



# The VINE



October 2021

News from the Secular Discalced Carmelite Community in England and Wales



*Back together: The recent Central Region day at Northampton Cathedral*

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**Deadline for contributions to the next Vine: Tuesday 8th February 2022**

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### Caverns of Carmel

Dear Fellow Carmelites

Some things are hard to put into words, so I'll let John of the Cross make a start:

*These caverns are the soul's faculties: memory, intellect and will. They are as deep as the boundless goods of which they are capable since anything less than the infinite fails to fill them. (Living Flame, 3:18)*

However much we try, John of the Cross reminds us that nothing will satisfy the yearning of our souls except God. Many people world-wide have felt gutted by the loss of physical contact with family, friends and colleagues during the pandemic, and John points out that 'one contrary sheds light on the other'. The pain of isolation throws into relief the delight of being with those we love, and I have been happy to share with you the joy of meeting together at three Regional Days so far this year, after two years of isolation.

During the months of enforced self-isolation, the caverns of our souls have been exposed by the mystery of our relationships in Carmel, for these human relationships reflect our relationship with God. Only God can fill the caverns of our souls, but the 'boundless goods' of our friendships in Carmel go beyond our personal preferences, our likes and dislikes. People who have a true call to Carmel are united by that call. There are no boundaries, for the call is from the one God, who shows himself in as many different ways as there are different Carmelites. What a rich vocation!

As we have noted before, our relationships during lockdown could have faded into oblivion, but in fact they have become deeper and more inclusive. Let us build on this gift of communication that we have been using so creatively, and ensure that every newcomer, each house-bound member, any distant fellow Carmelite, is actively included in our Groups and Communities. Already we are responding to each other's needs, for example, by supporting new groups with formation and giving individual formation by phone to those unable to reach any community. May ever-deepening contemplative prayer make us ever more receptive to this work of the Holy Spirit within the Secular Order.

In this issue you will find reports of the three Regional Days that have brought us together so far this year. Your National Council meets on 25th October, when we will update you on the arrangements for the Presidents' Conference at Launde Abbey (6-8 May) and the national Secular Order retreats at Ampleforth Abbey (18-22 July) and Aylesford Priory (25-29 July). By then we should also have an update on the developments at Boars Hill.

Should you need them for parish events or other outreach efforts, our OCDS leaflets are still in good supply (stored in the sacristy at Boars Hill). Just let me know and I can post them to you or bring them to your next Regional Day.

Such wonderful feasts around this time! May your Guardian Angels keep you united with them in their presence before God: another wonderful mystery. I'll let St John of the Cross have the last word:

*Reflect that your guardian angel does not always move your desire for an action, but he [she] does always enlighten your reason. (Sayings of Light and Love, 37)*

With love and prayer in Carmel,

Annette

## Central Region Annual Regional Meeting, 25 September

We were able to meet for the first time in two years at the brand new St Thomas Centre at Northampton Cathedral. The town is better located for the northern areas of our Region – Derby, Nottingham, Lincoln – than Boars Hill. Those that attended the meeting from the northern end were very appreciative of the change of venue.

An important additional attraction that drew us to Northampton was the fact that Bishop David Oakley is himself a Secular. He was delighted to welcome us and to share in the day with us. Not only that, but he shared with us in a most winning manner the story of his attraction to Carmel, which he joined as a Birmingham priest when he was parish priest of Maryvale. He was subsequently Rector of Oscott Seminary before being appointed Bishop of Northampton.

The Bishop's talk was followed by the Presidents' Reports – a traditional feature of Regional Days. They provided a fascinating picture of how the various groups and communities responded in very varied ways to the lockdown. Most groups had recourse to Zoom gatherings; in one case the members originally displayed a great reluctance to get involved with Zoom but eventually ended up being so enamoured with it that they did not want to stop. One piece of specially good news was that the Nottingham community has split and given birth to a new Lincoln group, so that the region now comprises eight groups.

A soup lunch was provided by the staff at the Centre – who could not have been more helpful and serviceable, and their help was much appreciated.

After lunch Fr Matt gave us an excellent talk on Edith Stein. The day culminated in mass in the Cathedral at 3pm, which was available in live transmission. Fr Matt celebrated (Bishop David was by then on his way to a parish visitation in Luton), one person was received into formation and several persons made first and second promises – as follows:

**Taken into formation:**

Karen Littleton (Oxford St Therese)

**Final Promises:**

Michael Clarke (Derby St Edith Stein)

Suzanne Finch (Oxford St Therese)

Josephine Gilbert (Derby St Edith Stein)

Elizabeth Hyde (Derby St Edith Stein)

Elizabeth King (Oxford St Elijah)

Tony Solomon (Oxford St Elijah)

**First promises:**

Sue Armstrong (Oxford St Elijah)

Maria Berggren (Oxford Blessed Marie-Eugene)

Sheila Lynas (Derby St Edith Stein)

Jolanta Wisniewska (Oxford St Elijah)

The Day was attended by 31 persons – an excellent number given the uncertainties of the exit-lockdown period which were further complicated by a fuel supply problem at many filling stations. We had such a good experience of the St Thomas Centre that we have since booked it for the same Saturday in 2022 (24 September).

