

# CARMEL CLARION



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## THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Jessica Powers (1905-88)

The lovers of Christ lift out their hands to  
the great gift of suffering;  
for how could they seek to be warmed and clothed  
and delicately fed,  
to wallow in praise and to drink deep draughts  
of an undeserved affection,  
have castle for home and a silken couch for bed,  
when He the worthy went forth, wounded and hated,  
and grudged of even a place to lay his head?

This is the badge of friends of the Man of Sorrows:  
the mark of the cross, faint replica of His,  
become ubiquitous; it spreads like a wild blossom  
on the mountains of time and in each of the crevices.  
Oh, seek that land where it grows in a rich abundance  
with its thorny stem and its scent like bitter wine,  
for wherever Christ walks He casts its seed  
and He scatters its purple petals.  
It is the flower of His marked elect, and the fruit  
it bears is divine.

Choose it, my heart. It is a beautiful sign.

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**THE HOUSE AT REST** by Jessica Powers, also  
known as Sr. Miriam of the Holy Spirit OCD, 1994,  
\$6.95, plus packing & postage for a total of \$8.00.  
The Carmelite Monastery, W267 N2517 Meadow-  
brook Road, Pewaukee WI 53072-4599.

**Introduction.** I am very heavily indebted to Sister  
Josephine Koepfel, OCD, at the Elysburg Carmel, for  
the greater part of the following article. Sister wrote it in  
1981 as a biographical essay for *Ways to Know God*. 1

## St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, O.C.D. Fr Theodore N Centala OCD

**Family Background.** Edith Stein, the eleventh child  
of Siegfried and Auguste (Courant) Stein, was born on  
October 12, 1891, in Breslau, then part of Prussian oc-  
cupied Poland. On August 9, 1942, about one hundred  
and fifty miles to the southeast of her birthplace, Edith,  
then a Discalced Carmelite nun known as Sister Teresa  
Benedicta of the Cross, died at Auschwitz (Oswiecim),  
Poland, as a victim of the hatred that claimed two-and-  
a-half million lives in that concentration camp alone.



**Photo.** Appropriately, Sister Benedicta has been  
called the face of the faceless millions to die in the  
Holocaust. How well her calm and pensive features  
give dignity and magnanimity to that image of the out-  
raged! If we need a symbol for forgiveness of the un-  
forgivable we have only to look at those eyes in which  
there is mirrored full recognition of the unjust hatred  
her countrymen had for her people. She was com-  
pletely aware of being deprived of country and home  
on the occasion on which that photo was taken for she  
was leaving Germany for Holland as an expatriate to  
save her sisters in religion from reprisal at the hands of  
the Nazis. If there is reproach in her eyes it is gentle.  
Most of all they seem to be asking: "Of whom are you  
reminded when you see my sorrow? Who told us what  
is the greatest proof of love?"

"Her ancestors... were hard-working, ambitious merchants, with large families nurtured on the spirit of the psalms. They worshiped the God of Israel in synagogue and in private prayer at home. New Year's, the Day of Atonement, and Passover were the high points of the year. Supporting this Jewish tradition was a strong sense of communal awareness, fostered above all by the mother of the family."<sup>2</sup>

**Early Life.** For her, the first years of life were enriched by the love of her mother, brothers, and sisters. Her father, Siegfried, had died in 1893. Indeed, Frau Stein, whose heart had been expanded by sorrow as well as by giving without counting the cost, was an example for her youngest daughter. Edith was able in the last days of her life to be a tower of strength for other Jewish mothers and their frightened children. When she encouraged the distraught women in Westerbork and Auschwitz, could Edith have been remembering her own mother, a young woman holding a very small child in her arms, bidding farewell one day to her husband who was not to return alive from that day's business trip? Edith was scarcely one-and-a-half.

**Childhood.** Meaningful events, joyous as often as pain-filled ones, marked Edith's childhood. Her mother worked the whole day at the lumberyard, managing sales, purchasing, overseeing the mill, the shipping, and the bookkeeping, while being responsible for her home as well.

