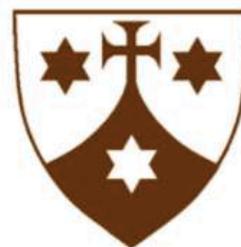




# The **VINE**

News from the Secular Discalced Carmelite Community in England and Wales



February 2022



Saint Teresa's cell in Ávila. On 12<sup>th</sup> March we celebrate the 400th anniversary of her canonisation.  
*Photo credit: Lawrence OP*

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**Deadline for contributions to the next Vine: Tuesday 7th June 2022**

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## FROM OUR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow Carmelites,

### Carmel in 2022

This year is full of promise, indeed we have at last been able, after a long wait, to make three-year or life-time commitments to Carmel in our Promises. As St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross says, making Promises is a ‘dreadfully serious business’. After the prolonged trauma of Covid, we ask ourselves, how are we living our Promises? How integrated have they become into our daily prayer life and apostolic life? It is not easy and we need support to live a Carmelite vocation to the full, the support of prayer and the support of our communities.

Sadly, there are some of us who still feel unable to be with their community in person. They miss that camaraderie over coffee, that laugh in sharing news, that wave of sympathy in disclosing problems, that intensity of prayer together in deep silence? I found that it wasn’t until we met again in reality that I realised how much we had been missing. There is more to a meeting than the persons present, for we welcome the other Person, who is there where two or three are gathered together.

Everyone can come together this year, as we look forward to three major national events: the Presidents’ Conference at Launde Abbey from 6th to 8th May, and the Secular Order retreats at Aylesford Priory and Ampleforth Abbey, 18th to 22nd July and 25th to 29th July respectively. You will find information and booking details in this issue of ‘The Vine’.

The Presidents’ Conference is supremely important, for it is an occasion when all Presidents and Group Leaders meet together for prayer and to consider the state of the Secular Order in England and Wales. Asking for guidance from the Holy Spirit, they will decide what should be our national priorities for the coming three years and explore how the individual Secular Order Communities and Groups can flourish.

The Conference is also the occasion when the National President and the seven Regional Representatives are elected. With Fr Matt, these eight Carmelites will serve as members of your National Council until the next Presidents’ Conference.

The conference is a great opportunity for presidents, particularly those who have recently assumed office, to meet each other and share ideas, and to make friendships that will support them as they strive to fulfil their vocation in Carmel as president.

This year’s Presidents’ Conference (delayed by a year) is particularly important because of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Covid has taken its toll on many of our groups, but it has also thrown up new opportunities in the use of information technology, such as in our improved OCDS website and use of video recordings and video conferencing. The ending of the lockdown in mid-2021 has also been the occasion for an upsurge in vocations to the Secular Carmelites, particularly among younger people.

But we need your help. To prepare for the Presidents’ Conference, I will be writing to you all, asking how you see the current situation in the Secular Order. Your generous provision of ideas and suggestions will help provide the focus for the Conference, and

give pointers towards our priorities in living our vocation as secular Carmelites over the next three years.

Making Promises is indeed ‘a dreadfully serious business’ but, as Teresa Benedicta goes on to say, we need not be alarmed. What we promise is beyond our own human power but it is not beyond the power of the Almighty. Day-in, day-out, we entrust ourselves to him.

Let us be joined together as one Secular Order in supporting our Presidents at their forthcoming conference, by giving them food for discussion and above all, prayer for wisdom and discernment.

With love and prayer in Carmel,

*Annette*

## NEWS FROM GROUPS

### Blessed Marie-Eugène, Boars Hill

For almost three years now our study has been I want to see God by Blessed Marie-Eugène, which we will complete at our next meeting in two weeks, and yes, we need a medal for perseverance! There are four members of our community whose first language is not English, and all members found the book difficult at times. But sometimes, several members would actually live out the theme of the chapter, and we feel that Blessed Marie-Eugène and the Holy Spirit helped us. After a little rest, a retreat day in March, we will look at Teresa’s ‘Book of her life’ and see where it leads.



Father Matt and the Boar's Hill group

And like everyone else in the country, and beyond, our days for promises were ... on, off ..., on ..., off, but eventually, Maria made her first promise at the regional day in Northampton which was so joyful and sheer delight for meeting everyone again. And yet, we still had five members unable to attend this (due to Covid) to make their promises.

But thanks to Fr Matt's kindness, they were finally able to do this on 11th December at Boars Hill during one of our meetings. Sylvia and Carol made

their final promises, Barbara her first (her witness follows) and Imogen and Solange were received into formation. Fr Matt and a special guest joined us for a shared lunch afterwards which included cured ham from Ávila and many other treats.

I asked Barbara Spence to write down the moment when she realised, right before our eyes, that her time was up ...

### **My journey towards my first vows**

At Armelle's request this is my testimony about how I got to my First Vows yesterday.

Is this my path towards being a saint? This is what we all ask isn't it?

I have to admit there are so many saints in the church and so kind and gentle. But St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross are precisely, out of all the saints, the no nonsense, no ifs no buts, straight to the point kind of ones. Why couldn't Jesus choose for me a 'sweeter' kind of path?

God, in his mercy, and knowing what a chicken I am, came to welcome me first through St Thérèse of Lisieux. It seemed to me that the mountain and its impossible seven mansions would be more approachable with her. So I asked St Thérèse of Lisieux to take me under her wing. After all, she was a novice master. I learned about the spirituality of offering to Jesus the little everyday things and I knew this was my path. Furthermore, during St Thérèse of Lisieux's time, the elevator had been recently discovered. She thought that, in spiritual terms, there must also be an elevator to go through these seven mansions. And indeed, she discovered it! It is Our Lady herself who would be our lift. Yes, this was starting to sound like a path that even someone like me could take upon.