*Cyprian Blamires*

## London Regional Day, 24 July

We had been able to have a pared-down London Regional Day on 5 December 2020, when London was briefly in only Tier 2 restrictions, but it had had to be confined to a private and very moving Mass, during which eight members made their promises, and to meeting in small groups afterwards on a mild winter afternoon in the Priory garden.

But our Summer Regional Day on 24 July marked a new beginning, the first time for 18 months that we had all been able to meet in almost normal conditions and to have a full day's programme. Our renewed zeal for our Carmelite vocation was heightened by Fr Matt's talk on St Elijah and by having with us eight new enquirers who had been waiting until the end of lockdown to attend their first Secular Carmelite meeting.

During Mass, Michael Thorne from Kensington's Ven Hermann Cohen Community made his first promise; and Maria Micheletti from the Ealing Group, who was absent during the day because of a Covid false alarm, was able to make her definitive promise later that week during the Secular Carmelite retreat at Kensington. And, during Evening Prayer, Audrey Ngouadje from the Notting Hill Community, Gary O'Mahoney from the Gerrards Cross Group and Joanna Sekula from the Ealing Group were all received into formation.

During Evening Prayer we prayed for our seven members who had died during the pandemic and ended with the Devotional Renewal of Promises and the spontaneous singing of the Salve Regina.

*Mark Courtney*

## East Anglia News and Regional Day

Over the summer months, we've had the opportunity to come together again in our groups locally. Nationally we met at Walsingham for the annual Carmelite Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham which was held on the last Saturday in June. This year was special because we were meeting again as the Carmelite family for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic and so it had a feeling of thanksgiving and beginning anew.

Carmelites from both the Ancient and Discalced Orders, friars and seculars, came together for the pilgrimage, some having travelled long distances to be there. Fr Matt spoke to us on the importance of St Joseph in Carmelite tradition and the devotion which St Teresa had for him – you can find this talk on the website. We were joined in the Chapel of Reconciliation by other pilgrims including a number of Tamil and Travellers' families for whom the Shrine has a special significance. After Mass and a picnic lunch we had a silent walk to the Church of the Annunciation in Walsingham village for Adoration and Benediction before we returned home.

The following weekend there was another opportunity for celebration and thanksgiving when Fr Mike Smith OCDS was ordained at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich. The last time most of us had seen him was when he made his Final Promise to the Secular Order at the Walsingham Pilgrimage in 2019. It was a really joyous occasion for all of us who were able to attend. Antonia Braithwaite OCDS from the Letchworth group, read the First

Reading of the Mass and her young sons served on the altar. You can see Antonia and her family receiving a blessing from Fr Mike.

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mt Carmel, we gathered at Quidenham Carmel for a talk given by the Prioress, Sr Stephanie on the importance of St Joseph for us Carmelites. This was followed by shared Vespers for the feast day . Sr Stephanie's talk is also on the website. Our numbers were sadly depleted because of COVID and the 'pingdemic' but we hope to make this an annual occasion to celebrate this special feast day with the sisters.

And finally, we met again at Quidenham on Saturday 2 October for our first Regional Day in two years. Actually it was a morning rather than a day because of a continued concern to limit the potential spread of the virus. In addition there was the fuel shortage! Many seculars from Walsingham and Peterborough were unable to attend because local petrol stations were closed or fuel supplies limited. Fortunately Fr Matt and Annette with her travelling bookshop managed to make it to Norfolk – and home again.

Fr Matt spoke to us about relationship in Carmel: Our vocation is a gift of the Holy Spirit which gives us a unique bond in Carmel but one which is not exclusive. Friendship was important for our saints: Edith Stein was attracted to Carmel after reading the *Life* because she felt that St Teresa knew her, she could relate to her. This sense of relationship is rooted in the writings of Teresa. She begins the *Way of Perfection* by asking what kind of people we are. She says we should get to know the friends of the Lord through the Scriptures and the lives of the saints. In the *Interior Castle*, the Fifth Dwelling Place is understood to be where we die to the old way and begin a new way of living. It is the Dwelling Place of the love of neighbour – this is where we learn to truly love our neighbour. Relating to others is important because we can't have a relationship with God if we can't relate to each other. Silence and distance is necessary for prayer but prayer leads us into relationship.

