



# The **VINE**



October 2020

News from the Secular Discalced Carmelite Community in England and Wales



*Pictured: Ruins of Hulne Carmelite Priory, Northumberland*

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Deadline for contributions to the next Vine: Monday 8 February 2021

Contact: Tim Burton OCDS [carmel@kinabra.net](mailto:carmel@kinabra.net) 01328 700165

## Carmel in the Cloud

Dear Fellow Carmelites,

I write this on the memorial of St John Henry Newman, and am reminded of his beautiful hymn:

Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,  
Lead Thou me on.

We are indeed in the midst of Covid gloom and doom, in a cloud of unknowing. By the time you read this, you may be in lock-down again under the impact of the second wave of the pandemic. Our opportunities for contact with each other may be further curtailed – real, touching, human contact that heals and consoles, that shares joy and sorrow, that communicates love and compassion. A son is pulled away from his grieving mother by the grave-side, a granny cannot cuddle her gurgling grandchild.

In this ever-changing Covid cloud, we are living a life of loss: loss of informal and spontaneous contact with each other, loss of freedom to travel in safety, loss of days without the threat from an invisible bug. In spite of heroic efforts to support each other, these cumulative losses engender a sense of grief; we grieve for what we have lost, and see no light on the horizon.

Yet John Henry Newman tells us that, ‘One alone is constant, One alone is true to us, One alone can be all things to us.’ Are we allowed to put ourselves under his guidance? This surely is the only question. In this Covid gloom we, as Carmelites, know that God is hidden in the cloud. The cloud leads us as it led the Israelites across the desert. Moses entered the cloud on the mountain to converse with God. Jesus disappeared into a cloud as he ascended into heaven. We enter this cloud, live in this cloud, with confidence in God’s guidance and in communion with each other through prayer and steadily living our Carmelite vocation.

However, the restrictions imposed by Covid regulations are a challenge for us in the Secular Order. How do we replace our physical monthly meetings and Regional Days? Can we have elections? How do we see through formation programmes and accept Promises? How do we share our Carmelite charism with newcomers? The warmth and conviviality of chatting over a cup of tea and slice of home-made cake is hard to replace with a Zoom cuppa alone in the kitchen. We miss being in one holy space of silent prayer together. We lose out on growth in self-knowledge through interacting with each other seated in a circle or round a table. Smiling through the window is a meagre alternative to hugging someone in our group who is sick.

Your National Council will be dedicating their next meeting in November to looking at these questions and how we can proffer a shaft of light in this cloud. Sadly, our website editor, Paul Swinhoe, remains very unwell and we will be looking at how we can manage our OCDS website during this time. This year, I would have visited many more Communities and Groups, especially in East Anglia, so would like to offer a virtual visit to any of your meetings if you would like that. Similarly, if anyone is organising a Regional meeting, I would be happy to join you in any way possible.

Through clouds thick and thin, we are together. We remember St Elijah and the 'little cloud no bigger than a person's hand' that marked the end of drought and is a symbol of Mary our Mother. She will hold us safe; she stood before the Cross and stands beside us all, as Carmelites in the cloud.

With love and prayer in Carmel,

*Annette*

## NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

### **St Teresa and St Hugh Peterborough**

It is now past eight years since our first Carmelite prayer meeting took place in April 2012. From the very start we have been led and spiritually motivated by Jane Nicholson whose has been our mentor and guide. Now Jane has asked Susanne Myall to give the presentation talks. Since then we have had several enquiries from those willing to explore a potential vocation to the Secular Carmelites.

Now we have two fully professed. One was ready to make his first promise in April but sadly this had to be postponed until a later date due to the Covid-19. We also have another ready for admission to formation plus two enquirers. But everything is on hold until the Covid situation improves.

We started with our first Zoom prayer meeting on the 15th of May and since then we have been meeting on Zoom every second week and sometimes third week. However, not all of our members are able to join us on Zoom for various reasons. We miss them all and we remember them in our prayers and intercession.

We follow the same prayer routine which we used to before Zoom with the exception of Lectio Divina and Adoration.

Our virtual prayer meetings have been a lifeline during this pandemic but we hope and pray that our original face-to-face group meetings resume soon.

*Kevin Joseph OCDS, Group Leader*

## **Blessed Marie Eugene Community, Oxford**

We have continued our monthly meetings via Zoom. Although these are shorter, restricted by the microphone on/off limitations and lacking in physical contact, there has been a better attendance at all meetings and a greater desire to be a community.

We continue to study *I want to see God* by Blessed Marie Eugene, OCD. This has turned out to be, on several occasions, a truly lived experience. For example, the chapters 'Distractions and dryness' and 'Spiritual friendship' were deeply lived by several members and this in turn enlightened and encouraged the whole community. Not an easy read, but worth the effort. Even during shutdown the Holy Spirit does wonderful things!

