



# The **VINE**



October 2022

News from the Secular Discalced Carmelite Community in England and Wales



*City of Avila: Statue of St Teresa*

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**Deadline for contributions to the next Vine: Monday 6 February 2023**

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Little Flower of Carmel  
1st October 2022

Dear Fellow Carmelites,

On this glorious feast day of our Little Flower, we too allow ourselves to be nurtured in the garden of our souls, and offer the flowers to be picked to bring our joyful vocation to others. Thérèse discovered a glorious secret: we don't have to earn a reward; we are simply asked to open ourselves to receive love beyond all telling. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.'

As a child, Thérèse was formed in the community of her loving family, and another, much more difficult community, formed her in the convent at Lisieux. It was in these challenging circumstances that she discovered her 'Little Way' which was to spread like wild-fire, even to soldiers in the trenches (both sides) in the First World War.

For us too, community is the heart of Carmel. During lock-down, we discovered new ways of being community and thankfully these discoveries continue to enrich and complete our community meetings. Like Thérèse, we are becoming open to a more inclusive way of being community.

Many of you have had elections, some delayed due to Covid, and how important these elections are! Presidents and their Councils are the backbone of our Order and need to be elected with care and due procedure (see Local Statutes Section V d). It is within our communities, as it was for Thérèse, that we give a whole-hearted 'yes' as we gather together to vote on positions of service.

It is reassuring that the Council makes decisions with the President, so the responsibility does not fall on just one pair of shoulders.

Similarly, the 'primary responsibility of the Council is the formation and Christian and Carmelite nurturing of members of the community' and it elects a Formation Director to co-ordinate this. The Constitutions take this seriously: 'The Council meets frequently and always when necessary in reference to taking care of formation programs and growth of their own community'. (Paragraph 49) Again, the responsibility of formation does not rest on one pair of shoulders, but on every member of the Council, and indeed, on every member of the community.

As well as elections, we have been making belated Promises, offering another 'yes' to live in the spirit of the evangelical counsels and Beatitudes, committing themselves to Carmel. As Edith Stein says, 'Make your heart free by the faithful fulfilment of your vows; then the flood of divine life will be poured into your heart until it overflows and becomes fruitful to all the ends of the earth.' (Hail Cross, Only Hope, Vol IV page 95) What a privilege for all of us to receive this vocation, to know that the Lord searches for us and that we are given the grace to respond wholeheartedly in Carmel. With the aid of all our Carmelite Saints, sisters and friars, let us support each other on this journey.

Your National Council is also a small community, and longed for the opportunity to meet together physically after years of Zoom meetings. Earlier this week we therefore travelled to Wistaston Hall, Crewe for an overnight stay, and Joan McInnes, our Minutes Secretary, has written a short report of our discussions for this issue of *The Vine*.

I look forward to visiting you all again over the next year or so to bring you the wider feel. We are also, of course, an international, world-wide community, as the *Communicationes* from Rome and letters to the Secular Order from our Provincial General express. A summary of aspects relevant to us from the recent Definitory Meeting and *Communicationes* out yesterday is in this issue of *The Vine*.

Let us pray to St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, our Little Flower, to abundantly cast down her roses upon us, flowers of care and support, of wisdom and inspiration in these troubled times. As the patron saint of missions, she will surely guide us. Next year there are several centenaries of Thérèse, and Rome will be sending us excerpts from her writings, and reading guides. In our own areas we may be inspired to use these for parish talks and reflections in silent prayer.

This has been a time of change and movement, a sign that the Holy Spirit is in our midst.

St Thérèse, pray for us.

Wishing you every blessing in Carmel,

*Annette*

## NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

Wistaston

26-27 September 2022

The National Council met at Crewe for the first time in person since before the pandemic. We've been meeting on Zoom during Covid but being able to meet physically again was a great blessing. Our meeting followed on from the Presidents' Conference at Launde Abbey in May where many of the issues affecting the Order had been discussed. Our intention at Wistaston, Crewe was to try to discern where the Holy Spirit is leading the Order in England and Wales now and how we could respond to the needs of different Secular communities.

Over the last few years Annette, on her visits to groups around the country, has become aware of those needs which Seculars had made known to her. In fact she has a list! And so we used this list to decide in our discussions on establishing the priorities for action over the next three years. The letter from the Superior General earlier this year described the main priority for the Secular Order as the growth of 'vibrant, well-functioning local communities and groups and effective missionary witness at local and provincial/national level'.

So perhaps the most important issue for us all is Formation: what helps us to live our lives as Secular Carmelites? Mark suggested that we consider the ends before the means: good Presidents and good Directors of Formation would help produce well-formed members and Deborah felt that each member should be able to contribute to Formation - everyone has something to offer. Forming the formators is especially important for those groups like mine in Norwich which only began just before Covid and where we don't have the historic experience of formation which communities acquire over the years.

We spoke of the necessity for accompaniment in discerning a true vocation and the need for ongoing formation and lived experience. Annette reminded us that the essentials for formation are available to all of us: The Constitutions, the Ratios and the Formation Document from Rome. There's a new publication of both the Constitutions and the Ratios which have combined, in a very accessible way, the various separate documents we had before. If you don't recognise any of these - ask your Regional Rep!

We felt that an important part of formation in our identity as Seculars was the annual retreat which Fr Matt gives for us. In fact, there is an obligation on us all to attend a Secular Retreat annually if we can. (Constitutions/Community IV)) We spent a lot of time discussing retreats - their location, duration and cost, aware that the coming year may be difficult for many. So what we've arrived at is a variety of options:

- **Ampleforth** from Monday to Friday 17 - 21 July 2023 for 29 people,
- **Aylesford** from Monday to Thursday 10-13 July 2023
- **Wistaston, Crewe:** a weekend retreat 8-10 September 2023, for up to 20 people.

