

Flos Carmeli

Oklahoma Semi-Province of St. Thérèse
Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites

Summer 2022

Volume XXXII No. 3

From the President's Desk

By Anna Peterson, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel,

July is an especially grace-filled month for our Order. The highlight is the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. We also celebrate feasts and memorials of St. Elijah; Mary, Mother of Divine Grace; St. Teresa of the Andes; and Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin, among others.

Updates

The Provincial Council (PC) has completed one of its goals for the triennium - the review and revision of the OCDS Provincial Policies and Norms. Communities will receive notification as soon as the revisions are posted on the website.

The search is on! The PC is looking forward to receiving recommendations from our communities for candidates to serve on the PC from January 2023 to January 2029. The deadline is August 1, 2022.

Soon the PC will offer YouTube presentations on OCDS leadership topics such as: election procedures, the role of the nominating committee, successful transition process, orientation for new councils, budget development, and more.

In this issue

- . . . our OCDS Provincial Delegate, Fr. Stephen Sanchez, reflects on the current liturgical season.
- . . . an excerpt from an article by Fr. Sam Anthony Morello, OCD on discernment of vocation
- . . . articles on Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and on Mary as our sister

Questions & Answers

Q - Our community's election was delayed due to COVID restrictions. Our new Council took office in 2021 instead of 2020. Does this Council serve 3 years - until 2024?

A - No. The current Council's term ends with the end of the triennium - 2023. During this triennium, some Councils will have served 3 years, others two or less. The next triennium is 2023-2026. Local communities should follow their traditional nomination and elections schedule. Local



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From the President's Desk

By Anna Peterson, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council

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elections should be completed before the friars begin their 2023 Chapter meeting (usually in late May/early June).

Q – How often should our local council meet?

A – The Constitutions (Organization and Government # 47 g) state “The council meets frequently and always when necessary in reference to taking care of formation programs and the growth of their own community.” The Statutes require monthly Community meetings so it would seem practical for the Council to meet monthly to develop the agenda for that monthly meeting, to review the development of those in formation, to discuss the apostolate, budget, etc., and to approve minutes, to develop the agenda for the next council meeting, and to visit and pray together. Other intervals may be appropriate depending on how far Council members must travel to meetings or may argue in favor of Council meetings by video conference.

Q - We reviewed the OCDS Constitutions, Provincial Statutes, and the Ratio, but did not see anything specifying interviews by the local Council for Aspirants petitioning for admittance to Formation I and clothing. Some on our local Council wondered if that was necessary. Are we correct in assuming that the Council interview these Aspirants before admission to Formation I even though we know them on a conversational basis?

A - **Absolutely! Interviews are a critical part of the discernment process.** It is the responsibility of the local Council to discern a candidate's vocation throughout formation. Besides receiving input from a candidate's formator, it is necessary for the Council to meet with candidates in person to assist in discernment. Ideally, the Council should conduct annual interviews with each person in formation. An “Annual Check-In” norm/policy will soon be added to our Provincial website.

It is not too early to start planning for the celebration of two special dates related to St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, the patroness of our Province. October 19, 2023, marks the 25th anniversary of St. Therese being named a Doctor of the Church and January 2, 2023, marks the 150th anniversary of her birthday.

The General Conference of UNESCO voted to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Therese of Lisieux (1873-2023). For the next two years, Therese will be celebrated around the world. The anniversary of her beatification will also be celebrated in 2023.

*You have honored the family of Carmel with the title and the patronage of the Virgin Mary;
may all Carmelites live with her in unswerving allegiance to Jesus Christ.
Mary, Mother and Beauty of Carmel, intercede for us!*

Yours in Carmel,

Anna Peterson, OCDS

**President, Provincial Council
for the OCDS Oklahoma Semi-Province
Council Members:**

Barbara Basgall, OCDS, Mark Calvert, OCDS, Maxine Latiolais, OCDS and Jillison Parks, OCDS

Report from the Provincial Delegate— Father Stephen Sánchez, OCD

Oklahoma Semi-Province of St. Thérèse

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Carmel,

As we enter summer, let us turn our reflection to the current liturgical season. The Church refers to those liturgical times that are not “privileged” (Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter) as Ordinary Time.

“Ordinary” does not equal mundane or boring but refers to the established daily form of grace that is poured out upon us throughout the year. While the privileged seasons are liturgical seasons where the community of belief gives special attention to a particular mystery of salvation, the rest of the year is a time of prayer and reflection upon the mysteries of our salvation as manifested to and through the Church in our daily journey.

The end of the Easter season gives us plenty to reflect upon. Easter ends with the celebration of the mystery of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit manifests itself in a very public way – the unction of the Apostles and with Mary and the effect of this unction in the public proclamation of Jesus as Risen Lord. This revelation of the Holy Spirit then leads to the celebration of the Most Blessed Trinity. This reflection then in its turn leads to the celebration of The Most Precious Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi).