A very brave new aspirant joined us for the first time by Zoom at our August meeting. What a great life-giving and joy-filled blessing!

With effect from November, we will be changing our meeting dates to the second Saturday of every month to avoid the half-term traffic when things get back to normal.

*Armelle Belcher OCDS, Group Leader*

## **The Holy Trinity and Our Lady of Doncaster**

### **In Memoriam: Jaqueline Frances Long OCDS**

Jaqui was a member of the Doncaster Community who lived in Sheffield. She was received for Formation in October 1999 and made her First Promise on the 24th April, 2008. Deteriorating health subsequently prevented her attending the monthly meetings of the community and she died in the Palliative Care Unit of Sheffield's Northern General Hospital on 26th August 2020.

Born in Nottinghamshire on 22nd April 1949, she was the eldest of four children in a devout Catholic family. Her father, to whom she was extremely close, died when she was only nine, and her bond with her mother was particularly deep. As a young woman she considered joining the religious life but chose instead to become a State Registered Nurse and midwife.

After training in Birmingham and London she came to Sheffield and began work at the Jessop Hospital for Women. Jaqui married in 1974 and thereafter devoted herself to bringing up her three children: David, Elizabeth and Jonathan. She later resumed her nursing career and worked at the Ophthalmology Department of the Hallamshire Hospital and the Orthopaedic Department of the Northern General in Sheffield.

Her life centred on her faith, her children and her wider family. She was a long-serving parishioner at the Sacred Heart Church in Hillsborough and a founder member of its Jubilee Choir. It was here that Father Andrew Browne, OCDS, celebrated her Requiem Mass.

Jaqui was one of those very special people who radiate goodness. When friends have spoken of her after her death such epithets as beautiful, cheerful, selfless, kindly, ebullient, heart of gold, infectious laugh, are often heard. She was fervent in her devotion to the Carmelite charism and the nurturing of her interior life. Those of us who met or knew her were privileged. A great source of Christian inspiration to her many friends, she never failed to provide a warm welcome to her home, even when she was very ill. One always felt happier and closer to Our Lord after having spent time with her.

*Fiona Connor, OCDS*

### **From garden centre to Carmelite grotto**

*The following article first appeared on the website for the Diocese of East Anglia ([www.rcdea.org.uk](http://www.rcdea.org.uk)), who have kindly agreed for it to be reproduced here.*

*A dusty unwanted statue in a garden centre has become the central feature of a Carmelite grotto. Fr Paul Vincent OCD from St Mark 's Ipswich tells the story.*

It is our Carmelite tradition that wherever we go we encourage the devotion to Our Lady. The Diocese of East Anglia gave us a beautiful presbytery with spacious gardens.

When we saw people going to Walsingham and other shrines of Our Lady, we began to think about having a grotto of our own which would help people, where they could come daily and express their devotion through the rosary and novenas.

I and Fr Bineesh began to think about having a grotto in the inner garden. There was a baptismal font which was abandoned years ago, and we thought to ourselves that many people had been baptised in the font. We could not throw it away, and decided to make it the foundation of the grotto.

The next step was to get a statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. We ordered one from India through St Paul's but we couldn't succeed in bringing it from India and there was a great delay to the project.

As we were searching locally, it was Deacon Clive Brooks who said that there was a statue in a local garden centre. We went there and saw the marble statue, which was covered in dust and unwanted by customers. One of the workers said that it had been there for many years and nobody wanted to have it.

We brought it home and cleaned it. We ended up with a beautiful, shining young Mary with a rosary in her hands. It is very similar to the statues of Our Lady of Lourdes.



When I shared the idea about the grotto project with the parishioners they came forward to help, and we were easily able to finish the dream plan we had. All the work was done by our parishioners and the priests of St Mark 's.

We decided to bless the statue on the Nativity of Our Lady. I invited Fr John Williamson OCD from Gerrard's cross and we had a solemn Holy Mass in the Garden. After the Mass Canon Mathew George blessed and inaugurated the grotto.

*Pictured above are Fr John Williamson, Fr Paul Vincent OCD and Fr Bineesh Elanjikkal John OCD at the blessing of the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Ipswich*

## **A visit to Sandymount House of Prayer**

We were blessed in March just before lockdown hit to take a group of 15 on a weekend retreat led by Fr Matt and myself at Sandymount House of Prayer at Blundellsands, Formby.

The group was ecumenical in nature and our theme was 'Unceasing Prayer' inspired by Teresa's statement, 'Unceasing Prayer is the most important aspect of the rule.'

The idea was to explore what it might look like to live a life of unceasing prayer whatever our state in life. We had the house to ourselves and were able to live as a little community for the weekend, with the beautiful beach not far away for walks. It was a special time of peace, silence, sharing, listening and laughter.



