



# The **VINE**



June 2023

News from the Secular Disalced Carmelite Community in England and Wales



# FROM OUR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

## Carmel in Waiting

Dear Fellow Carmelites,

In the eventful last three months, we have seen the Coronation of King Charles and his Consort, Queen Camilla. Camilla has scrapped ladies-in-waiting, preferring to have 'companions', but Queen Elizabeth had a band of these friends, loyal, unpaid, who helped her fulfil her vocation in many practical ways.

They were friends in-waiting for the Queen's particular needs, their eyes on the hand of their mistress. We are reminded of Psalm 123, a cry for help, a pilgrimage:

*To you have I lifted up my eyes,  
you who dwell in the heavens:  
my eyes like the eyes of slaves  
on the hand of their lords.*

*Like the eyes of a servant  
on the hand of her mistress,  
so our eyes are on the Lord our God  
till he shows us his mercy.*

Waiting is difficult, for the end is not in sight; it is unknown. 'Are we there yet?' children repeatedly ask towards the end of a long journey. We ask the same, have we arrived yet? But it is an ongoing pilgrimage in this life: we never arrive, and 'there' is unknown. At this season, the disciples were waiting in the upper room, but they did not know when or how the Holy Spirit would come. They only knew that Jesus, now wafted from their sight, would send them the Paraclete.

As Carmelites, we wait in prayer and patience, completely trusting that God cares for us and will answer our needs and the needs of our traumatised world. We hear the cry for vocations for our nuns and friars, we experience challenges in our own communities, we lose the impetus to carry on, and Jesus says, 'it is not for you to know ... just wait'. A waiting person is one who is still, who is listening, who lives in hope, who keeps eyes on the hand of God, who keeps enough oil for the lamp to be lit when the Bridegroom arrives.

As I write this, the friars are attending their triennial Provincial Chapter in Derry. We pray with hope and confidence that the Holy Spirit will guide their decisions and plans for the next three years. We pray for Fr Jim Noonan, our newly elected Provincial General, and thank Fr John Grennan, our previous Provincial, who has asked me to make his Chapter report available to all the Seculars\*. It gives a lot of information about our friars, and you will see that they are making a concerted effort to engage with young people and support new vocations to the Order. Both his and my Chapter Reports are available from your Regional Representative. We thank our Representatives for their nurturing, listening and helping role in supporting our communities. Also, we thank our registrar, treasurer, secretaries, archivist, Vine and website editor and, not least, Fr Matt, who work quietly and humbly in service of our Order.

Over the next three years, as a Teresian Order of friars, nuns and seculars, may we be united in our prayer and patience, waiting together for the power of the Holy Spirit, promised to those disciples two thousand years ago.

Where impatience and rush and anxiety about the future is all around us, let us be Carmel-in-waiting on behalf of the world.

Wishing you every blessing of the Holy Spirit,

*Annette*

\* Click [here](#) to link to a copy of the report on our website, or visit the For Seculars page. Fr Willie Moran, reported as seriously ill, died peacefully on 24 May



## NOTES FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

The National Council met online for its quarterly meeting on 17 May.

We had reports from Phyllis Ibbs, the Treasurer who told us that significant contributions had been made to the new Retreat Fund but as yet no claims have been made against it.

She reminded us of the need for groups to contribute to the Jubilee Fund; most had already made their contribution but a few had still to submit theirs.

Tim Burton, the Webmaster described the various recent additions to the website, including the study guides to the writings of St Thérèse which all three branches of the Order have been encouraged to read over the next couple of years in the run-up to the centenary of Thérèse's canonisation.

Annette Goulden, our National President, introduced the topic of Secular Retreats by remarking on the high numbers of Seculars who have signed up to attend one this year. The Retreats at Ampleforth and Wistaston are now fully booked but there is still availability at Aylesford in July. There is also a one-day non-residential retreat at Kensington Priory, Saturday 21 October (note: this is a change from the originally proposed date) and a two-day non-residential retreat at the House of Prayer, East Molesey (near Hampton Court, SW London), Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 September.

Given the popularity of this year's Retreats and the limited number of Retreat Centres, we spent some time discussing what might be the best arrangements for next year: weekends or weekdays, school holidays or not, accessibility to as many as possible regardless of geography. Details are provided at the end of this issue.

But before that, we have the Annual Carmelite Pilgrimage to the National Shrine to Our Lady of Walsingham on Saturday 24 June. At 11am Fr Matt will give a talk at the Chapel of Reconciliation. Last year EWTN happened be recording the Pilgrims Mass along with Fr Matt's talk, so it was ensured a worldwide audience!

The Council meets again in July so if there is anything you think we should be considering please do get in touch with your Regional Rep.

*Joan MacInnes*

## NORTH-EAST REGIONAL DAY 3RD JUNE

The following talk was led by Fr. Matt Blake OCD at our regional day at the Carmel convent in Wetherby on Saturday, 3rd June.