As members of a Marian Order, I would like to offer a reflection based on the memorial established by Pope Francis, a memorial based on the proclamation of the Second Vatican Council. With the public manifestation of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, which is considered the “birth of the Church,” of the new Israel, Pope Francis instituted a new memorial to be celebrated the day after Pentecost, Mary, Mother of the Church.

To appreciate this memorial in the context of salvation history, we recall that the original celebration of Pentecost was a celebration of the first harvest in the “promised land,” the first harvest as a free people. This celebration was also known as the “feast of weeks” – that is, the time of the wheat harvest. The first of the sheaves of wheat was presented on the first day of the feast of weeks and the last of the sheaves on the closing of the feast, on the seventh sabbath. This celebration, during the time of Jesus, was joined to the memorial of the giving of the Covenant at Sinai, so that it becomes the celebration of the Covenant and the fruits of the promised land.

Taking these historical roots, I would like to offer this reflection: With the public manifestation of the Holy Spirit on the closing of the fifty days after Easter we can see that the memorial of Mary, Mother of the Church as being tied to this “harvest” of believers, the first truly free people prefigured in the freed Israelites. Mary, with the Apostles,

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†
Memorare

Remember,
O most gracious Virgin Mary, that
never was it known that anyone
who fled to thy protection,
implored thy help, or sought
thine intercession was left
unaided.

Inspired by this confidence,
I fly unto thee, O Virgin of
virgins, my mother; to thee do I
come, before thee I stand, sinful
and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word
Incarnate, despise not my
petitions, but in thy mercy hear
and answer me. Amen.

Report from the Provincial Delegate— Father Stephen Sánchez, OCD

Oklahoma Semi-Province of St. Thérèse

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witnesses this manifestation, this public proclamation, the first sheaves of wheat, this birth of the believing community.

What does it mean that Mary is seen as “Mother of the Church?” As in all analogies and parables, the signs are limited ways in which a truth is being pointed out for consideration. Mary, as the first of the faithful disciples, is a member of the Church. She is “Mother” to us in a very special way in that she is not only a member, but she is seen as a prototype of the Church as we see in the Book of Revelation where she is associated with the sign of the Woman clothed with the sun.

How then are we to see this singular vessel of grace as “Mother?”

“Two Truths lie at the heart of the Marian mystery. Among redeemed mankind, the Mother of God is the most sublime human being of all and the firstfruit of the Redemption. At the same time she is the mother of all redeemed mankind and, as such, her sway, within the redeemed world, is universal and extends to all those who are co-redeemed.”¹

Her motherhood to us is based on many considerations. The fact that she gave our flesh to the Word of God and by giving birth to our Redeemer and Head of the Church, she is as well therefore mother of the body of Christ. This title is connected to and dependent upon Christ Himself as True Man and True God. On another level, we have the scriptural statement “Mother behold your son...” at the foot of the cross. She is somehow the mother of the community in the “order of grace,” which means that she intercedes for us and helps us to be born into theological faith as God’s children. Mary is also Mother of the Church because in her we have the incarnation of Israel’s desire for the Messiah, and in the Incarnation we have the encounter with the Messiah that we all desire and for which we strive.

“...in Mary, the Incarnation took the form of a living encounter between God the Redeemer and mankind waiting for the Messiah.”²

I leave you with some criteria established by the Council Fathers for authentic Marian devotion:

- 1) It must be theologically based. That is, it must have sound backing from Scripture and the ramifications of the particular Marian stance cannot contradict already accepted theological truths. It must be seen within the Trinitarian and Christological contexts.
- 2) It must lead to a deeper knowledge of Mary. That is, it is to be a help to the faithful by showing the depth and breadth of Mary’s role as a disciple of Jesus within the context of the ecclesial community.
- 3) It should lead to imitation. After the above two criteria are met, the particular exposition of a Marian stance should be an encouragement to the faithful to imitate Mary’s faith life as a disciple of Jesus.

Queen and Beauty of Carmel, pray for us!

In Him,

Fr. Stephen Sánchez, OCD

1. E. Schillebeeckx. O. P., *Mary Mother of the Redemption* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964), xiv
2. E. Schillebeeckx, 33

News from the Province — St. John of the Cross & St. Paul, the Apostle, Birmingham, AL
Submitted by Thais M Serio, OCDS

On Saturday April 9, 2022, Rebecca Kessler and Jacqueline Smoke from the Community of St. John of the Cross and St. Paul, the Apostle in Birmingham, Alabama were clothed with the scapular of the Order. Fr. Frankline Fomukong, Spiritual Assistant, presided over the ritual and the blessing of the scapulars. The ceremony was held in the private chapel at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Homewood, Alabama.



Left to right: Rebecca Kessler, Fr. Fomukong, Jacqueline Smoke

News from the Province—Our Lady of Prompt Succor Community, New Orleans, LA
Submitted by Sally Veronica Vlosich, OCDS



A Day of Prayer and Recollection was held at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, Louisiana, on Saturday, April 30, 2022. Fr. Damian Zablocki, Presenter and Mass Celebrant presented a Conference on “The Cross and Reparation in the Lives of the Carmelites.”