*Gillian Coxhead*

## FROM OUR NUNS

*The Open Forum of the Association of British Carmels produces a magazine Cor Unum, and the most recent issue has articles from Carmels in England, Wales and Scotland which describe the impact of lockdown on their Communities.*

*In general, life became simpler and quieter, with no visits from families, no workmen with noisy machines and greater emphasis on self-sufficiency (growing vegetables, making bread). The roar of traffic from any nearby busy roads ceased, birdsong was clearer and the rhythm of daily life more integrated with the rising and the setting of the sun.*

*Sr Jo, from Ware Carmel, has kindly given us an insight into the impact of Covid-19 for this edition of The Vine. Thank you, Sr Jo!*

Like everyone else, our Carmels continue to live with the ongoing effects of the pandemic. Over summer, the warm weather, the reduction in cases, and the gradual easing of the restrictions made a difference for our communities too.

Those of us who earn our income by making or distributing altar breads noted a gradual return of orders, although it is clear that the numbers attending Mass remain small with the need for altar breads at a far lower level than normal.

We keep in our prayers the parishes who are trying so hard to make it possible for people to return to Mass, while sympathising entirely with the elderly and vulnerable who are understandably anxious about taking this step.

Where it can be done safely, some of our communities have themselves once again opened their chapels to the public, but since this requires the following of strict protocols, a simplified liturgy and extra cleaning regimes, others have felt that it is best not to celebrate public Masses for the moment.

All our communities contain large numbers of elderly sisters and our priority must be to protect them as far as is reasonably possible. Meanwhile, younger sisters have become accustomed to limited forays out for essential tasks, appointments and so on, and have discovered in the process that the combination of mask plus veil is not always a happy one, offering some unique logistical challenges!

## OUR VOW OF OBEDIENCE

*Thank you to Teresa Lynch OCDS from the Holy Trinity group, Notting Hill, for giving us so much food for thought in this short meditation. Ed*

In simple terms, obedience is compliance with an order, request, law or submission to another's authority. The duty of obedience requires all to give due honour to authority and to treat those who are charged to exercise it with respect, and, insofar as it is deserved, with gratitude and goodwill. Obedience is closely aligned to humility.

Aristotle defines moral virtue as a disposition to behave in the right manner and to stand between extremes of deficiency and excess, which are vices.<sup>1</sup>

Obedience, in human behaviour, is when a person yields to explicit instructions or orders from an authority figure. Obedience is generally distinguished from compliance, which is behaviour influenced by peers, and from conformity, which is behaviour intended to match that of the majority.

Virtues are states of character that find expression both in purpose and in action. Moral virtue is expressed in good purpose for action in accordance with a good plan of life.

Obedience is a virtue and a habit that teaches us to be humble. Faith is a theological virtue and compels obedience (Heb, 2:9).

True Christianity means a state of obedience and faith. Without these together, (looking into Jesus), we are in danger of insisting on neither. Faith is a knowledge of something real and objective. It is not a feeling or an opinion. Liberalism extols 'faith as opinion'. The spirit of obedience helps us to shed our ego and our pride.

The Bible also talks a lot about obedience as it is seen in many of the scriptures.

Children are asked to obey their parents in Ephesians 6:1, as this is the right way to behave as a child in a family. 'Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right'.

When Jesus was found by His parents, in the Temple, he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them (Luke 2:51). Could obedience lead us to suffering? Christ was humble. He obeyed God and walked the path of obedience all the way to death (Phillipians, 2:8).

Jesus asked His Apostles whether they could drink from the cup that he would be required to drink. He is warning those who wish to follow Him that there is inevitable cost in following Him, who is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' (John, 14:6).

Obedience is not an optional extra. We know that obedience is a very essential virtue and habit one should be faithful to in our homes, workplaces and in the communities in which we live. Jesus, no doubt, with sadness, knew that obedience, as part of



commitment to Him, would bring suffering and even death to His followers, including those who had not seen Him but yet have believed (John 20:29).

There are many ways that obedience can be tested in us. Carmelite and other Saints teach us by their lives that obedience is integral to faith and love of God. Their holy fear of offending God in the least way is linked to their obedience to the Church they loved. Their shining love for God, meant commitment to His will in all things and therefore, obedience was paramount in their lives of faith.

The English Martyrs of Reformation times, the Carmelite Martyrs of Compiègne, during the French Revolution, testify to the fact that obedience to Church teaching can cost people their lives.

There are more recent martyrs who preferred death to rejection of Christ as in Egypt, the Middle East and Northern Nigeria. In the first six months of 2020, one Indian NGO recorded 293 cases of persecution and five Christians have lost their lives even though Christianity came to India almost two millennia ago. One of these five murder victims had been suffering ongoing harassment for converting to Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

St John Henry Newman believed that God asks for obedience by His real presence in the Catholic Church. St John Henry came to love the Church, its dogma and doctrines for which he had suffered greatly by converting to Catholicism but which had brought him true happiness. He believed in the Church as the true presence of God and devoted his life to its mission.