In addition, Fr Matt has offered a one day retreat in Leeds; Mark is looking at the possibility of one and two day retreats in London and Cyprian is considering a day retreat in Oxford. Fr Matt also gives a retreat in Walsingham each autumn which is open to all. Hopefully there's something for everyone here!

However, residential retreats don't come cheap so Annette is setting up a fund to help subsidise the cost for those who need it.

As you know, we come together with the rest of the Order and the O.Carms, every year for our annual pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady in Walsingham. This year Fr Matt's talk went global as EWTN live-streamed the Pilgrims Mass! The date of our next pilgrimage is Saturday 24 June 2023.

We also set aside time to look at how we attract new members. While there's a steady stream of enquirers coming via the website, this is an issue which some of those in small groups were concerned about at Launde, although actually it is perhaps something that concerns us all: it is part of our apostolate, our sharing of the treasures of Carmel. Here are some things that might help:

- **National and local websites.** Our website ([secularcarmel.org.uk](http://secularcarmel.org.uk)) has been revamped over the last few years and now has great store of all things Secular. Check it out if you haven't already and you'll be amazed by the wealth of

material you'll find there. Some local communities also have their own websites. Worth considering?

- **Personal contact** is so important. People respond to a personal invitation, a tap on the shoulder.
- **Leaflets, information sheets.** We do have a Secular Order pamphlet to share or to leave at the back of the church - have you seen it? If you'd like some, ask your Regional Rep. There's also an introductory document which gives a brief outline of our history and our way of life. Or perhaps you have something similar you can share with the rest of us?
- **Diocesan directory.** All regional groups should be advertising in the local diocesan directory - and usually it's free!
- **Parish newsletters** are a very simple way of broadcasting the presence of a local Secular community.
- **Template for talking to parishes.** Annette has a template for parish talks if you'd like one. Or perhaps ask an outsider could give the talk eg a Regional Rep.
- **Worldwide celebration of centenaries.** Next year will bring worldwide celebration of anniversaries such as that of St Therese. Rome is producing excerpts from Manuscript A of her writings which would provide a good opportunity for Parish events such as Adoration with readings from Therese, talks, prayer groups.

We left Wistaston after two days of prayer and discussion with a renewed sense of community and commitment to serve.

*Joan MacInnes*

## FROM OUR GROUPS

### Wincanton Group

#### Retreat Weekend: Our Lady and St Bernard Monastery Brownshill

From 17th-19th June ten of the Wincanton Community gathered in the Bernadine Cistercian monastery in Stroud for our annual retreat under the direction of Fr John McGowan OCD.

#### Friday evening

Fr John had finally managed to get back from the Holy Land after airport delays both going and coming and told us about the pilgrimage he made there with 26 other pilgrims. He visited the Bethlehem Carmel and brought back an icon of Sister Miriam for us all. He talked about Capernaum and its importance in the life of Jesus where he lived with Peter for two years.

He then went on to talk about Synodality and the key issues for discussion and discernment in the months ahead. The booklet lists in order of importance: (a) the Church is mystery, (b) People of God (c) hierarchy (d) laity. (See *Lumen Gentium* from the 2nd Vatican Council Docs) Note that hierarchy is not top of the list, Fr John said! Clericalism as Pope Francis pointed out is still lurking!

## Saturday

Fr John gave each of us of us a tiny pod of mustard seeds to demonstrate the parable that Jesus gave on becoming a tree that the birds could nest in. Teresa of Avila planted this seed and now the Carmelite Order is worldwide.

He drew our attention to the importance that the friendship between Fr Gracian and Teresa of Avila was. He has written a book on this which is due to be published any day entitled *A Love Profound*, written in novel form with letters exchanged between Teresa and Gracian, a must read for us all!

Returning to our Carmelite vocation, Fr John said we have to live with imperfection in ourselves and others. We have ideals but as we can see with so many orders when their founders died, upheavals and changes occurred. We have to remember that God is greater than our sin and our failure to live up to our vocation.

## General Chapter

The General's report noted that the sense of freedom in the 1970's had an adverse effect on community. He looked at apostolic life versus prayer, community v. pastoral ministry, formation for the priesthood. A danger that we lost sight of the bigger picture. However we are still here today because of the Covenant God made with Teresa and her first nuns, love, prayer and intimacy with the Lord are the foundation stones of our vocation and we all have known people over the years who have inspired us to be Carmelites today.

Provincial chapters should be more inclusive, (all three branches of the Order participating, being more creative and ensuring that the Secular Order are there for its duration not just when their agenda is being discussed. We should find other ways of getting to know one another in the Order.

He noted the living faith among the young and the importance of responding to their need for inspiration. We must find ways of reaching out and bringing them into our rich inheritance.

## Declaration of Carmelite Charism: *Let's Walk Together*

Fr John found this document very inspirational. The Teresian vision of the human person. Our life of prayer essential as is fraternity and mission. We are the living stones, faithful to the past but living in the present. Friendship with God, fraternal life and mission are one. We return to our sources, adapting to the modern world and responding to our personal call to Carmel.

In the 7th Mansion, Teresa pointed out the magnetic beauty of the soul and its marvellous capacity. The human person is the dwelling place of God so we don't judge by the externals as does our modern world.