Congratulations to our OCDS Sisters ...

During the Liturgy of the Mass, Kristi Neal, aspirant in the Covington Community of Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit was clothed in the Scapular of the Order by Fr. Damian Zablocki. Mary Engler, Formation Director of the Covington Community assisted in the ceremony.

Also during the Mass Rosa M. Perkins, OCDS, of the New Orleans Community made her First Promise along with Sally Veronica Vlosich, OCDS, of the New Orleans Community who made her Definitive Promise.

Formation Director Dr. Susan Weyer, OCDS assisted in the ceremony.



Pictured: Rosa Perkins, Fr. Zablocki, and Sally Vlosich

News from the Province — Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Submitted by Letty Silva, OCDS

On March 12, 2022, the Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus celebrated rituals at Epiphany Catholic Church, Oklahoma City. Making First Promise was Rosa Zapata, Debbie Collins, Janie Sheik, Coco Lopez, and Alison Hopper. Lou Wise professed his Definitive Promise.



Front row: Coco Lopez, Allison Hopper, Rosa Zapata, Debbie Collins
Back row: Lou Wise, Janie Sheik

On May 21, 2022, the Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Teresa of Jesus celebrated the clothing ritual where Renee Winkeljohn (picture below with Fr. Lwin) was clothed in the Scapular of the Order at Epiphany Catholic Church with Father Ben Lwin serving as celebrant.



News from the Province — Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Submitted by Letty Silva, OCDS

On Saturday, March 19, the community of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel and St Teresa of Jesus celebrated St. Joseph's Feast Day with our Spiritual Assistant Father Luis Belamonte Luna, OCD.



News from the Province — Community of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Thérèse,
San Antonio, TX

Submitted by Nan Starjak, OCDS

On March 20, 2022, the Community of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Thérèse had the joy of celebrating the Ritual for First Promises of three members – Norma Aguilar, Richard Aguilar, and Jose Ortega.

The community's Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Jorge Cabrera, OCD, presided during noon Mass at the Little Flower Basilica, San Antonio, Texas.



**News from the Province — Community of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
and St. Thérèse, San Antonio, TX**
Submitted by Nan Starjak, OCDS

The community of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Thérèse, San Antonio, Texas, held a silent retreat on May 13-15, 2022 at the Oblate Renewal Center in San Antonio. Fr. Stephen Sánchez was the retreat master. The theme of the retreat was “What Do You Want of Me?” from St. Teresa’s poem “In the Hands of God.”



**News from the Province — Our Lady of Confidence and St. Joseph Study Group,
Savannah, Georgia.**

Submitted by Maria R. H. Carrera, OCDS

On January 8, 2022 Our Lady of Confidence and St. Joseph Community, Savannah, Georgia celebrated the Rite of Admission to Formation I. During the Morning Prayer, Father Daniel F. Firmin, JCL, VG, Pastor of Saint James Church, Savannah Georgia and celebrant of the Rite of Admission accepted the petitions of the new candidates to Formation I.

The three candidates to Formation were clothed with the Scapular of the Order and provided with the book of the Constitutions of the Secular Order and the book of the Gospels.

Left to right: Anna Sudomerski , Donna Barr and Maria R. H. Carrera



Spiritual Corner — Excerpt from LAY CONTEMPLATIVES IN THE CHURCH

by Father Sam Anthony Morello, OCD

A Discussion on Discernment

Let me point out that a vocation is two sided. There is first of all the interior experience of the call, and attraction to the Order for supernatural reasons. This gives way, after careful discernment, to a free decision to apply. The personal dimension is easily appreciated and usually meant when speaking of a *vocation* from God.

But vocation is also *ecclesial*. It is not complete until there is another call, the call to enter, and then again to make Promises, on the part of the ecclesial community; this is an official invitation by the authorities of the community. This second aspect of vocation is the result of a communal discernment. It is a second call that comes to the person from outside the self.

The government of the Secular Order assumes the role of communal discernment. It is seriously negligent to simply profess anyone who holds on during the entire formation program. The Director of Formation and the Council must decide, without scruple, on the authenticity of the candidate's vocation. It is not for them to leave difficult cases to the judgment of the priest assistant. It is a sin against truth and charity to refuse to confront problems. And the absence of a genuine vocation is indeed a problem for the community.

As the period of formation progresses, on-going shared discernment with the candidate is essential. And as the period concludes, if there is still a substantial doubt about suitability, the person must *not* be professed. The Promises may be postponed for a while, but eventually a decision must be made in favor of the vocation or against it. Good will is not sufficient. If a person is not *habitually* given to our kind of prayer and/or cannot fit into the group socially, a negative decision must be made and communicated. The promises cannot be made.