The wish for keeping faithful to obedience can also be seen by those driven out of jobs they love, due to their need for conscientious objection in practice.

‘The world must know that I love the Father and do just what the Father has commanded me’ (John 14: 31). Jesus’ obedience to the Father was clearly not based on some sense of duty or guilt, but out of a radiant love for the One who loved Him perfectly.<sup>3</sup>

Obedience is the source of life. Faith without obedience to the Church (which is Jesus Himself), is impossible. Jesus says, ‘I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him, will bear much fruit’ (John 15:5). ‘Remaining in Him’ means committing to Him to do God’s will. Therefore, through obedience, a prerequisite of Faith, we are united to Christ and His love for the Father.

#### *References*

1. Aristotle (384–322 B.C.): *Nicomachean Ethics: Books I to IV* .
2. *Aid to the Church in Need* (2020). India: Giving hope to suffering Christians. [www.acnuk.org](http://www.acnuk.org). Giving hope to suffering Christians. October.
3. Sr Faustina OCD (2020) *Obedience: In intimacy with the Father*, Carmelite Sisters of Los Angeles.

## OUR LADY, MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE

*I am grateful to Maria Pugh of the St Joseph's Group, Boars Hill for the following. Maria was invited by the group to give a talk on 'Our Lady, Mother Of Divine Grace'. This was postponed due to Covid-19 but on 21 July Maria was able to share her thoughts thanks to Zoom meetings led by Annette Goulden. Afterwards some members suggested the talk could be republished in the Vine. Ed.*

### INTRODUCTION

When I was asked to speak about 'Our Lady of Grace' I thought, wow, what an honour. Then it dawned on me what a responsibility it is. Me, having never talked to a group before and being very much in the background, being given such an honour! It overwhelmed me. And what can I say? I know someone who always says: 'What can you say about Our Blessed Mother, just fall on your knees and shut up'!

But I will try and say a little about my thoughts, personal experience and encounters with Our Blessed Mother.

### BACKGROUND

I understand 'Divine Grace' to be a theological term. It has been defined as the divine influence which operates in humans to regenerate and sanctify, to inspire virtuous impulses, and to impart strength to endure trials and resist temptation; and as an individual virtue or excellence of divine origin. Our Lady is Mother to this.

The Church says of Mary 'The Blessed Virgin Mary was eternally predestined, in the context of the incarnation of the divine Word, to be Mother of God. As decreed by divine Providence, she served on earth as the loving Mother of the divine Redeemer, his associate, uniquely generous, and the Lord's humble servant. She conceived, bore, and nourished Christ; presented him to the Father in the Temple, and was united with him in his suffering as he died on the cross. In a completely unparalleled way she cooperated, by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity, with our Saviour's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason, she is Mother to us all in the order of grace.' (*Lumen Gentium* 61).

### MEDITATION

There is so much here but I want to focus on two areas from which I offer a meditation.

- Firstly, she is, 'Mother to us all in the order of grace!'
- Secondly, among other things her Motherhood is about cooperating with Our Saviour's work of restoring supernatural life to our souls.

## Mother to us all

Mary is the place where He is born. He is born in order to continue the work of restoring supernatural life to our souls. This work is continuous. Not only is He born in Her but to continue His work He must be born in us.

## Our Lady's mission

Part of her mission is to help us to understand that it is in us that He wants to be born so as to operate in the world. In St John's Gospel says that, 'He dwelt among us'. The word used for 'among' is 'in'. It means, He dwells in us - all of us, it is plural. We are the place where He resides. Don't look out there in history or any other place. It is within that we find Him and become Him. This is part of her mission to us. In order for Him to be born in us we have to become like her. Her name contains the manner in which this is done.

## Mary the name (the co-operator)

Much is in a name. Mary from the Hebrew roughly means to 'rebel', 'to push away': not the type of rebellion associated with people rebelling against the Government, for example, but, to rebel against all that is not of God. She pushes away all that is not of God so that what is of God is all that remains. In this Immaculate state she is 'a fitting place for Our Lord Jesus Christ to be born'. She has cooperated with God by becoming exactly what God wants of her: a place for His Son to be born. Now as Mother of us all what is true of Her She will want for us too. When in contact with Her she corrects and helps us to understand how we too must push away all that is not of God. Through Her we come closer to her Son, Jesus Christ, by becoming like Her. We become mother to Our Lord. It is in us – all of us - that He wants to be born ever and again. 'Christ could be born a thousand times in Galilee - but all in vain until He is born in me'. (Angelus Silesius).

## She like her Son is our pattern

In Mary we see a picture of what we must become, namely: God the Father has chosen Mary to be the Mother of His only begotten Son. He chooses you and me, too. The purity she had from birth was a gift of God. She was the only one who could create that place for His birth. We are asked to follow and create a place in ourselves where He can be born.

