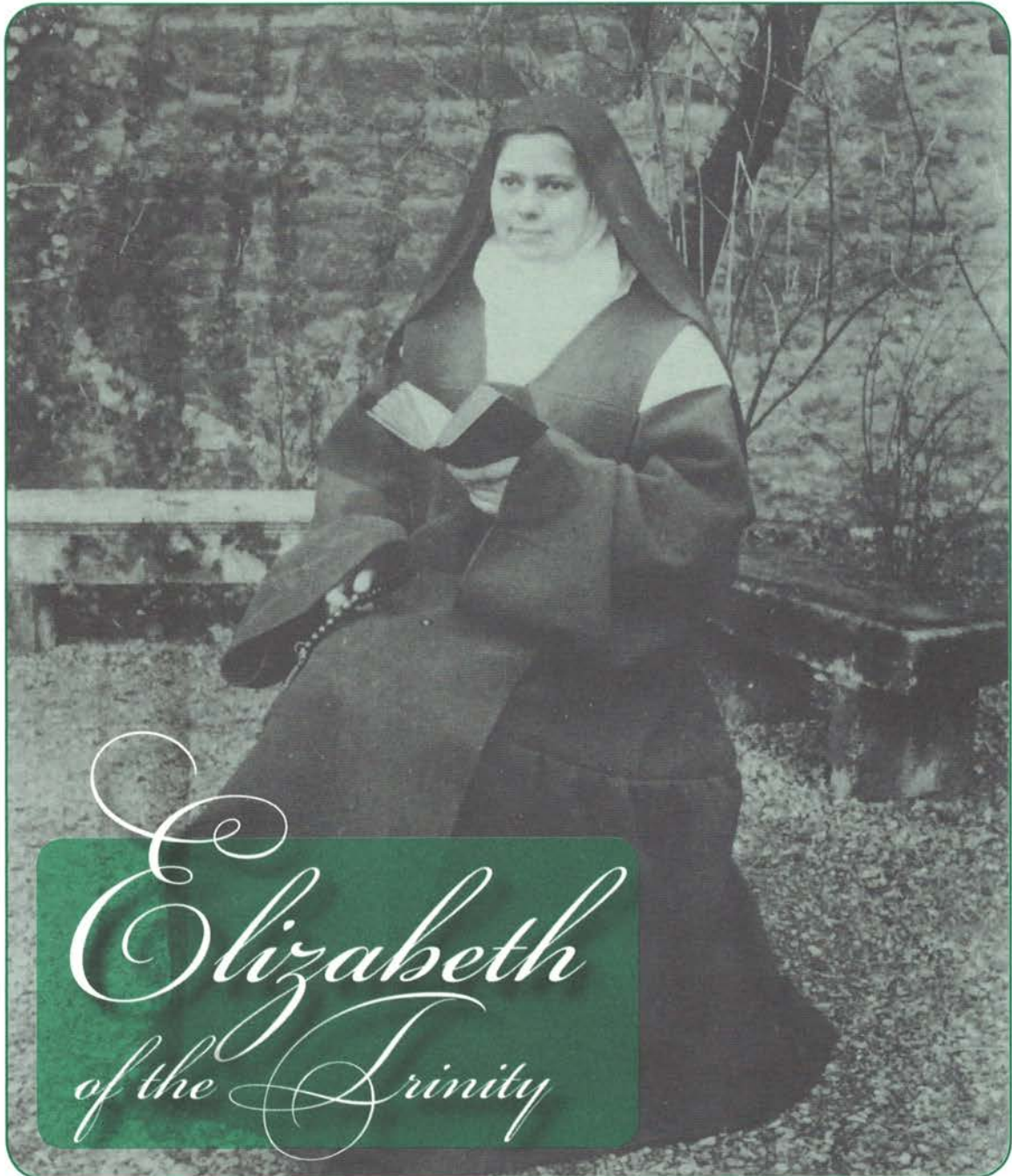


# CARMEL CLARION

AUGUST – OCTOBER 2009 † VOLUME XXV, NO. 4



*Elizabeth  
of the Trinity*

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AUGUST — OCTOBER 2009 † VOLUME XXV NO. 4

*Discalced Carmelite Secular Order, Washington, D.C.*

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# Editorial

On June 19, 2009, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pope Benedict inaugurated the “Year of the Priest” in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the birth of St. John Mary Vianney (the Curé of Ars), the patron saint of parish priests. It is a call for the Catholic faithful to ponder the vocation and ministry of its priests, “who, even amid difficulties and incomprehension, remain faithful to their vocation as ‘friends of Christ,’ who He has called by name, chosen and sent.”

An integral element of our Carmelite vocation is the concern and support of the Church’s priests through our prayer. Teresa, our Holy Mother, esteemed the bishops whom she knew, and valued the clergy very highly. For her, a priest was no mere ecclesiastical functionary; rather, he was a standard-bearer, a Christian leader or captain; a defender of Christ’s cause (cf. W 3.1-2)<sup>1</sup>. This element of our vocation is seen in every one of our saints and blessed. Thérèse had such esteem for the priesthood that she wished that she herself could become a priest. She corresponded with two priests throughout her lifetime praying and encouraging them in their vocation. Likewise, for Elizabeth of the Trinity the priesthood was an intimate part of her spirituality as Joanne Mosely explains in the first article of this issue of the *Clarion*. Please take time to reflect upon their teachings about the priesthood and incorporate them into your Carmelite prayer life.

As I write this it is almost three months from the weekend of our 2009 OCDS Congress. We who were so involved in the planning and execution of the event have descended from the mountain of excitement and fulfillment to the plain of back to life as usual. We are finding that those who attended have become like pebbles thrown in a pond. The ripples of the Congress are moving across our Province and beyond. As I said in my homily at the Congress, we the planners set the table; it is up to various OCDS communities to bring the message of the Congress to fruition in each community. The feedback on the Congress has been very positive. CDs are now available for purchase.

We celebrate the ordination of the Washington Province’s newest Carmelite priest, Fr. Abednecco Wambua Peters of Elizabeth of the Trinity, OCD. Watch our new section in the *Clarion*, **Nairobi News**, to keep informed of our brother’s activities at our mission in Kenya Africa.

We thank the 92 OCDS communities in the Washington Province who stepped up to their financial obligation and submitted their 2009 Provincial Dues and *Clarion* subscriptions for all the members of their community. At this point in time, according to our records, 9 communities have still not submitted 2009 monies and 50 communities have members whose Provincial Dues and *Clarion* subscriptions remain unpaid. This is 16% of our Order. Members will have their *Clarion* suspended if payment is not received by December 15, 2009. The overall financial status of OCDS has been reviewed. Fr. Provincial’s letter appears on the next page. 2010 Rosters will be mailed no later than early December. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in processing these in a timely fashion.

Fr. Regis

1 The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila, Vol. Two, 1980 by ICS Publications, “The Way of Perfection”, Chapter 3.1-2



St John Vianney



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October 15, 2009

### TO ALL OCDS COMMUNITIES IN THE WASHINGTON PROVINCE

Dear members of the Disalced Carmelite Secular Order,

During these last four and a half years, the OCDS Main Office and your Provincial Delegates have made a conscious effort to control expenses. However, as we all know, the cost of everything simply continues to rise. I'm writing this letter to communicate a decision regarding Provincial Dues for 2010, 2011, and 2012, the cost of the *Clarion* subscription, and to indicate the factors that were taken into consideration.

Please begin collecting **\$30.00 Provincial Dues** and **\$10 for the *Clarion* subscriptions** now so that your OCDS Community can fulfill its financial obligation to the Order and submit its 2010 monies in January 2010. The total amount due will be the number of OCDS members in your community times \$40.00.

During these past four years, the focus of the *Clarion* has been on the teachings, life, and writings of St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, St. Thérèse and Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity. This was done in response to your requests for additional formation materials. Beginning in 2010, the ***Clarion* will be published on a quarterly basis** so the cost of an annual subscription **can remain at \$10.00.**

The OCDS Provincial Council, Provincial Delegates and I are working diligently to produce the Washington Province Statutes. After they become available and indications are circulated for their successful implementation, additional funding will be required to support the expenses of the seven PC members, training initiatives, support of our Secretary General in Rome, community visitations, etc. To this end, the Washington Province Dues will be \$35.00 in 2011 and \$40.00 in 2012 to help us reach these legislative directives in the Order.

Yours in Carmel,

Fr. John Sullivan, OCD, Provincial, Washington Province

Fr. John Grennon, OCD, Provincial Delegate – Midwest and Florida

Fr. Paul Fohlin OCD, Provincial Delegate – Northeast

Fr. Regis Jordan, OCD, Provincial Delegate – Mid-Atlantic



# Giving God:

## Elizabeth of the Trinity and the Priesthood

Joanne Mosley

The 'priesthood of all the baptized' is a familiar phrase in Christian consciousness today. But how much do we think about what 'our priesthood' really means? And does it give us a sense of kinship with those members of the Church who are ordained priests? Elizabeth of the Trinity was writing at a time when the distance between priests and laity was almost palpable. And yet, with her keen theological sense, she could see the dignity of our call as Christians and showed true solidarity with priests: they were her fathers and brothers, participants in a sublime mystery.