The more important maternal duties were never neglected. Edith recalled that if ever she were ill as a child, her mother's visit to the bedside was an effective cure. Such care was better than any tonic, more healing than any medication. So effective was this loving presence for the child that this experience helped Edith when she later was nurse and confidante to her numerous small nieces and nephews for whom she was more in demand, at times, than their own mothers.

Life with her family had a maturing effect on this perceptive and possibly too introspective child. Her intelligence was stimulated and nourished as she listened to her elder sisters and brothers and the succession of cousins to whom Auguste Stein gave a home.

**School.** Throughout Edith's school years we find evidence of her strong and well-developed intellect. The division of the German school system differs so from the American one that it is best to look at Edith's aca-

ademic record in terms of her age. On her sixth birthday, she was, by exception, admitted to the first grade toward midyear.

It soon became evident that she was even happier in school than at home. For the ten years that followed she found school a place where she could be herself. Her teachers appreciated her eagerness and her inquisitiveness and they managed to keep her interested in her studies even when she had advanced beyond the others in her class.

She was a quaint mixture of shyness and something akin to ambition; she strove always for the scholar's "first" in rank and was then reluctant to be singled out for awards. It seemed difficult for her to find a way to balance the hunger for knowledge and the awareness of her talents with her charming gift, apparent in her photographs, of self-effacement. She was searching for the truth.



**Crisis of Faith.** Edith studied harder than her constitution would allow. At the age of fifteen she gave up school and went to Hamburg to live with her eldest sister, Else Gordon, and her family. After six months there she was able to resume her studies. She prepared for the university with the help of tutors in Latin and mathematics. But these studies, and the university atmosphere, also fostered the first beginnings of her self-termed atheism which was to persist until she was twenty-one. She discovered psychology, which gave her some temporary comfort in her search for the truth. But then she no longer believed in a personal God. And so she quit praying.

**Discovery of Philosophy.** Returning to Breslau in 1907, Edith Stein resumed her studies in that city's University, obtaining the equivalent of our college education. In 1912 she decided, after reading Edmund Husserl's *Logical Understanding*, to study phenomenology under him in Göttingen. Some of her fellow students were Dietrich von Hildebrand, Jean Hering, Hedwig Martius, and Hans Theodore Conrad.

Another fellow student of Edith Stein's was Roman Ingarden who later brought phenomenology to his native Poland. There, one of the students of the following generation to become acquainted with phenomenology would be Karol Wojtyla, destined to become Pope John Paul II. He used some phenomenology when he wrote his dissertation, *Faith According to St. John of the Cross*. We will see that Roman Ingarden's friendship with Edith was to lead him to write in her defense long after she was deprived of every opportunity to speak for herself.

**The Red Cross.** At the beginning of her sixth semester in Göttingen, Edith Stein received approval from Edmund Husserl to prepare her doctoral thesis, *On the Problem of Empathy*. But wars have a way of disrupting lives. In 1915, from April to October, in the midst of intense studies and before she got her doctoral degree, there was to be an interlude of service for the Red Cross, nursing soldiers in a field hospital for contagious diseases. Frau Stein was bitterly opposed to the idea of her twenty-four-year-old daughter facing the risks to be found in such a place. (The *lazaret* at Maerisch-Weisskirchen was a huge undertaking, providing four thousand beds for the troops injured or ill at the Carpathian Front.)

Edith Stein's relatives and advisers were afraid that the rumors about the hospital were indicative of even greater dangers for a young woman than typhoid or any of the other deadly diseases that brought the soldiers there. When Edith Stein learned the true nature of their fears, she was all the more determined to enlist in the Red Cross. It seemed necessary to her that women of high principle make up the nursing staff so that the wounded could be assured of proper care in the last days of their young lives.

Although the whole of this experience took only six months of 1915, that time had a maturing effect which left its mark on her philosophical and spiritual search-

ing for the rest of her life. She saw more of death than one would ordinarily see at the age of twenty-four. Those who faced it in her care, who fought it or accepted it with her help, were not all her compatriots. A Czech, Slovak, Slovene, Pole, Ruthenian, Hungarian, Rumanian, Italian, gypsy, and even, on occasion, a Russian or a Turk was her patient. Edith Stein's gift for languages proved useful here and more than once, a dying soldier found his last moment that much easier for hearing a soft phrase in his own mother tongue.