From the moment she conceived, she was one with her Son and is always with Him. She is not close to Him ... that implies separation; she is one with Him. We are asked to be one with Him and always with Him. This is no light task, no sweet poetry to adorn holy books. Mystical Rose she might be but she is also a towering oak tree strong and vibrant for her Lord. That is tough. Are we?

## She is close to us

When we receive Jesus in Communion, our Blessed Mother is there beside Him, when there is Adoration, she is present. They are one; without her, there would be no Son of God. Through her prayers and intercession to her beloved Son she is able to give us all graces. When we pray to her she responds in the best way so that we receive what we need or what is appropriate for us. She never fails; her love for us never stops. She is truly our Mother. There is something of her in us! She is a state of 'spiritual development'. That is, we can be in a state of Mary. An echo of her is found right at the beginning of Genesis, 'the spirit hovered over the waters.' Now this 'hovering' or 'vibrating' suggests sound. It is the sound of fluttering of wings of a bird laying or incubating an egg. It is female! Through this feminine God will give birth to the world. There are deep and contentious mysteries here but they are worth pondering. So like her we must find the place where Christ can be born in us ... find our motherhood as in, 'Christ our Mother' (Julian of Norwich).

## THE ROSARY

Our Blessed Mother asked us to pray the 'Holy Rosary'. The word rosary has its origins going back through Middle English to Latin meaning 'a rose bed' or 'rose garden'. We walk around a garden and take in the sights, breathe in the perfume and avoid the thorns. Through the rosary we walk through the life of Jesus; with Mary we see what we must give birth to; we see further that we have to become what we give birth to: Christ. We see how she cooperated with God. The rosary is not just about looking back into historical events. It is about become these events now. No wonder they are called the Mysteries of the Rosary. We come closer to her Son Jesus Christ in the rosary. Again, closeness is not enough; it implies separation. Like her, what we want, what she wants for us, is not separation but oneness. Born in me, I become Him; I and the Father are one; but the Father is greater than all. There is a strange mystery here, but she leads us to it.

## MY EXPERIENCES OF OUR LADY'S GRACE.

When I was about nine or ten years old I sat one Sunday morning in church and overheard some ladies talking. One lady's daughter had come back to visit her mother from England. She told them how nice the people were and how beautiful it was and how she would not come back to stay in Austria, but would return to England to live there. As I heard this, I thought to myself, I too would like to go to this place. Then I asked Our Blessed Mother, whose Marian altar was in front of me, if I too could go to this beautiful place.

Many years later I was a nanny to three small children. Two of them went to a French School but needed extra lessons. I had to take them to a café, where we sat in a corner and a lady taught them. The waiter brought coffee and drinks for us all ... and

it was him who became my boyfriend. It was customary to exchange photos of each other so he took my photo and sent it to England, where an Austrian Family needed someone to clean. I was chosen. One day I received a letter from England with a permit to work for a year. My beloved Mother fulfilled my wish.

When my mother was dying I prayed to Our Lady, that she would be by my mother's side. My mother had had a stroke and her lungs had started to empty themselves. Blood was running out of her mouth and she could not talk. When I saw my mother for the last time, she was in intensive care. She had been laid in a metal bed with iron bars. Her hands and feet were tied to the bed rails. She had a tube in her nose and wanted to speak to me but could not. At this moment I saw not my Mother laying on the bed but Jesus. It was He who laid there. Through the grace of Our Blessed Mother I was allowed to see Her beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

On my first visit to Medjugorje, on the 10 of August 1988, Fr. Slavko gave us a talk about fasting after Mass. Modern fasting is all about dieting on fruit and lettuce leaves; but this is not fasting. Fasting is about clearing a space in one's life to come close to God and hear His words. As he gave us a very moving talk, I saw a very large wooden cross in front of me. As I looked at it, the flat wood twisted into a vine-stock, branches came out where the crossbars were and down hung three huge bunches of grapes on each side. The cross turned from death to life and it bore such large fruit. Oh Lord, for the first time I saw life and what a life! Then I heard these words, but there was no voice, it was internal. 'From now on you will bear large fruits for me.' O Blessed Lord I love you so much, take my life and make it yours. A very, very special gift from Our Blessed Mother.

On the 15th of January 2018 I prayed the rosary for a priest, which I did every day. On this day I found by coincidence 'The Chaplet of the Immaculate Heart of Mary' and so I prayed it after the rosary. Then I started the night prayers as I examined my day to see if I had committed a sin. I always say 'Abide in me' afterwards. Suddenly I heard a voice and it felt as if someone stood next to me and said: 'I always abide in you, it is you who turn your back on me when you sin. I am always there waiting for you to come back'. Suddenly, everything that had happened to me in my childhood came back: all my family memories. Every scene was just as it was all those years ago. This voice said, 'you hated me', and I said, 'no, I did not.'. But this voice said, 'Yes you did, because I was in them, as I am in you'. I said, 'But I was only a child then', and the voice said again, 'But you are still a child, because you do the same now as you did then'. I cried bitterly for a long time for I suddenly realised that I have not changed. My Blessed Mother intervened for me, through Her Grace.