During Mass, Fr Matt received four new aspirants into Formation:

Jenny Sansom and Loretta Taylor (Holy Family, Norwich)  
Mary Hatcher (Mother of Carmel and St Henry Morse, Quidenham)  
Renata Pankiewicz (Letchworth)

*Joan MacInnes*



Father Mike gives his blessing

## Report from St. Joseph's Secular Order Group

When I was elected President of the St. Joseph's Group in November 2019, Father Liam's message to me was a quote from St. Elizabeth of the Trinity 'Launch out your boat onto the ocean of trust'. How true that was to become! This was just before the pandemic, so straightaway I was presented with plenty of new challenges. I only had 1 meeting with the group before we went into lockdown.

At first there was real antipathy towards Zoom. After a while I decided to go boldly ahead, and went about learning how to set it up myself. Would you believe it, the group then took to it like ducks to water and were sad when it ended! It was a great learning curve as we experimented with best way to pray Morning Office together, and eventually a working formula was found.

On 8th December 2020 Pope Frances declared this the 'Year of St. Joseph', which is very important to us this being our titular. To celebrate it I have given a series of talks on St. Joseph: St. Joseph and the Holy Family; St. Joseph our Patron; Devotion to St. Joseph; St. Teresa, Father Gratian and St. Joseph taken from Gratian's book *Summary of the Excellencies of the Glorious St. Joseph, Husband of the Virgin Mary*; The Paternity of St. Joseph; St. Joseph's trade as a Carpenter; The Collective Virtues of St. Joseph; and this week we prayed St. Joseph's Chaplet together. This took us up to July of this year, when the August meeting was replaced by Fr. Matt's wonderful online retreat.

In addition to these talks we have discussed various psalms together and found this very beneficial and helpful when praying the Divine Office.

When Fr. Cannistra, as our Father General, sent out a circular to the Secular Orders in May this year, it made me wonder what he was really trying to say to us. Rightly or wrongly, I concluded that we should be listening more to God, and less to mankind and peoples' opinions as to the way forward, so as a result we are going to start studying *Dei Verbum* from Vatican II.

At present we have 11 fairly regular attenders at meetings; one non-attender due to degree studies; another who is too ill to attend; one isolated member; and one serious enquirer who may have to join another group as she works Monday to Friday.

Finally, I would say that lockdown has produced great benefits for our group in bringing the members much closer together through various forms of contact, and many good works, some of which put me to shame. A serious bout of Covid with one member, stroke with another, and a dreadful tragedy with another when the police shot dead her son, have all resulted in bringing out the best in communication in all its forms, true Christian love, generosity and activity, which makes me very proud to be their President.

*Joan Burn OCDS*

## St. Thérèse Community, Oxford Priory: Reflection on the Central Region Regional Day 2021

How uplifting to be able to be together again. So many happy, smiling faces and, in such a beautiful place. Thank you Bishop David Oakley OCDS For being such a welcoming host and to all of those who worked hard to bring it together as well as to all who came and made a day to be treasured. How the light brought to us by the Holy Spirit, shines so brightly within us as we move out of the dark shadow of the last 18 months.

### Introducing the St. Thérèse Community

Our community meets each second Monday of the month at the Priory in Boars Hill. We are one of the oldest communities in the region dating back to the 1980s when it was known as the Abingdon group. It was in the days when the late and great Fr. Livinius guided us along the way to Canonical Election in 1994.

Our membership numbers 13 at present including our newest member, Karen who was received into formation and Suzanne who, after 18 months of patiently waiting, made her definitive promises, both of whom were so full of joy that their faces beamed continuously. Congratulations to you both.

As is expected from an older community like St. Therese, our membership has also aged. Seven of our members are no longer able to attend meetings regularly due to age, infirmity or travelling has become too difficult. Among them include three past presidents, Grace Molloy, Mary Fear and Sue Mather. However, we all keep in touch with letters and phone calls. We keep them in our prayers and, we are always grateful for their prayers. We also have 16 deceased members meaning we now have more members praying for us in Heaven than we do on earth. May they rest in peace.



*Karen, Frances, Suzanne, Roswitha and Chantal*

### A community in isolation

Having been newly elected as president and after a few stumbles along the way I was just finding my feet when the shock of lockdown happened. What do we do now as a community? Being Carmelites, many of our community greeted lockdown as an opportunity to focus totally on our prayer life. We decided to meet spiritually in prayer when we would normally be together, and we also formed a WhatsApp group to share spiritual thoughts

Then there was ZOOM! This was a whole new world for us. Some found it OK while others disliked it intensely. We eventually had three devotees who persevered. As I was using the free app we could only meet for 40 minutes at a time so I booked three sessions back to back. We did have some frustrations with experiences of going in and coming out. A few

laughs along the way as we lost a few in transit. Then a miracle happened. Karen joined us as an aspirant and brought with her the pro zoom. Hallelujah! No more interruptions and longer meetings. A special thank you to our Blessed Lord for seeing our dilemma and answering our prayers, and not forgetting a big thank you to Karen.