One of the great graces of Elizabeth's life was to have, as a family friend, Canon Angles. This was a kind, elderly priest to whom Elizabeth, at the age of seven or eight, confided her desire for religious life. He took her seriously, remained in correspondence with her throughout her life, and saved her letters carefully - perceiving, uncannily, that they would one day be needed for her beatification process! Having lost her own father at seven, Elizabeth found in this priest a *paternal* presence, someone with whom, in all safety and confidence, she could share the family tensions and her inner struggles. 'I well know,' she wrote to him from Carmel, 'you still have quite a fatherly affection for me' (L 219).

Any priest receiving a letter from Elizabeth could expect to be asked for his *prayers* and his *blessing*. In a letter she wrote to the Dominican Fr Vallée just weeks before she died, she called herself his 'little child' and asked him to 'bend once again over my soul and bless it on the threshold of the Father's House' (L 304). Interestingly, this expression of 'leaning over' (*se pencher*) is the same term she had used for God the Father in her famous prayer to the Trinity: 'bend lovingly over Your poor little creature;' and again, when writing to a young man about to be ordained: 'the Father is bending over your soul, shaping it with His divine hand' (L 231). Both times here, she was speaking of the power of the Creator God transforming the soul. So, for Elizabeth, the blessing of the priest was an extension of the Father's power, like the sun shedding its rays ever more widely and deeply, or the shadow with which she asked the Father, in the Trinity prayer, to cover her. As she wrote to Canon Angles: 'I recollect myself beneath your dear blessing' (L 219).

Her contact with priests led her to value highly their very words - in their role of *preaching* or *spiritual direction*. The day she met Fr Vallée, just before her twentieth birthday, was a turning point for her. She explained to him that in prayer she had the impression of being dwelt in but did not understand why. Vallée, an eminent theologian, was only too happy to explain the doctrine of the indwelling of the Trinity in the soul. He later described her instantaneous reaction: 'I saw her borne away as on a tidal wave!' Overwhelmed with joy, Elizabeth had just received the key to her inner vocation. Earlier that year, commenting on a retreat she had just attended, given by a Jesuit, she said revealingly: 'this father knows how to give Our Lord to souls' (D 144). The idea of *giving* God would recur often in her writings, in connection with the priestly vocation. Elizabeth would see this notion as especially relevant to the Eucharist.



Canon Isidore Angles  
Elizabeth's close  
confidant



## The Chalice and the Host

Through the Mass, the priest is a channel of God's power in a supreme way. Elizabeth once wrote: 'nothing better expresses the love in God's Heart than the Eucharist' (L 165). She often asked priests to say Masses for her or for her prioress, as the greatest gift one could receive, and she begged for them with a mixture of awe and humor: 'I need your chalice' (L 275), she said boldly! She also desired to be a part of the Mass: 'please place me in the chalice' (L 131), she requested of Canon Angles; for in this way, she hoped to be made into a perfect reflection of the Trinity.

Especially dear to her was to become identified with Jesus as host - a theme, we shall see, which reached its highpoint during her final illness. She asked Canon Angles to consecrate her together with the host (L 256) and then to 'offer her' (L 151). But however sublime the theme, Elizabeth could not resist a touch of humor: 'Pray for your little child, too, consecrate her with the sacred Host... then her prayer can become all-powerful, and you will profit by it...!' (L 225). The Carmelite vocation to pray for priests was very close to

Elizabeth's heart. In fact, it seems to have come almost suddenly into focus after she entered Carmel: her correspondence to priests generally shows a transition from asking for their prayers to praying for them as well: 'not a day passes without my praying for you' (L 91), the new postulant assured Canon Angles.

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***"I love this thought, that the life of the priest (and of the Carmelite) is an Advent that prepares for the Incarnation in souls."***

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### 'The Vicar of the Vicar'

As Elizabeth's inner life matured, she found herself helping priests not only with prayer but also with words. She was exercising a kind of priestly ministry that she herself had received in the past - and not only from priests. When still 'outside' Carmel but a frequent visitor, she had been struck by the effect on herself of the conversations with the then prioress, Mother Mary of Jesus: 'I can't say just how much she gives Our Lord to me...' (D 145), she recounted in her diary. And again: 'My Jesus... she knows so well how to give You to my soul' (D 154). Elizabeth supported, in particular, two young men in their journey from seminary to ordination. André Chevignard, by a neat family parallel, was brother of Georges who was married to Elizabeth's sister Marguerite. Then - with echoes of Thérèse - there was a young missionary in China, Henri Beaubis, entrusted to Elizabeth by her prioress. Like the saint of her baptismal day, Mary Magdalen - known traditionally as 'the apostle of the apostles' (cf. Jn 20:2.18) - so Elizabeth, alluding to the place of Chevignard's first appointment, was pleased to remind him: 'I am the vicar of the Vicar of Meursault' (L 250)!

To these young men she was an inspirational guide. With no training in theology other than her own reading and the community retreats, she nonetheless drew skillfully on scripture in her letters to priests, often quoting those parts of it most relevant for developing a spirituality of the priesthood: the *Letter to the Hebrews* and the high priestly prayer of *John 17*. Yet, far from merely teaching others, Elizabeth found it a deeply enriching process in which she came to fathom the priestly quality of her own vocation: that of a baptized soul, a person of prayer, and especially a Carmelite. "Apostle, Carmelite," it is all one!' (L 124), she wrote to Beaubis. And to Chevignard: 'I love this thought, that the life of the priest (and of the Carmelite) is an Advent that prepares for the Incarnation in



souls' (L 250). And how was the Carmelite 'one' with the priest? Elizabeth explained it, again to Chevignard, using her key notion of 'giving God': to be contemplative like Mary while active like Martha - 'this is how I understand the Carmelite's apostolate as well as the priest's. Then both can radiate God, give Him to souls' (L 158). So as to radiate God, to overflow with Him, she longed to be filled with Christ: 'That is the dream of my Carmelite soul and, I believe, also the dream of your priestly soul. Above all it is the dream of Christ' (L 214).

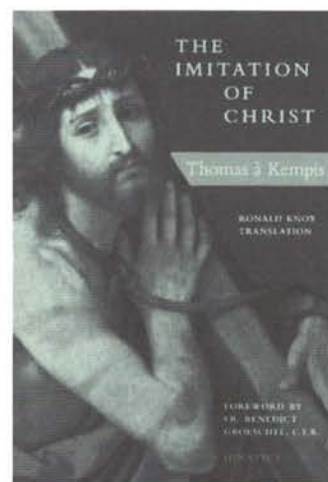
## 'Another Christ'

In the way she addressed priests, Elizabeth showed much respect and reverence. But this had nothing to do with social conventions. Rather, it stemmed from her vision of the priesthood as a 'great mystery' before which 'I can only be silent' (L 232). As apostle (and future priest), Beaubis was to be, she told him, 'another Christ' (L 124); she thus pre-empted the words of Pius XI in his encyclical on the priesthood: 'Let the priest live like another Christ.' The imitation of Christ is, of course, the call of every Christian. However, Elizabeth's letters are a reminder that our model, in particular, is 'Jesus Christ, the High Priest' (L 231), 'Jesus, the Eternal Priest' (L 232). And at the same time, Elizabeth pointed to another model and indispensable guide along the path: Mary, the 'priestly Virgin'.

The priest, like Jesus, is a 'mediator between God and souls' (L 232). Quoting St. Paul (1 Cor 4:1), Elizabeth called the priest the 'dispenser of God's gifts' (L 202; cf. L 203), and came now to the heart of her message: the priest is the person who gives God. But she now showed a second dimension. The first, as we have seen, is giving God to *others*: 'the All-Powerful,' she wrote to Beaubis with a touch of irony, 'seems to need you in order to give Himself to souls!' (L 202). The second dimension, however, is this: in our prayer 'it is, so to speak, God whom we are offering to God' (L 124). This two-directional giving brings immediately to mind the whole movement of the Mass: in distributing communion the priest gives God to the *people*, and in raising the host to the Trinity he offers God *to God*. But as Elizabeth explained in this letter, we can do both things – radiate God to people, offer God to God – through our *prayer*. There is one condition: we must be filled with Christ; we must be 'another Christ working for the glory of the Father' (L 124). It is no surprise that in the opening words of this letter Elizabeth quoted from *John 17*, the high priestly prayer. For Jesus, the new High Priest is the unsurpassable person of prayer.

## Prayer and Action

Above all, Elizabeth was keen that priests should not label themselves as purely active. She wanted them to understand that they were called to a contemplation as deep as that of the Carmelite. Explaining to Chevignard 'to what an abyss of glory we are called!', she passed on to him this inspirational teaching of John of the Cross (SCB 39:3): '[the Holy Spirit] makes [the soul] capable of producing in God the same spiration of love that the Father produces in the Son and the Son in the Father, the spiration that is the Holy Spirit Himself!' (L 185). In a later letter, she would describe to Chevignard how this spiration or *breathing* is the bedrock of all ministries - indeed, an apostolate in itself: 'We will breathe in love and draw it down on our souls and on the whole Church' (L 214). And







the breath of the Spirit is nothing but fire: 'At His touch our soul will become like a flame of love spreading into all the members of the body of Christ' (L 250).

When writing to Beaubis, Elizabeth used another biblical image for the Spirit: water. But the message was the same: we must receive God before we can give Him. It is more effortless than we think, for all we have to do is to be still and overflow: 'Oh, how powerful over souls is the apostle who remains always at the Spring of living waters; then he can overflow without his soul ever becoming empty, since he lives in communion with the Infinite!' (L 124). For priests,

and for anyone with an active ministry, this takes the perspective away from the apostolate as our own exhausting labor, and shows that what is needed is an inner receptiveness to the Holy Spirit, by which we capture the water or the air or the flame - to refresh and enkindle the world.