May her humility, simplicity and love inspire us all.

Amen.

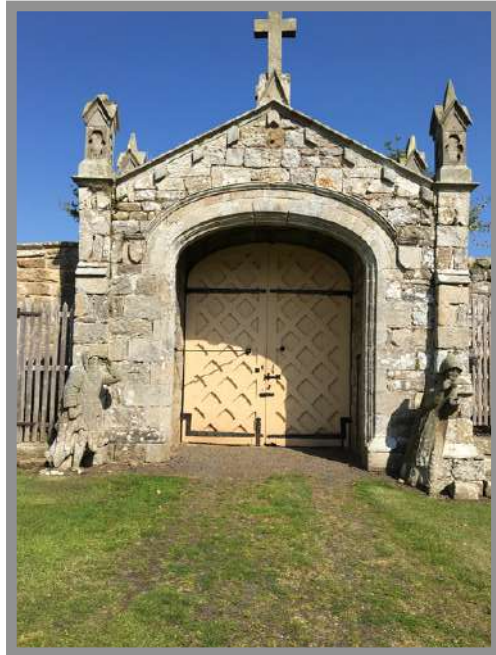
## A VISIT TO HULNE PRIORY

*Carol Siddle OCS (Blessed Marie-Eugène of the Child Jesus Community, Oxford) writes:*

In the summer I had a blessed visit to the site of the first Carmelite priory in England, established by 24 friars who travelled here from Mount Carmel in the Holy Land. Located in the Hulne Park estate, Northumberland, it is said to be the earliest Carmelite foundation in this country and looks to have been founded at approximately the same time as Aylesford, circa 1240-1242. It is said that the founding friars wished to settle there because nearby Brizlee Hill reminded them of Mount Carmel.

This is a wealthy and immaculately kept estate. Not a blade of grass or fencing stone is out of place. The original estate owner, John de Vescy, gave the friars free liberty to take all of the natural resources they needed - timber, charcoal, thatch, honey and wax from the wild bees. They were allowed to run a mill and fish on the river, and had the right to graze oxen and horses, all granted to them by de Vescy. The subsequent owners, the Percy Family, continued this tradition. So the friars would have been very generously looked after. There are two sets of defensive walls around the Priory for protection because in the early days, raids by invading Scots were still common. The site is well looked after now despite being a ruin.

The priory was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539, the church was demolished and the Percy family bought the parkland. They and subsequent generations liked the beautiful priory site and kept it tidy despite it becoming a ruin. Buildings were used as a hunting lodge and a



gamekeeper's house. At one point a 'picnic house' was built on the priory grounds using some of the stones from the original abbey. As a Carmelite I found it a little sad that the holiness of the site was perhaps not of importance to these generations but it is probably due to their general appreciation for its location that it is so well preserved.



Overall I was very moved to be walking on the ground that our Carmelite forebears walked, and praying for these souls who we pray for without knowing them individually.

The photographs of the site and estate grounds give some idea of where they lived and what remains. It is believed that Capability Brown redesigned some of the estate in the 1750s-80s when he was working in the nearby Alnwick Castle estate (both owned by the Percy Family) so it is likely that what we see today is a more manicured version of the original. The little friar statues were also added in the late 1700s. I am not sure, but wondered if the uniform square foundation stones by a wall might be where their cells would have been? I also wondered if some of the enormous trees might have been there back then?

Should anyone wish to visit this beautiful estate, the walk is paved nearly all of the way so not difficult underfoot. Further information and maps can be found on:

<http://www.northumberlandstates.co.uk/the-estate/walks-trails/>

<https://thegardenstrust.blog/2017/07/08/hulne-priory/>



## A MEDITATION ON ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

*Thank you to Gillian Coxhead who has kindly passed to me one of a series of monthly meditations on Sayings of Light and Love. Ed*

Many people from all walks of life sought John out for his spiritual direction and wisdom. One of the methods he used was to jot down little 'sayings' which people could take away for personal prayer and reflection.

Over the next few months, I would like to share some of these with you, with the occasional personal comment but mostly for you to ponder and reflect upon as the spirit leads.

Though they were written for individual people they form the basis of John's teaching on the spiritual life; that, is the experience of a life lived in relationship with God.

In his prologue to the sayings he makes it clear that he is very aware that it is one thing to be able to express something in words but quite another to be able to embody, to live the reality of the words. It is his desire that those who receive them will be 'stirred', stirred to go forward in the service and love of God.