### Our virtual life together

We saved time by sending a newsletter prior to the meeting. Our time together was spent in fellowship, sharing reflections by each taking turns to make a presentation followed by evening prayer and intercessions with a time in silent contemplation.

We are also very highly appreciative of the friars and particularly our own Fr. Matt's contributions on virtual media. There was so much for us to be nourished while on our Carmelite journey away from our community.

For our reflection time we invited the Holy Spirit to lead us in our choices of reflections, gaining inspiration from our prayers, thoughts, and readings. We covered psalms, scripture readings and many aspects of prayer with the help of such Carmelites as St. Theresa, St. John of the Cross, St. Mary of Jesus Crucified and Br. Lawrence. We found we were entering a journey from a dark place into light and finally seeing on the horizon, new hope when lockdown lifted, and we gradually emerged. Our last reflection was the beautiful Psalm of the Pilgrim, before journeying back to our resting place.

*How lovely is your dwelling place  
O Lord God of Hosts!  
As the sparrow finds a home  
And the swallow to settle her young,  
My home is by your altars!  
Happy are those who dwell in your house!*  
(Ps. 84: 2, 4 – 5).

### Emerging from the darkness

Once restrictions were lifting and the opportunity for us to meet in person became a reality, we found the priory not yet ready to enable us to have meetings. Looking for a place to meet resulted in an invitation from Mary Fear, one of our isolates who can no longer attend meetings. Mary said, *'If we met at her home, I can come'*. We met together for the first time to a joyous and uplifting reunion. It was so successful; Mary has asked us again.

### When small is big

Our next meeting was in the new Mount Carmel room at the priory. Only a few of us averaging three to five at each meeting. We may be a small active group of members but, we are finding a greater intimacy among us leading to a deeper spiritual experience of closer friendship and hopeful of a fruitful journey forward together. We are a small but enthusiastic community who care for and support one another as we embark once again on a promising "little way". We have no fears of membership dwindling for, as St. Teresa says,

*'Trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be'*

With Our Lady of Mount Carmel protecting, Our Mother St. Teresa of Jesus guiding and St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus loving and comforting us, we move forward in trust and confidence.

### Postscript (Elijah's breeze)

For me the day was not over. When I arrived home I was presented with a welcome and a meal from my wonderful husband Tim. There was still some sunshine in the late evening when we sat under the last of the summer roses on the patio and drank a glass of wine together. We said nothing, just enjoyed each other's company. Then a small breeze took the last of the roses and sprinkled the petals over us.

Thank you Thérèse for your loving care and a perfect day.

*Frances Ward OCDS*



## NEWS FROM THE NUNS

### Nuns' Association General Assembly

The Prioresses from the Carmels in England, Wales and Scotland that are members of the British Association met at Minsteracres for the General Assembly from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September. They were joined by Sr Jo from Ware Carmel, who is responsible for formation, and by Sr Lesley from Quidenham Carmel.

It was a joy for them all to be together and share news. Fr Matt gave talks on Edith Stein, thereby bringing this powerful woman into their discussions on how to give each other mutual support in these challenging times.

### Darlington Carmel

With the death of Sr Francis, Darlington Carmel has sadly closed. Sr Jude and Sr Camilla are both in a nearby nursing home. The books printed by the Darlington Press have been transferred to the Carmelite Book Service at Boars Hill, now managed by Fr Yamai.

Unfortunately, copies of the *Ratio Institutionis* and the *Constitutions* booklet with St Albert's Rule, the Rituals and Local Statutes, ran out before Sr Francis could print any more, but they will be reprinted as soon as possible. Meanwhile, both can be accessed online.

## NEWS FROM THE FRIARS

### General Chapter in Rome

Every three years, the friars have a General Chapter in which the General Provincial gives a report on the 'State of the Order' and the general Provincial is elected (or re-elected). There is a full programme of talks, discussions, and spiritual renewal.

The latest edition of *Communicationis*, No. 369, gives a wonderful array of pictures of the 92 Carmelite friars from around the world who attended the 92<sup>nd</sup> General Chapter from 30 August to 24 September 2021. There were some aspects that marked out this General Chapter. Pope Francis gave them an audience and spoke to the friars of the Carmelite vocation. In his speech he said, *Friendship with God ripens in silence, in recollection, in listening to the Word of God; it is a flame that must be nurtured and protected day by day.* You can find the complete text here:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/september/documents/20210911-carmelitani-scalzi.html>

Two new features were that more than half of those present were attending a General Chapter for the first time, and more space was allocated for group meetings and to the working groups (by language and geography).

Another new feature was that one entire day was given over to *listening* to nine of the Order's young friars (under forty) from round the world, who had been invited for a day to share challenges in their areas and give suggestions for the renewal of the Order. Further listening was given to four religious friars (brothers but not priests).