Yet, there was a little problem. I could not join any group because I could only come on Saturdays (perfect excuse)! But our no-nonsense, no ifs or buts patron would have none of that! Precisely they had just opened up a new Saturday group. So, there I was, and now it seemed like I would have to have a new spiritual director. My spiritual director turned out to be 'tailor made'! She has been to me literally like the one who sees what no one else perceives. That is, that there is no more wine. With her patience, her gentleness but also no ifs no buts approach has literally taken me by the hand to this stage.

Yet, it was still not that simple to say yes. Not even after ten years of coming and going to our Carmelite priory. You see, I had a little secret. I had asked St Thérèse of Lisieux to give me a very clear and precise sign that this was indeed my path. Given that she is the Little Flower I asked her very concretely for a flower. I said to her: 'Should you want me to take this vow you are going to have to send me a flower and the sign that it comes from you is that it has got to be given to me by a Carmelite.'

And so the time came when I was asked whether I was ready. My answer was no! I was going to fly out to my country of origin (perfect excuse!). And of course nobody knew, but I had still not got that flower.

Then came one of our Saturday sessions and somebody in our group said that St Thérèse of Lisieux was steadfast in answering any prayer. I was puzzled, it was obviously not true. Here I was at a time when many in my group would next month take a vow, but still I had not got that flower! 'St Thérèse, shame on you!' (I thought to myself). And as I was saying this my face suddenly became pale, I started almost shivering. Hadn't she really? Well precisely that week a beautiful humble, generous soul, a new sister in Carmel had

actually brought to my doorstep not one but a bowl full of flowers! The realisation of this fulfilment came in front of all my Carmelite group to share as a testimony! And almost in tears I told them about my secret. Even if I had to delay my trip home I would now say yes! How could I not?

As I write this, it has been a day since taking my first vow. I have come to realise that Teresa of Avila and me are just going to have to be friends. I went up to her and said: 'I have to admit I am afraid of you'. And then there came a second realisation. My name is Barbara Maria. I am a teacher. On the first day of class I always say to my students: 'I am Barbara but you should not be afraid as I am also Maria'. (I do not know if they get this!) And so, I said to St Teresa don't you also have something of a Maria within you? Her answer? Teresa DE JESUS! So here begins our new friendship. I will let you know how this develops.'

*Armelle Belcher and Barbara Spence*

## St Austell Group

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel 2021, we had the great joy of Glennis Jose making her First Promise and Maureen Vincent's Reception into Formation. It was a very happy occasion for us all, especially as we are only a small group. We also have one aspirant at the moment and another possible enquirer. Now that Covid restrictions are hopefully almost over, we are hoping to go out into other parishes to talk about the Secular Order. Glennis has been giving us a series of well researched presentations on St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross which have inspired us to find out more about this Carmelite saint. We are very happy to be back to our normal monthly meetings and are continuing with our reading of the Life of St Teresa of Jesus.

*Joan Brown*

## St Elijah Community Oxford

On 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021, the Oxford St Elijah Community held elections. We were delighted to welcome Elizabeth King as our new President and Cyprian Blamires as our Formation Director. Annette Goulden, Anna Faure and Tony Solomon are Council members. Annette is Secretary and Anna is Treasurer.

Our outgoing secretary, Anna, gave a comprehensive report summarising the membership and activities of the St Elijah Community over the last year, and our outgoing treasurer, Tony, presented the treasurer's report.

We now have 15 members. Eleven have made their Definitive Promises, two have made First Promises, and two members are in formation. Three of these are 'associate members' as they are unable to attend physical meetings. One associate member only recently joined us as he had been an 'isolated' Secular Carmelite for many years following the closure of his group.

During lockdown, we enjoyed monthly Zoom meetings, which included one member who cannot join us in person. This was a great boon which we plan to continue in some way.

Interspersed with their individual formation programme, those in formation attended occasional group formation sessions to look at specific topics not covered in our regular meetings. One such topic was the friars' 'Charismatic Declaration', which we thought was applicable to the Secular Order in many ways.

We are twinned with Ware Carmel and, although we have been unable to visit the sisters since April 2019, we pray for them on their First Profession anniversaries and they pray for us.

We also enjoy being twinned with Our Lady, Star of the Sea, Torquay.

Altogether, in spite of Covid, it has been a very fruitful year and we are enormously grateful to all those who have travelled with us, and continue to share our charism.

*Annette Goulden*

## Our Lady of Walsingham

Four members met in Walsingham in at the end of January to discuss future plans for our group.

Much has changed in the past three years. A new – and now thriving – OCDS group has been set up in Norwich assisted by the re-location of some of our members. At the same time, the Peterborough group has been struggling due to ill-health and travel issues. To address this, and offer a more accessible meeting place for members living in the western part of the region, we have agreed to meet in future at the Church of the Annunciation in Kings Lynn. Our group will retain its name and will incorporate the Peterborough group. It seems very appropriate to maintain the Walsingham connection since the the Catholic church in Kings Lynn is the Pontifical Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. It contains its own holy house and was the main national shrine until superseded by Walsingham's Slipper Chapel in 1934.

At the January meeting Tim Burton agreed to be President; Jane Nicholson will remain as Formation Director and Hannah Edwards will be our new Secretary. Other roles will be filled as the re-constituted group develops.

## Holy Trinity, Notting Hill

### Lay Carmelites - the future

Teresa Lynch writes:

Why are we Carmelites? How can we be Carmelites in the world? All vocation comes as a calling from God. What does God expect of us?

Being a Carmelite means to live in allegiance to Jesus. We are the instruments of His grace. A prerequisite of being a Carmelite, is to be a faithful Catholic who accepts the doctrines of the Church. Preferring non-Catholic doctrines, prohibits allegiance to God's teaching for Catholics and by extension for Carmelites.