Love and service for John are the hallmarks of what it means to live a full, genuine, authentic Christian life.

When we are stirred something shifts, something changes in us; we experience, see things in a new way. To be stirred suggests movement. It may be unsettling: a call to action or even a call to less action!

John is writing for (to use his term) 'the wayfarer', a person on a journey, on the move:

'They will be sayings of discretion for the wayfarer, light for the way and love in the wayfaring.'

And he goes on:

'Let us speak to the heart words bathed in sweetness and love ... removing obstacles and stumbling blocks from the paths of many souls who unknowingly trip and unconsciously walk in the path of error ...'

These sayings are to encourage, to uplift, not to trip people up, catch them out, but enable them to see, to move into deeper levels of awareness.

For John, God is a God of mercy, who always comes to our aid because without Him we can do nothing.



*O lord my God,  
Who will seek you  
with simple and pure love  
and not find that you are all one can desire,  
for you show yourself first  
and go out to meet those who seek you?*

(Sayings of Light and Love 2)

*O sweetest love of God,  
So little known,  
Whoever  
Has found this rich mine  
Is at rest!*

(Sayings of Light and Love 16)

## PROVINCIAL CHAPTER OF THE ANGLO-IRISH PROVINCE 2020

The chapter endorsed the Charismatic Declaration, which was issued in 2019 after a world-wide discussion process, in place of making any changes to the friars' Constitutions. Much of the content of this document is relevant to the Seculars. It can be found at:

**[www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/en/charismatic-declaration](http://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/en/charismatic-declaration)**

The declaration will provide our friars with the basis of vision for the future and planned strategy for the province.

Two vocations teams for the English and Irish Regions will be formed, with a mandate to develop a vocations promotion plan, policy and programme for the future.

The Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality (Boars Hill) will be resourced for the development and implementation of a special programme in Carmelite formative spirituality that is focused on young adults. Its work as a ministry of the Anglo-Irish Province was endorsed.

Annette Goulden, as National President of the Secular Order, was asked to present a Report on the Secular Order in England and Wales at a Zoom meeting with the friars of the English Region on 21 July 2020. Sr Sheelagh OCD gave a comprehensive review on behalf of the Carmelite nuns at the same meeting.

The new placements decided at the Chapter are as follows.

## ENGLAND

**Boars Hill:** Fr Alex (Prior), Fr Tony Parsons (Sub-prior), Fr John Hughes, Fr Kelvin Ekhoegbe, Fr Yamai Bature

**Kensington:** Fr Thaddeus (Prior), Fr Matt (Sub-prior) Fr John McGowan, Fr Theophilus Nyamali, Fr Tijo Xavier

**Gerrards Cross:** Fr Martin McDonald (Prior), Fr John Williamson (Sub-prior) Fr Bob Davies, Fr Maurice Flynn

## IRELAND

**Avila, Dublin:** Fr John Grennan (Provincial), Fr Liam Finnerty (Prior), Fr Felix Okolo (Subprior), Br Noel O 'Connor (Provincial Bursar),

**Clarendon Street, Dublin:** Fr Jim Noonan (Prior), Fr Vincent O 'Hara (subprior)

**Derry:** Fr Stephen Quinn (Prior), Fr Michael McGoldrick (subprior), Fr Michael Spain

## FRIARS' WEBSITE FOR THE ENGLISH PRIORIES

Have you ventured into the new website for the priories of Boars Hill, Kensington and Gerrards Cross?

[www.carmelite.uk.net/oxford-priory](http://www.carmelite.uk.net/oxford-priory)

Listen to Fr Liam having breakfast al fresco and showing us a fine tree, whose deep roots are a parable for God's strength and stability, or hear Fr Tony Parsons (newly arrived at Boars Hill) introduce himself with his guitar.

## COURSES, ENCOUNTERS AND RETREATS

### BOARS HILL 2020-21

Grace-Filled Encounter Series: The five Teresas

**Sundays Sept 20 – Nov 15, 7pm two lectures**

**Cost: £90 or £20.00 per session**

**September 20:** St Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) – Matt Blake, OCD

**October 11:** St Teresa Margaret Redi (1747-1770) – Cyprian Blamires, OCDS

**October 18:** St Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897) – Vincent O 'Hara, OCD

**November 1:** St Teresa of the Andes (1900-1920) – Alexander Ezechukwu, OCD

**November 15:** St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (1891-1942): Christof Betschart OCD

## Spiritual Enrichment Lecture Series (SELS)

£20 each. The video lectures remain available to the subscriber after they have been given.

## Breathing Spaces

On-line spiritual accompaniment This is free.