## Sunday

Our relationship with God. Nuns, friars and secular all live the Carmelite charism in their different ways. For Seculars our commitment is to family life and work. Our prayer life has an apostolic and missionary dimension. Our prayer has the power to change the world and others lives. We have a ministry of spirituality, spiritual direction, and so much else to share

with others. Above all all we follow Teresa's example who was conquered by the love of God. 'He loved me and gave Himself up for me' our lives like hers to be a personal relationship with Christ, obedient to Him. Friendship with the Beloved. God is in each one and he awaits a loving response. As Teresa said, prayer is a conversation between 2 people who love one another. Love gives birth to confidence. We don't have to try to prove anything with God (Dionne Warwick's song Don't bring me Flowers!) We are created for Love, we have a spousal love between us and Jesus.

We ended the retreat with Mass and Noreen Drake-Stoker making her Final Promise.

The community sent us off with a celebration lunch. Their life of prayer, silence, joy and loving service provided a wonderful atmosphere for our time together.

Thank you everyone for this time together, all the more special as it is a first retreat since the Covid restrictions.

*Caroline Dawnay*

*Nora Drake-Stoker has sent us the picture on the left and writes:*

'I was signing my Final Promise on the Altar observed by Fr John Mc Gowan OCD. The Wincanton Carmelite Group went out of their way to make it a very blessed day indeed for me.'



### **Blessed Marie-Eugène Community, Boars Hill, Oxford**

We are now ten members of six nationalities and in a few days a new aspirant from Mexico will be joining us.

After almost three years studying *I want to see God* by Blessed Marie-Eugène we had a little break, our first retreat since the foundation of our community five years ago. After Mass in the chapel, we met for a shared banquet of international flavours. The theme for the day was 'community' and getting to know one another; so, after picking names from a hat, we went off in pairs, for forty minutes, bringing with us an item which spoke about our journey in Carmel. Oh how we returned full of wonder, joy and chatter! So we went back to the chapel for a thanksgiving hour before the Blessed Sacrament.

Our new study is in two parts, first the Rule and Constitutions which we read and ponder over during the month, then come and share our thoughts or questions.

We have a rota to lead our study and everyone is on it, including those in formation.

In August, Steve Judd made his Final Promise. Fr Matt celebrated the Mass and joined us afterwards, with Steve's wife Marion, for another shared international lunch. We asked Fr Matt to talk about becoming Canonically Established, after which one member exclaimed: 'What are we waiting for?'. And so the process has now started. Please pray for our community

*Armelle Belcher, Servant-Leader*

### Cornwall Group

We have just returned from our group retreat. Unfortunately, we were unable to come to either of the national OCDS Retreats as they were too far away for some of us to travel. So we decided to have one nearer to home. We went as a group to the Retreat Centre at Fowey. This is a lovely house, in beautiful surroundings, on the outskirts of Fowey in Cornwall. It has a very peaceful atmosphere and is ideal for small groups of up to six in single rooms, or ten sharing.

In the absence of a retreat director, we used the DVDs from last year's Scripture and Spirituality conference, mainly on St John of the Cross. We found these very helpful and they provoked some lively discussion.

There is a lovely chapel in the Retreat Centre, with a view of the sea in the distance, and we were blessed with the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Some of us also enjoyed walks on the nearby cliffs and down to the beach at Readymoney Cove.

Father Michael, from St Austell, also came on one day and offered Mass for us, and gave us a very interesting talk on St John of the Cross. We are very grateful for his support of our small, but enthusiastic, group. Unfortunately, one of our members was unable to join us owing to Covid. We are praying for her speedy recovery.

We are looking forward to our Regional Day at Newton Abbot on the 22nd October, when we have one member who is being received into Formation.

*Joan Brown*

### St. Thérèse Community, Oxford

The St. Thérèse Community met for our normal monthly meeting on a beautiful hot sunny day on Monday 4 July. However, this was an extra special day, blessed by God and further uplifted by the making of definitive promises by two of our beloved members, Melanie Parris-Dollar and Chantal Haigh.

At the heart of our meeting was the Mass, celebrated in the Chapel. The ceremony of the making of promises, led by Fr. Matt was filled with much emotion & joy. It had been a long path for both of them and they were finally rewarded for their commitment, love and fidelity



to Carmel, to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and to the Saints of Carmel who so lovingly support us. The promises, as Fr. Matt emphasized, most surely marks a beginning as they embark on the journey of a lifetime.

Photos were taken after, followed by an abundance of food and celebratory cake in the Mount Carmel room, most carefully decorated in Carmelite style to mark the occasion, all in relaxed, happy companionship. Justin too, Mel's eldest son, joined us.

Fr. Matt stayed with us for the whole afternoon, crowning the afternoon with his



*Fr. Matt with Chantal Haigh & Melanie Parris-Dollar*



*Roswitha Watson, our President and Fr. Matt with the St. Thérèse Community*

presence.

*Annie Judge OCDS*

**Doncaster Community**

**Ampleforth Retreat, July**

*John Suckling writes:*

I have recently made my first promises and this was my first regional retreat. The setting of Ampleforth was stunning - new life all around us in the beautiful countryside and grounds. This was very much welcomed after the difficult times of Covid and the lockdown.

Unfortunately, not everyone who booked to come on the retreat were present due to testing positive for Covid. However, they were all present in our thoughts and prayers. The theme of the retreat was based on St. Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle - which I had read but not in any depth. Fr. Matt gave the retreat, and his insight really helped us all to have a better understanding of this work. It was a joy to meet others from different communities and to share with one another in fellowship. It really brought home to me what a gift Carmel is! It is very much like a family.