Less than thirty years later, Edith Stein would realize that she herself was facing death, also amid a crowd of mixed nationalities who shared not the dreaded typhoid but a common heritage of Judaism. We can but surmise then that she served again, this time in the *lazaret* of Auschwitz by giving more than words of encouragement. She also gave an example of her own acceptance of the inevitable.

When Edith Stein returned to Göttingen to resume her academic life, she found changes. Many of the teachers and students had been called to the front. Some of the most promising were never to return.



In 1916, Edmund Husserl was called from Göttingen to the University of Freiburg. Edith Stein had by then completed her dissertation and had earned her degree *summa cum laude*. Even as she was Husserl's last important student in Göttingen, so Edith Stein was to become his first assistant in Freiburg. Here, among others, she again met and more closely befriended Roman Ingarden who, also a student under Husserl and a frequent visitor to the master's home, was in a position to attest to Husserl's thorough confidence in Edith Stein's work.

**Phenomenology.** She was expected to do more than collate and transcribe these notes in the exact form in which he had written them. When her persistence succeeded in getting Husserl to read the work she had edited, he would either recognize that his own thinking had gone far beyond his notes in the meantime or he would be set off on an entirely new tangent of philosophical speculation.

She had not only been his student, but she had read a great number of his manuscripts and had also taken the opportunity to discuss scientific subjects with him in private conversation. It has been attested that his disciples influenced Husserl in some of his best and deepest thoughts during his discussions with them.

**Beyond Phenomenology.** In Göttingen, she was introduced to Max Scheler, a Jewish convert from Munich. His 'prophetic philosophy' Formalism in Ethics and a Material Ethic of Values made an indelible impression on her. "Never again would I experience in such pure form the 'phenomenon of creative genius'. During a series of evening lectures Scheler spoke on The Nature of the Holy. "He demonstrated with irresistible brilliance that religion alone makes the human being human. He placed humility at the foundation of all moral endeavor and argued that the sole purpose of this endeavor was to lead the individual to the loss of self in God -- and on to new Resurrection."

"It was my first contact with a world that until then had been completely unfamiliar. I cannot say that it led me directly to faith. But it did open up a whole new realm of 'phenomena' that I would not be able to pass by blindly anymore." She had been introduced to the idea of a personal God. The one her mother prayed to.

Edith Stein followed her hunches, realizing that she was making progress in her search for the truth. She then wrote to Eduard Metis, an Orthodox Jew, "asking him for his idea of God and whether he himself believed in a personal God. The answer was brief: God is Spirit - there is nothing more to be said. To me it was as if I had been given a stone instead of bread."

**The World of Faith.** "All that constant drilling about looking at everything without prejudice and throwing away our blinders had not been in vain. The bars of the rationalist prejudices I had unconsciously grown up with collapsed, and there, standing in front of me, was the world of faith."

She was to teach but hardly as an equal of the men who studied with her under Husserl. Edith Stein's experience of the professional bias and jealousy did not embitter her. The fact that she was one of few women leaders in a predominantly male sphere of interest made her own writings and lectures on women's professions less theoretical and more authoritative.

**Adolf Reinach.** After leaving Husserl, another professional task kept her busy. When Adolf Reinach, a former teacher of hers at Göttingen, was killed at the front during World War I, Edith Stein put his philosophical papers in order at his widow's request. Edith Stein was so impressed by Frau Reinach's profound Christian faith that there and then, in 1917, she embarked on the spiritual journey that would lead her to the Crucified Christ.

Already, Edith Stein had abandoned her atheism, and had come to accept Christianity, but was still uncertain as to which Christian denomination she should embrace. It led her through 1918, when she taught in Freiburg and Göttingen, back to Breslau in 1919, and from there to Bergzabern in the summer of 1921 for a providential discovery of the writings of the 16th century mystic, Teresa of Avila.



While vacationing with Hans Theodore and Hedwig Conrad-Martius, former fellow students under Husserl, Edith Stein found a copy of a certain Spanish Carmelite's *Life* in the library of their Bergzabern home. Teresa of Avila fascinated Edith Stein. She read her lengthy autobiography from cover to cover in one sitting. When Edith Stein had finished reading, she exclaimed: "That is the truth." Her long journey of searching for truth ended in Carmel.