### **'My Cherished Mother, My Holy Priest'**

As Elizabeth descended into the final stages of her illness, she was confined to the infirmary where she was rarely able to receive communion. Yet, here, she lived the Eucharist as never before: her suffering, she said, was a Mass in itself (L 309). She now saw herself fully as a host, offered up on the altar which was her bed, and reproducing Christ right up to Calvary - that full imitation of Him which she famously described as '*Laudem gloriae*', the 'praise of glory.'

Alone and thinking on her bed, Elizabeth was very logical! How could her suffering be a Mass if there were no priest? On the one hand, 'His love is the priest' (L 309). But there was another at her side, her 'consecrating Priest' (L 306), Mother Germaine. The young prioress accepted this role (L 271, n.1): she had offered Elizabeth to God at her profession, and was doing the same again in preparing her protégée for heaven (L 320, n.3). 'O my Mother,' wrote Elizabeth in verse a month before her death, 'it is you, this Priest at the altar / And *Laudem gloriae* is the little host' (P 121). And in a farewell letter known today as *Let Yourself Be Loved*, which Germaine read again and again until it nearly disintegrated, Elizabeth addressed her prioress in a way that she might have spoken to the fatherly Canon Angles - only, now it was with the filial sentiments of a child to her mother: 'My Cherished Mother, my Holy Priest' (LL 1).

### **'My Happiness Will Grow'**

As death approached, Elizabeth - most probably influenced by Thérèse - felt certain that she had a mission to fulfill in heaven. We could call her a priestly mediator in her heartfelt desire to bring souls to God, to help them 'go out of themselves to cling to God' (L 335). In imitation of Jesus the High Priest, who intercedes for us at the right hand of



the Father, she told a friend that after this life, 'my happiness will grow in interceding for you' (L 341). And to Mother Germaine who had done so much for her, she declared: 'in Heaven I will fulfill in my turn a priesthood over your soul' (LL 3). Her work would continue in heaven because 'it is Love who associates me with His work in you' (LL 3). And how would this work as priesthood?

The answer is expressed perfectly in a poem Elizabeth wrote, when still a novice, defining the role of the Carmelite - a person so given to God that, filled to good measure, she can give Him to others:

The Carmelite is a soul given [to God]...

The Carmelite is a soul invaded,

Full of God so as to give Him always. (P 83)

To every person we wish to help, we too can be a 'priest' - uniting, through Jesus, creation with the Father. For, as Elizabeth shows us, it is not the case that some people are priests and others not, but that *all* are priests - just in varying ways and with differing ministries. The dignity of the call of every Christian is to be part of this team, joined in spirit with the ordained priests of the Church: not a team where we pass a ball or a baton, but where we pass on God! United to Jesus and sharing in His work, we give Him to others, and we offer God to God. ☩



*Mother Marie of Jesus, sitting, prioress when Elizabeth visited Carmel as a child.*

*Mother Germaine of Jesus, standing, prioress at her death.*

## Within Me I Have The Prayer of Jesus Christ

"House of God," I have within me the prayer  
Of Jesus Christ, the divine adorer,  
It takes me to souls and to the Father,  
As that is its double movement.  
To be savior with my Master  
That is also my mission.  
So I must disappear,  
Lose myself in Him through union.  
Jesus, Word of life,  
United to you forever,  
Your virgin and Your victim  
Will radiate Your love:  
"Amo Christum."

December 25, 1903  
(P88, stanza one)

# Elizabeth of the Trinity and Mother Germaine of Jesus

By Fr. Daniel Chowning, OCD

One of the most attractive qualities of Elizabeth Catez is her gift for friendship. She enjoyed a wide circle of friends and socialized freely at balls, dances, picnics, tennis matches, excursions in the country, and playing the piano with friends. She wrote glowingly of the pleasures of her vacation in the Pyrenees Mountains. "Our stay has been a continual round of pleasures; dances, musical sessions, outings in the country, all one after the other. The company we keep in Tarbes is very pleasant... We do not leave the piano, and the music stores of Tarbes cannot keep us supplied with enough music to sight read."

What about her social life in Carmel? How did she express her gift of friendship within Carmel's enclosure?

When Elizabeth entered Carmel on August 2, 1901, the community consisted of twenty-four nuns, including six in the novitiate and two extern sisters. Shortly afterward, the community made a foundation at Paray-Le-Monial. Seven sisters, including the prioress, Mother Marie of Jesus, left for the foundation. Unlike her sister in Carmel, St. Therese, who reveals a lot about her relationships with her sisters in religion, Elizabeth shares nothing about her communal interactions. The silent, quasi-solitary, and structured life of Carmel didn't allow for the type of interpersonal relationships Elizabeth enjoyed as a young girl and throughout her teenage years. In Carmel, a new quality of friendship began: a Gospel ideal of love expressed by St. Teresa in *The Way of Perfection*, "All must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped." (WP, 4:7) What is learned from the sisters like her novitiate companion, Sister Marie-Odile, is

that Elizabeth "was always kind, considerate, and ready to render service." Another sister spoke of her patience and her pleasant way of service. "She made you feel happy simply by handing you a letter. She could cheer you up without saying very much. In giving once, she gave a thousand times over. For her nothing was commonplace. She put something great into everything. And that was the way she gave so much."

Of course relationships are not conflict free, especially when fifteen different personalities live as close together as in a cloistered community. There is bound to be friction from time to time. It seems that Elizabeth received the grace to keep herself centered and calm when she met a correction or an impatient response.

One day, Elizabeth spilt some water on the stairs that Sister Marie of St. Bernard had charge of. Elizabeth received a sharp correction. Later on, realizing the disproportion between a few drops of water and an impatient outburst, Sister Marie of St. Bernard approached Sister Elizabeth and said, "Still friends?" To this, Elizabeth replied: "Friends? As always!"

Sister Marie of the Trinity, Elizabeth's sub-prioress, was known for losing her patience quickly over the smallest mistakes made during the Divine Office. Witnesses say that Elizabeth never reacted when corrected harshly. She remained calmly in her depths and kept up her good will.



*Recreation in the garden. This picture, taken much later in August 1938, is suggestive of Elizabeth's time.*



There was one relationship among her sisters that developed into a deep and lasting friendship, and that was with Mother Germaine of Jesus, Elizabeth's prioress and novice mistress during her five years in Carmel. Mother Germaine perceived Elizabeth's inner depth, affirmed her personal vocation, and encouraged her to follow the Spirit's guidance. Thus Elizabeth flourished and grew emotionally and spiritually under Mother Germaine's leadership and spiritual guidance. The truth is that we wouldn't even know of Elizabeth of the Trinity if it were not for Mother Germaine's affirmation of Elizabeth as a woman with a rich inner life.

Mother Germaine was 31 one years old when she was first elected prioress, only two months after Elizabeth's entrance. The seven sisters who left for the foundation of Paray-Le-Monial left the community impoverished. Since Mother Marie of Jesus had taken along with her some of the most gifted sisters, Mother Germaine had no one to whom she could confide the novitiate, so she assumed this ministry as well.

Mother Germaine was a descendent from the noble family Gouze de Seine. She herself was a marquise. Ranked among her familial ancestors was St. Bernard, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, and Just de Bretennières, martyred in Korea and later canonized by Pope John-Paul II. She was intelligent with a keen psychological insight into people. Although she was a good and generous leader, and loved by her sisters (she was elected prioress seven times), she herself often lacked self-confidence in her leadership abilities. One of her greatest gifts was her ability to honor each sister's unique gifts and personal grace. She was deeply influenced by the spirituality of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, whose *Story of A Soul* had recently been published. Consequently, in community life, and especially in her ministry among the novices, she created a "Teresian" spirit of confidence in God's merciful love and childlike surrender to God. Although she drew much from the spirituality of St. Thérèse, she never imposed it on others. She always respected each nun's unique spiritual path. In her death circular, there is a description of how she guided the novices in their prayer. One cannot help but think that Elizabeth took this teaching to heart. "As to her prayer, all was so simple that it is almost impossible to analyze it. She hardly accepted that one analyze on this point. To the young novices, as soon as she gave them the first principles of meditation, she counseled them to do no more than to remain there silent and attentive in the presence of the One who wanted to work in their souls, applying themselves to faith in His infinite Love."



*Mother Germaine before her entrance to Carmel.*

Mother Germaine possessed a "Teresian soul." She loved her holy mother Teresa of Jesus. St. Teresa's broad and luminous doctrine resonated with her own spiritual longings. She possessed a generous spirit and gave herself completely to the community. She strove to keep the community faithful to the Rule and Constitutions, yet she was not rigid. Under her leadership an atmosphere of unity, love and joy reigned in the Carmel. She was a model of St. Teresa's ideal prioress: "Seek to be loved in order to be obeyed."

From the beginning, Elizabeth felt understood and loved by Mother Germaine. Nevertheless, Mother Germaine wasn't blind to Elizabeth's faults and imperfections. She didn't spare Elizabeth the challenges she needed to grow as a woman and Carmelite. Very quickly she perceived Elizabeth's extreme sensitivity and she worked to purify and mature it. She herself testified during the diocesan process: "I declare that I didn't deal gently with Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity. I often reproached myself for having many times been too severe with her. Many times, she who was so delicate and sensitive must have found me matter for sacrifice. I add to this witness the truth the Servant of God herself told me near the end of her life in an hour of simple outpouring and with



touching humility: ‘Mother, you have mortified well my sensitivity, but I needed it and I thank you for it.’”



