

Carmelites have told us that what Carmel means to them is:

‘Persistence in prayer no matter what’

‘Loving God and seeing him in each other’

‘A continual call to prayer’

‘The boundless assurance given by our Carmelite saints’

‘Unshakable belief in the power of prayer’

‘To live constantly in the presence of God, fully exposed to his penetrating and transforming love’

‘Carmel is for me to be a soul of love’

‘All God asks of you is to be yourself before him’



Where do I go now?

The chief source of information about the Secular Carmelites in the UK is our website at

secularcarmel.org.uk

It can be accessed via the QR code here:

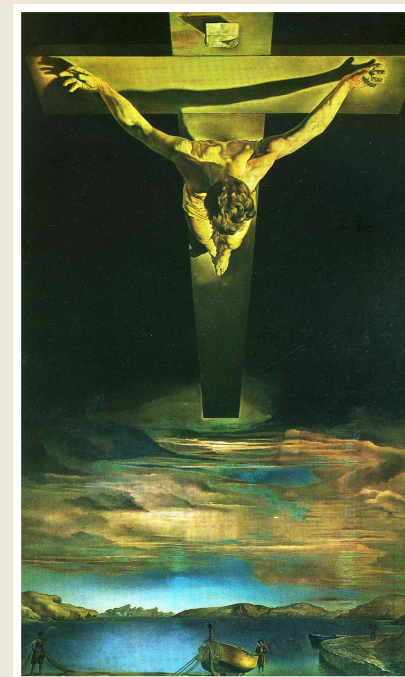


There is a helpful account in Aloysius Deeney, *Welcome to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites*: obtainable at internet booksellers and also from the Carmelite Book Service, Oxford.

St Teresa of Avila's prayer for guidance:

I am Thine, I was born for Thee,
What is Thy will with me?
Let me be rich or beggared,
Exulting or repining,
And comforted or lonely.
O Life – O Sunlight shining
In stainless purity!
Since I am Thine, Thine only,
What is Thy will with me?

LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP



Introducing the Secular
Carmelites and their role in
the Church

A way of going deeper into
the heart of God



Lay people in Religious Orders

The Religious Orders are a priceless treasure in the Catholic Church. Lay persons can be part of this treasure themselves while remaining in the lay state – by joining movements whose members aspire to live the spirit of the Order in question while not actually living in community.

Lay people in Carmel

The lay movement attached to the Teresian Carmelites – the Carmel of St Teresa of Avila, St John of the Cross, St Thérèse of Lisieux, St Elizabeth of the Trinity – is known as the Secular (meaning ‘lay’) Carmelite Order. We feed our souls on these and other great Carmelite teachers of prayer. The charism of Carmel involves going deeper in prayer as an inspiration for everyday action.

History of the Order

The Carmelites are the only Order originating in the Holy Land itself, and – though their origins are lost in the mists of time – we hear of their existence from the twelfth century onwards. The first members were male hermits on Mount Carmel who felt a close affinity with St Elijah – whom they took as their patron along with Our Lady. They fled to Europe in the thirteenth century when their existence was threatened by the Muslim presence in the Holy Land. The Women’s Order and the Secular Order were established in the mid-15th century.

Is Carmel for me ...?

What commitment to OCDS involves

Membership of a local community and through this the worldwide Order.

Attendance at monthly community meetings focusing on study, discussion, and prayer

A rule of life involving the private recital of the Morning and Evening Prayer of the Church plus a daily period of silent prayer.

Regular attendance at Mass



Might I have a vocation to Carmel?

Indications of a vocation to Carmel might include:
Spiritual hunger, a longing to go deeper into the treasures of the Catholic faith

An attraction to one or more of the Carmelite saints

A desire to join others in the quest for spiritual growth

A desire to spend time alone with God

Some of our guides in Carmel

St Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)

One of the most astonishing figures in the history of the Church; she founded seventeen monasteries in twenty years, thereby spearheading the reform of the ancient Carmelite Order, and she wrote four spiritual classics that are still immensely popular today.

St John of the Cross (1542-1591)

One of the greatest teachers of contemplative prayer in the history of the Church, his writings have inspired countless poets and writers as well as spiritual leaders down to the present day.

St Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897)

A remarkable figure who spent all her adult life behind the walls of a monastery unknown to the outside world, but wrote a spiritual masterpiece, *Story of a Soul*, which has since sold millions of copies; her teaching of ‘the Little Way’ has entranced and inspired many.

St Edith Stein (1891-1942)

A German Jewish convert to the Catholic faith and an acclaimed philosopher who became a Carmelite. She died in Auschwitz together with her sister Rosa, leaving a body of profound spiritual writings.

Modern guides

Among Carmelite teachers of prayer to whom many today look for inspiration are the late *Ruth Burrows*, *Elizabeth Obbard*, *Fr Iain Matthew*.