Look at the quality of one's commitment to our daily program, and scrutinize the person's capacity for community. We are a community support system to lay contemplative life. Community is essential. If a person does not contribute to peace and harmony, is anti-social, factious, a troublemaker, ambitious, etc., there is no ecclesial vocation.

One can pursue contemplation without us. Our Order needs social contemplatives. The Teresian community emphasis applies to the Secular Order as well as to friars and nuns, though secular community is more loose-knit.

When officers fear making a mistake, for the love of God they ought to make in favor of *exclusion* rather than *inclusion* of the doubtful. Include only those who clearly belong! To rise to this challenge is to exercise real lay leadership. To think that you will have to answer to God for a sin against charity because of excluding someone doubtful is but a defense mechanism to avoid responsibility. You will not have to answer to God for not living out your role in the Order and the Church.

Do not turn to *isolated* status as the solution for persons who do not belong. Isolates are tertiaries who do not have access to an actual community, not those *incapable* of community. The Director of Formation or the President must sit down with such a candidate and explain that God is not calling him to the Order. The candidate can be led to understand that God wants him/her to benefit from

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Spiritual Corner — Excerpt from LAY CONTEMPLATIVES IN THE CHURCH

by Father Sam Anthony Morello, OCD

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affinity to Carmel in a non-juridical way: that is, in private, by reading, by devotion, etc. But there is no ecclesial call to the Order. Something difficult to communicate and to accept, true enough, but this is the stuff of real life. Unless we walk in the truth, all else is but vanity.

Discernment of vocation also has to peer into the *actual circumstances* of a candidate's life. Good people who otherwise would qualify, but who presently do not have any leisure time or cannot manage to impose some order on their hectic schedule, should postpone their entry.

Again, hard as it is to admit, good will is not sufficient. We have gone beyond the legalistic days of dispensations. A person needs to have at least enough time to be able to *habitually* follow our daily prayer program. We are slaves to nothing; but neither are we to *make believe* that we are Secular Carmelites when life cannot yield us enough leisure to exercise the charism of the Order. One should wait until life eases up and offers some respite.

If we really were attentive to the quality persons applying and to the quality of their real circumstances, I believe we would have less fallout from the Secular Order. Lack of perseverance often merely means the lack of vocation from the beginning.

The Secular Order must successfully *sustain the contemplative prayer of the members* over the years. The monthly meeting should contribute to the knowledge of prayer by instruction and by ongoing formation study and discussion. It should fuel motivation to persevere daily in the arduous practice of private prayer. Although, there are other goals of the monthly meeting, this is the primary one.

--Rome, October 3, 1988



Spiritual Corner — Mary, Our Sister

by Father Bill John Melancon, OCDS (Bill-John of the Angels)

Mary, Beloved by the Trinity Community, New Iberia, Louisiana

Priest for the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana

The Blessed Virgin Mary goes by many titles. Usually, these are due to locations, special devotions, and events. In this little essay, we want to look at the Blessed Virgin Mary's relationship with us and in particular to discuss Mary as our Sister.

Each of us has varied relationships. For a woman, some of those relationships are daughter, sibling, wife, mother, grandmother, aunt, godparent; you get the idea. In reading a few articles, it becomes obvious that Mary as our sister can cause a few feathers to be ruffled. For Carmelites, it should cause no concern. The Order was founded by those hermits on Mount Carmel and in the first rule by St. Albert, they are called Brothers of Our Lady.

In the little book, Welcome to Carmel, A Handbook for Aspirants to the Discalced Carmelite Secular Order, page 120, we have this:

Along with giving a religious sense to the secular custom of patronage and taking Mary as the "patroness" of her servants, Carmelites regarded the Mother of Jesus as their spiritual mother and as the "sister" they imitated in their own lives of faith and prayer. The English Carmelite theologian, John Baconthorpe (d. 1348), famous among other things for his defense of the Immaculate Conception, wrote a short commentary on the Carmelite Rule as a word-picture of our Lady's own life. Other fourteenth century documents call Mary 'Mother of our Order of Carmel.'

Considering Mary as "sister," an approach that is becoming fairly frequent again in current Catholic consideration, was a way of regarding the Blessed Virgin as the great example of doing God's will in all things. For Carmel there was a sense of intimacy between the 'brothers of our Lady of Mount Carmel' and Mary their 'sister.'

Many years ago during my postulancy with the Carmelite friars, it was mentioned to my class that Mary was our sister. At first, the tendency to react to this strange notion had to be kept at bay. Mary as mother, queen, patroness, and our lady was normal. We heard it all the time. We grew up hearing about these many titles---but sister? Our puzzled looks were met with an immediate gentle and kind response. In explaining to us that Mary could claim these wondrous titles, we had to remember that she was the "handmaid of the Lord." Her life as a woman living in the region of Galilee in northern Palestine (the land of Canaan) cannot be discounted. Her responsibilities as a wife and mother, her example as a woman in society and culture, and her relationship as a daughter, kinswoman, and citizen roots her among and with us. She cooked for her family, visited the sick, honored her parents, paid imperial taxes, and fervently prayed. She reflected our situation in hers. Her example is ours to follow. Without denying all the other titles, she is with us as our sister, walking along with us as we make our way in the world.