*Mother Germaine  
in 1908*

Sister Elizabeth of the Sacred Heart shared this story she heard from Mother Germaine herself:

“Mother Germaine was a woman of faith. She formed Elizabeth in her school. Between Compline and Matins, there was some free time. As a postulant, Elizabeth loved to walk during this period on a terrace and gaze at the stars. One night, Mother Germaine passed by and saw Elizabeth on the terrace. She asked, “What are you doing there?” “Admiring the stars,” Elizabeth replied. Mother Germaine responded, “That’s enough! Go to your cell. You didn’t come to Carmel to dream about stars.” Mother Germaine’s motive was, “I wanted to establish her in faith. I was her spiritual mother, not her stepmother.” In the beginning Mother Germaine saw Elizabeth’s soul as too poetic (sentimental). She often repeated to us, “My children establish yourself in faith.” How many times she repeated this to the novices. She struggled a lot on this point against Elizabeth’s over-sensitivity. I told Mother Germaine that as a little girl Elizabeth liked to hug flowers. Mother said to me, “That doesn’t surprise me of her.” For Mother Germaine, faith was paramount. She had very great goodness, as well as great firmness.”

As a novice mistress, Mother Germaine watched over the young aspirants and didn’t allow them to get carried with sentimentality. She wanted to guide them to live the theological life of faith, hope, and charity. Every day, except Sundays and feast days, the novices gathered in the novitiate after Vespers, which was prayed at 2:00 p.m., for a half hour lesson. Twice a week during this period Mother Germaine met with the novices and gave them a commentary on *The Way of Perfection*. Two other sisters met with them the rest of the week and read a passage from a book and then explained the text and answered questions. Furthermore, Mother Germaine met with each novice daily for a few minutes to speak about her prayer. Once a month she held a longer personal conference with each one. So we see that Elizabeth benefitted from Mother Germaine’s direction her entire short Carmelite life.

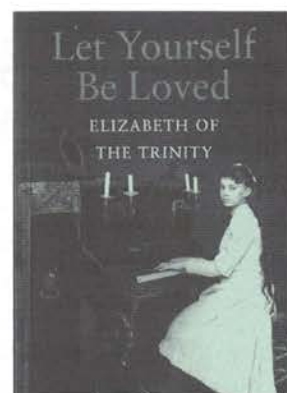
Mother Germaine cared for Elizabeth during her last illness with great solicitude and maternal love. She visited Elizabeth daily during her lingering and painful illness and encouraged her to unite her sufferings to the Crucified One. She introduced her to the writings of Angela of Foligno who helped Elizabeth find meaning in her suffering. It was Mother Germaine who asked Elizabeth to write down her reflections during her last retreat before she died.

We can only imagine the depth of sharing that passed between Elizabeth and Mother Germaine during those formative years and following Elizabeth’s profession. As Elizabeth drew close to the doors of eternal life, who knows what transpired between these two women? Their relationship must have moved beyond the boundaries of prioress/novice mistress and novice and developed into a mutual sharing of souls. We get some insight into their friendship in a letter Elizabeth wrote to Mother Germaine during the last days of October 1906. This letter, known as “*Let Yourself Be Loved*,” was left for Mother Germaine to be read after Elizabeth’s death. It was only discovered after Mother Germaine’s death in 1934, next to Elizabeth’s photo she kept on her table. Throughout the letter we can discern Elizabeth’s understanding of Mother Germaine, her



struggles as prioress and her experience of interior darkness and poverty. The letter is prophetic. Mother Germaine's death circular recounts that she went through periods when she felt keenly interior poverty, feelings of fear, weakness and regrets. She would often say, "I have wasted my life." Later on, when Mother Marie of the Heart of Jesus replaced her as prioress, Mother Germaine suffered much from Mother Marie's perception of Elizabeth that differed from her own and her strong resistance to Mother Germaine's tireless and determined efforts to compile and publish *The Praise of Glory*, the first work to present to the Church the spirituality of Elizabeth of the Trinity.

Elizabeth's testament to her "soul friend," Mother Germaine was: "Let yourself be loved is your vocation. Believe in God's personal, merciful love for you; allow yourself to be loved. Even if you make mistakes, "this love can rebuild what you have destroyed." God's love can restore His image in you when marred by sin or infidelity. Always be vigilant in love. In times of darkness and lassitude, believe that God's love is working even more in you conforming you to the Crucified and transforming you into a *Praise of His Glory!* Let yourself be loved!" ☩



*Let Yourself Be Loved*  
By Eugene McCaffrey, OCD  
Teresian Press, 2008

## OCDS 2009 Congress Update

***We offer praise and thanksgiving for the many graces we received . . .***

and apologize for the oversight acknowledging the following OCDS Communities had attendees at the Congress:

- Washington (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) DC (7)
- Willow Grove PA (5)
- Winchester VA (1)
- Winooski VT (4)
- Worthington OH (1)

**Some personal donations need special recognition.**

**Their generosity contributed significantly to the "look and feel" of our wonderful time together. . .**

- Alicia Steger OCDS, husband Steve and children: made over 175 large and small logo buttons
- Celia Schmitt OCDS: handmade 300 "St. John of the Cross" Rosaries
- Cora Edwards OCDS: handmade 30 small veils and 15 crystal rosaries
- Helen Dickey: large hand painted Congress banner
- Lucilia Solomon-Kahn OCDS: 47 large handmade veils
- Maria Castro: layout and design of Congress Program
- Maria Engracia Salud: 310 logo flags for canvas bags
- Sandra Willis: dressed the Adoration Chapel
- Veronica Royal: St. Elijah icon hand painted for the raffle
- Virginia Picardo: 310 Rule of St. Albert & Constitutions packages from the Philippines
- Additional cash donation: Nori Uchida OCDS

# Teachings from St. Teresa of Jesus on... ...THE PRIESTHOOD

23. Once, while approaching to receive Communion, I saw with my soul's eyes more clearly than with my bodily eyes two devils whose appearance was abominable. It seems to me their horns were wrapped around the poor priest's throat, and in the host that was going to be given to me I saw my Lord with the majesty I mentioned placed in the priest's hands, which were clearly seen to be His offender's; and I understood that that soul was in mortal sin. What would it be, my Lord, to see Your beauty in the midst of such abominable figures? They were as though frightened and terrified in Your presence, for it seems they would have very eagerly fled had You allowed them. This vision caused such great disturbance I don't know how I was able to receive Communion, and I was left with a great fear, thinking that if the vision had been from God, His Majesty would not have permitted me to see the evil that was in that soul. The Lord Himself told me to pray for him and that He had permitted it so that I might understand the power of the words of consecration and how God does not fail to be present, however evil the priest who recites them, and that I might see His great goodness since He places Himself in those hands of His enemy, and all out of love for me and for everyone. I understood well how much more priests are obliged to be good than are others, how deplorable a thing it is to receive this most Blessed Sacrament unworthily, and how much the devil is lord over the soul in mortal sin. It did me a great deal of good and brought me deep understanding of what I owed God. May He be blessed forever and ever.



*The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila, Vol. One  
Second Edition (Revised) 1987 by ICS Publications  
"The Book of Her Life", Chapter 38, paragraph 23, pages 338-339*

# Teachings from St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face on... ...THE PRIESTHOOD

## "Souls, and Especially Priests"

On April 9, 1888, Thérèse Martin crossed the threshold of Carmel, and on that day a profound spiritual revolution began for the monastery of Lisieux and for all the others in France. Thérèse entered a cloistered monastery that in 1861 had established a missionary foundation in Saigon. By this means the Carmel was reaching out in the fullest sense for the salvation of souls, a salvation sought through a very particular style of spiritual life. This way of life was set down in a book entitled *The Treasure of Carmel*, in which one reads among other things:



The purpose of the Carmelite order is to honor the Incarnation and Passion of the Savior, to unite oneself strictly with the Word made flesh, and to glorify God through the imitation of his hidden life of suffering and immolation. Its purpose is also to pray for sinners, to offer oneself for them to the divine justice, and to make up for the penance they do not perform, through an austere and crucified life. In this way a Carmelite nun is charged with continuing and completing in some way Christ's work of mediation. This order calls for mortified and large-hearted souls who will generously and courageously take the place of our divine Master—now impassible—to be immolated with him for the glory of the Father and the salvation of souls.

Thérèse Martin entered Carmel with this spiritual ideal, arrived at through humble but heroic love and confident prayer: "I had declared at the feet of Jesus-Victim, in the examination preceding my Profession, what I had come to Carmel for: 'I came to save souls and especially to pray for priests'" (A 69v)

Thérèse, Celine recalled, referred to this daily mission of apostolic prayer for priests as a "wholesale business," because by working for the sanctification of those directly responsible for the Christian faith, she could more easily reach the souls of those entrusted to them. Looking back as a religious on the experience of her trip to Rome, she wrote to Celine:

Oh, Celine, let us live for souls... let us be apostles... let us save especially the souls of priests; these souls should be more transparent than crystal... Alas, how many bad priests, priests who are not holy enough... Let us pray, let us suffer for them, and, on the last day, Jesus will be grateful. We shall give Him souls!... Celine, do you understand the cry of my soul? (LT 94)

And in October:

Ah! Celine, I feel that Jesus is asking *both of us* to quench *His thirst* by giving Him souls, the souls of *priests* especially. I feel that Jesus wills that I say this to you, for our mission is *to forget* ourselves and to reduce ourselves to nothing... There is only one thing to do during the night, the one night of life which will come only once, and this is to love, to love Jesus with all the strength of our heart and to save souls for Him so that He may be *loved*... Oh, make Jesus loved! (LT 96)

A little afterward she writes still more to Celine on the same theme: "Celine, if you wish, let us convert souls; 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).