Fr Matt started by making reference to St. Simon Stock in order to examine what Carmel is. He recounted how St. Simon Stock's relics had arrived in Kensington in May 1864 following the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy, and there followed a huge procession in the streets of London, led by Cardinal Wiseman, who acknowledged the importance of the Carmelite order. Fr. Matt pointed out that St. Simon Stock symbolised the restoration of a spirituality from a former golden age, which offered new hope to Catholics in England who had suffered oppression for several centuries. The Carmelites have always brought enrichment to the Church wherever they went and provide a rich heritage and wisdom. When Fr. Hermann Cohen came to England in 1864, he brought with him not just this saint's relic, but also the much-needed spirituality that he symbolised. St. Simon Stock is also linked with the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and his relics in Salamanca, Bologna and Paris are associated with other universities in the medieval world which were originally established by religious orders. His influence, and that of the Carmelite order, within education is widely acknowledged.

Following Vatican II it seems that there had been mixed views about St. Simon Stock as to whether he had existed at all, and at one point he was removed from the saint's calendar, although later reinstated. What is obvious is that he is the representative of the Carmelites from Mount Carmel who lived and spread this tradition, which is so important and life giving to us. The mountain itself carries so much symbolism and it is a place of theophanies where God has made himself known.

The first book of Kings recounts the stories of Elijah overcoming the prophets of Baal who represented the false gods of the Phoenicians. Elijah was a prophet of prayer who maintained a close relationship with God through his complete trust in him. However, most Carmelite names of that period are not known because they did not want personal recognition. They bore witness during a time of persecution, particularly during the crusades, and wanted simply, in anonymity, to give glory to God. They subsequently left Carmel

and came to Europe and found themselves in towns and cities where they grew rapidly, by meeting the needs of the people in various ways through ministry and work in schools and hospitals. They naturally complemented the established Franciscan and Dominican mendicant orders and provided much needed urban support which the Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries were unable to meet from their rural locations. Of primary importance from this early period was their devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, who interestingly, after much recent research, is placed second only to the devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes.

Despite, in some cases, a lack of factual evidence to support certain beliefs, legends can convey truth. When Elijah saw a cloud the size of a hand appearing in the sky following a drought of more than three and a half years, some have suggested that in the cloud was an image of Mary holding the baby Jesus.

Truth can originate from the faith of people and it is not controversial to suggest that Mary intercedes on behalf of the faithful in times of great need, whether these signs actually took place or not. Certainly St. Simon Stock is associated with a deep devotion to Our Lady and many churches and schools across the world are also associated with him, and we are a part of this rich tradition.

How can we explain Carmelite spirituality? It is a language of the soul and a language of the Spirit. When asked who is our founder by other established religious orders in the thirteenth century such as the Franciscans and Dominicans, the Carmelites could not lay claim to Elijah in a historical sense, some fifteen centuries before Christ, but we could recognise him as our patron on a spiritual level.

On a mountain linked to Elijah, Carmel was founded next to a spring which he established and his story is related to us through his devotion to prayer. An illustration of this connection we share with this important prophet is exemplified by Edith Stein, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, who, after reading the life of St. Teresa of Avila, exclaimed 'This is the Truth' because through this work she discovered who she was at the deepest level because she realised that she was actually reading about herself. What her heart had been searching for was in St. Teresa's story, and the same is true of the first Carmelites who studied

Elijah, because our founder also bore witness to this spirituality.

Both St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross regard Elijah as our holy father and also adopted Mary by incorporating her important spiritual role and example within the lives of the early Carmelites. Mary is regarded as our Patron in the same way as in feudal times, when the people belonged to their patron through agreement and structure. She is also regarded as our mother because she nurtures us and looks after her family, providing us with protection and a deep sense of identity. Mary is also our sister because she is one of us and our relationship with her has grown ever closer and deeper over time.

The Spirit is moving ahead of the Church in many ways and the Church often simply approves what it is already doing. There are indeed signs of hope for the future as people respond to the inner searching of their souls and choose to adopt the depth and beauty of Carmel.

Mount Carmel is our heritage and it can be made present everywhere because God is everywhere. The power of the message of Carmel is represented by those dedicated followers who have been formed through its Spirit, adapting constantly in a changing and challenging world, in order to make God's presence known by all of God's children.

*Brian Dunleavy  
Darlington Secular Carmelite Group*

## WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL DAY

**Our regional day was held on Saturday 25th March at the Carmelite Monastery in Wolverhampton.**

We gathered in the lovely peaceful setting of the Carmel. The day started with half an hour of Exposition in the beautiful chapel, followed by Fr. Matt Blake's talk. As it was the Feast of the Annunciation, Fr Matt based his talk on the place of Mary in the Carmelite Order. He explained how the titles, Mother, Sister and Patron describe how the order sees Mary.

Fr. Matt went on to speak about Mary as 'Our Lady of Mount Carmel.' This title shows us that Mary is a meeting place between God and man, and also that, like Elijah, Mary is a prophet. The

Annunciation follows the formula of the call of the prophets and in Mary, the Word of God is conceived and becomes man. She is the one who brings us to the true Holy Mountain who is Jesus and shows us how to have a right relationship with him.

Fr Matt also mentioned the attitude of St Teresa and St John of the Cross to Mary. Neither give a long teaching on Mary but her influence is taken for granted. Fr. Matt finished by reminding us that our Constitutions give us a good description of the importance of Mary to Carmelites.