On Wednesday it was the feast of our Holy father St. Elijah and during the Mass we renewed our commitment and promises. Emma Halliday from the Darlington community made her first promises. Brian and Eszta Dunleavy, also from Darlington, were received into formation as was Lizzy Lazar from the Leeds

The hospitality we received was not wanting. We were able to join the brethren for the offices and Holy Mass. Thank you to all who made this retreat a memorable and joyous occasion for me. I hope to be able to go next year please God!

*Emma Halliday writes:*

Thanks to covid this was only my second retreat with Carmel. However it was definitely unforgettable! The first reason was the sweltering heatwave on the first two days when the temperature reached 38 degrees!

However the second-and much better reason was that I made my First Promises down in the Abbey crypt. It was a beautiful Mass presided over by Fr Matt and I got cards and presents afterwards. Fr Matt gave some wonderful talks on the Interior Castle. What a marvellous and eye opening book it is! Very beautiful spirituality and full of common sense. I should like to thank Mary for organising the retreat and ensuring my Promises went smoothly

## FROM THE REGIONS

### Eastern Regional Day

Eighteen Secular Carmelites from the Eastern Region met at Quidenham Carmelite Monastery on Saturday 4 October. The beautiful early autumn weather seemed so in keeping with the joy we felt at coming together. Our morning session was greatly enriched by a talk from Father Matt in which he described Thérèse's path to sainthood from the initial publication of her life to her adoption as 'saint of the trenches' by soldiers of both sides during the First World War. He also explained how Thérèse strongly influenced the spirituality of both Fr Marie Eugène and Edith Stein, particularly in the early stages of their Carmelite life.



At the Mass that followed Hugh and Shirley Lyons (pictured) made their Final Promises. Thank you, Shirley, for the lovely celebratory cake which you baked for the occasion.

In the afternoon Mary Gledhill gave us a short and very knowledgeable talk on the significance of the Promises. As we all make our spiritual journey in Carmel it is so valuable to be periodically reminded of the profound implications of our commitment to the Rule and to one another.

The day ended with Evening Prayer in the church, another joyful expression of our togetherness as Carmelites.

A special thanks must go to our Regional Representative Joan MacInnes for organising this event and to the nuns for their hospitality.

*Tim Burton*

## Central Regional Day

On Saturday 24th September, about twenty-two enthusiastic Seculars met at the superb St Thomas Centre of Northampton Cathedral for our Regional Day. We were again blessed to be joined by the Bishop of Northampton, Bishop David Oakley, who is a Secular Carmelite. He chose as his motto **Beati Pauperes Spiritu** 'Blessed are the poor in spirit', reflecting our Carmelite Promise to live in the spirit of the Beatitudes.

Each President or Group Leader gave a short report on their communities, and we were delighted to hear that Blessed Marie-Eugène Group now has enough members to make an application to Rome to be canonically established.

Cyprian, our Regional Representative, then interviewed Bishop David with prepared questions, which followed on from the wonderful talk Bishop David gave at our Regional Day last year. (He says he has only one Carmelite talk!) Our Bishop told us of the key moments in his life in discerning his vocation as a priest, starting with a question in class, aged seven, 'what will you be when you are grown-up?'

We enjoyed hot soup and crusty bread and home-made cake for lunch before Fr Matt talked to us about the forthcoming Carmelite centenaries for St Thérèse and St John of the Cross. He pointed out that centenaries connect us with our history; God speaks through history. He then explored the legacy of Therese of Lisieux seen through the eyes of Marie-Eugène and Edith Stein. They each give us key insight into the phenomenon that Thérèse is.

Marie-Eugène spoke of little Thérèse a pouring out of the divine love in our souls, floods of divine love for the world. We are encouraged to walk in her path, to live her spirituality and to partake in her mission, which is the mission of the Church.

Edith Stein sees that people are wanting to know more about Carmel, and Therese opened the door to let the Carmelite spirit into the world and into everyday lives.

Thérèse became herself in Lisieux Carmel, for the community provided the environment in which she could grow. On 16th July 1940, Edith wrote that even in the little details of life, Thérèse gave herself to love. The Church's mission is to be love and to communicate love.

After this inspiring talk Fr Matt celebrated Mass and we wended our way home, full of the fruits of the day. Just being together was the greatest joy and mutual support.

## OCDS RETREATS

This year has brought us the joy of being able to meet together for residential Secular Order retreats at Ampleforth and at Aylesford. For many of us, it was our first visit to Aylesford O.Carm Priory, the first home in England of the Carmelite friars escaping from the Holy Land. The beauty and spirituality of the ancient

Over the five days, Fr Matt gave us seven talks on how to read St Teresa's *Book of Her Life* in a way that greatly helps our understanding, not only of the book, but also of Teresa herself. The audio recordings of the talks (except the first introductory talk) are available on the OCDS website. Transcriptions of talks 1-4 and talk 6 can also be accessed on the website. Transcription of Talks 5 and 7 is work in progress.

At Boars Hill Retreat Centre, the annexe is to be rebuilt, work due to start in March 2023. While CACS on-line retreats and courses will continue, there will be no residential retreats until the work is completed (estimated to take 18 months).

Dates for forthcoming retreats are given below.

*Annette Goulden*

All of the following are with Fr Matt Blake OCD, National Delegate to the Secular Order

### 2023

**The Friars, Aylesford:** July 10-13, Monday afternoon to Thursday lunchtime

**Ampleforth Abbey:** July 17-21, Monday afternoon to Friday morning

**Wistaston Hall, Crewe** September 8-10, Friday evening to Sunday lunchtime.

### 2024

**Ampleforth Abbey** 15-19 July, Monday afternoon to Friday morning

## NEWS FROM ROME

This is a brief summary of relevance to the Secular Order.