If we imitate Mary, we can imitate her spiritually. This includes being "pregnant" with the Word of God. The early brothers on Mount Carmel understood this vocation. To carry and deliver the Word of God to everyone whom we encounter. It's the call of the Christian in general. How wonderful it is to be part of an Order that uses this image to remind us to strive for holiness in our daily tasks. The intimacy of carrying the Word, constantly relating to the Word as integral to who we are, and then, without losing the Word, we give birth to the Word in the world!

Spiritual Corner — Mount Carmel and Our Lady

by Mark S. Calvert, OCDS
Knoxville, Tennessee

To deepen our understanding of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, it helps to deepen our understanding and appreciation of that geographic place where the Order arose: Mount Carmel. One may translate the Biblical Hebrew word “Carmel” as meaning “woodland.”¹ Indeed, the word “Carmel” refers to the typical rich Mediterranean vegetation composed mostly of many shrubs and small trees with wild fruits.² Another venerable tradition translates the name “Carmel” as “Vineyard” or “Garden of God.”³

This Biblical vineyard imagery appears in one of the ancient hymns of the Order, the *Flos Carmeli*, in which Our Lady is addressed as “Blossoming Vine”⁴ or “Flower of Carmel, tall vine blossom laden.”⁵ Authorship of the *Flos Carmeli* is attributed to St. Simon Stock, who was, of course, the Carmelite who received the scapular devotion from Our Lady. The date of that vision has been traditionally recognized as July 16, 1251, which established the date on which the Church celebrates the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel — also called the scapular feast.⁶

Mount Carmel is used in the Bible as a symbol of beauty and fruitfulness:⁷ “Your head is like Carmel” affirms the spouse of the Song of Songs,⁸ praising the beauty of his beloved.”⁹

According to St. Gregory of Nyssa, a Fourth Century bishop who is counted among the Fathers of the Church, Mount Carmel is renowned because of the virtue and reputation of Elijah the Prophet, who lived there.¹⁰ Our great Twentieth Century Carmelite saint, St. Edith Stein or Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, commented on the similarity between St. Elijah, the Prophet of Carmel, and Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel. St. Teresa Benedicta wrote this:

[T]he holy prophet [Elijah] had lived in the same spirit that also filled [Our Lady] from the time her earthly sojourn began. Released from everything earthly, to stand in worship in the presence of God, to love him with her whole heart, to beseech His grace for sinful people, and in atonement to substitute herself for these people, as the maidservant of the Lord to await His beckoning—this was her life.¹¹

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1. [Carmel in the Holy Land](#) at p. 18.
 2. [Carmel in the Holy Land](#) at p. 14.
 3. Gabriel Barry, OCD, [The Inspiration of Carmel](#) (Vineyard Series One) (Teresian Press, Durham, England 1984) at first unnumbered page of Introduction. See also [Carmel in the Holy Land](#) at p. 13.
 4. [The Inspiration of Carmel](#) at first unnumbered page of Introduction. See also [Carmel in the Holy Land](#) at p. 13.
 5. From O. Carm. U.K. website, <http://www.carmelite.org/flos.htm>.
 6. Benedict Zimmerman, “Carmelite Order,” at ¶4, in Vol. 3 [Catholic Encyclopedia](#) (Robert Appleton Co., New York 1908).
 7. [Carmel in the Holy Land](#) at p. 11.
 8. Song 7:5.
 9. [Carmel in the Holy Land](#) at p. 11.
 10. [Carmel in the Holy Land](#) at pp. 12-13, citing [Patrologiae Cursus Completus...Series Graeca](#), Vol. XLVI, p. 594.
 11. Edith Stein, OCD, [The Hidden Life](#) (Volume IV of Collected Works), “Before the Face of God,” at p. 3.

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Spiritual Corner — Mount Carmel and Our Lady

by Mark S. Calvert, OCDS
Knoxville, Tennessee

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A rather clever scriptural connection of Our Blessed Lady with Mount Carmel was devised in the first decades of the Fourteenth Century by the English Carmelite John Baconthorpe. Baconthorpe took two texts written by the Prophet Isaiah and read them as complementary. He began with the familiar text of Isaiah 7:14: “the virgin shall be with child and bear a son.” Baconthorpe then considered Isaiah 35:2: “to her is given the glory of Lebanon, the splendor of Carmel.” The pronoun “her” in this verse literally refers to the holy city Jerusalem. But recall that in Sacred Scriptures the image of “mother” is often applied to Jerusalem.¹² Baconthorpe thus interpreted Isaiah 35:2 as pertaining to Our Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary: “to her [Mary] is given the glory of Lebanon, the splendor of Carmel.”¹³ Accordingly, he concluded that the Virgin Mary is prophesied to be the Lady of Mount Carmel. Therefore Baconthorpe, with subsequent generations of Carmelites, could say of Mary, “To her is given the splendor of Carmel.”¹⁴