After lunch, Annette Goulden commented that Phyl Ibbs, the Regional Representative, who could not be with us, sent her love and wishes for a successful meeting.

Annette spoke about the parents of St Thérèse, Zélie and Louis Martin, and focussed on the losses that Thérèse encountered in her short life, for example, the loss of her mother when she was three, and the loss of her elder sisters Pauline and Marie to Carmel. There were many more losses culminating in the loss of her faith at the end of her life. Annette pointed out that through these losses, Thérèse learnt to trust and wait on God, this is an example to us.

Cyprian Blamires summarised some of the positive developments happening, some as a 'follow on' from the use of 'Zoom,' (or others methods) of holding virtual meetings during the pandemic. This has enabled people who are not able to physically get to group meetings to attend. Secular groups have been founded in parishes, and one of the groups who met in Boars Hill now meet in a new conference hall in Northampton.

Cyprian commented that there is now a 'Retreat Fund.' Anyone requiring help should contact Phyl Ibbs.



The day finished with Holy Mass, celebrating the Feast of the Annunciation, during which Diane Wildheart, (Worcester) and Colin Parsons, (Welshpool) were admitted into Formation; and Nicola Hunt and David Seager (Wolverhampton) and Jane Little (Worcester) made their Final Promises - pictured.

Very many thanks go to Mother Bernadette and the Community for their hospitality. A special thank you to Sr. Marie Thérèse, the Extern Sister, who provided us with plentiful refreshments, and general care and attention.

Sue Andrews

## EAST ANGLIA REGIONAL DAY

The communities of East Anglia came together at Quidenham Carmel for the Feast of the Annunciation in Lent. For the first time since the pandemic, the Parlour was full of Seculars from across East Anglia meeting up with old friends and finding new ones. Our Lent days are a little different from the Regional Day in that Fr Matt isn't with us and this time we didn't have anyone making Promises but with the celebration of the Mass at the centre of the day, around it we did have some very thoughtful talks from two Seculars, Jane Nicholson and Tim Burton and also a talk from Sr Stephanie who is the Prioress at Quidenham.

Jane writes icons and so she spoke about the icon made by the Malachite Sisters of the Annunciation for St Teresa's Quincentenary. She described how to read the icon which depicts Teresa's teaching on prayer through to the Seventh Dwelling Place as God gradually takes over and the soul experiences peace and reconciliation. The outside walls which resemble the walls of Avila contain the areas where the work of God takes place within the soul, depicted by the Four Waters of Prayer described in *The Life*. It also indicates the desert landscape of the early Carmelites and a tiny cloud which signifies the presence of Our Lady. St Joseph is clearly seen too as are the words of Teresa's Bookmark prayer which she holds in her hand.

Tim followed on with a reflection on Art in prayer; but whereas reading an icon is intended to draw us into prayer, some art can be a drawback. Art is directly involved in beauty, goodness and truth therefore serious art is pursuing truth. St Thérèse reflected this thought when she said 'All I was trying to do is to pursue

the truth.' However, not all art is beautiful -

some can be disturbing eg some of Goya's works or TS Elliot's poetry, we might find the depiction of the Passion disturbing. St John of the Cross warns against false art but the Catholic tradition validates art and properly used can be a reflection of theology - a starting point not an end point. As examples we might take St Bonaventure's description of St Francis, the poetry of St John of the Cross or the writings of St Teresa.

In the afternoon, Sr Stephanie chose to share her thoughts on the Rosary and Carmel, specifically The Rule of Albert and the Joyful Mysteries. Beginning with the Annunciation she described how Mary's consent is real, accepting and hoping for fulfilment with her whole mind, body and soul. She may have lost her place and standing in society but gained inner freedom which is what our Rule leads us towards.

At the Visitation, Elizabeth and John welcomed Mary with a mutual respect. The Rule, with its numerous mentions of brothers/community encourages like-minded people to see God in each other as God-bearers and God-receivers.

Everyone who came to worship at the Nativity came as strangers and put down root as people of hope: St Teresa tells us we must all be friends, in St John's Gospel, Jesus says 'I call you friends'. The Rule does not want anyone to stay on the fringes of our Carmelite life.

The Presentation in the Temple introduces us to Simeon and Anna who have spent their lives watching and waiting for the Lord. In a similar way, The Rule requires that we should ponder the law of the Lord night and day. Which leads us to the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple where his parents observe Him listening and questioning which is also fundamental to our rule, listening together to holy Scripture and discussing matters of discipline and spiritual welfare.

Sr Stephanie concluded with the observation that what we receive from our initial period of Formation is the aptitude to keep on learning from our experiences through reflection, study, discussion and open conversations with each other.