**"That is the Truth."** Edith Stein's later assurance that from the time of her admittance to the Catholic Church, Carmel had become her goal, justifies an interpretation of "That is the truth" as referring more to the way we are to respond to God than to a particular set of doctrines about God.

Through her autobiography, Teresa of Avila now became Edith Stein's guide in the spiritual life as Husserl was in the phenomenological one. Teresa's warmth and generosity could strike a responsive chord in Edith Stein for a reason which was not generally known in 1921. Teresa of Avila had some Jewish ancestry; her grandfather was a Spanish *converso*. As Teresa's greatest joy was to call herself a daughter of the church, Edith Stein decided this would be her chosen role, too.

**Baptism and Confirmation.** Edith Stein's baptism on New Year's Day, 1922, and her confirmation on the following February 2nd strengthened her for the ordeal of facing the pain and lack of understanding with which her heartbroken mother received the news.

Unable to deny the change for the better in her youngest daughter, who was now evidently more devoted to her family and more contented than ever before in her life, Frau Stein nevertheless made every effort to win from her daughter an admission that only the God of Israel should be served. In her turn, she was unable to show her mother that indeed they were loving and serving the same God. That her daughter also had faith in and a deep personal love for that God's Son, Jesus Christ, was inexplicable to the devout Jewish matriarch. They refrained from arguing, however. Perhaps the silent, loving struggle between these two women was the deepest sorrow either of them ever had to accept.

**A Teacher, After All.** The years following her baptism were spent as a lay teacher with the Dominican Sisters in Speyer, Germany. Teaching in this girls' college where she also assisted with the preparation of the Sister candidates at St. Magdalen's, Edith Stein was able to live in an atmosphere very much like the cloister which was still denied to her. She saw that she could not add yet another wound to her mother's heart before the one inflicted by her baptism had healed. Besides, her spiritual directors felt that teaching was God's will for Edith Stein for the time being.

In 1931, with very little encouragement from Heidegger, Edith Stein made some renewed -- but again unsuccessful -- attempts toward obtaining recognition as an academic lecturer at the University of Freiburg. She herself was somewhat indifferent and resigned when again she was denied a professorship.

**Lecture on Womens' Issues.** The years of 1931-32 were spent for the most part in lecture tours that took Dr. Stein throughout Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. She was also called upon to speak at scientific seminars. In Munich, Heidelberg, Vienna, Prague, Paris, and Kiel, she was given recognition for her treatment of "The Ethos of Professions for Women". In Zurich, her presentation was acclaimed as brilliant.

**Anti-Semitism.** The stirrings of anti-semitism became more and more apparent during these years in all academic areas and culminated in 1933 in the revocation of the right to teach from all who were Jewish. This move by the government freed Edith Stein to follow her call to Carmel.



**Carmel at Last.** The events of Edith Stein's nine years in Carmel contain many joys and they end with her martyrdom at Auschwitz.

14 October 1933. **Entrance into Carmel, Cologne.** Her spiritual director, Abbot Walzer, OSB, had some fear that this candidate would grow restless within the confines of the cloister and living with sisters of limited academic background, but it did not happen.

15 April 1934. **Clothing as Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.** It was a custom in the Carmels in Germany for each sister to take Teresia as the first part of their name, just as in some countries they take Mary. In a less formal setting it was common for community members to call her "Sister Benedicta". In the feminine gender her name meant "blessed". She treasured: "Blessed by the Cross."

Sister Benedicta readily admitted that sometimes it was not easy for a forty-six year old to become a student again. She wrote to Mother Petra, her friend in the Benedictines, where she had spent many a Holy Week.

"For the time being I try to keep telling myself how displeased you would be with the way I pray the Office. I seem to be a fairly awkward novice altogether, who puts a strain on the love and patience of the superiors and the rest of the community. Clearly, it will be some time until they can make a passable nun out of me. So please pray that I can learn to correspond to the great grace of this vocation."