### **Is our Lay Carmelite vocation easy?**

Isiah reminds us that without God's powerful Word and Presence both creation and dysfunctional humanity are doomed. In our era of mistrust, insecurity, and vulnerability, full of fragile peace and broken promises. Isaiah's description of 'weak hands', 'feeble knees' and 'fearful hearts' hits home (Is 35:3-4).

Our vulnerability and insecurity can be addressed by focusing on God, Who keeps faith forever. Who is just to the oppressed, Who gives lavishly, Who liberates, Who heals, Who supports, Who defends and Who forgives. This is the God we worship. Who takes special interest in and acts on behalf of the downtrodden, the vulnerable, the powerless and the despairing (Neary, 2004).

### **Are we the lamp or the light?**

Jesus tells us let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matt 5:16).

That is our vocation, to humbly reflect the Truth and Light of Christ, not to develop the pride, that thinks we are the source of goodness. This pride smothers Christ's light, it is the opposite of the Truth (Foster, 2010).

### **What helps us in our vocation?**

We listen to the word of God in Scripture, spending time each day in personal prayer, attending Mass on Sunday and in the week as often as possible, together with regular confession, and by seeking to be of service to our neighbour.

In each of these ways and by remaining always united in prayer with Our Blessed Mother, we are being called to lives of joyful hope.

### **Our community**

We are neither a prayer group nor a social group. We are called to live as Carmelites in the world. Additional to our need and vocation for contemplation as with the enclosed orders, there are many ways that we can help others by our vocation, in the world which can differ from those in the enclosed orders.

### **We are committed to prayer for others**

We have for some time as a lay Carmelite group prayed with a purpose for others who are struggling and who may have no one to pray for them. We have discussed how we can help our agreed causes by prayer and possible action as follows:

We continue to pray for prisoners and keep in contact with the governor of our chosen prison, Pentonville in north London.

We are mindful of the difficulties faced by new mothers whether single or married and pray for them, being mindful of organisations dedicated to their support, e.g., single mothers <https://bassuahlegacy.org/>

We pray for the homeless and help in our own ways .

We will pray against (in St Pope John Paul II's words, 'the scourge of abortion'. There are several organisations that are dedicated to this cause that can be supported, e.g., The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, Right to Life and The Good Counsel Network

We will pray to help sensitively anyone we meet who is a lapsed Catholic.

We pray for the Pope and all priests.

We pray for parents of young people to block their access to pornography and for the big corporations to admit and prevent the harm being caused to their physical, mental, social, and spiritual development.

We pray for the status of women to be respected in relation to the transgender lobby.

### **Church teaching**

We need to remember that the risen Jesus said to His disciples: as the Father has sent me so I am sending you. Then when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them: 'receive the Holy Spirit' (John, 20: 21-22).

We need to be mindful of the Prophet, Elijah whose saying became our motto: 'I am zealous for the glory of the Lord'. This, in action, is more than a motto. We need to be prepared to prove our allegiance to Jesus whenever the need arises and without counting the cost or the regard of others.

Secular Carmelites need to be prepared to counter error, whether from religious or lay people. Participation in the Church Synod meetings can offer our Carmelite perspective and defend the faith.

### **Contemplation**

'Contemplation is a science of love. It is an infused, loving knowledge of God.'

*Saint John of the Cross (1542-1591)*

'Contemplation seems to supersede and to reject every other form of intuition and experience—whether in art, in philosophy, in theology, in liturgy or in ordinary levels of love and of belief. This rejection is of course only apparent. Contemplation is and must be compatible with all these things, for it is their highest fulfilment. But in the actual experience of contemplation, all other experiences are momentarily lost. They 'die' to be born again on a higher level of life' (Merton, 2007).

We can and must reflect 'a science of love' despite being in the world.

### **References**

Foster, S. (2010). *In Joyful Hope. Trust and Renewal in Christ*. Advent Reflections. Meditation for a Holy Advent. Ed. Brandon McGinley. EWTN Publishing.

Merton, T. (2007). *New Seeds of Contemplation* Chapter 1

Neary, M. (2004). *Trust and Renewal in Christ*. Advent Reflections. Meditation for a Holy Advent. Ed. Brandon McGinley. EWTN Publishing.

## THE TERESIAN PRAYER GROUP WANTS TO EXPAND

Following successful programmes at Kensington Priory in previous years, the Teresian Prayer Groups for the current programme, running from September 2021 to May 2022, have been operating in four different locations or times in the London Region: Kensington Priory (separate sessions on a Thursday evening and on a Saturday morning), Gerrards Cross Priory, and Orpington Parish.

The aim of each Teresian Prayer Group is for its members to grow in prayer, following the teaching of St Teresa of Avila. The meetings in the current programme follow this journey of prayer as described in St Teresa's Way of Perfection, with reference to the example of other Carmelite saints. Monthly meetings have a talk by a distinguished Carmelite speaker, followed by a time of quiet prayer and then small group discussion and sharing about the talk and our experience of prayer. Membership of the Group is open to everyone and is free.

In order to make them available to more than one group, the talks for the 2021/22 programme are being recorded in advance and being made available to members at the beginning of the month via a private YouTube channel, to be watched at home in advance of the meeting (except for the Thursday evening session at Kensington where the talk is shown on a big screen). This also means that we can share outstanding Carmelite speakers. This year, we have Sr Jo Robson OCD, a very well know speaker on St Teresa, Fr Matt Blake OCD and six of the most experienced Secular Carmelite speakers. Already we have heard quite a few comments that echo, if less eloquently, what one of the members wrote in a previous year, 'It is one of the best, most beautiful and helpful talks I have ever heard... it has shifted something deep inside and changed my perspective of who I am and in whose presence I exist and who is waiting for who!'

The discussion after the talk is also an essential part of the programme, giving members a unique chance to follow St Teresa's advice to those who want to be people of prayer, that they should seek friendship and association with other persons having the same interest. For many of those attending, this is the first time they have been able to talk with others about their own prayer life and the joys and trials which everyone who practises prayer experiences. This is so important, that we are making the talks available only to the members of the Teresian Prayer Group, to use them as they are intended: and this also means that the speakers, knowing that they are talking to a committed and sympathetic group, can speak informally and in a more personal way than if they thought their talks would be broadcast to the world.