*Joan MacInnes*

## LONDON REGIONAL DAY, 29 APRIL 2023

April 29th 2023 was a special day for us Discalced Carmelites, being the hundredth anniversary of the beatification of St Thérèse of Lisieux. It was also the feast day of St Catherine of Siena. In his talk to us in the morning and during his sermon at Mass, Fr Matt drew sympathetic comparisons between them, outlining their great influence in the centuries in which they lived and their continuing inspiration for the whole Church, which has been emphasised by their declaration as Doctors of the Church: by Pope Paul VI in 1970 for St Catherine; by Pope John Paul II in 1997 for St Thérèse. (This makes them two of the four women Doctors of the Church - St Teresa of Avila was the first, a week before St Catherine in 1970; and St Hildegard of Bingen was the most recent in 2015. St Catherine, who was a Dominican Tertiary, is also, as Fr Matt remarked, the only layperson so far to have been declared a Doctor of the Church).

As well as the opportunity for quiet meditation, there was a variety of activities for people to choose from in the afternoon, and a large number chose to attend a forty-minute discussion on formation at which the focus was on hearing what those in formation felt they wanted, and the formators were in listening mode. The discussion could only skim the surface, but there were some useful new perspectives about the content of formation, as well as a discussion on mentoring and individual formation where the practices in some groups provided ideas on which other groups will build.

The regional day was also special in welcoming so many into our Order. The Notting Hill group was prominent, with Gary O'Mahoney, Roseleen Cowie and Thabo Nathan making their First promise and Valerie Ludwik her Final promise, and Maria Schafer being received into formation. Also having the joy of making their Carmelite promises were Abundia Munar (Kensington Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Teresa, Final promise) and Audrey Hamilton (Notting Hill, First promise). And the South London community had three members for reception into formation: David Ahmed and Joanelle Candido were received on the day, while Carolyn Gamerston, who was too ill to travel, had permission to be received into formation at a small ceremony at her home later.



## ST ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY COMMUNITY, NOTTINGHAM

It seems a long time since we provided any news so what follows covers a longer than usual stretch of our community life.

Throughout lockdown we'd been able to use Zoom to continue with a full monthly meeting and also those who were able to met every Friday morning for Morning Prayer. We went ahead with an alternative Zoom version of our annual retreat on the Rule of St Albert. It was then a great joy to be able to begin meeting again in a new home, as the church hall we'd previously moved to remained closed. We now meet in a church and hall in a suburb just a few miles outside the city and even better served by public transport.

Last year marked an important milestone for us, when five members from Lincolnshire left to form the St John of the Cross group in Lincoln, so that we now have an OCDS presence in three of the four main counties of the diocese and I think I'm right that Cyprian Blamires is working hard at developing a group for Leicestershire, too.

We have said some farewells. One of our younger members left to enter Notting Hill Carmel and received the habit in July last year; one of our councillors moved to East Anglia and has transferred to the Norwich group. We have said a welcome, too, to Maria who transferred to us from the Ealing group when she moved to Nottingham; in final promises Maria was a member of the first group to complete our spiritual direction formation programme at Boars Hill. Over this period two of our members made their First Promise, more recently another her Definitive Promise and three people were received for formation, although one quite quickly discerned that his calling was elsewhere. In this last month we've also welcomed a new enquirer.

Last year we led a retreat day *With Jesus in the Desert - exploring His temptations and ours* just before Lent and were pleased to attract 16 people, considering how very difficult communication with parishes had become. This year the diocese was offering several events so we didn't think it right to compete.

For the last two years, as our usual retreat centre was still closed, we had an overnight booking at a local Christian conference centre. For the first we used YouTube videos on desert spirituality and Brant Pitre on the *Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*;

these really offered high quality input. Last year we returned in Lent but jointly with the St Edith Stein community in Derby; we looked at what it means to be *Secular Carmelites*, how do we live our rule and promises in daily life? This year we joined together there again, with a focus on St Thérèse. In both years a retired priest celebrated Sunday Mass for us. Last summer some of us, from both Nottingham and Lincolnshire also managed a totally silent, self-catering retreat with the Benedictine monks of Christ our Saviour Monastery in Turvey. There are just two of them now; their hospitality was tremendous, warm and unobtrusive. Since then, dear brother Herbert, aged 105 years, has died but Fr John continues and we hope to return later in the year.

Although we were grateful to be able to use the conference centre this year we really felt the absence of a chapel and other places for quiet and reflection. The Hayes is true to its name and so is great for conferences, but we decided to return next year to Buckden Towers, which now runs on a self-catering basis.

For several reasons our outreach groups ended with lockdown; we've felt a need to do things a little differently now, so that meetings are more definitely a place for spiritual conversation rather than simply discussion. Previously we'd been reading together either whole Carmelite works like *The Way of Perfection* or *The Practice of the Presence of God* or thematic extracts from our saints like Marc Foley's *Ascent to Joy*, on John of the Cross or John Nelson's *The Arms of Love*, on St Thérèse. This time we're widening the perspective and exploring the basics of *Prayer of the Heart* using an introduction from Bishop Hugh Gilbert, former Abbot of Pluscarden, followed by a booklet from a late Carthusian prior (translated by Bishop Erik Varden). Throughout each month group members have just one short section with its biblical references to ponder/pray on; at the meeting there's an opportunity to share any reflections that have come out of any of this. There's then a time of silent prayer in which each person dwells with the phrase or image that has emerged over the month.