Carmel, then, “is the mountain of Mary. The attribution of beauty and of sanctity typical of Carmel converge, through the comments of the Fathers of the Church and [other] Ecclesiastical writers, in the person of the Mother of God, [who is] exalted above all creatures because of her place in the history of salvation.”¹⁵ Mount Carmel itself became a symbol of Our Lady, so that those Biblical texts that extol Mount Carmel’s beauty, sweetness, and fertility were applied to the Blessed Virgin.¹⁶

Mary has also long been linked to Mount Carmel in the Carmelite tradition through an interpretation of the events on Mount Carmel recorded in 1 Kings 18:42-46. The little cloud rising from the sea in 1 Kings 18:44 is seen as prefiguring the Blessed Virgin.¹⁷ She is that little, grace-filled cloud who precedes the torrent of God’s grace poured out in the Incarnation of Christ, bringing new life to the dry, barren land.¹⁸ This further reinforces the connection between the Blessed Virgin and Mount Carmel.

According to an early legend of the Carmelite Order, during her earthly lifetime the Virgin Mary made frequent visits to hermits living on Mount Carmel for retreat and recollection.¹⁹ Regardless of the historical basis for this legend (which is not reflected in Sacred Scripture), such tales and these allegorical interpretations of Scriptures about Mary and Mount Carmel inform us of the Order’s Marian character and the significance of Mount Carmel itself from the beginning.²⁰

12. E.g., Matt. 23:37; Gal. 4:26; Is 66:10-11.

13. Isaiah 35:2.

14. Carmel in the Holy Land at p. 35.

15. Carmel in the Holy Land at p. 11.

16. E. Kilian Lynch, O. Carm., Your Brown Scapular (Newman Press, Westminster, MD, 1950) at p. 7.

17. Carmel in the Holy Land at p. 23; The Hidden Life at p. 3.

18. Peter-Thomas Rohrbach, Journey to Carith at p. 27. See also Ex 16:10 (“the glory of the Lord appeared in a cloud”); Is. 45:8 (“Drop down dew, ye heavens, and let the clouds rain the Just One; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour”); Ps. 72:6: (“He shall be like rain coming down on the meadow, like showers watering the earth.”) (a psalm applied to the Messiah).

19. See Carmel in the Holy Land at pp. 31, 35-36.

20. Your Brown Scapular at p. 13.

Spiritual Corner — Mount Carmel and Our Lady

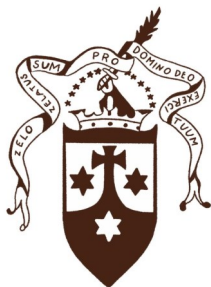
by Mark S. Calvert, OCDS
Knoxville, Tennessee

(Continued from page 16)

Historical facts also demonstrate the Marian nature of the Order on Mount Carmel from its beginnings. Recall that the Rule of St. Albert, issued around A.D. 1209, prescribed that the hermits of Carmel were to have a chapel at which they could gather each morning for the celebration of Mass.²¹ In fulfillment of the Rule, the Carmelites had such a chapel, with the Blessed Virgin Mary as the named patroness.²² Indeed, a “French pilgrim who visited Mount Carmel around A.D. 1231 noted in his journal that the Carmelites’ little church was dedicated to Our Lady. . . . This simple record demonstrates the venerable historical roots of Marian devotion in the Order” on Mount Carmel.²³

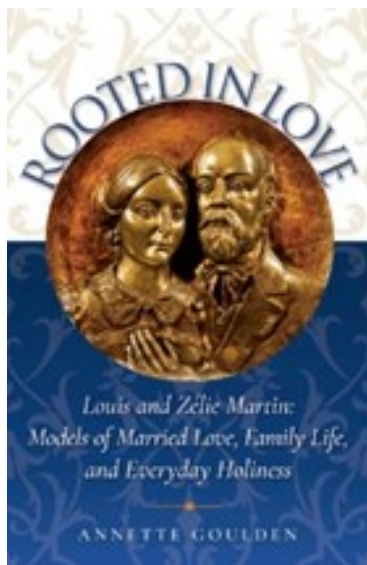
So let us daily refresh ourselves in spirit on Mount Carmel. In prayer, as we seek the Trinitarian God within our souls, we can rest in the beauty our Order’s homeland, under the watchful eyes of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: our patroness, mother, and sister.²⁴ Let us honor Jesus’ command, given to St. John the Apostle on behalf of us all: Let us behold Our Mother, Our Lady of Mount Carmel.²⁵ Let us behold her in prayer and behold her as our model of life and virtue. And, like the Apostle John, let us take her into our homes, where we may dwell under her loving protection.