A companion novice, Sr. Electa, wrote, "She was just as faithful about obeying the novitiate regulations as she was observing the other practices of the Rule. Our novice-mistress had been a little worried at first when she heard she would have to teach a scholar. But Edith Stein was so amiable and eager to learn that the novice-mistress soon forgot her nervousness. Edith Stein always thought of herself as someone who had a lot to learn. There was one time I can remember when she had to miss a novitiate class due to the visit of a philosopher friend who came to consult her on some matter. When she joined us at recreation that evening, the first thing she asked was, "Did you learn anything interesting in the novitiate today?" Without waiting an instant, I said to her, "That's how it is. When you are not there, you do not hear." But she, with her quick wit, replied, "Yes, but it says in the Bible, 'Wisdom I learned without guile and imparted it without grudging'" (Wis 7:13). That hit home, and after I told her about the material we covered, I thought to myself, "I do not know if she realizes it, but Edith Stein has just described herself in the words of the Scripture." That's how simple and straightforward she was in everything."<sup>3</sup>

"I have just been approved for profession in April. Thank goodness you do not have to be a 'finished product' for this..."



21 April 1935. **First Profession of Vows.** During the first three years Sister Benedicta wrote, "The one thing a person needs to keep doing is to try to live out her chosen vocation with an ever-increasing honesty and purity, to make it an acceptable oblation for those with whom she is united. We ourselves experience a constant stimulus to this in the tremendous confidence people place in us and the frighteningly high opinion many of them have of our vocation..."

"The peace I experience every day seems too much of a gift to be meant for one person alone. I find great happiness, therefore, whenever someone arrives here all worn out and battered and then goes away with a measure of peace and consolation."<sup>4</sup>

"Think of me in the old brown habit, little and close to the ground as ever. It is the same story with my meditations. They are not any great soaring spiritual flights, but very simple and down-to-earth. Their main value is that they express my gratitude at having this place as my earthly home."<sup>5</sup>

21 April 1938, **Final Profession.** 1 May 1938, **Veiling Ceremony,** as a Choir Sister.

"I firmly believe that the Lord has accepted my life as an offering for all. It is important for me to keep Queen Esther in mind and remember how she was separated from her people just so that she could intercede for them before the king. I myself certainly am a poor and insignificant little Esther, but I take comfort from the fact that the King who has chosen me is infinitely kind and merciful."<sup>6</sup>

31 December 1938. **Transfer to the Echt Carmel, Netherlands.** "He who has placed the Cross on my shoulders has managed to make it sweet and light."<sup>7</sup>

**Passion Sunday, 1939.** "Dear Rev. Mother, Please permit me to offer myself to the Heart of Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement for true peace, that if possible the reign of the AntiChrist might be broken without another world war and a new social order might be established. I would like to do it today, if I could, since it is already the final hour. I know I myself am nothing, but Jesus desires it, and I am sure he is asking it of many others in these days."<sup>8</sup>

"I joyfully accept in advance the death God has appointed for me, in perfect submission to his most holy will. May the Lord accept my life and death for the honor and glory of his name, for the needs of his holy Church - especially for the preservation, sanctification, and final perfecting of our holy Order, and in particular for the Carmels of Cologne and Echt -- for the Jewish people, that the Lord may be received by his own and his kingdom come in glory, for the deliverance of Germany and peace throughout the world, and finally, for all my relatives living and dead, and for all whom God has given me: may none of them be lost."<sup>9</sup>

"Do you see the eyes of the Crucified looking at you with a searching gaze? They are asking you a question: Are you, in all seriousness, ready to enter once again into a covenant with the Crucified? What are you going to answer?"<sup>10</sup>

**1934-1942.** Sister Benedicta wrote most of her most notable works while she was in Carmel: *Finite and Eternal Being*, *Science of the Cross*, and others, including, most of *Life in a Jewish Family*.

**Final Days.** Each time we commemorate her death which took place on **August 9, 1942**, one terrible week after she was arrested in reprisal for the Dutch Bishops' outspoken opposition to Hitler, we recall that she can be seen as representing the millions who died as she did. She foresaw what was in store for her and accepted it in the hope of helping her people, and even those who by violence usurped the right of God, Creator and Sustainer of life in all his children, by deciding who was to live or to die.