The General Definitory of the Discalced Carmelites met in Rome from the 5th to 16th of September. Through the letter circulated to all Discalced Carmelites, they wished to inform us of the most relevant issues which they have been discussing in recent times.

Feedback on The Declaration on the Teresian Carmelite Charism continues to be gathered, from the reading and reflection that has taken place in the communities throughout this year. By means of the General Curia's YouTube channel, short guidance videos prepared by the Definitors have been offered to encourage and accompany the reception of the Declaration in the communities.

Initial formation, which has a decisive influence on the lives of religious is highly important, as is the preparation for solemn profession (the so-called second

Regarding youth ministry, they have received information about the international meeting of young Carmelites that is scheduled for July 31, 2023 in Fatima, taking advantage of the celebration of World Youth Day in Lisbon (August 1-6). More detailed information on the preparation of the event and the registration of participants will be circulated.

Another topic of the General Chapter, which took place a year ago, concerned the celebration of the centenaries of our saints. Following the Chapter suggestion, the Definitory proposes to the Order a program of personal and community reading of the autobiographical Manuscripts and other texts of Thérèse of the Child Jesus, distributed over the next three years. The material for 2023 will be distributed before the end of this year, which will consist of 8 sheets with texts chosen from Manuscript A and with suggestions for reflection and community discussion.

### The Secular Carmel

With Fr. Ramiro Casale, General Delegate for the Secular Order, the Definitory reflected on the situation of the Secular Order in the various parts of the world, following the recent visits he has carried out. The Secular Order is globally in a time of growth, and the total number of members is currently around 30,000. The preparation of an international Congress of the Secular Order continues, which would be held predictably in Spain in 2026 (coinciding with the centenaries of St. John of the Cross).

The Definitory analysed and approved the particular statutes of the Secular Order of Portugal, Karnataka-Goa and Warsaw. It has also received and discussed the formation programme for the Secular Order in Ireland.

*Fr Miguel Márquez Calle, General, Fr Agustí Borrell i Viader, Fr Pius James D'Souza, Fr Philbert Namphande, Fr Roberto Maria Pirastu, Fr Christianus Surinono*

### Some selections of news from around the world

#### Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, we have a parish, a monastery of Discalced Carmelite nuns and Secular Carmelites. They are presences, like so many others in Nicaragua, who have as their sole interest that of living and proclaiming the Gospel by their life and care for the dignity of every human being and their freedom, with prayer and without cost.

Dear Church of Nicaragua, with Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross, with all the Saints of Carmel, we wish to invoke and ask for all of you the humble boldness and freshness of those who are in the middle of the people in order to give life and sow seeds of fraternity and reconciliation. We make your pain and restlessness our own.

*Fr Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD*

## Rome

### *New Minor Basilica*

Following the formal request submitted to the Vatican by the Bishop of Avila, Monsignor Gil Tamayo, supported by the Carmelite Order, the Nuncio of His Holiness in Spain sent to Monsignor Gil Tamayo on July 13 the decree conferring the title of Minor Basilica to the church of the monastery of St. Teresa of Jesus, built on the birthplace of the Saint of Ávila.

## Youth

The first international Youth meeting on *Mysticism and Humanism, 'The challenge of interiority'* was held at CITEs [Centro Internacional Teresiano Sanjuanista] in Avila, from July 17 to 24. Five themes were discussed in the first five days of the Meeting:

- The labyrinth: the challenge of interiority
- The freedom to be oneself
- Jesus, the mysticism that humanizes
- I am I and my relationships, and without them I am lost
- Pilgrims of life

After each conference, a series of activities were proposed to the young people: the creation of labyrinths, a group reflection workshop, a moment of personal reflection and silence and listening to different life testimonies.

The program of the meeting also included two cultural activities.

## Burundi

Saturday, August 21, 2022, at the Mary Queen of Carmel Spiritual Center in Gitega, the 2nd Youth Festival was held on the topic 'Looking to the future. Empathy and the will to reconcile'. This theme concluded a year of community apostolate marked by three weekends of human and spiritual formation of young people.

## Vietnam

July 13, 2022 was a day of great joy for the Discalced Carmelite Friars in Vietnam: the monastery was blessed and the altar of the first chapel of the Order in Vietnam was consecrated.

## A CARMELITE SUMMER

*Tim Burton writes:*

Without specifically planning it, my wife and I have made several Carmelite connections on our summer travels.

After a week staying in rural Burgundy at the beginning of July we ended our break with a few days in Dijon. This enabled us to visit the shrine of St Elizabeth of the Trinity (right) in the great medieval church of Saint Michel.



On our last Sunday in France we were also able to drive out into the forested hills above the city in late afternoon sunshine to visit the present Carmel de Dijon near the village of Flavignerot. Here we attended Vespers with the community, pleased that the layout of the chapel gave us a sense of truly sharing worship with the dozen or so sisters. When the office ended we spent a few minutes in quiet reflection before St Elizabeth's cell (right). This was brought to Flavignerot from its



original site in the city centre and faithfully reconstructed. (Apologies for the reflection from the glass screen.)



On a lighter note, on visiting Auxerre at the start of our holiday we were able to purchase a bottle of beer brewed by the Carmelite nuns in Sens. I do wonder if this time-honoured form of income generation couldn't be taken up by one of our English communities!

Much more recently we enjoyed a week's break in Elgin in the far northeast of Scotland. Just before we crossed the new Forth bridge we paused to visit the medieval church at Queensferry.

Now in the care of the Scottish Episcopal church this is the only medieval Carmelite foundation in the United Kingdom still used for regular Christian worship.