Work was done on the *revision of the rules*, that is, the updating of a part of the legislation; and a *Declaration on the charism*. Much more could be said, but this gives a flavour of the vigour and hard work of the 2021 General Chapter.

At the Chapter Fr. Miguel of Mary Márquez Calle, OCD was elected as our new General Provincial, replacing Fr. Saverio Cannistrà. Born in 1965 Fr Miguel entered the Discalced Carmelite Order in 1983 and made his religious profession in 1985. He was ordained a priest in Medina del Campo in 1990. He is a prolific author of numerous publications on theology and spirituality. In February 2015, Father Márquez was the first provincial superior elected to serve the new Iberian Province of St. Teresa of Jesus, which was created from the union of all the smaller Discalced Carmelite provinces in Spain and the Balearic Islands during the extraordinary provincial chapter that was convened for



Fr. Miguel of Mary Márquez Calle

this specific purpose. He was re-elected to serve once again in the first ordinary provincial chapter in April 2017 for a term from 2017–2020, when the provincial chapter could be held again.

Since his 'retirement' following the 2020 provincial chapter, Father Miguel spent six months at St. Teresa's Church on Clarendon Street in Dublin, where he perfected his knowledge of English. Since May 2021 he resided in the friars' convent in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canary Islands.

He is a prolific author of numerous publications on theology and spirituality. His Spanish and his story can be found on the page for Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September.

We give Fr Miguel a warm welcome.

## CARMEL AND SHAKESPEARE: A CARMELITE REFLECTION ON FORGIVENESS WITHIN THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

*Shirley Lyons, Quidenham Group*

*The Merchant of Venice* is one of Shakespeare's most memorable plays confronting difficult, deep-seated issues of hypocrisy, anti-semitism, and lust for vengeance in the pursuit of justice, alongside a story of an Elizabethan woman's right to choose the man she wishes to marry. In every aspect, it is a powerful story of the pursuit of true love. It is rarely performed now, and yet, since it was first published, it has held up a mirror to each successive generation, revealing the real tension and inner struggle that we human beings face between choosing to live our lives according to Law or Spirit; the rigid intransigence of following the letter of the law without receiving and releasing God's free gift of compassionate, merciful, gracious love to temper it with wisdom, understanding and forgiveness. Do we follow the Law and demand justice, as the world perceives it, or do we follow the leading of God's Holy Spirit of loving kindness, leaving judgement and vengeance solely to Him? Law or Caritas? Thus, the scene is set for Portia's remarkable speech in Act 4, scene 1 of the play.

Portia is dressed up as a young male lawyer (no women being allowed in the law courts of this time) defending Antonio, a wealthy merchant. She is wise beyond her years, and is passionately seeking to defend the life of Antonio. His ships, filled with rich merchandise, have all been wrecked in violent storms, thus jeopardising his very life, as he has signed a binding legal contract with Shylock, a Jewish money lender, to forfeit a pound of his own flesh if he cannot pay back the money he has borrowed from him to act as a bridging loan until his ships come into port. Antonio has treated Shylock shamefully in the past, and Shylock is now wholly consumed with the need to exact revenge. Shylock bitterly and angrily implores the audience in Act Three sc.1 to have empathy with him, to be gracious in our understanding of his situation as a Jew living within an anti-semitic community, receiving its daily hatred and persecution. Now, in the court of law presided over by the Duke, who is acting as Judge, Shylock has become 'a stony adversary, an inhuman wretch, Incapable of pity, Void and empty of any dram of mercy'... He demands the full execution of the terms of his legal bond; he demands his pound of flesh.

Portia stands and speaks:

*The quality of mercy is not strain'd.  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:  
It blesses him that gives, and him that takes.  
T'is mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown.  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
It is an attribute to God Himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When Mercy seasons Justice.*

Shakespeare, who understands human behaviour so well, effortlessly leads the members of his audience to sympathise with both Antonio and Shylock's dilemmas, even if we find it difficult to condone their consequent choices and actions. Watching or reading this play, we, as Carmelites, recall Christ's counter-intuitive teaching on forgiveness in Matthew 18:22 when Peter is offering the suggestion that forgiving seven times is more than generous of us, when someone offends or wounds us. Jesus speaks plainly, 'No, not seven times but seventy times seven.'! In John 8:7, He solemnly adjures us all to reflect on the condition of our own hearts in front of the woman caught in adultery: Let he who is without sin cast the first stone. And in Matt 7:1–5 He calls us once more to reflect upon the state of our own hearts, minds and souls when we place Law before Caritas, before commissioning His disciples to go out and to teach these things to the whole world. Matt 28:18–20.