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21. Carmel in the Holy Land at p. 43; Rule of St. Albert, Art. 14, in OCDS Legislation for the Province of St. Thérèse (Oklahoma) at p. 4 (2017 ed.).
 22. Carmel in the Holy Land at pp. 43-44. See also Hugh Clarke, O. Carm. & Bede Edwards, OCD, eds., The Rule of Saint Albert, (Aylesford & Kensington 1973) at p. 12.
 23. The Inspiration of Carmel at p. 10; see also Carmel in the Holy Land at p. 35.
 24. The Hidden Life at p. 3. See also Joseph Chalmers, O. Carm. & Camilo Maccise, OCD, “With Mary the Mother of Jesus (Acts 1:14), Scapular Message on the 750th Anniversary of the Bestowal of the Scapular,” (May 16, 2001).
 25. Your Brown Scapular at pp. 13-14.



Book Review— Rooted in Love: Louis and Zélie Martin Models of Married Love, Family Life, and Everyday Holiness

By Annette Goulden



When Saints Louis and Zélie Martin were canonized in 2015, they were the first spouses to be declared saints as a couple. Their lives are proof that God works through ordinary families to draw his future saints—like St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Louis and Zélie’s youngest daughter—toward holiness. Even before their first encounter in the small town of Alençon, France, God was preparing Louis and Zélie for marriage. Later, he continued to sustain them powerfully in their married love and family life.

Rooted in Love: Louis and Zélie Martin: Models of Married Love, Family Life, and Everyday Holiness explores the stages of Louis and Zélie’s marriage, from the joys of parenthood, through the sorrows of bereavement, and ultimately to the challenges of single parenthood—experiences which many families face today. Author Annette Goulden demonstrates how, amid both the joys and the sorrows of family life, these saints grew in their understanding of God’s love for them. From the initial urge to earn God’s favor with sacrifices and sufferings to a deeper understanding of God’s unconditional love even in the minutiae of daily life, God was their guide on the path to holiness, a path that is open to all married couples.

This book is for both families and individuals—to offer them light and guidance to live their ordinary everyday life in closeness with God. No matter one’s vocation in life, Louis and Zélie exemplify how everyday experiences, such as being a working parent, running a business, or raising a difficult child, can be sacramental if one is open to a trusting relationship with God, even when he seems to be absent. Whatever the situation a married couple find themselves in, this saintly couple shows how daily actions and choices—however small and ordinary—are highly valued by God and can lead to holiness, to a close relationship with him, and to forming children who are strong in faith, maturity, and joy.

Source: ICS Publications

Carmelite Obituaries



Barbara Louise Abat, OCDS

January 21, 1937 – March 28, 2022

**Community of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Thérèse,
San Antonio, Texas**

Submitted by Nan Starjak, OCDS

A Mass of Christian Burial for Barbara Abat was held on April 2, 2022, at St. Monica's Catholic Church in Converse, Texas.

Barbara was born in Tennessee and served as a registered nurse in the United States Air Force. She was clothed with the Scapular of the Order in 1995, made her First Promise in 1999, and her Definitive Promise in 2003 taking the devotional name of Marie-Joseph Thérèse. Although she had been ill and on Infirm status for years, Barbara was always joyful and always praying for her Carmelite community, the Church, and the world. She said that, as Carmelites, "our life is a prayer." She is survived by her husband of 31 years, Deacon Jacques Abat and four children.

Henrietta Leblanc Albright, OCDS

July 5, 1942 – April 30, 2022

**Community of St. John of the Cross & St. Anthony
Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

Submitted by Frances Locker, OCDS & Patricia Ricord, OCDS

Henrietta Albright, 79, passed away on Saturday, April 30, 2022, in Lake Charles, Louisiana. A Mass of Christian Burial was held May 9, 2022 at St. Ann Catholic Church, Morganza, Louisiana.

She was a member of the OCDS Community in Baton Rouge, Louisiana having been clothed on December 1, 1980, taking the name Theresa of the Blessed Sacrament. Henrietta made her First Promise January 12, 1983, and her Definitive Promise December 15, 1985.

Henrietta served the Community as President, Councilor, Formator, and Secretary. She volunteered whenever she was needed.

In April 2008, Henrietta was postulated to our Provincial Council for the Oklahoma Province of St. Therese. In June 2011, Henrietta was elected President of the Province's Provincial Council. Due to health reasons, in 2013 she was no longer able to attend meetings. She tried to remain close to our local Community until her health further declined. She eventually moved to a facility in Lake Charles, Louisiana.



Maria "Mali" Alicia Hall, OCDS

December 3, 1935 to February 11, 2022

**San Juan de la Cruz Community
Houston, Texas**

Submitted by Denise Graham, OCDS

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on February 19, 2022, at St. James Church in Spring, Texas for Maria "Mali" Hall. Mali was born in Mexico City. She was very involved in her church parish, St Paul the Apostle in San Antonio, Texas. Mali served as a lector and other various church ministries at the time. In 1993, the family moved to Spring, Texas. She attended St. James Catholic Church. She was married to Cloyd Hall and they had three children.