In a letter to Celine who herself had decided to enter Carmel, Thérèse courageously defends the vocation of those who were soon to receive her into their community:

We are not *idlers*, squanderers, either. Jesus has defended us in the person of the Magdalene. He was at table, Martha was serving, Lazarus was eating with Him and His disciples. As for Mary, she was not thinking of taking any food but of *pleasing* Him whom she loved, so she took a jar filled with an ointment of great price and poured it on the *head* of Jesus, after *breaking the jar*, and the whole house was scented with the ointment, but the APOSTLES *complained* against Magdalene... It is really the same for us, the most fervent *Christians, priests*, find that we are *exaggerated*, that we should *serve* with Martha instead of consecrating to Jesus the *vessels* of our *lives*, with the ointments enclosed within them... And nevertheless what does it matter if our *vessels* be broken since Jesus is *consoled* and since, in spite of itself, the world is obliged *to smell* the perfumes that are exhaled and serve to purify the empoisoned air the world never ceases to breathe in. (LT 169)

SAINT THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX, *Her Life, Times and Teaching*  
1997 by ICS Publications  
Excerpt from "Apostle and Missionary" by Camillo Gennaro, OCD  
Pages 197-198



*Image dear to Thérèse. She used it to compose her last picture, for Father Belliere.*

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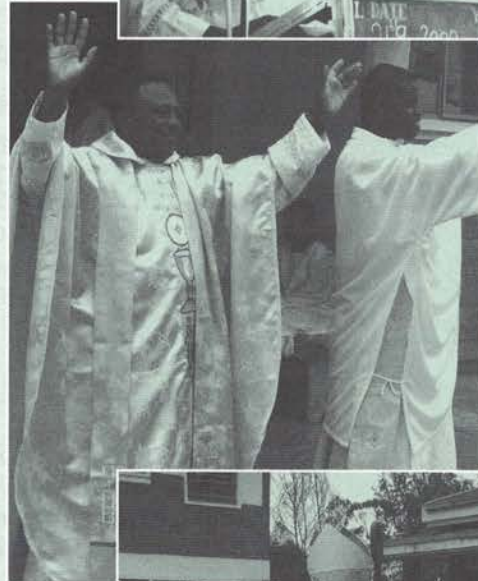


# Nairobi News

Fr. Abednecco Wambua Peters of Elizabeth of the Trinity, OCD, is the newest priest of the Washington province. He comes from a military family; his father is a soldier in the Kenyan military and his mother works as a receptionist at the barracks. Born on 14 November 1975, "Abedies" (or "Abed", as we call him for short) is the oldest of six brothers. He entered the Discalced Carmelite Community in Nairobi in 1997. After completing the postulancy programme, he was assigned to the Discalced Carmelite community in Morogoro, Tanzania, to do his philosophical studies, along with Richard Opendi and Jacob Mbiti, his fellow Discalced Carmelites from the Kenyan region. After philosophy, the three were sent for their novitiate year to Nsukka, Nigeria. They made their first profession as Discalced Carmelites on 16 July 2002. Upon returning to Kenya, Brs. Abednecco, Jacob and Richard started their theological studies at Tangaza College near our monastery, graduating in March 2006.

Since that time, Abed has served as director of our retreat house in Nairobi, and has had various pastoral assignments in Kisii and Tindinyo, where there are already convents of our Discalced Carmelite nuns, and where we are establishing small communities of our friars. He was elected by the students of the Kenya region to represent them at our last provincial chapter in 2009, and so has had an opportunity to visit the friars in the United States. His ordination to the priesthood took place only a few weeks ago, on 15 August 2009, in a beautiful ceremony at our monastery in Nairobi, which also included the diaconate ordination of Br. Daniel Mutuku.

But his favorite ministry of all is working with parish choirs, here in Nairobi and wherever he goes. In fact, with these choirs he has already recorded several CDs of his own music. Fr. Abed also enjoys preaching, and is a dynamic and eloquent homilist in English, Kiswahili, and his mother tongue of Kikamba. We are grateful that he has chosen to devote his many talents to the Order and the Church. ☩





# Letters from Elizabeth on *INDWELLING of the TRINITY*

*Editor's Note: Letters published from ICS Publications, Washington DC, 1995. Introduction by Dr. James P. Jenkins, Sr., OCDS*

God's tender love, mercy and grace acts in us in the time and place where we live. For Elizabeth, her increasingly deeper immersion into the indwelling of the Holy Trinity took place during her teen years as a secular and then in the Dijon Carmel during a short six-year period. In May 1902, she writes, in L 113, to her sister, Guite, "May He be our Center, our Dwelling Place." This also became the "place" of their daily spiritual rendezvous.

A year and a half later she writes to her husband's brother who became a priest, L'Abbé Chevignard, who was a frequent correspondent. In L 185, she gives her further understanding that the meaning of her name "expresses my entire vocation", of how God's presence in her soul as the Trinity is the same mystery shared by Carmelites and priests.

L 113 To her sister [May 25, 1902]<sup>1</sup>

J. M. + J. T.

My little Guite,

How happy your surprise made me. I almost had my mouth open to sing when I heard the first sounds of the harmonium and my heart *guessed it all*. The heart of your Sabeth was moved; the thoughtfulness of her little one really touched her, and her whole soul was in communion with hers. Give all my gratitude to the lovely voices that came to celebrate the Holy Trinity, particularly to my Marie-Louise. Tell her that I recognized her very well, and Alice too, and that I'm praying fervently for her.

Oh yes, my Guite, this feast of the Three is really my own, for me there is no other like it. It was really nice in Carmel, for it is a feast of silence and adoration; I had never understood so well the Mystery and the whole vocation in my name. I've given you to the Three, my Guite; you see how I dispose of you. Yes, it is in this great Mystery that I keep my rendezvous with you. May He be our Center, our Dwelling Place. I leave you with this thought of Père Vallée, which will be your prayer.... "May the Holy Spirit bring you to the Word, may the Word lead you to the Father, and may you be consumed in the One, as was true of Christ and our saints."<sup>2</sup> I kiss you, my two darlings. I'll keep my rendezvous with you every day of the octave from noon to 1 o'clock.<sup>3</sup>

1 Handwriting of 1902. Guite and her friends came to celebrate the "Holy Trinity" (May 25th), Elizabeth's second feast day. She is apparently thanking them the same evening.

2 Borrowed from the 10th instruction, on "The Most Holy Trinity," from the retreat preached by P. Vallée at the Dijon Carmel in 1900. The Notebook of the sermons, preserved in the ACD in Sister Agnès's handwriting, repeats the verb "emmène" (to lead or take [away or out]) twice instead of "emporte" (to carry away) and "conduise" (to lead or guide). Elizabeth recopied her own version in her notebooks in 1902 or 1904 (cf. PAT). We should note that "to carry away" is a typically "Valléen" expression.

3 The hour of adoration indicated for Elizabeth. The octave of the Blessed Sacrament (the feast was the 29th) lasted from May 30 to June 6. The Blessed Sacrament remained exposed.



L185 To l'Abbé Chevignard

[November 28, 1903]<sup>1</sup>

J. M. + J. T.

Dijon Carmel, November 28

“Ipsi sum desponsata cui Angeli serviunt.”<sup>2</sup>

Monsieur l'Abbé,

Thank you for your good prayers, thank you for your letter.<sup>3</sup> What you tell me about my name does me much good; I love it so much, it expresses my entire vocation; when I think of it my soul is carried away in the great vision of the Mystery of mysteries, in the Trinity that even here below is our cloister, our dwelling, the Infinite within which we can pass through everything. At the moment I am reading some very beautiful pages in our blessed Father Saint John of the Cross on the transformation of the soul in the three Divine Persons. Monsieur l'Abbé, to what an abyss of glory we are called!<sup>4</sup> Oh! I understand the silence, the recollection of the saints who could no longer leave their contemplation; thus God could lead them to the divine summits where union is made perfect between Him and the soul who has become His bride, in the mystical sense of the word. Our blessed Father says that then the Holy Spirit raises it to so wonderful a height that He makes it capable of producing in God the same spiration of love that the Father produces in the Son and the Son in the Father, the spiration that is the Holy Spirit Himself!<sup>5</sup> To think that God calls us by our vocation to live in this holy light! What an adorable mystery of charity! I would like to respond to it by living on earth as the Blessed Virgin did, “keeping all these things in my heart,”<sup>6</sup> burying myself, so to speak, in the depths of my soul to lose myself in the Trinity who dwells in it in order to transform me into itself. Then my motto, “my luminous ideal,” as you said, will be accomplished: it will really be *Elizabeth of the Trinity!*...<sup>6a</sup>

I am very grateful to you for having sent me your instruction; it can apply to a Carmelite as well as to a priest, and I loved reading it on the 21st, the day we had the beautiful ceremony of the renewal of our holy vows. You see how perfectly it suited the occasion!