We were given a very warm welcome and - although preparations for a folk evening were in progress - allowed to take a photo of the chancel.



*Priory Church, South Queensferry: exterior and chancel*

## OUR CARMELITE COAT OF ARMS

*The following article was written and given to the St. Joseph's OCDS Group, Oxford, by Liz Beaton, OCDS*

Our coat of arms is a wonderful emblem. I feel we should be proud to live under this beautiful shield, to become part of this heritage of holiness - which we see through the witness of Elijah to the living God, through the consecration to Jesus, Our Lord and Saviour, while under the protection of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God.

The evolution of this coat of arms and the understanding of its several parts is fascinating. I am grateful for the variety of sources on the internet and, thereby, some differences of interpretation as to what the shield represents.

The structure we see is as follows:

1. The Motto
2. The Flaming Sword
3. The Crown of Gold
4. The Seal of Mount Carmel
5. The Halo of Stars.



The shield first appeared at the end of the 15th century, on the cover of a book about the life of St. Albert, dated 1499. It was in the form of a vexillum- a sign, standard or banner. Over time it morphed into the heraldic shield we have today.



## The Seal of Mount Carmel

This is described as a seal but it looks like a shield to me. Mount Carmel is the centre, its tip reaching to the sky. The brown lower part represents the brown habit of the Carmelite and the white the cloak that is worn on occasions: sometimes in choir, maybe at professions, special meetings. The three stars are six pointed. The six pointed star is an ancient Christian symbol for God, it is called the Creator's star. It represents the fact that all the persons of the Trinity were present at creation. It is a hexagram, two overlaid equilateral triangles that form a six pointed star. It has an association with Judaism but the hexagram symbol did not originate in Judaism. It seems that it has been Christianised.

The **mountain** itself is a symbol of Christ.

The **three stars** represent the three great periods in the history of Carmel:

1. Star inside the mountain - the prophetic era - from the time of Elijah to the time of St. John the Baptist.
2. When the order spread throughout the east and the west - from the time of St. John to that of the first Latin General, named Berthold.
3. From Berthold to the end of time.

However, they can stand as a remembrance to the members of the Carmelite order.

The star inside the mountain represents the Carmelites who are still on their way to the summit of Mount Carmel (heaven) - that's us!

The other two stars represent all those Carmelites who have gone before us and reached the goal of their life's vocation: union with God in love in the eternal joy of heaven.

The summit is marked by the Cross, the means by which we travel. The Cross has been associated with reform movements within Carmel and is now usually associated with the Discalced reform.

Otherwise, the O.Carms see Star 1 as representing the Virgin Mary, the Star of the Sea; Stars 2 and 3 as representing Elijah and Elisha. So the stars emphasise the Marian character of the order and its Elijan origins. More recently though the two upper stars represent Mary and Elijah the white star as before represents the Carmelites of today ascending the mountain that is Christ. However there is another suggestion - that the central star was originally an opening, not a star, which represented the cave in which Elijah sheltered when the Lord appeared to him as the still small wind. This would suggest the silent and separated life of Carmel.

Another thought is that the white star symbolises the purity of the life of the friars, as does the white cloak or mantle, the purity of thoughts and desires.

## The Motto

This is written on the banner surrounding the seal.

The heartfelt cry of Elijah, surrendered and dedicated to living in union with the one, true God and the defence of God in the face of apostasy. I Kings 19:10. 'With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of Hosts.' This is seen as referring to the life of divine intimacy which defines the character of Carmel.

### The Flaming Sword

Another reference to Elijah and his fiery spirit. We see an arm and hand which holds a flaming sword, above the crown and which penetrates the banner. 'The prophet Elijah arose like a fire, and his word burned like a torch.' Eccl.48:1. Carmelites seek to carry continually, in their minds and hearts, 'the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God.' Ephesians 6:17b. And 'to live constantly with a loving, contemplative awareness of His presence, meditating day and night on the law of the Lord.'

### The Crown of Gold

The Crown of Gold represents the Kingdom of God. He is the sovereign Lord of Carmel. The Carmelite vocation is a calling to an unswerving allegiance to Jesus Christ our Lord and King. To serve Him with 'a pure heart and a steadfast conscience.' In this service Carmelites take their inspiration from the Blessed Virgin Mary, patron of the Order and the two great reformers, St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross. The Crown can also symbolise Mary's queenship.

The Crown used is the ducal crown of the Marquesses of Spain, which symbolises the nobility of the Order.

### The Halo of Stars

This appears as a semicircle of 12 stars, a typical depiction of Our Lady, recalling the apocalyptic vision of a woman clothed with the sun with a crown of 12 stars on her head, seen in Revelation 12:1. But these 12 stars also signify the 12 points of the rule:

Obedience, Chastity, Poverty, Reconciliation, Mental Prayer, Divine Office, Chapter, Abstinence from Meat, Manual Labour, Silence, Humility, Supererogation the last meaning good works performed over and above what is required for their own salvation the merit of which is held to be transferable to others in need of indulgence.

### Bibliography

NB This talk is a composite of the material I found on the internet.

- The primary source- Our Coat of Arms [https://ocdfriarsvocation.org>welcome](https://ocdfriarsvocation.org/welcome)
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- The six pointed star. The United Methodist Church. [https://www.umc.org>content>sixpointed star](https://www.umc.org/content/sixpointed_star)

A POEM FOR CARMEL

Thank you to Kathy Twist for sending us her artwork and poem based on a well-known icon of the Martin family.