The members of the Teresian Prayer Groups are of two types and the talks are pitched at a level that caters for both. Firstly there are the Secular Carmelites, of whom we have about twenty over the four sessions; and secondly there are the interested parishioners or members of the public who have signed up for the year – people who are not complete beginners in prayer but who want to understand mental prayer or deepen their prayer lives. We have about thirty of them this year.

But the types of participant are not evenly distributed. Two of our four sessions are associated with an existing Secular Carmelite meeting, being held wholly or partially in the first hour of its normal meeting time. This makes it easy for the Secular Carmelites in that group to attend and receive a better formation in prayer than their own group could provide – and that session is also open to outsiders who, depending on numbers, may have their own small discussion group led by an experienced Secular, or else share in the discussion with the Seculars. The other two sessions are free-standing, aimed mainly at parishioners and outsiders, but which Seculars can also attend, mixing with them in the small discussion groups.

Our experience this year has been so good that we plan to use the same recorded talks – with the speakers' permission – in a 2022-23 programme with sessions at the Notting Hill Group meeting and possibly at another Secular Group, and at a North London parish. There's the possibility of another parish, but the parish-based sessions have to be well prepared by previous contact with the parish and by having one, or preferably two, senior Secular Carmelites able to lead the sessions. (In order not to leave the two parish-based groups at Kensington and Orpington high and dry, we will also organise a less structured 'year two' programme for them).

With the recorded talks already available and with the London experience to draw on, we are sure that there are Secular Carmelite groups outside London who would like to run a similar programme in 2022-23. If done in conjunction with a normal Secular Carmelite meeting, it is little extra work. If done as a freestanding session at a parish, there is more work involved, but the results we are seeing this year at Orpington show that it can be transformative, not only for the people involved, but for the parish as well.

If you'd like to find out more about starting a Teresian Prayer Group, I'd be delighted to help you, and there's also the possibility of outside help in running it during the year.

*Mark Courtney*

mark.courtney@oxon.org

## THE SEVEN SUNDAYS DEVOTION TO ST JOSEPH

*Thank you to Chantal Roxane Haigh for contributing this inspiring introduction to the Seven Sundays devotion. The full text of this devotion is available as a beautifully produced PDF on our website following the menu: **Reading >> Online Library >> Resources for Prayer - TB***

A devotion to St Joseph involving seven Sundays leading up to his feast day on 19<sup>th</sup> March has been written by María Pilar de la Iglesia, a Spanish theologian with a doctorate in Spiritual Theology from the Carmelite Pontifical faculty of the Teresianum in Rome. Though this devotional exercise began on 30<sup>th</sup> January this year, there will be another opportunity to begin on 15<sup>th</sup> March in time for 1<sup>st</sup> May, Feast of St Joseph the Worker.

The Seven Sundays to St Joseph comprise for each Sunday a biblical reading and a passage taken from St Teresa of Jesus' writings.



St Teresa of Jesus' had great devotion to St Joseph to whom she dedicated her first foundation in Avila and of the seventeen foundations fifteen bear his name Ávila, Medina del Campo, Malagón, Valladolid, Toledo, Pastrana, Salamanca, Segovia, Beas de Segura, Seville, Caravaca, Villanueva de la Jara, Palencia, Granada and Burgos. (The exceptions are Alba de Tormes, dedicated to Our Lady of the Anunciacion, where St Teresa of Jesus is buried and Soria, dedicated to the Blessed Trinity, though originally dedicated to Our Lady of the Villas).

The statue of St. Joseph in the Convent of the Incarnation, Avila - the statue which spoke to St. Teresa of Jesus

Teresa's devotion to St Joseph, though recorded with hindsight in Chapter 6 of the *Book of her Life*, began long before the foundations were made as she recounts 'how she took the glorious St Joseph for her mediator and advocate, and of the great good he did her' (L 6, 8) and a little later recommends that 'those who cannot find a

master to teach them prayer should take this glorious saint for their master, and they will not go astray' (L 6, 8).

Her desire is for all to know the great good this glorious saint can do in our lives 'Because of my impressive experience of the goods this glorious saint obtains from God, I had the desire to persuade all to be devoted to him. I have not known anyone truly devoted to him and rendering him special services who has not advanced more in virtue. For in a powerful way he benefits souls who recommend themselves to him. It seems to me that for some years now I have asked him for something on his feast day, and my petition is always granted'.

We can have no better injunction to seek the help of Jesus' own father on earth, who is the very first person in St Matthew's Gospel to welcome the Virgin Mary and Christ into his life, becoming the Earthly Trinity: 'An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife' [...]. When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him' thus showing utter faithfulness to the Word of God through his angels now and later.

Thus, Teresa tells us 'It is an amazing thing the great many favours God has granted me through the mediation of this blessed saint [...]. For with other saints it seems the Lord has given them grace to be of help in one need, whereas with this glorious saint I have experience that he helps in all our needs and that the Lord wants us to understand that just as He was subject to St Joseph on earth — for since bearing the title of father, being the Lord's tutor, Joseph could give the Child command — so in heaven God does whatever he commands' (L 6, 8).

St Teresa is told that 'St Joseph would keep watch over it (the convent) at one door and Our Lady at the other, that Christ would remain with us and that it would be a star shining with great splendour' (L 32-11).

Following the Year dedicated to St Joseph, this devotion may help us to call on this 'glorious saint' and seek his help in the spiritual life in all the trials we face, for testing tribulations as well as joys were not unknown to him.