This past year members of our community have been, or are still, experiencing severe, sometimes life-endangering, illness or heart-breaking family crisis. The words of Julian of Norwich seem to apply '*He did not say, you will not be tempestated; he did not say, you will not be travailed; but he did say, you will not be overcome.*'

## OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND ST. TERESA COMMUNITY, KENSINGTON

Saturday 29th April 2023, the London regional day, happily coincided with the 100th anniversary of the Beatification of St Thérèse of Lisieux and the feast day of St. Catherine of Siena, a Lay Dominican. On this same day, our community joyfully celebrated as Abundia Toledo Munar made her Definitive Promise, during the mass at the Carmelite Priory.

Our community was also delighted by a visit from former president Michael Ionta.

*Caroline Moutell*

## HOLY TRINITY NOTTING HILL

*Holy Trinity President Teresa Lynch writes:*

We were fortunate to have a beautiful day for Audrey Hamilton's first Promise made on 29 April at our regional day in Kensington.

Please see the photos (below) of Audrey Hamilton.



## OCDS BOOKLETS

The Constitutions, Ratio Institutionis and OCDS leaflets are available from Annette Goulden. Please email [annette@goulden.co.uk](mailto:annette@goulden.co.uk)

Cyprian Blamires also has copies of the Constitutions and Ratio.

Constitutions £4.00 plus postage  
Ratio £1.00 plus postage  
Leaflets free: postage only

You can view the leaflet by clicking on the link below or visiting the 'For Seculars' page on our website. It was designed and printed by the National Council in 2014, so any suggestions for designing a new leaflet would be welcome.

[Carmel Leaflet](#)

## A SHOWER OF ROSES

*Roxane Haigh writes:*

A Discalced Carmelite Secular Community in Spain is now offering a daily message from St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus with a short commentary, no more than three or four lines, to go out on WhatsApp +4407988112388 A SHOWER OF ROSES, though email is also possible.

The messages have been sent out in Spanish for three or four years now and many graces have been received. This was the message for the feast of St Joseph, for example.

St. Joseph always responded to divine graces and it never seemed too hard to him to do the Will of God. What an example of faith St. Joseph gives us! Barely had the angel spoken to him than he fled with Jesus and Mary, he got up and set out on the journey.

St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus (Other Texts, March 1886)

St. Joseph lived a very normal life, like yours...but full of faith, in surrender to God. Ever ready to obey, beyond the securities life offers us ...

Today, Thérèse is inviting you to take St. Joseph as your model, trusting fully in God, being obedient to his will. What things do you find hard to accept in your life at the moment? What securities would you find hard to let go of? 'Get up and go', like Joseph.

ALL IS GRACE

Discalced Carmelite Secular Community of 'St. Teresa of Jesus', Plaza de España, Madrid



## A HISTORY OF THE BLESSED MARIE EUGÈNE COMMUNITY, BOARS HILL (17 JUNE 2017 – 4 MARCH 2023)

In June 2017, Barbara Thacker sent this notice for *The Vine*: The St. Elijah Community, Boars Hill, is proud to announce that ‘We so large have grown, that we have produced an offshoot which will be meeting on its own!’

Six of our well-loved members have left us to start the first Saturday meeting at Boars Hill, and this week we had our first meeting without them.”

A couple of months earlier, during the St Elijah community meeting, after a year of prayer and discernment, someone said she had packed her bags, no, not leaving Carmel for good as everyone thought, but ready to go and form a new community. During my final meeting with St Elijah, Brian, Carol, Roddy and Steve stood up too, ready to leave. It all took place so so gently that you could tell the Holy Spirit inspired this, and so we said farewell to fellow travellers to go and form a new community of Secular Carmelites. David who calls himself my twin (we made our first and final promises on the same days), believing that I would be alone, gallantly volunteered to come too but could see for himself that it would not be necessary.

We were officially announced and blessed by Fr Matt in June 2017 during a retreat on Blessed Marie-Eugène. Sylvia joined us that day, transferring from the Leeds community. This was followed by a picnic and a walk to the gate symbolising being led by the Shepherd onto a new path.

In July we had our first community meeting. We had no name nor mission. We wondered what these could be. Fr Matt came to talk to us and explained how a temporary council can be formed, and rules can be broken in the Spirit of St Teresa and John of the Cross.

In August we agreed that our name had to be: Blessed Marie-Eugène of the Child Jesus

In September, Maria joined us and we started our first study: 15 days of prayer with Blessed Marie-Eugène. Barbara joined us in October,

In September 2018 Roddy moved to Scotland but remained a member until transferring to another community a year later.

In January 2019 Odile Rimbart, a member of Notre Dame de Vie, visited us. This helped us choose the next study: *I want to see God*. An informal council was formed in May and Imogen came to meet us in December, officially joining us in January.

From April 2020 until July of the following year, we met on Skype due to covid.

Solange joined us via Skype in August 2020 and admirably so for another year before finally meeting the community in person.

Throughout 2021 we just continued to grow quietly.

Vivien transferred to our community from Washington DC in January 2022. In February we finished our study of “I want to see God” after 3 years. We all found it difficult, but grew more deeply, occasionally living out in ourselves the theme of a particular topic.

In March, we had our first retreat day, going off in pairs getting to know one another.