Shakespeare completes Portia's speech with these words:

*...consider this,  
That in the course of justice, none of us  
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy.*

As Carmelites we join with St Paul and all the Angels and Saints in offering up prayer for the whole world, unceasingly, Ephesians 6:18. And in this, we, like the Israelites led by Joshua, after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, cross over into the Promised Land of *Canaan*, which in Hebrew means the place of humbling. We arrive at last in a land overflowing with the milk and honey of *humility*. And it's that humility which allows us to fully own our humanity, and our daily need to accept all of our own personal frailty and weakness, laying it down at the foot of Christ's Cross where our suffering is redeemed and we are transformed in deep joy and gratitude.

St Thérèse of Lisieux writes in her *Autobiography*:

*To me He has granted His infinite Mercy, and through it I contemplate and adore the other divine perfections! All of these perfections appear to be resplendent with love, even His Justice (and perhaps even more so than the others) seem to me clothed in love. What a sweet joy it is to think that God is Just, i.e., that He takes into account our weakness, that He is perfectly aware of our fragile nature. What should I fear then? Ah! Must not the infinitely just God, who deigns to pardon the faults of the Prodigal Son with so much kindness, be just also towards me who 'am with Him always?' Luke 15:31*

What then happens to both Antonio and to Shylock? I invite you to discover this for yourselves.

***Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est.***  
**Where there is loving kindness, there is God.**

### MAKING LINKS WITH AN OCD MONASTERY IN GHANA

*Thank you to Janet Fyffe and Sophia Ankrah from Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Joseph (South London OCDS) for this fascinating and inspiring account – Ed.*

One of our members, Sophia Ankrah, spends some time each winter at her house in Accra, Ghana. (Obviously this did not happen in the winter of 2020/21!) Before the pandemic, Sophia had discovered that there was no community of OCD friars in Ghana, and at that time no OCDS communities, and so in early 2019 she arranged to pay her first visit to the only Monastery of OCD nuns in Ghana, at Tamale in the far north of the country. She was received there with great joy.

The sisters at Tamale live in considerable material poverty. Like the local population they are battling with the very dry climate, and have difficulty keeping the monastery running and feeding themselves. Sophia's first practical offer of help was to contribute to the cost of repairs to the enormous rainwater cistern that keeps a supply of fresh water available. The financial situation then worsened during the pandemic because demand for altar breads, the sisters' usual small source of income, almost dried up. The community has been very short of food. We took a community collection for them last year, and other friends around the world have helped where they can.



*The rainwater cistern*

The nuns' other material need was for books, which are difficult to obtain locally. On Sophia's return to London in 2019 our OCDS community ordered copies of the Carmelite Liturgy of the Hours from Boars Hill, and Fr Kelvin kindly added two Carmelite Missals so that the local priests could say appropriate Masses for the sisters on feast days. Our members contributed other books on Carmelite saints and history, including some that might be useful for the new OCDS group, the first in Ghana, that had just been set up locally. We sent the first batch of books to the office of the Apostolic Nuncio in Accra by sea, and it was taken to Tamale by the Nuncio himself (a great supporter of the nuns) in June 2019. Sophia took a second batch with her on her last visit before the pandemic, in early 2020, and is now collecting more in the hope of sending them to Accra this autumn ahead of her return to Ghana after Christmas. She will also be taking new UK-made equipment for making Easter candles, (another fund-raising activity) to replace the old worn-out kit.



Sophia with the sisters

Finally, the sisters need our prayers for their own situation and have asked us also to pray for the whole country. Ghana has been largely peaceful to date, with good relations between Christian and Moslem communities, but it has neighbours where Islamic terrorism has taken hold. The threat is felt particularly in the north. However, even in the midst of the pandemic there are signs of hope. With the help of prayers to St Joseph, the original community of nuns from the Philippines has been joined by some from Nigeria, and there are enquirers from Cameroon, from Nigeria, and from Ghana itself. Recently the local population have contributed to the cost of an electrical generator for the monastery, as the local supply is erratic at best. In true Carmelite spirit the nuns have thanked them with gifts of freshly baked bread.



Just out of the oven

## NOTES FROM A TALK ON EDITH STEIN

*Barbara Thacker has kindly sent us the following notes from Fr. Matt's talk at the recent event in Northampton Cathedral*

Edith was born in Silesia, then a part of Germany, now in Poland. She was born into a liberal Jewish Family, the youngest child. In her teenage years she realised that she no longer believed, and so was an atheist; even so, all her life she was searching for truth. One day Edith found a copy of Teresa's *Life*, and her search for truth was over. Teresa found her and completely changed her life. Edith's search for truth brings her to the point where she can no longer ignore faith.

She was brilliant academically, but initially no academic post was open to her because she was a woman and then later because she was Jewish.

She wrote no spiritual autobiography.

The one and only person in her life that she felt real empathy with is St. Teresa, or in other words someone who helps her to understand who she is. Teresa brings Edith's long search for truth to an end. She wants what Teresa has. To be Christian, Catholic and Carmelite are one.