This devotion completes a cycle of Novenas in preparation for the great feasts in the liturgical calendar, which María Pilar de la Iglesia began with the Novena to St Teresa of Jesus in October, 2016. Fr. Miguel Márquez, Superior General, who was Father Provincial for the Iberian peninsula at the time, granted it the *nihil obstat*.

The work as a whole can be seen as a gift which the Most Blessed Holy Trinity has bestowed on the whole Order, completed on the Feast of Epiphany of this year, in order to contribute to each one of us being able to prepare in the best way possible for the great celebrations of the liturgical year (Christmastide, Easter, Pentecost, the Blessed Trinity) or for the principal feasts days of the Order of Mount Carmel (Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St Joseph, St Teresa of Jesus, St John of the Cross and St Thérèse of the Child Jesus). Preparation is based on meditation on the Word of God, and the passages from the principal works of our Saints, so that we may be nourished and strengthened in the charism.

As the summit of our vocation is union with God, the Trinity, the novenas to our Doctors of the Church, St Teresa, St John and St Thérèse, the texts chosen reveal the spiritual journey they followed until they entered into the life of the Most Blessed Trinity, so that we may be encouraged to journey with resolute determination to be good soil so that the Lord will bring us into the mansion wherein dwells the Trinitarian God. The best way for this to happen is by imitating our holy Mother, St Teresa of Jesus, by calling on and allowing ourselves to be formed by the Virgin and St Joseph for they will prepare us in the best possible way so that life in the Holy Trinity may become a palpable reality in our lives, 'a star shining with great splendour' (This and the preceding paragraphs are taken from a letter María Pilar de la Iglesia sent to the friars, nuns and seculars to accompany the Devotion to St Joseph).



The altar statue of St Joseph in Segovia

St Teresa tells us that 'If the request is somewhat out of line, he rectifies it for my greater good' and in case we had any hesitation in seeking his help, she continues 'For I don't know how one can think about the Queen of Angels and about when she went through so much with the Infant Jesus without giving thanks to St Joseph for the good assistance he then provided them both with' (L 6, 8) and Our Lady told her that 'I made her very happy in serving the glorious St Joseph' (L 33, 14).

'On the feast of St Joseph, we reserved the Blessed Sacrament ... I did not want to enter except on the eve of the feast, secretly, and at night' (Foundations, 21, 5).

The only foundation where four Masses (the first by Julián de Avila and the second by St John of the Cross) were said on the day of the foundation - 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1574 - Feast day of St Joseph (Monasterio de San José del Carmen, p. 14).

The complete devotional book can be found in this link in various languages:

<https://carmeloteresajuan.wordpress.com/devocionario-con-textos-biblicos-liturgicos-santos-del-carmelo/>

Each document will print as an A5 booklet by choosing the booklet print option.

St Teresa of Jesus, pray for us.

Glorious St Joseph, pray for us.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pray for us.

*Chantal Roxane Haigh, Community of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Oxford*

## MOUNT CARMEL MAGAZINE

The first quarterly issue of *Mount Carmel* in 2022 has just dropped through the letterbox. It not only celebrates the fourth centenary of the canonisation of St Teresa of Jesus on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1622, just forty years after her death., but is also a special index issue for Volumes 35–69, Spring 1987 to December 2021. It is a very long time since an index has been offered, so this issue is well worth having.

In spite of the addition of an index, this January to March issue offers a range of delectable reading: Features (articles), ‘Companions for the Journey’, inspiration (quotations and poetry), News and Events, and Food for the Journey (book reviews). It is well worth the subscription of £24 p.a.

*Annette Goulden*

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

### Presidents’ Conference at Launde Abbey, 6-8 May 2022: booking arrangements

Participants can arrive between 3.00 and 6.00 pm. There will be afternoon tea at 3.30 pm on Friday and we will finish after lunch on Sunday.

Launde, an Augustinian priory before the Reformation, is now an Anglican retreat house and conference centre. There is plenty of space and beautiful, peaceful surroundings, with access to the chapel for daily mass and personal prayer. There is a shop, a book stall and a library.

All the bedrooms are en-suite, with hospitality trays, and are on the ground floor or accessible by lift. There are some dedicated, disabled-friendly bedrooms.

The expert chefs cater for all dietary needs, which Phyl will be requesting nearer the time.

Please see the Launde Abbey website [www.laundeabbey.org.uk](http://www.laundeabbey.org.uk) for more information and fine pictures of the grounds and accommodation. We are fortunate that Cyprian Blamires lives near Launde Abbey and can visit the site if needed.

The all-inclusive cost is £200, but please contact Phyl confidentially if this is more than you can afford. Cheques should be made payable to OCDS Jubilee Fund.

Payment can also be made by bank transfer to:      OCDS Jubilee Fund  
Sort Code: 30-95-41  
Account Number: 01358754

Please give your own name for reference so Phyl knows who has made the transfer.

If you prefer, you can pay by instalments of £50 per month from early December 2021 to March 6<sup>th</sup> 2022, by cheque or bank transfer.

To book your place, please contact Phyl Ibbs. She will need to know the final number by March 6<sup>th</sup> 2022. Her contact details are as follows:

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Phyllis Ibbs         | Tel: 01782 712164     |
| 2 Wooliscroft Avenue | phyllisibbs@gmail.com |
| May Bank             |                       |
| Newcastle            |                       |
| ST5 0NR              |                       |

## 2022 retreat for Secular Carmelites

Leader: Fr Matt Blake OCD 25<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> July

This year our retreat is at Aylesford Priory, Maidstone, Kent. It replaces the OCDS annual retreat which has customarily been held at Boars Hill Priory.

To book your place, please contact:

Cyprian Blamires  
130 Burnmill Rd  
Market Harborough  
LE16 7JG

01858 468224  
07714 651756

cpblamires@aol.com

The cost for single room occupancy for the full retreat is £315.00.

The cost for shared occupancy for the full retreat is £275.00 per person.