In April, we started the study of St Teresa’s Life and The Rule and Constitutions

During the OCDS national presidents retreat at Launde Abbey, the importance of becoming Canonically Established was explained and it confirmed for me that the time had come.

This process was started in October. That same month Sandra came to meet the community.

And in January 2023, the confirmation from Rome was received and here we are!

Today, 4 March 2023, day of the Canonical Establishment of the Blessed Marie Eugène community.

In preparation for this day, various Novenas have been offered, one of which was to St Joseph, and one to Blessed Marie Eugène using the Novena prepared by Notre Dame de Vie in anticipation of his Beatification. I cannot think of anything more fitting. Our Lady and Blessed Marie Eugène pray for us!

I would like to thank Fr Matt for his spiritual support and advice throughout this time, as well as Annette and Cyprian for their regular visits and support, and to the St Elijah community for their sacrifice and prayers, as well as fellow Secular Carmelites and the friars for their prayers and support too.

We started with six, now 12 when Philip comes to visit as enquirer next month.

We will have our first elections in June and form a new council.

## Tomorrow

Our hopes and dreams: I am not sure what they are yet, perhaps we jointly know, ... I feel that we are like a canvass, a tapestry being woven and one day, its unique image will be made quite clear. I hope for now that we will remain constantly changing, always flexible, always allowing ourselves to be transformed. I hope all will be friends, loving and serving each other, Carmel and the Church ever more deeply.

Already three years ago, as we studied *I want to see God* chapter called 'At the point of departure', I deeply felt this extract (taken from page 166 3rd para.) would be our motto, our drive and our mission when we became Canonically Established:

*"I want to see God!" the child Teresa had exclaimed. And this was not a passing whim, the sigh of a moment of fervour; it was the aspiration of her whole soul, the passion of her entire life, the longing that dominated all of her spiritual attitudes. Moreover, perfection consists in being perfectly united with God, our end. Hence, the realistic logic of the Saint, teaching others the way of sanctity, imposes on the soul from the beginning, as its first attitude and first movement, the need of tending to Him with whatever modest strength it can dispose of. The quest for God must guide its steps and inspire all its actions."*

So now, Teresa's sons and daughters, the members of the Blessed Marie Eugène community here today, I hope you will agree and exclaim with me: "We want to see God, and this is not a passing whim nor the sigh of a moment of fervour; it is the aspiration of our whole souls, the passion of our entire lives, the longing that dominates all of our spiritual attitudes, we want to be perfectly united with God, our end... our first attitude and first movement is the need of tending to Him with whatever modest strength we dispose of. This quest for God must guide our steps and guide all our actions.

Well, if we are not there yet, we can at least try, we have nothing to lose!

In summary, we want to see God, and we are going to help each other grow and very quickly become Saints. And just in case our good God agrees, I hope your bags are packed!

## Now

Now it's time to go and celebrate. My hope is that you will join us and my dream is that we will have a jolly good time, and maybe later, we will take a little walk to the gate...

*Armelle Belcher OCDS*



*Canonical Establishment of the Blessed Marie Eugène OCDS community on 4 March 2023.*



*On the same day, Imogen made her 1st Promise and Maria made her Final Promise.*





*AND 2 birthdays that day too: Vivien and Sandra, watched over by St John of the Cross!*



*AND we did walk to the gate to mark a new beginning, again!*

### Postscript

On 13 May 2023, another very special day for our community, with Solange who made her 1st promise and Sandra who was received into formation.

Unlike all previous times, it was Fr John Hughes OCD who received these as Fr Matt was unable to attend.

Next to Sandra are recently arrived from India, Fr Nicholas Macedon OCD, and next to him, Fr Ernie Montuerto OCD, from the Philippines.

They joined us in the conference room, along with Fr Kelvin, Brothers John Bosco and Emmanuel, and Sandra's friends and children for lunch, loud and joyful chats, and a very large Carmelite cake which could not be finished but swiftly and gladly transported to the priory for further consumption...





### BOOKINGS FOR SECULAR RETREATS IN 2024

#### Kairos Centre

Friday 31 May to Sunday 2 June 18 rooms

Organiser: Mark Courtney

#### Ampleforth

Monday 15 July to Friday 19 July 29 rooms

Organiser: Mary Farrell

#### Aylesford

Monday 22 to Thursday 25 July

Organiser: Cyprian Blamires

#### Wistaston

Friday July 26 to Sunday 28 July 27 rooms

Organiser: Annette Goulden

#### The Briery, Ilkley

September 13 - 15 25 rooms

Organiser: Mary Farrell

The Briery team are Sisters of the Cross and Passion. There is going to be an increase in price after August 2023.

Reminder: you can confidentially access the Retreat Fund for help towards the cost of one of these retreats. Simply contact your Regional Representative or Phyl Ibbs. For the Ampleforth retreat, contact Mary Farrell.