What is it that Teresa said that made such a difference? Chapter 40 of the *Life* speaks of Truth making Himself known to her (Teresa). Truth is a Person. She now approaches Truth with perseverance and awe. He has revealed Himself.

At the end of Chapter 8 of the *Life* Teresa says 'I wanted to live . . .'

Being an academic was no longer an obstacle to the new life, but a conversion of the old life. Using the gifts she had, now no longer searching for the truth but rather paying homage to truth.

Teresa lives in her writings. What Edith heard or encountered was Teresa's soul, or the place where God was in Teresa's soul. The encounter between Jesus and Teresa.

Initially Teresa's title for her book was 'The Book of her Soul' or 'The Book of God's Mercies'. Now Edith can no longer say 'No' to Carmel; an acknowledgement of the truth.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Winzi Parry RIP (St. Thérèse community)

It is with sadness I announce the recent departure in July of our member Winzi Parry.

Winzi was one of our earlier members who in later life due to family commitments and poor health was not able to come to our meetings but remained in touch. The community arranged Mass in her memory and for the repose of her soul. May Eternal rest grant unto her and let perpetual light shine upon her, May she rest in peace.

*Frances Ward*

*St. Thérèse Community*

## DATES FOR ACTUAL REGIONAL DAYS

London Region	24 July 2021	Kensington
Central Region	25 September 2021	Northampton
East Anglia Region	2 October 2021	Quidenham
South West Region	30 October 2021	Weston-Super-Mare
West Midlands Region	19 March 2022	Wolverhampton
North East Region	18 June 2021	tba
North West Region	tba	

## NEWS FROM BOARS HILL PRIORY

The **Carmelite Book Service** is now managed by Fr Yamai Bature: [priory@carmelite.org.uk](mailto:priory@carmelite.org.uk)

**Mass at the Priory** No booking is required for this but social distancing continues in the chapel.

*Weekdays:* Mass at 6 pm, followed by Evening Prayer.

*Saturdays and Sundays:* Mass at 12.15 pm.

Please join the monthly on-line **Holy Spirit** and **Healing Masses**

The **Mount Carmel Room** (the converted garage) is available for meetings. It is beautifully furnished, with a well-equipped kitchenette and loo on-site. Please book with Ruth Preston: [ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk](mailto:ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk)

**Residential accommodation** is available in the refurbished Pyramid, where the rooms are now en-suite. Also, six rooms with individual designated bathrooms are available in the annex.

## WEBSITE NEWS

Nine months into our new website I'm deeply impressed with the rich resource it now offers to us Seculars, thanks – I should add – not to my own contribution as 'webmaster' but to a team of creative contributors.

Please, if you have not yet done a little exploratory browsing could I encourage you to do so. Two very good starting points, after the **Home** page, are the **Enrichment** and **Reading** menus. These are respectively an up to date summary of learning opportunities and a very extensive online Carmelite library ideal for initial and ongoing formation.

May I also recommend a 'click' to read or download our latest addition, a beautiful **Novena to St Teresa**. This is not only a wonderful support for private prayer but also a perfect distillation of our charism and spirituality.

So just as a reminder: the address is: [secular.carmel.org.uk](http://secular.carmel.org.uk). Happy browsing!

*Tim Burton*



### CENTRE FOR APPLIED CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY

Carmelite Priory, Boars Hill, Oxford, OX1 5HB

**The Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality continues to offer a range of wonderful programmes to help us enrich and develop our spiritual lives. More details of the following can be found can be found by following the CACS link on our website.**

A new nine-month **Residential Prayer Course** enables one to practise contemplative living according to one's own lifestyle. The course meets one weekend (Friday – Sunday) a month from November 2021 to July 2022, and is presented by the Living Prayer course team of the Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality and invited speakers. Food and accommodation are included.

The **Spiritual Enrichment Lecture Series** is a series of inspirational online talks designed to allow you to grow in your spirituality, from the safety and comfort of your own home.

All courses will be streamed live and, in many cases, you will have the opportunity to access the material after the talk. Participants will hear keynote speakers who will explore the practice of contemplative prayer and spiritual guidance in the Carmelite tradition.

**What is Contemplation?** invites you to join the CACS team in a series of weekend retreats to learn how to connect to God through the art of contemplative seeing, listening and reading. In each of the weekend retreats, you will learn different skills and understand how poetry or photography can help you connect with God.

29-31 October: Contemplative Listening  
12-14 November, Contemplative Reading

Find out more here:

<https://www.carmelite.uk.net/online-talks-retreats/contemplative-weekend-retreat/>

The two-year **Spiritual Direction Course** started in September this year.

The **Carmelite Contemplative Circles** are continuing to draw people to Carmel around the country.