## New Courses

### **Mystical Wisdom for the Ages: Insights from the Carmelite Doctors of the Church**

From 1st October 2020 £220.00

### **The Prophetic Spirit of Elizabeth of the Trinity**

From 8th November 2020 £270.00

## Ongoing Courses

### **Spiritual Direction Training Programme**

Current programme ends July 2021

New online course Sept 2021 – 2023

**School of Prayer** deferred to 2021 Sat morning/month £700

**Living Prayer** deferred to 2021 9 months, one residential w/e a month  
£1900

**Prayer Guides Course** deferred to 2021

## Retreats

Online retreats for special occasions such as Lent, Pentecost, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St Teresa of Avila.

Individually Guided Retreats (IGRs) These are tailored to suit the retreatant.

## Wisdom Lectures: video library service

### **Individual membership**

As Secular Carmelites, Fr Alex has kindly given members of the Secular Order (and nuns) reduced subscription rates for the Wisdom Lectures: £10 per month or £100 a year (full price £14.99 and £150 respectively). For the OCDS reduction, simply request a coupon from Ruth when you sign up.

### **Group membership**

Group subscription for members of the Secular Order is £80 per month or £720 a year (full price £110 and £999 respectively).

The co-ordinator for the group subscription can decide how much to charge, so can create a fighting fund to enable some members to join at a lower rate or free of charge. Group membership is for a minimum of 10 and maximum of 50 people. Each group member is signed up individually and can log into the Wisdom Lectures whenever they want.

Additionally - For Presidents/Formators of communities: The CACS team will offer ongoing support to help make the most of Wisdom Lectures for your community.

- The Wisdom Lectures series has many exciting possibilities for you and your community.
- With all this content available, you and your community could have your own study group and formation classes.
- As a community, you could watch a video with information on a Carmelite topic and when the clip is finished you could proceed to discuss what you saw and how it affects your Carmelite life. Indeed, this offers the chance for communities to journey together and delve deeper into Carmelite spirituality.

<b>Wisdom Lectures: content</b>	
1-37 The Journey of Prayer	Sr Jo Robson OCD and others
38-57 The Path of Transformation	Many speakers
58-62 St John of the Cross: The Dark Night of the Soul	Matt Blake OCD
63-72 St John of the Cross: The Spiritual Canticle	Matt Blake
73-79 St Thérèse and the Spirituality of the Little Way of Love	Vincent O ‘Hara OCD
80-88 Retreat: Empowered by the Spirit ‘s Breath	Liam Finnerty OCD and the friars at Boars Hill
89-94 Mary in the Carmelite Tradition	Iain Matthews OCD, Matt Blake, Kelvin Ekhoegbe OCD
95-97 The Embrace of Love	Kelvin Ekhoegbe
98-105 The Interior Castle of St Teresa	Kelvin Ekhoegbe

**Spirituality Summit**

The 50th Anniversary of the Doctorate of Santa Teresa of Jesus will be celebrated on September 27, 2020. To commemorate this event, the Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality, Oxford, will host an International Spirituality Summit on ‘Teresa of Avila, a Teacher and Guide: Celebrating 50 Years of Her Doctorate.’ The summit will take place on 16th November 2020 from 2:00p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The summit will celebrate the life and legacy of Saint Teresa of Avila, an exceptional woman and the first female doctor of the Church. Participants will be inspired by her remarkable life, empowered to follow in her footsteps, and more.

The keynote lecture will be given by Cardinal Anders Arborelius, OCD. Other participants include: Rt Revd. David Oakley (Bishop of Northampton), Very Revd. John Grennan OCD, Dr Susan Muto, Sr Jo Robson OCD, Fr Matt Blake OCD, Mark Courtney OCDS and Annette Goulden OCDS. There will be a panel discussion on Saint Teresa 's life and legacy chaired by Professor Peter Tyler of St Mary 's University, Twickenham.

If you desire to nurture your spiritual life, are interested in spirituality, the role and influence women can have in today's culture and society, and you're a lover of Carmel, you wouldn't want to miss this summit.

Save the date, and plan to join us virtually for this important summit on November 16, 2020.

Provisional programme below. For further information contact: [inquiries@oxcacs.org](mailto:inquiries@oxcacs.org)

<b>1:30 pm</b>	Zoom opens
<b>2:00 pm</b>	Invitation to Prayer, Welcome and Introduction - Fr Alex
<b>2:05 pm</b>	Opening Remarks - Rt Rev. David Oakley (Bishop of Northampton)
<b>2:10 pm</b>	Keynote Lecture - Cardinal Anders Arborelius, OCD
<b>3:00 pm</b>	Coffee Break
<b>3:15 pm</b>	Lecture II - TBD
<b>4:15 pm</b>	Break
<b>4:45 pm</b>	Panel Discussion
<b>5:45 pm</b>	Questions & Reflections
<b>6:15 pm</b>	Shared Silence and Closing Prayer
<b>6:30 pm</b>	End of Summit

The  
*Secular  
Carmelite  
Calendar*  
2021

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



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