Monday I will say the Office of Saint Andrew for you,<sup>7</sup> and I will offer Holy Communion for that same intention. May you be submerged, invaded by the great river of Life,<sup>8</sup> may you feel the springs of living water<sup>9</sup> well up from the deepest part of your soul, so that God may be your All. I have entrusted this desire you formed in my soul into the hands of her<sup>10</sup> who was so completely God's “thing,”<sup>11</sup> and she will speak to you in the silence of your soul. With you, I remain wholly adoring the Mystery.

Sr. M. Eliz. of the Trinity r.c.i.

The death of Monsieur Chapuis<sup>12</sup> grieved me deeply: to think God has loved so much and that some souls close themselves off to the action of this love....

1 Cf. notes 7 and 12.

2 “I am the bride of Him whom the Angels serve” (ninth antiphon of Matins for the feast of St. Agnes, January 21).

3 On the feast of St. Elizabeth, November 19.

4 Elizabeth is thinking here particularly of st. 39 [K-R] 39:4] of the Spiritual Canticle. The expression “abyss of glory” is found on p. 423 [in the French edition used by Elizabeth].

5 Beginning with “the Holy Spirit raises ...”, an almost literal quotation from SC p. 421 [K-R] 39:3].

6 Lk 2:19 and 51.

6a Words written larger by Elizabeth. We put them in italics.

7 The patron saint of André Chevignard, celebrated November 30; which was in fact “Monday” in 1903.

8 Cf. Rev 22:1: “the river of life-giving water”?

9 Cf. Jn 4:14 (according to the trans, of SC p. 122 [K-R] 12:3)).

10 The Virgin Mary.

11 Cf. L 179, note 2.

12 Cf. L 183, note 9.

# Elizabeth Of The Trinity

## In Search Of The Absolute

Elda Maria Estrada, OCDS

*Editor's note: This was originally recorded as a retreat and distributed as an audiotape album by ICS Publications. We hope you enjoy it printed in its conversational style as a 5-part series throughout the balance of 2009.*

### Part III – Elizabeth: A Life Utterly Lived in Praise of Her Three: The Blessed Trinity

Elizabeth lived her vocation, even before she entered Carmel, as a praise of glory of the Trinity. In this presentation I have broken down the components of Elizabeth's motto, "Praise of Glory", and attempt to present it as a unified whole. I talk about what is praise, what is glory and how Elizabeth lived it in her own life. And lastly to share what I think we need to do to be like her, a praise of glory.



*The Psalter is the official book of the praise of God.*

The word, praise, comes from the Hebrew word, *halliel*, where we get our word Hallelujah meaning *Praise the Lord*. The Psalter is the official book of the praise of God. To praise also means to *cry out for joy* or to *acclaim*. It is praise indeed, which defines the climate of prayer in the Psalms. We read all the time, "I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (Psalm 34:1.) "Every day I will bless You and praise Your name forever and ever." (Psalm 145:2.) This is so because by its very essence, praise belongs to and is directed to God, who deserves all praise and honor and thanksgiving and adoration. The praise of the psalmists flowed from a very experiential, existential knowledge and experience of God. This is how we will consider the manner in which Elizabeth understands and lives her vocation as a praise of glory of the Trinity.

We can look at our Christian life as having one goal, namely to become the glory of God, with two different modalities. The first modality is ultimate and absolute, namely the existential, ever present glory of God. This should be the aim and the existential thrust of our lives, the *raison d'être* or reason for living. Glory of God can be of two kinds. It can be intrinsic (inner) or extrinsic (outer). The way I can give the most glory to God is through the fulfillment of His will in my life, to a total adherence of my will to His in this life. So, at one end is the ultimate or absolute will of God. At the other end, the secondary aim or goal, which flows naturally from the first one, is an immediate (the first one was ultimate; the opposite of ultimate is immediate) or relative goal, which is our own sanctification, our own holiness. This comes as a consequence of a profound degree of union with God.



St. Augustine tells us the word “*Gloria*” in Latin means *clara notitia cum laude*. It’s clear news with praise. It is joyful news and expresses something extrinsic to the subject, us, that it affects. Let me explain what extrinsic glory is. God is glorified in the measure, in the degree in which the beauty of His perfection is reflected in our spirits. In other words, when the whole array of God’s attributes are visible, present and operative in us. The greatest glory we can give the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, is to become Jesus and like Him, to have as our most important reality of life, to fulfill the Father’s will.

Now what does it mean to become Jesus? It means to think like Jesus, to talk like Jesus, to feel like Jesus, to love like Jesus, and consequently to act like Jesus. This presupposes that we have a most profound degree of intimacy with Jesus as Lord of our lives. As St. Paul says, “so that primacy might be His in everything” we think, say, or do in our lives. Elizabeth lived this to perfection. It is the objective of the Christian life: to become Jesus, to be one with the Father, through the Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. We do this through the constant practice of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love.

So what is the “intrinsic” glory of God? This is the kind of glory that God has in and of Himself by the mere fact and reason that He is God. This is the glory God has always had in the bosom of the Trinity, the one glory that is communicated and exchanged among the three Divine Persons of the Trinity.

It is almost impossible for us to talk about this intrinsic glory. At best, as St. John of the Cross tells us, our words remain *un no se qué que queda balbuciendo*—a mere stammering. But St. Augustine stammered some very profound insights in his reflection on the Trinity. And in them, he reflects the contributions of the Greek Fathers and early Councils.

St. Augustine takes his cue from the beginning of John’s Gospel. The Father from all eternity speaks His Word. This Word (or *Logos*) is with the Father always and is God the Son. The Father and the Son love each other with an eternal, perfect love. They breathe forth all their being to each other, and this breath is the Spirit of God, who is also the Love that joins Father and Son. For all eternity the fullness of life and being flows among them—each possessing all the divine life wholly and yet also sharing it completely in this ever-flowing embrace of knowledge and love. The Greek Fathers had a wonderful word to describe this communication among the Divine Persons. They called it *Perichoresis*, which literally means a “round dance.” As reflected in our dim minds, we refer to this fullness of everything as the *intrinsic* glory of God. It is a glory that we creatures can never add even the slightest measure to, nor can we take it away.

God in His infinite glory is absolutely happy in Himself. He does not need any of His creatures. But God is Love, and as Love freely chose to create other beings to share in His life and all that goes with it. And so God created a universe and angels and human beings. God does this in an eternal now, so that at each instant we flow from the creative love of God. And as if this were not enough, when our first parents refused to return God’s love, He sent His Son among us as one of us. In time He spoke His Word who, through the Holy Spirit, took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

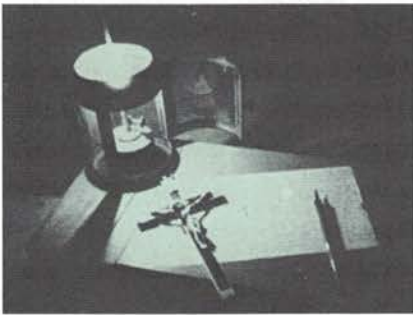




The man Jesus born to her is, therefore, personally the Son of God and also our brother. In him, we can become happy in God. He introduces us, so to speak, to the eternal dance of the Divine Life.

I want to emphasize that all of this is pure gift of love. Perhaps we lose sight of that when we forget that the word “grace” means gift. So we speak of the Incarnation of the Word as a great grace that God gives the human family. We understand this mystery better if we contemplate it, for in contemplation God leads us, as John of the Cross tells us, to a loving knowledge of God. Our minds cannot hold this mystery; and to grasp any of it, the infinite light of His glory must be refracted into bits that hint at God’s intrinsic glory. These bits are what we call the attributes of God. Among the most wonderful of these attributes is His *hesed*, a Hebrew word that is variously translated as *love, loving mercy, faithfulness*. We human beings most often experience God’s glory as Mercy, for He gives everything to us, including our very being, as a pure, unmerited, and unconditional gift—a gift that He never withdraws even when we refuse it. Mercy is Trinitarian Love in action. It has the Father as its source, is communicated to us through His Son, our Brother according to the Flesh, and brought to perfection in us by the work of the Spirit.

Love is the flower and mercy is the fruit. When that love leaves the Trinity and is poured out upon us, it’s coming from “the heart of the Father” and through the wounded side of Jesus, through his wounded heart. in the power of the Holy Spirit. It touches us and it convicts us. We are moved and shaken up. It transforms us. It brings about conversion. It sends us forth to share loving mercy with others. So that we reflect the Mercy of God, like Mary who, untouched by sin, shared perfectly in the work of her Son. That is what mercy is, that we become sharers, participants in God’s own divine light and love, where we are urged, impelled to share it practically and concretely with others, specifically through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.



Love cannot be contained. It needs to be expressed to the fullest, even at the price of the cross. God wanted forever to communicate His infinite perfections and His attributes to His creatures; intending by that action that His own “extrinsic” glory be visible in the world. That’s what we do to glorify God. This glorification of God through His creatures is ultimately and definitively the reason and supreme end of creation. All of creation, ourselves included, has as its primary goal and as its primary end, to give God the glory He deserves. God created all things for His glory. We creatures cannot exist but in Him and for Him. That is what we say in the Mass: through Him, with Him, and in Him. Therein the depth of our very being is united with the essence of God. We cannot partake of this essence of God because that would make us gods; but we become sharers and participants of God’s divine life, which is love, His Love.

We find our own happiness in glorifying God. As I said before, we glorify God by perfect adherence to the fulfillment of His will in our lives.

I am going to share some scriptural texts so that you can reflect on and pray about what it means to give glory to God. They are: Isaiah 42:8, 48:11, The Book of Revelation 1:8, 1 Corinthians 10:31, and Ephesians 1:4-5, 12 and 14.