Payment to be made to OCDS Jubilee Fund, either by cheque sent to:

Phyllis Ibbs (see address above) or by bank transfer to:

OCDS Jubilee Fund  
Sort Code: 30-95-41  
Account number: 0135874

But – IMPORTANT – please give as the reference your surname followed by 'Aylesford' or if there is not space for this your surname followed by the letter 'A'.

## Retreats at Boars Hill 2022

Here is a summary kindly prepared for us by Annette Goulden. Fuller details are available on our website following the menu headings: **Enrichment >> CACS**

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Lenten Retreat: The Seven Last Words</b>   | <i>Carmelite Retreat Team</i>      |
| Mondays during Lent: Feb 28, March 7,14,21,28, April 4 & 11, 7-8 pm, online               |                                    |
| <b>Lenten Meditations with Poetry and Art</b>   | <i>Susan Muto and Lori McMahon</i> |
| March 15,22,29 & April 5, 7-9 pm, Zoom sessions   |                                    |
| <b>Weekend retreat:</b>   |                                    |
| <b>Ours were the sufferings he bore</b>   | <i>Fr Liam Finnerty</i>            |
| April 8-10, online/Priory   |                                    |
| <b>Seder meal</b>   | <i>Fr Alex</i>                     |
| April 13, 5-8.30 pm, online or in person  |                                    |
| <b>Easter Triduum: He is Risen!</b>   | <i>Carmelite Retreat Team</i>      |
| April 14-17, online/Priory  |                                    |
| <b>Weekend retreat:</b>   |                                    |
| <b>The breathing of the air – the Holy Spirit in the teaching of St John of the Cross</b> |                                    |
| May 13-15, online/Priory  | <i>Fr Matt Blake</i>               |
| <b>Contemplative weekend:</b>   |                                    |
| <b>Seeing with the eyes of the heart</b>  | <i>Audrey Hamilton</i>             |
| May 27-29, online/Priory  |                                    |
| <b>Weekend retreat: Pentecost, Romans 5:5</b>   | <i>Fr Liam Finnerty</i>            |
| June 3-5, online/Priory   |                                    |
| <b>Contemplative weekend:</b>   |                                    |
| <b>Listening to the voice of the heart</b>  | <i>Carmelite retreat team</i>      |
| June 24-26, online / Priory   |                                    |
| <b>Triduum for Our Lady of Mount Carmel:</b>  | <i>Fr Matt Blake and the</i>       |
| <b>Mary, the 'Perfect Mirror' of God's Glory</b>  | <i>Carmelite retreat team</i>      |
| July 13-16, online/Priory   |                                    |
| <b>Contemplative weekend: Resting in the Word</b>   | <i>Audrey Hamilton</i>             |
| July 22-24, online/Priory   |                                    |
| <b>Advent with the Prophets:</b>  |                                    |
| <b>embracing the mystery of Christmas</b>   | <i>Carmelite retreat team</i>      |
| Mondays in Advent: Nov 28, Dec 5, 12 & 19, 7-8.30 pm, online                              |                                    |
| <b>Advent with the angels:</b>  |                                    |
| <b>embracing the mystery of Christmas</b>   | <i>Carmelite retreat team</i>      |
| Weekend retreat, December 2-4, online/Priory  |                                    |
| <b>Advent retreat weekend:</b>  |                                    |
| <b>A new spring in spiritual freedom</b>  | <i>Fr Matt Blake</i>               |
| Dec 9-11, online / Priory   |                                    |
| <b>Also: In-person directed or private retreats, and online directed retreats</b>         |                                    |

## TALKING PHILOSOPHY: A CARMELITE PERSPECTIVE

### Reading and discussion Zoom group open to all

My name is Jane Horton. During 2019 I decided to read some of Edith Stein's writings and had not got very far when I realised it was going to be a challenge! I did a Politics and Philosophy degree many moons ago and vaguely recalled some of Edith's ideas but all had faded into a general mire, and I was distinctly rusty at grappling with complex (and logical!) thought.

Heather Ward, the Formation Director of our Carmelite Group, explained how Philosophy is actually a perfectly natural part of human experience, but one that we often feel is too difficult – sometimes simply because of the way writers (dare I say Edith?!) formulate ideas. In Heather's words:

In the French play, 'The Bourgeois Gentleman', a newly rich man wants to learn to be upper class: a gentleman. His freshly appointed tutor, hearing him speak, praises his use of prose, and he responds delightedly, 'To think I've been speaking prose all my life and didn't know it!'

I love this story because it shows how often we don't give names to what we do and how we can be influenced, for good or ill, by the names we do attach to what we do. It's like this, I think, with philosophy. All of us, at some time or other, ask ourselves: 'What's real?'; 'What's true or truth?'; 'How do I know it's real, or true?'; 'What's right?'; 'How do I know what's right?'. Children can sometimes ask, 'What happens to the world when I'm asleep: is it still there?'. These are all philosophical questions, but we don't often identify them as such: we don't realise 'I've been doing philosophy all my life' and get put off by the word 'philosophy', seeing it as something beyond us, or as nothing to do with actual life.

The answers given to these questions we ask, and many more, in their own day, helped to shape the way our Carmelite saints understood, and wrote about, their world and the human person. Our understanding of their teaching can be deepened and expanded when we come to appreciate how they heard and used the philosophy of their times. Such an appreciation may also help us to listen and respond to the philosophical ideas that can challenge or inform our communication of faith today.

James Hunter joined our Nottingham Secular group in April, 2020 and has a lot of experience in teaching both Theology and Philosophy in schools and as a Deacon, so he and I exchanged a few emails. From this (and the Covid communication revolution) came the idea of a Zoom group for Carmelites who would like to 'discover, grapple with, and ultimately conquer' (his words) some of the more philosophical Carmelite writers.

Here's an introduction by James:

I took my Final Promises, as a Secular Carmelite on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2008 with the ‘St Edith Stein’ Community in Derby.