### Secular Carmelite non-residential retreat

**This retreat take place from Saturday 2 to Sunday 3 September, at the House of Prayer, East Molesey, SW London. The organiser is Mark Courtney.**

#### About the venue

The House of Prayer is run by the Sisters of the Christian Retreat, a Catholic Order founded in the late eighteenth century. Their website, with a good description, is at:

<https://www.christian-retreat.org/>

They have a large Victorian house in East Molesey, set in a good-sized suburban garden. The Thames, with riverside walks to Hampton Court, is a mile away. We will have the use of a conference room and a large lounge, as well as an attractive prayer room which has the Blessed Sacrament reserved and where Mass will be celebrated, plus the dining room at meal times and the upstairs

residents' sitting room except for Saturday morning.

The house has seven bedrooms, which we have block-booked for Saturday night for the use of those who for mobility problems or other reasons would find it too difficult to travel in on both days. We will effectively have sole use of the house and garden, although there might be individuals coming for spiritual advice.

#### Travel

The House of Prayer is quite easily accessible. From Waterloo or Vauxhall stations it is just under 40 minutes by train to Hampton Court station and then a twenty minute walk (or the 411 bus running three times an hour). For the less mobile, an alternative is frequent main-line trains from Waterloo to Surbiton station (six an hour on Saturday morning, taking 17 or 23 minutes) and there is a taxi rank at Surbiton station (4 miles, 15 minutes to the House of Prayer). The House of Prayer has seven parking spaces and the neighbouring streets have uncluttered, unrestricted parking. By car it is an easy 15 minutes via the A3 from junction 10 of the M25, or 12 minutes from junction 1 of the M3.

#### Retreat Programme

Arrival on Saturday morning is at 10.30 am, and the programme for the day will start at 11.00 am and finish at 7.30 pm after supper (with an option to leave early at 5.45 pm, after Evening Prayer). The programme on Sunday will start at 10.30 am with Morning Prayer and finish at 5.30 pm after Evening prayer, with an option to stay on for supper for £9 extra. On both days there will be Morning and Evening prayer, Mass, two short retreat talks by Fr Matt on a topic relating to St John of the Cross and plenty of free time for prayer etc, including three hours each afternoon. Lunch on both days, supper on Saturday and tea, coffee and biscuits during the day are included in the retreat cost.

#### Booking arrangements

The all-inclusive non-residential cost of the retreat is £75. Contact me at [mark.courtney@oxon.org](mailto:mark.courtney@oxon.org) to make a provisional reservation, and I'll reply with payment details to pay a £20 deposit for a confirmed booking. The deposit will be refunded on cancellation only if there is a waiting list and the place can be offered to someone else. The balance of £55 should reach me by 14 August so that I can meet the demanding payment requirements of the

venue. If you have paid the balance earlier and cancel before 14 August, the balance payment will be refunded in full: if you cancel soon after that date there might be a partial refund. (When you make the balance payment you can also specify any dietary or other special requirements see the House of Prayer website for what they can accommodate).

There are seven bedrooms prioritised for those who find travel difficult, at an additional cost of £55. All but one have already been assigned. If you would need one to be able to attend the retreat, let me know and if I cannot confirm one for you, I can put you on a waiting list.

*Mark Courtney*

tel 020 8288 0536

## NUNS' ONGOING FORMATION MEETING (OFM) 2023

*Sister Shelagh Banks writes:*

We are arranging an Ongoing Formation Meeting this year which is going to be livestreamed, and we'd be very happy for any Secular Carmelites who are interested to join us online.

There will be three days of talks, from 26th to 28th September 2023. The theme will be 'Listening'. Sister Carmel of Wood Hall and Sister Thérèse of York Carmel are organising the meeting. I'm attaching their flyer (*see end of this Issue*), and this is what they said about the speakers in a letter to the Carmels:

The renowned scripture scholar, Fr Nicholas King SJ has generously agreed to be with us throughout the week and he will begin each day with a session on Listening in Scripture. Many of you will be familiar with his translation of the Bible. Father Nicholas is also the Jesuit Provincial Delegate for formation.

Our remaining three speakers will join us for one day each, leading sessions in the late morning and late afternoon.

As the theme for the meeting was inspired by Pope Francis and the Synod, we wanted to include some input about synodality and the dream of Pope Francis for a 'listening Church.'

Dr Austen Ivereigh will speak on Listening in the Church. Austen has written two biographies of Pope

Francis and collaborated with the Holy Father on *Let us Dream*. He was one of the team that compiled the National Synthesis of Synod responses for England and Wales and more recently he has been involved in the continental stage of the Synod.

Sister Lynne Baron FCJ will speak on Listening in Community Life. Sr Lynne is involved in vocations ministry and formation locally, nationally and internationally and is the Delegate for Social Action in the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

Our final speaker needs no introduction! Fr Matt Blake OCD will share with us on Listening in the Carmelite Tradition.

**There will be no charge for accessing the Zoom livestream**, and I do hope some of you will be able to join us. The talks will also be recorded, for the benefit of people who are not free to listen at the time.

Every good wish to you for 2023,

*Shelagh*

If you would like to join the OFM on-line please contact:

Sr Thérèse: Thérèse.thicket@gmail.com

Carmelite Monastery, Thicket Priory, Thorganby, York YO19 6DE

## OBITUARY

**Joan Slater, 1944 - 2023.**

Joan Slater was a former Regional President, and had also been group President twice, once of the Kensington group and once of the Holy Trinity group in Notting Hill, where she was later to serve as Formation Director until a few years ago.