In practice, nothing should be of more concern to a person who hungers and thirsts for holiness than a constant forgetfulness of self. That is why it is important to practice living in the presence of God. Do we walk, sit, talk, and hear in His presence? The only thing it takes is the intentionality to do so. We simply can say, “Jesus, I love You”, and offer whatever we are doing to Him. This is giving God glory because this is what Jesus Christ is doing constantly before the Face of the Father.

That presence is truly the beginning of wisdom because it elevates us to a spiritual plateau. It gives us the consistency we need and is the beginning of becoming. It impregnates us with a sense of the divine, of the holy, and of the spiritual. Let us ask our guardian angels to remind us always, in every activity, that we are in His presence. Elizabeth of the Trinity lived immersed in God’s presence. This constant forgetfulness of self is what presence is all about. We must get out of ourselves in order to become present to Him.

One time I was in prayer and I heard very softly, clearly, and precisely, a manly voice speaking with gentleness and authority, saying, “Become present to Presence”. That is what Elizabeth did. As I have said before, the two elements or pillars of presence are silence and recollection. Living in His presence with purity of intention means I am doing this for You Lord, and for You alone, knowing only too well that my intentions are tainted. By saying with a loving heart, “Jesus, I trust in You,” we ask Him to accept our imperfect offering and fix or purify it.

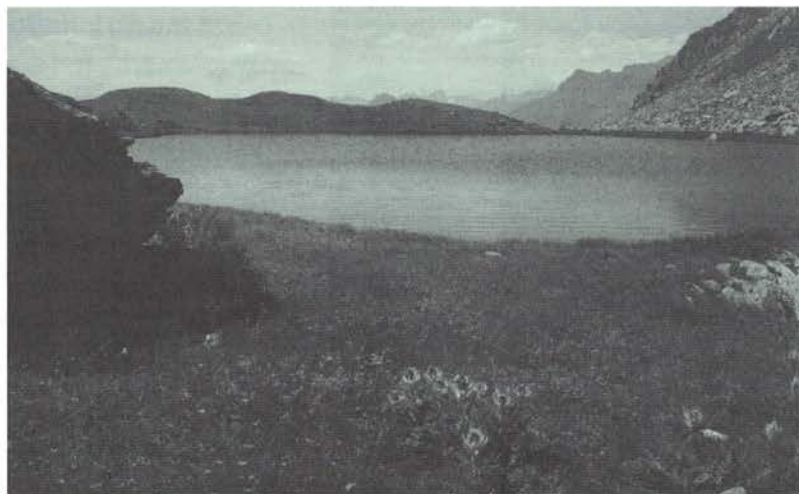
This purity of intention is nothing but the expression of a pure heart. What is a pure heart? A pure heart is an undivided heart, a heart centered on God alone. Most of us have divided, dichotomized hearts, and hearts attached to ridiculous things. We need to have humble, contrite and pure hearts, the hearts of children, filled with innocence and trust. That is what God needs for Him to be God in our lives.

A pure heart is always looking with a consuming and absorbing passion for the glory of God. Another Saint, Ignatius of Loyola, knew this to perfection. He wanted to do anything and everything for the glory of God. So did Elizabeth, who said, “In the heaven of my spirit, the Glory of the Eternal One, only the Glory of the Eternal One.”

St. John of the Cross said, “In this mount of perfection only dwells the honor and Glory of God.” When we give glory to God, we grow in holiness because the way we give glory to God is to love, for that is what God’s will for us is. It is all one reality, to love.

This reality can be addressed as three different modalities: conforming to the will of God as was discussed in Part 2 of this series, configuration with Christ by becoming Jesus as we have just discussed, and union with Him for the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit through love. Love is always and forever the unitive element in the Trinity.

Let me say some more things about glory. Praise is very simple, while glory is far more difficult to understand. The Hebrew





word for 'glory' is *kavod*. It means to have weight, to be heavy. Glory arises from the interior weight or density of a person, weight meaning the power of his or her presence and actions. We are not to be seeking our own wealth or power and all those secular things that fill our heads. We are supposed to be looking constantly for the glory of God whose very presence gives weight and stability to our lives and to the whole universe. The spirituality of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity focuses on this presence.

The glory of God is the radiant manifestation of God's being in the whole world, His self-manifestation outside the realm of heaven. It is God's presence and dwelling in the world, most intimately and specifically His dwelling in us. Glory is a divine attribute linked to the power, the presence and the holiness of God, as we see in Psalm 24:7-10, which celebrates Yahweh as the King of Glory.

The prayer of Israel as a community of believers, or in private, is attentive to the diverse manifestations of the glory of God. Each one of us is Israel, the beloved, the chosen one. So when you read the Scriptures and see, "The Lord said to Israel..." substitute, the Lord said to John..., the Lord said to Mary or Elizabeth or Paul, etc. Insert your own name because He is speaking to you directly, personally and intimately.

To give God glory is simply to acknowledge God's greatness. It is an invitation for us to become open and receptive to the gift of God, and be able to perceive the splendor of God as it is manifested in the beauty, the grandeur, the simplicity and the holiness of all of His creation. For this we need the eyes, mind and heart of a child so that when we see the tiny flowers in the garden, or contemplate the awesome reality of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, we see the underlying presence of God. Even in the Eucharist, He appears in the ordinary elements of bread and wine. Wasn't it wise to choose those symbols to represent His eternal presence with us? They speak to every person in the world, regardless of culture. The functioning of our human body also speaks of the glory of God. So as you consider every aspect of the created world, you should come to the same conclusion, and exclaim as in Psalm 86:12, "I will glorify your name forever."



Although the primary meaning of *kavod* is weightiness it also is connected with impressiveness. The Hebrew authors of the Old Testament adopted this meaning to express the notable awesomeness of Yahweh who refused to give Himself a name but said, "I am Who am". In other words, I am so great, so vast, so immense, that I cannot allow my whole being to be under the constrictions of a name. "I am Who am." I am immeasurable.

In the Old Testament, the glory of the Lord is usually described by fire and by light before Israel, as in the Exodus experience (Exodus 24:15-17) or on the mountaintop as a consuming fire and overpowering experience. However, the glory of the Lord is also perceived as God's constant perennial and abiding presence, the *Shekinah*.

And so it is today. He is present before we even arrive. He is always there for us in our home or waiting for us when we go to prayer. He is always present ahead of us, longing for our full, total, undivided presence in Him, our purity of heart, and desire to please Him. For



the Israelites, He was the abiding presence in the Ark of the Covenant. Here are some other references to the glory of God in the Old Testament: Ezekiel 1:22-28, Daniel 7:13-14 and Psalms 19, 29, 66 and 96, just to mention a few.

For us, people of the New Testament, the Church, His abiding presence is in the Blessed Sacrament, the other Sacraments, the Liturgy, in His Words of Scripture, in a loving and worshipping parish, and in communities like our Secular Discalced Carmelites. The glory of God is throughout all creation, and in the most intimate, closest presence, He dwells within. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the locus, the place of encounter with God's Glory. Jesus is the Glory of God. He demonstrates His divinity several times in the synoptic Gospels, at His birth (Luke 2:9), at His Transfiguration (Luke 9:31 – 36), and in the predictions of His second coming (Matthew 16:27, 24:30 and 25: 31) (Mark 8:38, 12:26). For Saint John, the glory of God is not restricted to extraordinary events or circumstances because the glory of God is always present and available to those who have faith, hope and love, for those people in whose lives the theological virtues reign. (John 2:11)



Saint John also realizes that during His life on earth Christ laid down the fullness of His Glory both before the incarnation and again before the resurrection (John 17:5). Later in John 17 Jesus said, "Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your Son that your Son may give glory to You. In as much as You have given Him authority over all mankind that He may bestow eternal life on those You gave Him." What is eternal life? Eternal life is to know God, to know God not only intellectually, but also existentially. That is what happened to Elizabeth. She knew God and experienced God. She came close enough to the mystery that she could be taken into that mystery. Jesus continued to speak with the Father: "Now this is eternal life, that they may know You are the only true God and the one whom You sent, Jesus Christ." "I have given You glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do." "Do you now, Father, give me glory at Your side". So, the big question is, how can we give Him glory? The greatest glory is to give ourselves in total love to Him with the readiness, the acceptance, and the generosity that is proper of love, and do this by giving Him an undivided heart, a pure heart, a heart that truly resembles the heart of Jesus and Mary.

After reading the works of Blessed Elizabeth, I came to the conclusion of who is a praise of glory. I say that a praise of glory is a person who dwells in God. Jesus said it in John, "Abide in Me, dwell in Me, be rooted in Me". Because Jesus said it, "Ask and you shall receive" if you ask the Father in Jesus' name, and if you are willing to fulfill the commandments, then the Father will hear you. The praise of glory is a person who loves God with a love that is pure and disinterested. In other words, love God for His own sake, not for the sake of His gifts. The praise of glory is a person who doesn't seek self in His love. I do it because I love you. That is enough for me. The praise of glory is a person who surrenders completely, totally and blindly to God's will. It is not a person who says, "Why does this happen to me?" A praise of glory is a person who lovingly says, "Yes, Lord, not my will, but Your will," as Jesus and Elizabeth did.

