-924-8231 (Cell) 609-558-5104 or toglorify@aol.com.

August 8-10 2008 District 3: "Foundations for Spiritual Life" by Fr. Paul Fohlin, OCD at Mount St. Alphonsus Retreat House in Esopus, NY; Cost: \$170. Contact Pat Brazo 607-273-0821 or Joyce Ponserella at smarysunshine@aol.com.



September 26-28 2008 District 6: "Foundations for Spiritual Life" by Fr. Paul Fohlin, OCD at the Franciscan Guest House, St. Anthony's Monastery, in Kennebunk, ME. Deposit: \$50 (non-refundable) due by April 1, 2008. Total costs: \$180 for double ... \$140 for single. For map & views of retreat house only: <http://www.franciscanguesthouse.com>. Contact: Corinne Roberts at 978-887-3020 or corinnemry@aol.com.



Suggestions for OCDS Meeting Minutes^{*}

What should be included in community meeting minutes?

- Date, time meeting convened, place of the meeting
- List of who was in attendance and who was absent
- Brief description (short paragraph) of any talk given as well as the name of who gave the talk
- Short summary of business part of the meeting
 - Any announcements made
 - Treasurer's Report –
 - Current account balance
 - Any major financial actions taken in the last month (payments over \$50)
 - Approval of minutes from last meeting
 - Infirmarian's report
 - Other reports – i.e. liturgist, librarian, hospitality
- Any assignments for next month – i.e., readings for each formation level, readings for community reading
- Time meeting adjourned

What should be included in the minutes of Council meetings?

- Date, time meeting convened, place of the meeting
- List of who was in attendance and who was absent
- Brief summary of business discussed
- Record of any votes taken – if vote was not unanimous, then there should be some short report of what concerns were raised
- Time meeting ended

It is important to remember that Council meetings often deal with confidential matters, so the minutes need to remain confidential. However, it is also good if the council (through the secretary) provides a brief summary of any non-confidential business to the community. This could be done in the form of the minutes with the confidential parts removed or as a summary report at the next community meeting following the council meeting. Council records are maintained by the secretary.

^{*} FLOS CARMELI, OCDS Newsletter, Central Jurisdiction, Spring 2008, Vol. XIX, No. 2

Reminders

Embracing All Challenges

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Washington Province

Congress

July 16 - 19, 2009

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