Holy Trinity, Notting Hill group are grateful to group members who knew Joan and her friends for contributing to this tribute.

Joan joined the Carmelite Secular Order in her 30s following her conversion to Catholicism. She was always ready and willing to give of her time, being easy to talk to and a good listener. Her knowledge of the Secular Order was well known.

Born in Bury in Lancashire, Joan studied at Bolton Technical College, gaining a Librarian qualification. This knowledge was beneficial some years later, in helping the Friars with the Carmelite Library in Kensington.



She moved to London to become assistant Librarian at the Royal Academy of Music in 1969. This position combined her librarian duties with a passion for music. She was a pianist; viola player and she later became an organist. We also remember her good singing voice.

Joan remained at the Royal Academy of music until her decision to retrain as a psychotherapist and counsellor, qualifying in 1996, gaining an MA. Moving to Bedfordshire soon afterwards, Joan saw clients, indulged her love of gardening, and became an organist at her local church.

Joan was a staunch Socialist and was involved in local politics. She was an avid reader with a particular interest in history. She was an animal lover and animal rights were a very important cause to her.

Gill Day, a close friend of 55 years, has said that Joan often stayed with Gill and her husband for Christmas and New Year. Gill's dogs loved Joan and she loved them. Gill described Joan as a true friend who was always loyal and dependable and is dreadfully missed.

Joan was a special Carmelite who faithfully made the journey from Bedford to London, while

Formation Director at Holy Trinity group. Members (in particular, our group Secretary, Mary Riordan) were in contact with Joan since her retirement due to her inability to make the drive to London any longer due to arthritis.

Joan managed to attend my entry into Formation ceremony and celebration despite a stressful time, both driving from Bedford that morning and then trying to park her car with the problem of the vanishingly few parking spaces around the Carmelite church in Kensington, which delayed her arrival!

During her time as my Formation Director, Joan and I would discuss the increasingly secular age that can be difficult for Catholics to negotiate. Our conversations included discussions on the best ways to manage such a culture at work which encroaches on so many aspects of life.

She was willing to be available to me by phone after her retirement, as I had become Formation Director at Holy Trinity, Notting Hill, in 2019, just before the pandemic. Our discussions occasionally included the latest activities of both our favourite composers; John Rutter and Bob Chilcott. We also sometimes discussed the importance of diet for arthritis which by then had become quite a problem for her although she seldom complained much.

Joan remained relatively well for some years in her retirement before the need for constant care. During her confinement in a nursing home, Joan had a constant presence of close friends visiting her. The nursing home staff looked after her very well with the support of a Catholic carer and regular visits from the local priest from whom she received the last rites.

Soon after her peaceful death in March this year, Masses were offered for her by Fr Tijo and Fr Matt at the Carmelite church in Kensington.

Joan's friend Gill thanked us for remembering her in this way and said that Joan would be touched by this tribute to her.

Along with those of our Carmelite Secular Sisters who knew her, we will miss Joan and remember her in our prayers. Joan, may you rest in peace.

*Teresa Lynch, President,  
Holy Trinity Group, Notting Hill*



## PROMISES MADE

### Received into formation:

Sandra Kolb	Marie-Eugène	13 May
Diane Wildheart	Worcester	25 March
Colin Parsons	Welshpool	25 March
Maria Schafer	Notting Hill	4 March
David Ahmed	South London	29 April
Joanelle Candido	South London	29 April
Carolyn Gamerston	South London	
Sandra Kolb	Marie-Eugène	4 March

### First Promise:

Imogen Davies	Marie-Eugène	4 March
Solange Duffy	Marie-Eugène	13 May
Roseleen Cowie	Notting Hill	29 April
Thabo Nathan	Notting Hill	29 April
Audrey Hamilton	Notting Hill	29 April
Solange Duffey	Marie-Eugène	4 March
Imogen Davies	Marie-Eugène	4 March

### Final Promise:

Maria Berggren	Marie-Eugène	4 March
Nicola Hunt	Wolverhampton	25 March
David Seager	Wolverhampton	25 March
Jane Little	Worcester	25 March
Abundia Munar	Kensington	29 April
Walerie Ludwik	Notting Hill	29 April

## ABOUT OUR COVER PICTURE

This painting is by Pietro Lorenzetti who lived from about 1280 to 1348. It dates from 1328-9. The painting formed a panel of the predella of the dismembered altarpiece in the Carmelite church San Niccolò al Carmine in Siena. It depicts a rocky landscape on Mount Carmel, with the well which according to tradition was opened up by Prophet Elijah.

Scenes from the life of Carmelite hermits are represented both beside the well and the background. The hermits wear the striated Carmelite habit, modelled after the cloak of Elijah, scorched as he ascended heaven in a chariot of fire, and retrieved by his disciple Elisha.

The theme of water and wells was of course taken up by St Teresa of Avila. In the hot and dry weather of June 2023 it seems doubly appropriate as a cover theme.

**Deadline for contributions to the next Vine: Wednesday 4 October 2023**  
**Contact: Tim Burton OCDS [carmel@kinabra.net](mailto:carmel@kinabra.net) 07719 320284**