A praise of glory is a person who is silent, ready as a lyre to respond to the mysterious, gentle, and loving touch of the Holy Spirit, knowing that the strings of suffering



make the sweetest sounds. This person desires that the Lord play that string over and over again because that is the greatest gift to Him in love. The praise of glory is one who gazes steadfastly upon God in faith, love and simplicity. That is the spiritual testament of our Holy Mother, St. Teresa, who said, "Daughters and sons, I don't ask anything else of you but to look at Him". Our contemplative look must become a gaze, a resting place and that is the way He will speak to our hearts and to our spirits and we will become transformed.

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***A praise of glory is a person who is silent, ready as a lyre to respond to the mysterious, gentle, and loving touch of the Holy Spirit, knowing that the strings of suffering make the sweetest sounds.***

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A praise of glory is a person who reflects all that God is. Whether we want it or not, we exude who we are no matter how many masks we may wear. A praise of glory is a person who lives in an attitude of constant thanksgiving and praise, glorifying the infinite mercy of God. A praise of glory is one who offers every act, word and deed in His presence in union with the desires of Jesus' heart and His mother's heart. He or she becomes closer and closer and more deeply rooted in love in such a way and to such a degree that they say, "It's not I who lives, Father, it is Christ who lives in me." Consequently, when the Father looks at us He sees in us a reproduced image of Jesus, the Son. So, even in this life we can begin and continuously chant the eternal hymn of praise, "Holy, Holy, Holy".

May we listen with spiritual ears and may our hearts become open. May our wills become determined under the leadership of our Holy Mother Teresa of Jesus, our Father John of the Cross, and their most enlightened and holy daughter, Elizabeth of the Trinity. May we come to understand and realize our vocation to live and help others to become a continuous praise of glory of the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Amen. ☩

## Questions of the Month

***What is the status of requests for Canonical Establishment of OCDS communities in the Washington Province?***

The Provincial and his Delegates have determined that recommendations to Rome for Canonical Establishment of OCDS communities are on hold. Previous requests will be reviewed at a future date.

***Where can I see pictures from the 2009 OCDS Washington Province Congress?***

Go to the OCDS Provincial website: [www.ocdswashprov.org](http://www.ocdswashprov.org). Did you take pictures? Please send them to Sacred Heart OCDS Community, c/o St. John the Evangelist Parish, Attn: Michael Alley, 112 East 2nd St, Frederick, MD 21701. Digital photos can be sent to [www.ocds2009congress@live.com](mailto:www.ocds2009congress@live.com).

We continue to collect community pictures and narratives as discussed on page 10 of the January-February issue of the Clarion. Please take this opportunity to have your OCDS community represented. We need greater interest to move this project towards completion.





**2009 OCDS Washington Province Congress**  
**July 16 - 19, 2009**  
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***with Zeal, Prayer and Action***

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*Let us embrace the challenges faced by each and every OCDS community –*

*United in zeal, prayer and action, we know that our Lord and Lady will bless and guide us.*

# Elizabeth of the Trinity: Prophet of the Presence of God

*Eugene McCaffrey, O.C.D.*

## The Beautiful Sun

I leave you my faith in the presence of God, of the God who is all Love dwelling in our souls. I confide to you: it is this intimacy with Him 'within' that has been the beautiful sun illuminating my life, making it already an anticipated Heaven... (L 333).

The message of Elizabeth of the Trinity 'is spreading today,' John Paul II declared, 'with a prophetic force.' She is a prophet in the sense of someone who reminds us of a forgotten truth, sheds new light on old mysteries and stands out as a sure and steady guide in a world of uncertainty and ambiguity. Her life has become a beacon of light for us: a call to discover once again the truth that God not only loves each one of us personally, but is also intimately and uniquely present to us.



## Remain In My Love

The presence of which Elizabeth speaks is not a vague, indiscriminate power but something personal and individual. God is not the ground of our being in some dry, remote sort of way. We are not surrounded by God as by air, light or energy: He is a personal God who knows each of us individually and cares for us uniquely. Yet God is not just present to us, no matter how personal and immediate that may be: He is also present within us.

This is the great truth of which Jesus spoke at the last supper: 'Those who love me will ... win my Father's love, and we will come and make our home in them' (Jn 14:23). It is an indwelling presence; a homing presence, through which God is at home in the human heart; a presence based on choice, love and friendship.

'I am asking the Holy Spirit to show you this presence of God within you,' Elizabeth writes to her mother, adding, '...if you read the Gospel of John, you will see ... that the Master insists on this commandment: 'Remain in me, and I in you' (L 273). She was conscious, not only of the Gospel teaching, but also of the great Carmelite tradition she had inherited, inspired by the example and words of the prophet Elijah, 'to live in the presence of God' (cf. 1Kgs 17:1).

## 'Little Bethany'

The writings of Elizabeth of the Trinity offer a fresh insight into the gospels and are an inspiration and encouragement for all who struggle along the way of the spirit. Her writings are not scholarly or systematic: they are a reflection of her own experience in prayer and of her ever-deepening awareness of the reality and power of God in her life.

The doctrine of the indwelling became the key to her own spiritual life and is central to her teaching. She wished to 'live through love in His presence' (Eph 1:4); her life was essentially a response to this presence, an awareness of the One dwelling in the depths of her heart. She wanted more than anything else to retire within herself and live in the little 'cell' - the 'little Bethany', she called it (IN 5) - which God had built in her heart. 'I have found my Heaven on earth,' she wrote, 'since Heaven is God, and God is [in] my soul' (L 122).



## A Lay Contemplative

Once, when Elizabeth was unable to attend Mass because of illness, she wrote to her friend Canon Isidore Angles: 'I am prevented from going to church, from receiving holy communion but, you see, God has no need of the sacrament to come to me, it seems to me that I have Him just as much; it is so good, this presence of God!' (L 62). Elizabeth was able to find the fullness of God's presence everywhere and in everything, through an ongoing awareness of His dwelling within her: 'It is there, right in the depths, in the Heaven of my soul, that I love to find Him since He never leaves me. "God in me, I in him", oh! That is my life!' (L 62).

These words were written while Elizabeth was still a young woman living in Dijon, where she was actively involved in youth work, teaching catechism and visiting the sick and elderly. Few could have guessed at the depths of spiritual longing hidden within the heart of this young woman. Awareness of God's presence was a formative part of her everyday experience - an attitude, an approach to life, quietly nourishing her and shaping her outlook and decisions.

The summer months of travel with her family and friends were filled with tennis, croquet, musical sessions and a constant round of parties. Elizabeth, always lively and endowed with great charm, was fully part of this social scene. But already there was an air of mystery about her; she was someone aware of a deeper voice echoing within. At a dance, someone was heard to remark, 'She's not for us, look at her expression.' Her dancing partners read her well. Elizabeth was listening to a different music; her heart was already captive to a greater and deeper call.

## His Presence, My Joy

At the heart of Elizabeth's teaching is the need for stillness and silence, a silence of listening and openness to the 'still, small voice' of the Spirit within. In an age of ever-increasing noise and activity, her teaching shines like a beacon of sanity and carries a message of hope. It is the message of God's love, of His presence in our lives, and of His invitation to intimacy. Most important of all, Elizabeth speaks out of her own experience, out of the lived reality of her own life. A young woman rich in human qualities, vibrant with the sensitivity of an artist and the courage of a soldier, she speaks words of wisdom and of common sense.

Once Elizabeth discovered, at the age of ten, that her name meant 'House of God', she was determined to make that house a home, where she would live as attentively as possible to the presence within. This presence became her joy. Though she lived only twenty-six years, it was enough for her to live with total intensity, both as a lay contemplative and as a Carmelite nun, the mystery of God's life that she shared through baptism. To an age searching for meaning and identity, she tells of her own search and her own discovery: her thirst for the deeper reality within and the joy of finding, and surrendering to, love: 'love is something infinite,' she once wrote, 'and you can always go farther in infinity!' (L 192).

Prophet of the presence of God, Elizabeth invites us to accept this 'gift of God' and open our hearts to the reality within:

... in that little inner sanctuary [of my soul] ...I find Him at every hour of the day and night. I'm never alone: my Christ is always there praying in me, and I pray with Him. (L 123).

I am asking God to give you a taste, too, of the sweetness of His Love and His presence: that is what transforms, what illumines life; it is the secret of happiness! (L 174) ☩



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## Reminders

From the OCDS *Constitutions* on Authority and Obedience

¶ 15 The promise of obedience is a pledge to live open to the will of God, “in whom we live and move and have our being” (Ac 17:28) imitating Christ who accepted the Father’s will and was “obedient unto death, death on a cross” (Ph 2:8). The promise of obedience is an exercise of faith leading to the search for God’s will in the events and challenges in society and our own personal life. For this reason the Secular Carmelite freely cooperates with those who have responsibility for guiding the Community and the Order in discerning and accepting God’s ways: the Community’s Council, the Provincial and the General.

¶ 41 The Secular Order is juridically dependent on the Disalced Carmelite Friars.

¶ 43 The Provincial Superior, usually aided by the Provincial Delegate, is the Superior of the Secular Order within his territory. The Washington Province is divided into Regions with Provincial Delegates appointed as the immediate authority of OCDS communities within defined geographic boundaries: Fr. Regis Jordan, OCD for the Mid-Atlantic states; Fr. John Grennon, OCD for the Mid-West states and Florida; Fr. Paul Fohlin, OCD for the states in the Northeast.

¶ 48 The General Superior, the Provincial Superior and the Council of the community are the legitimate superiors of the Secular Order. *The elected Council of the community governs individual OCDS members. Under no circumstances are past officers to retain community records without the specific request of the Council. The president is the identified spokesperson for the community and conducts monthly meetings.*