The **Living Flame Initiative** is currently focussing on young people in Oxford.



# Living Prayer Course

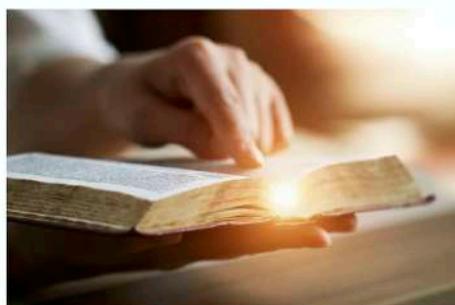
A Course in Contemplative Prayer & Living

November 2021 - July 2022

*Are you interested in deepening your prayer life? Do you have a heartfelt desire for a transforming experience of your spiritual journey?*

This innovative nine-month Prayer course will help you to deepen your experience of prayer. It will enable you to practice contemplative living according to your own lifestyle. The course meets one weekend (Friday evening- Sunday lunchtime) a month from **November 2021 to July 2022**, and is presented by the Living Prayer Course Team of the Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality (CACS).

TERM THEMES - *Awakened by the Beloved, Letting Go and Letting God, Receiving True Life from the Tree of Life, Resting in God and Resting from Self, Simplicity and Contemplative Discernment, The Contemplative School of Mary, Forgiveness and Healing in Relationships and Spiritual Commitment.*



*Grow in your knowledge and practice of Silent Prayer, Lectio Divina, Contemplative Liturgy, Psalmody, Prayer Journaling, the 'Gratitude Prayer' and Spiritual Reading.*

For more information: [www.carmelite.uk.net/livingprayer](http://www.carmelite.uk.net/livingprayer)  
Or contact: [ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk](mailto:ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk) | 07849 596 572

## Online Course of Spiritual Theology - Teresianum - Rome

A letter has been passed on to us by Fr Matt giving news of a course from the Teresianum that will be of great interest to the Secular Order:

Dear OCDS Members English speaking.

Peace and joy in Jesus

I am forwarding you this information from the Principal of the Teresianum, the Pontifical University of the Discalced Carmelites in Rome. They are important instrument for the formation in Spiritual Theology. You may forward it to your Province/Community OCDS. Thanks for you cooperation.

Enrolment until October 15th!

Sister Grace of the Carmel in Covington is available for information. Her email: [certificatesto@teresianum.net](mailto:certificatesto@teresianum.net)

Many greetings and thanks for your precious help,

Christof OCD

Tel. (39) 06 85443 264

email: [secularord@ocdcuria.org](mailto:secularord@ocdcuria.org)

[www.carmelitaniscalzi.com](http://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com)

The  
*Secular*  
*Carmelite*  
*Calendar*  
2022

Carmelite saints,  
other principal saints and all  
Feasts listed day by day  
in a convenient booklet  
to fit in your Office book



Copies are available from:  
Judith & Anthony Kirke  
42 Keyhaven Road  
Milford-on-Sea  
Lymington, SO41 0QY

Prices including postage:  
1 copy: £3.00  
2 copies: £5.60

£2.40 each for more copies  
sent to the same address.

cheque with your address  
with order please  
or pay by Paypal  
[a.kirke@talktalk.net](mailto:a.kirke@talktalk.net)

## Stop Press: A message from Father Alex

*Annette has forwarded us the following note and information, just received from Father Alex:*

Here in the Priory, we've been thinking of training people to facilitate spiritual conversations from a Carmelite perspective. We hope those trained can bring this gift to their parishes. We'll be training some of those who have completed one or other of our courses. I was hoping some seculars would be interested. What do you think? Could you pass on the message below to them, please? The training is free.

Friends,

As the world prepared itself to enter into the New Millennium Pope St. John Paul II asked a question:

'Is it not one of the "signs of the times" that in today's world, despite widespread secularization, there is a widespread demand for spirituality, a demand which expresses itself in large part as a renewed need for prayer?'

You'll agree with me that there's a real demand for our spirituality and the desire in people to pray. Those who have taken courses run by CACS often at the conclusion of their courses express a pertinent question:

'What comes next?'

Let me again use Pope St. John Paul II to direct our attention:

'Our Christian communities (re: parish) must become genuine "schools" of prayer, where the meeting with Christ is expressed not just in imploring help but also in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion, until the heart truly "falls in love." '

The question is about how to bring theory and pastoral practice together and so we have developed a free resource for anyone who may be interested in continuing the journey with us. To become part of our mission and help spread our spirituality in their own local parish level. Helping us to help parishes.

To provide others with an encounter with Christ through what you have received as Carmelites. To become the lived message of Carmel's life of prayer by introducing others to our Spirituality.

What's next? That's over to you now!

Contact me if you would be interested in helping us grow our mission and message.

With blessings and every good wish,

Fr Alex