Mali was introduced to the secular Carmelites of the San Juan de la Cruz Community in Houston, Texas and made her clothing on September 12, 2009, with Bishop Anders Arborelius, OCD. Mali made her first promise on September 17, 2011, and her definitive promise on September 14, 2014. Mali liked to joke about being clothed by Bishop Arborelius, OCD (who is now Cardinal Arborelius, OCD of Stockholm, Sweden).

Carmelite Obituaries



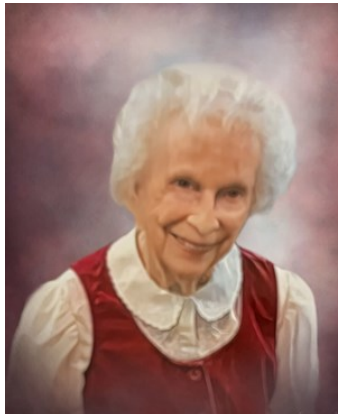
Patricia Ellen Darby, OCDS

November 21, 1936 - January 15, 2022

**Infant Jesus of Prague Community
Dallas, Texas**

Submitted by Susan Ortega, OCDS

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on February 11, 2022, at St. Jude Catholic Church, Allen, Texas. Pat was clothed in the Scapular of the Order on May 17, 1987, made her Definitive Promise on July 19, 1992, and professed a vow on October 15, 1996. She was a faithful member of Carmel and served the Province as provincial secretary and editor of the *Flos Carmeli*. She also served the Dallas community in many capacities. She had a big heart and a playful sense of humor.



Sylvia Mayeux, OCDS

February 23, 1927 ~ April 17, 2022

**The Prophet Elijah & St. Mary of Jesus Crucified Community
Alexandria, Louisiana**

Submitted by Mary Jo McCoy, OCDS

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sylvia Mayeux was held on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Moreauville, Louisiana.

She was the eldest member of Elijah the Prophet and St Mary of Jesus Crucified Community, Alexandria, Louisiana. She was clothed with the scapular of the Order on October 1, 1991. She made her First Promise on November 6, 1993, and her Definitive Promise on December 7, 1996, taking the devotional name, Sylvia Mary of the Nativity. Sylvia also professed vows on October 27, 2002.

Sylvia was a strong intercessory prayer warrior for our community and an original member, serving in various capacities including retreat planning, assisting in formation, and as a council member. She used her education and gifts as a teacher to help special needs children and worked with mothers and children in the battered women's shelter. She received several awards for establishing a program to help homeless children in Rapides Parish.



O Most Holy Mother of Mount Carmel, when asked by a saint to grant privileges to the family of Carmel, you gave assurance of your Motherly love and help to those faithful to you and to your Son. Behold us, your children.

We glory in wearing your holy habit, which makes us members of your family of Carmel, through which we shall have your powerful protection in life, at death and even after death.

Look down with love, O Gate of Heaven, on all those now in their last agony!

Look down graciously, O Virgin, Flower of Carmel, on all those in need of help!

Look down mercifully, O Mother of our Savior, on all those who do not know that they are numbered among your children.

Look down tenderly, O Queen of All Saints, on the poor souls!

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pray for us.

Parting Words

Flos Carmeli provides information for the Secular members of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in the Oklahoma Semi-Province, which has jurisdiction over OCDS members living in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas.

Oklahoma Semi-Province members wishing to submit articles for publication in the *Flos Carmeli* or for subscription information, please contact Maxine Latiolais, Provincial Council *Flos Carmeli* coordinator, at flos.submit@gmail.com

The submission due dates for articles are:

January 1
April 1
July 1
October 1

Any OCDS member submitting an article must include their name, community name and location in the article.

“As we know from gospel accounts involving Mary, she was never a passive bystander with regard to the events of her life or those of her son. As spouse of the Holy Spirit, Mary was the epitome of fruitfulness throughout her life on earth. She gave birth to the infant Jesus; she was the vehicle that ushered in Jesus’s public life when, at her request, he performed his first miracle; and she was present at the foot of the cross when the new Israel was born from the Israel of old. With the exception of the annunciation, whenever Mary is mentioned in Scripture, she is always in the company of others, illustrating for us the importance of social involvement and the communal dimension of a life lived in union with God. Mary was fully proactive, except when it came to receiving God’s self-communication. Then she waited, trusting in God’s initiative as she pondered in her heart what she did not understand, for nothing in her external life belied her interior disposition as handmaid of the Lord.”

Hughes, Barbara. *Mary the Perfect Contemplative: Carmelite Insights on the Interior Life of Our Lady* (p. 25). ICS Publications. Kindle Edition.

Getting the *Flos Carmeli* to members

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

Provincial Council for the 2020-2023 Triennium:

Anna Peterson, San Antonio, TX, President

Barbara A. Basgall, Oklahoma City, OK

Mark Calvert, Knoxville, TN

Maxine Latiolais, New Iberia, LA

Jillison Parks, Savannah, GA