During the course of my Diaconal ministry I have been promoting the practice of contemplative prayer to adults from all kinds of backgrounds and beliefs and been active in the Secular Discalced Carmelite Order. Whilst investigating St John of the Cross and St Edith Stein, amongst other writers, it seemed that their philosophical background was an important part of understanding their ideas: for example, the scholastic Thomism of St John of the Cross and St Edith Stein.

Similarly, when exploring the ‘Cloud of Unknowing’, the apophatic, or *via negativa* (ie praying without mental images) thinking of the Cloud author is clearly influenced by Denys the Areopagite, who also influences St John of the Cross and St Edith Stein.

Again, the faculty psychology (ie memory, understanding, will) language of St John of the Cross, St Teresa of Avila and St Edith Stein is influenced by the teaching of St Augustine, who, in turn, is much influenced by Plotinus, Philo and Plato.

All this made me wonder if it is time for us to offer a chance for Secular Carmelites, and anyone else who may be interested, to investigate the history of ideas, and the thinking and philosophical input which informs much of Carmelite mystical theology. This would be in a friendly, intimate, non-threatening group, assuming no previous knowledge, and also open to non-Carmelites, non-Catholics, Christians of any denomination, contemplative tradition or indeed anyone, of any faith or none.

Hence ‘Talking Philosophy: a Carmelite Perspective – reading and discussion Zoom group – open to all’ which we are suggesting as a way forward.

After wider consultation with Fr Yamai Bature OCD at Boars Hill, Oxford we have decided to start with ‘History of Philosophy’ materials to lay a broad, general foundation together, before moving on to Stein, etc.

### Reading list and further information

If you are new to Philosophy, the following are recommended. These books should all be available, either new and/or second-hand, from various booksellers, via Amazon UK or ABEBooks.

1. *Sophie’s World* (20th Anniversary Edition), Jostein Gaarder

An easy read from cover to cover it punches above its weight, providing a surprisingly comprehensive and insightful history of ideas with detailed index section at the back for quick reference. This is an international best-seller with over 40 million copies sold and translated into 60 languages!

2. *The Dead Philosophers’ Café*, Vittorio Hösle

A great introductory, and exploratory, exercise in the art of philosophical dialogue

3. *History of Western Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell

Slightly dated in parts, but remains a best-selling, accessible and sometimes witty and amusing reference work.

For the actual discussion group we shall be starting with the following two books together 'in parallel' which complement and support one another:

1. *A New History of Western Philosophy*, Anthony Kenny, 2021

Particularly good for group reading and discussion, by a leading philosopher, combining four of his previous books in one volume at a very competitive price! Takes us further into 20th/21st Century Philosophy than Bertrand Russell's book above.

2. *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, John Cottingham, 2021

By a leading Catholic philosopher, this is the best anthology on the market, covering in one volume the widest range of selected readings - and at a reasonable price.

As we finish using selected portions of the books above we shall then go on with the next two books, together 'in parallel', which likewise complement and support one another:

1. *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue*, Alasdair MacIntyre

By a leading Catholic philosopher who was actually converted through trying to explain the philosophical theology of Thomas Aquinas to sceptical students!

2. *A Short History of German Philosophy*, Vittorio Hösle

From the medieval mystical philosophy of Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa to the post WWII schools of German Philosophy including along the way Edith Stein and her contemporaries some of whom were particularly influenced by Meister Eckhart and the Rhineland mystics.

Again, as we finish using these we shall go on still further, with another two books and so on.

NB: Any e-book editions of the books we use should best be avoided as experience has shown that these are quite impractical for group work and research.

It is estimated that the four items of reading and discussion materials above, taken together, will last our 'Talking Philosophy' sessions anything from 18 to 24 months before going on to new material. So this will be good value and cheaper than comparable online courses but with no essays or course deadlines to meet! Also, members will take ownership of their reading and learning in dialogue together and build up a home library of philosophy to refer to again and again in future.

In the spirit of John Paul II's encyclical Faith and Reason a similar structure for a 'Talking Theology' session will subsequently be rolled out. The 'Talking Philosophy' sessions this year (2022) and onwards are normally, on 1st Wednesdays of each month and the 'Talking Theology' sessions will normally be on 3rd Wednesdays starting in February 2023. Both these two will meet monthly, in mutual support, from then on as one unified, Philosophy and Theology group. There will, of course, be allowances for occasional breaks and absences with an optional annual weekend residential conference including one or two guest speakers. This would afford an opportunity for members to gather together in the flesh to enjoy one another's company and to celebrate our shared interest!

For 'Talking Philosophy' apart from the cost of books for each member there will be an annual subscription of £10, due in May, towards the Zoom licence costs, etc. Our Zoom sessions are from 7.45pm, logging on, for an 8.00pm prompt start (with latecomers logging on when they can) and finishing promptly by 10.00pm. During February, March and April 2022, we are warming up with preliminary philosophical exercises and opening with the Kenny and Cottingham main texts, in May 2022.

We do hope you will join us! If you wish to enquire further, please contact us as follows:

James Hunter OCDS (Deacon): james.hunter200@btinternet.com

Jane Horton OCDS ('Holy Family', Norwich): janefhorton@gmail.com

Heather Ward OCDS (Formation Director, 'St Elizabeth of the Trinity', Nottingham): heatherward67@yahoo.com

Fr Yamai Bature OCD (Boars Hill, Oxford): fryamai@carmelite.org.uk

Tim Burton OCDS ('The Vine' editor and OCDS webmaster): carmel@kinabra.net

Fr Matt Blake OCD (Provincial Delegate): mblakebhill@yahoo.co.uk

## IN MEMORIAM: DORIS MOORE



Doris Moore, a loyal and long standing original member of Ealing OCDS sadly died on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021 aged 95 years old. Originally from Mauritius and eight children emigrated to England settling in Ealing London. She had one brother Doug whom she was very close to and always looked out for. They even managed a family holiday in Mauritius in 2019 before lockdown!