## CARMEL FROM THE BEGINNINGS: PART ONE

*Thanks to Barbara Thacker for sending us this short historical sketch. She originally prepared it for a Carmelite retreat at Boars Hill. The second part will be published in the next Vine.*

### A distant beginning

Perhaps the beginning of the Carmelite Order is far back in time with Elijah: *'Then the prophet Elijah arose like a fire, and his word burned like a torch.'*

Ecclesiasticus 48:1

*It was Elijah who said, 'The Lord lives in whose sight I stand; and With zeal I have been zealous for the Lord God of hosts.'*

No Mount Carmel - no Elijah

Then silence! I did find one piece of information that in 1155 St. Berthold, an Italian priest/monk settled on Mt. Carmel with ten ex-crusaders who lived as hermits in caves. Another piece of information! He was not Italian but a Norman French crusader who was at the battle of Hattin in 1187 and had a vision of Jesus denouncing the evil ways of the soldiers and ultimately came to Mt. Carmel. However, there is no evidence that he was the founder of the Carmelites. He stayed on Mt. Carmel until he died in 1195.

### Foundation

It's possible that it was between 1187 and 1192 that Latin hermits settled near the fountain of Elijah. After the third crusade in 1190 (led by Kings Richard 1st of England, Philip Augustus of France and the German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa), a peace treaty was signed with Saladin which would (from 1192-7) give pilgrims free access to the Holy Places.

Who were the Carmelites? Probably Europeans - English, French, German. Crusader knights and their followers; so there would have been both nobles and freemen, who spoke a multiplicity of languages. Norman French, Anglo Saxon, French, German and Italian.

How did they live? We don't know but it seems most likely that they would have lived in a 'laura'. The word means 'pathway'. A laura was/is a group of hermits living in cells (nowadays small self-contained houses) grouped round an oratory or chapel. There is a present day laura on Mt Carmel - I think it is O.Carm. And there are at least two in the United States - one Teresian and the other Diocesan.

How many were Carmelites were there on Mount Carmel? We don't know. Neither do we know how many nationalities there were. How did they spend their time? In solitude, prayer, and work; they needed to do some sort of work to provide for themselves; growing vegetables, making baskets; making their habits. Were there craftsmen among them? More than likely, weavers, tailors and bakers perhaps. But all the time they were living in the heart of Jesus and becoming rooted there.

Between 1206 and 1214 the hermits approached Albert Avogadro, bishop and Patriarch of Jerusalem to ask for a Rule of Life. It is the shortest of the Monastic Rules but contains more than 39 biblical references. Like the Gospels themselves it is Christocentric.

However, in 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council sought to contain the proliferation of new religious groupings and the Carmelites felt their existence threatened - which it no doubt was. So they tried for, and eventually in 1226 received, initial ratification from Pope Honorius III which was confirmed in 1229 by Pope Gregory IX.

### Exodus

By 1238 the Saracens were taking over the Holy Land meaning that Mt. Carmel was becoming increasingly unsafe. This makes me think of the seven Cistercian monks in Algeria who were assassinated in 1996 by Muslim extremists; and in our present day of the Carmelite sisters in Zing, Northern Nigeria, threatened by Boko Haram and who have decided to stay.

Between 1240 and 1242 the hermits left Mt. Carmel. It must have been a terrible wrench as well as extremely traumatic; leaving a well ordered life of silence and solitude to go they knew not where. By land and sea brought the dangers of shipwreck; of thieves and starvation. Back to the countries they left many years ago could bring noise, hardship and chaos.

They would be forced to discover in every place a 'spiritual' Carmel - an inner solitude, silence and prayer of the heart - in the midst of busy towns and cities'.

Some were to go Cyprus, Sicily, southern France and England. In 1242 a Sir Nicholas de Grey returned from the Holy Land bringing Carmelites with him to Aylesford. Others made the long journey to Northumberland to Hulne near Alnwick because, it is said, it bore some slight resemblance to Mt. Carmel. At the dissolution it was given to the Percy family (the Dukes of Northumberland). The ruins of the Priory are still there and can be visited (but there are no facilities).

Would it be possible to continue to live as hermits? (Some did). Their cloaks it has been said that reminded them of Elijah in the chariot of fire, throwing his cloak to Elisha. The dark stripes are reminiscent of scorch marks! These much-loved striped cloaks were a huge problem. In some countries they were called Devil's clothing!

The design of the robes became such a scandal that Pope Alexander VI ordered the Friars to give up their stripes but it took 25 years and a papal bull issued by Boniface VIII banning stripes from all religious orders before they gave in and became known as the White Friars.

*To be continued.*

## OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

*Thank you to Teresa Lynch for sending us this seasonal reflection.*

The month of October each year is dedicated to the Most Holy Rosary. This is primarily because the liturgical feast of Our Lady of the Rosary is celebrated annually on 7 October. At every one of her six apparitions in Fatima, from May to October 1917, Our Lady specifically asked for the Rosary to be said every day, and as if to emphasise its importance even further, in her final apparition on 13th October 1917 she declared: 'I am the Lady of the Rosary'.

### The Fatima Apparitions

The three little children at Fatima: Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta, were asked by Our Lady for the rosary to be prayed at each apparition.

May 13th: 'Pray the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world and an end to the war.'

June 13th: 'I want you to pray the Rosary every day.'

July 13th: 'I want you to continue to pray the Rosary every day in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary, to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war because only she can help you.'

August 19th: 'Continue praying the Rosary every day'

September 13th: 'Continue to pray the Rosary every day in order to obtain the end of the war.'