Doris was introduced to Carmelite Spirituality by a friend Lisa Cliff with whom she shared many pilgrimages to Liseux. She was an isolated Carmelite for some time until a secular order group was formed in Ealing which she joined sharing with Genevieve Pocas and Maria Nankivel leading with great spiritual depth and wisdom. Doris was described as generous and thoughtful of others and very much influenced by St Teresa of Avila's spirit of detachment which she lived. She finally made her definitive Promise in 1990.

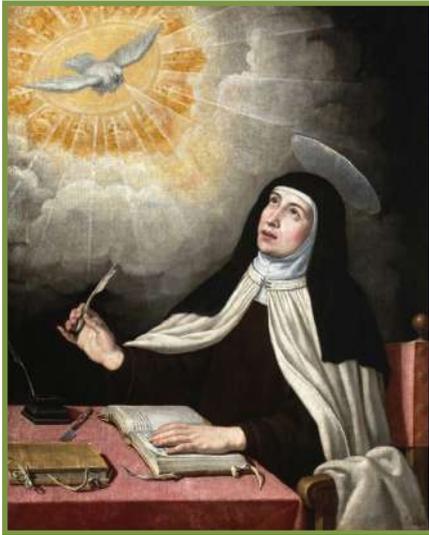
The group gradually expanded but remained small and continued to be guided by Doris's leadership and spirituality. She was truly a mother figure to all. As her health declined she remained very committed as the group finally met in her home and latterly via zoom!

Doris accepted her ill health and reduced mobility with great serenity which she radiated; even following a fall at Boars Hill where she fractured her hip! She was so loved by all and deeply mourned when she died at home. A very moving funeral was held at Ealing Abbey followed by burial in her homeland Mauritius.

Rest in Peace Doris. You will always be fondly remembered.'

*Betty O'Sullivan, Ealing OCDS*

## FOUR HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CANONISATION OF ST TERESA: 12 MARCH 2020



*The Diocese of Avila kindly provides the following news and image. - TB*

Following the request made by Bishop Gil Tamayo to the Holy Father, Pope Francis has granted the Diocese of Ávila a Jubilee Year on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the Canonization of Saint Teresa of Jesus. Uniquely, this jubilee will extend from March 12, 2022 to October 15, 2023 (a year and a half) because it also joins a customary Teresian Jubilee Year.

The solemn opening of the Jubilee will take place on Sunday, March 13, at a eucharist in the church of the convent of Santa Teresa de Jesús. Pilgrims to this church will then be able to obtain a Plenary Indulgence with the

usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff).

The Diocese of Ávila has said: ‘We want to thank God and the Holy Father for this extraordinary grace that he has just granted us, which will help us to continue to come even closer to the spiritual greatness of Saint Teresa of Jesus. Our saint is a focal point for all Christians, inviting us to heed Christ’s command: “be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect”’.

## POET’S CORNER

Around about the time of Christmas twenty nineteen  
Strange things were happening on the Chinese scene.  
Some sort of virus they said had occurred  
Was this true or something we had just heard?

From where it originated they were not sure  
But no worries, it won’t come to our door.  
Then the daily news became worse and worse  
And we too had been struck by this deadly curse.

What will it mean we were asking ourselves  
To discover it meant no food on the shelves.  
It felt like the war as we got in the queue  
Not just food missing but toilet rolls too.

If a headache occurred it was just too bad  
As remedies to cure it could not be had.  
Use anti-bacterial gel we were told  
But none in the shops was there to be sold.

The wearing of masks was becoming a habit  
If you saw a packet you needed to grab it.  
They say wash your hands to 'happy birthday' twice  
Whereas one Hail Mary was much better advice.

The virus was creeping nearer and nearer  
And essentials in the shops were dearer and dearer.  
The Prime Minister seemed to have a permanent frown  
No wonder as our country went into lockdown.

Our lives were thrown into complete disarray  
But nothing prevents us from stopping to pray.  
Churches were closed and our meetings ended  
But we as Carmelites carried on as intended.

We could say the Divine Office as before  
And used our technology skills a lot more.  
There were plenty of online Masses to hear  
Press the wrong button though and they soon disappear.

In the Catholic Church there was no doom and gloom  
As our Parish Priests had learnt how to zoom.  
Father Matt kindly kept us in the know  
With his wonderful talks many weeks in a row.

Prayer requests were coming thick and fast  
Much more than they had in the past.  
We could pray more now as we had the time  
Then the phone would ring, it was Amazon Prime!

We made plans to meet up on the 3rd July  
But on the lifting of lockdown we did rely.  
As true Carmelites we always find a way  
All we had to do was change the day.

At long last this day has arrived  
So no longer do we feel deprived.  
To be together is so important to use  
But like Saint Teresa we prefer no fuss.

*Barbara Smith*



**Catholic National Shrine  
of Our Lady, Walsingham**

# **Carmelite Pilgrimage**

## **Saturday 25 June 2022**

### **Timetable for the day**

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>11am</b>    | <b>Talk by Fr Matt Blake OCD<br/>(Chapel of Reconciliation)</b>                   |
| <b>12 noon</b> | <b>Pilgrims' Mass (Chapel of Reconciliation)</b>                                  |
| <b>1-2pm</b>   | <b>Picnic lunch in grounds of the Shrine</b>                                      |
| <b>2pm</b>     | <b>Silent procession to the Church of the<br/>Annunciation Walsingham Village</b> |
| <b>3pm</b>     | <b>Exposition and Benediction at the Church<br/>of the Annunciation</b>           |
| <b>4pm</b>     | <b>Depart</b>   |

**All Welcome**

**For further information email [jpmacinnnes@gmail.com](mailto:jpmacinnnes@gmail.com)**