October 13th: 'I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the Rosary every day.' (At this last apparition, along with St. Joseph with the Child Jesus blessing the world, the children saw Our Lord bless the world, standing next to Our Lady who was resembling Our Lady of Sorrows and then resembling Our Lady of Mount Carmel).

It was on the rosary that Our Lady placed the greatest emphasis in her message and peace plan. The reason for it was made clear by the declaration on the Rosary by St John Paul II when he first travelled to Fatima in 1982, and subsequently in the luminous teaching on the value and power of the Rosary in one's daily life as a Catholic (St John Paul II, Apostolic letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, October 2002).

The teaching in this document, which is easily readable, is an inspirational aid to understanding the meaning and relevance of praying the Rosary in one's daily life. It is perhaps best summarised in the following pronouncement:

'The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a Christocentric prayer ... it has all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety, of which it can be said to be a compendium.'

(St John Paul II - *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 2002, n. 1).

so as to make us fear for the future of this fundamental and indispensable institution and, with it, for the future of society as a whole. The revival of the Rosary in Christian families will be an effective aid to countering the devastating effects of this crisis typical of our age' (n. 6).

By immersing us in the mysteries of the Redeemer's life, the Rosary ensures that what He has done and what the Liturgy makes present is profoundly assimilated and shapes our existence (n. 13). Contemplating the scenes of the Rosary in union with Mary is a means of learning from her to 'read' Christ, to discover his secrets and to understand his message ... she teaches by obtaining for us in abundance the gifts of the Holy Spirit (n. 14).

'Never do the life of Jesus and that of Mary appear so deeply joined as in the Rosary. Mary lives only in Christ and for Christ!' (n. 15)

(St John Paul II - *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 2002)

St Louis de Montfort, a saint renowned for his devotion to Our Lady has said:

'Among all devotions, that which most consecrates and conforms a soul to our Lord is devotion to Mary, his Holy Mother. The more a soul is consecrated to Mary, the more it is consecrated to Jesus'

(St Louis de Montfort, *Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, p. 84).

### Our Lady's promises

The Blessed Virgin Mary made these promises to Saint Dominic and to all who pray the rosary that 'Whatever you ask in the Rosary will be granted.'

1. Whoever shall faithfully serve me by the recitation of the Rosary, shall receive signal graces.
2. I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the Rosary.
3. The Rosary shall be a powerful armour against hell, it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies.
4. The Rosary will cause virtue and good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant mercy of God; it will withdraw the hearts of men from the love of the world and its vanities and will lift them to the desire for eternal things. Oh, that souls would sanctify themselves by this means.
5. The soul which recommends itself to me by the recitation of the Rosary, shall not perish.
6. Whoever shall recite the Rosary devoutly, applying himself to the consideration of its sacred mysteries shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not

chastise him in His justice, he shall not perish by an unprovided death; if he be just, he shall remain in the grace of God, and become worthy of eternal life.

7. Whoever shall have a true devotion for the Rosary shall not die without the sacraments of the Church.
8. Those who are faithful to recite the Rosary shall have during their life and at their death the light of God and the plenitude of His graces; at the moment of death, they shall participate in the merits of the saints in paradise.
9. I shall deliver from Purgatory those who have been devoted to the Rosary.
10. The faithful children of the Rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in Heaven.
11. You shall obtain all you ask of me by the recitation of the Rosary.
12. All those who propagate the Holy Rosary shall be aided by me in their necessities.
13. I have obtained from my Divine Son that all the advocates of the Rosary shall have for intercessors the entire celestial court during their life and at the hour of death.
14. All who recite the Rosary are my sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters of my only Son Jesus Christ.
15. Devotion of my Rosary is a great sign of predestination.

### Benefits of the Rosary

We can receive many benefits from praying the Rosary. We can have peace of mind, an increase in love for Jesus, unity with our Church, follow Mary's request, understand better the will of God in our lives, and develop a greater focus on God instead of ourselves.

Throughout her apparitions, Mary makes predictions and warns that unless everyone prays, repents, and abandons sin, the world will suffer war, turmoil, and persecution of the Church. The current war in Ukraine and wars elsewhere, are very much in need of prayer and most specifically the Rosary. Additional to the Rosary daily, the other ways recommended by Our Lady of Fatima for the faithful to take part in bringing peace to the world and to the Church were:

- the Brown Scapular
- sacrifices for the conversion of sinners
- reparation to the Immaculate Heart by the Five First Saturdays' devotion.

By these means, along with the consecration of Russia, (achieved by Pope Francis on 25 March 2022), she promises that her Immaculate Heart will triumph, bringing souls to Christ, her Son and that this triumph of Our Lady will bring about the triumph of the Catholic Church.

Our Lady of the Rosary and of Mount Carmel, please pray with and for us.

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## PROMISES MADE

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	Hugh Lyons	Final Promise
Wincanton	Nora Drake-Stoker	Final Promise
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St Thérèse, Oxford	Melanie Paris-Dollar	Final Promise
	Chantal Haigh	Final Promise

## POSTSCRIPT

### Community of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Teresa, Kensington

Following three years of devoted service, Marisa retired as our President. She led the community through the pandemic, ensuring we met regularly via Zoom and in person when able to do so. She developed a considerable number of initiatives for our community, with an emphasis on developing our appreciation of the charism of the Teresian Carmel.

We held our elections in September which were presided over by Fr Matt - we were delighted to welcome him to our meeting. Christian Kendall-Daw was elected as President alongside three Councillors: Gloria Celis, Caroline Moutell and Mary Jeyaseelan. We also celebrated Ngozi Igweani-Gilmartin making her First Promise, we wish her every blessing.

*Christian Kendall-Daw*