May Sister Benedicta assist all who read this presentation to find that they have begun to walk on these ways of knowing God. With her as a guide, may we all

reach a plateau of peace and contemplation where the beauty of our God, who is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, can fill us with new hope and the expectation of the coming of his Kingdom, and the glory of his Name, in all his people.



Below are some quotations from *Ways of Knowing God*. The essay was expressly written by Sr. Benedicta for an American readership. It was sent to the U.S. in the fall of 1941, less than a year before her martyrdom.

"The Psalmist hears the voice of God in nature... God has manifested or mirrored himself in his work and there by lets himself be known... He (the Psalmist) does not, however, know God from this source only. Rather, he finds God in all things because he possesses the faith and because God's voice speaks in his interior."<sup>11</sup>

"It is questionable whether one can claim that lack of faith, a total ignorance of God, can exist without personal guilt and, therefore, that some may be inaccessible to the image-language of the Scriptures. If such a case could exist, one cannot deny all human guilt. We may disregard here original sin and the opacity of the mind caused by it."<sup>12</sup>

"But no person grows up in absolute separation from others; and then it is 'society' which is responsible when it fails to furnish the testimony which might have opened the eyes of this person. In most cases, however, the 'unbeliever' is also responsible for his blindness. Nobody can live under such conditions that no testimony whatsoever of God would reach him."<sup>13</sup>



"If he refuses it entrance into his mind and does not, at least, take some pains in following up the views he comes to know, it is his own guilt. If at a later time there results a total incapacity of knowledge, if a factual non-recognition is superseded by an inability to recognize, all these effects are ultimately his own doing. This is, obviously, even more the case when there is not only actual lack of faith but definite atheism by principle, or hostility against God." 14

"Some people fail to obtain a knowledge of God because of laziness and dullness of mind; in such instances the inability to see may be considered as a state of punishment." 15

"God will let himself be found by those who seek him. Therefore, he first wants to be sought. Revelation in nature is not inescapably clear... but an instigation towards further search. Supernatural revelation gives the answers to questions aroused by natural revelation. Faith is already finding God and means that he lets himself be found to a certain extent. Faith is a gift that should be accepted. In faith divine and human freedom meet." 16

"But faith is a gift of such a nature that it calls for asking for more. As a dark knowledge lacking true insight, faith awakens the longing for unveiled clarity. As a mediated encounter, it arouses the desire for immediately encountering God; the very content of faith arouses this desire by the promise of beatific vision." 17

"One may also understand, on the other hand, that God withdraws from those who do not comply with the call for further search, who remain unmoved and in dullness of spirit in face of his self-manifestations or do not seek therein him but means to serve their own ends, eventually even against him." 18

"All knowledge about God becomes precisely knowledge of God, namely the personal encounter with God. When this encounter finally becomes a person's proper experience, no longer mediated by images and parable, not by ideas, nor by anything which may be given a name, then only is reached the level of 'mysterious revelation' in the strict sense, the 'mystical theology,' the self-revelation of God in silence. This is the summit, the height of which is approached by the degrees of the knowledge of God." 19

"Thus it may be stated once more: God himself is the first theologian. All speaking about God presupposes God's speaking. His most real speaking is that in the face of which human speech is silenced, that which no human words can comprehend nor the language of image express. It amounts to a seizure of him to whom this speaking of God is addressed and it demands personal surrender as the condition of hearing it." 20

#### FOOTNOTES

1. *Edith Stein: Ways to Know God*, by St. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross, OCD, and *A Biographical Essay*, by Sr. Josephine Koepfel, OCD, New York: an Edith Stein Guild Publication, 1981.
2. *Edith Stein: A Biography*, Waltraud Herbstrith, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.
- 3-10. Same as #2 above, pages 70-95.
- 11-20. Same as #1 above, page 34-53.

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#### MIRACLE APPROVED FOR CANONIZATION

In 1987 in Brockton MA, a four year old Teresia Benedicta ingested a large amount of Tylenol, 16 times the lethal dosage for her body size. Her liver became five times normal size and she was facing kidney failure. Her family prayed to God through the intercession of Sr. Teresa Benedicta. She was cured and left the hospital in a few days with no after-effects. Many on the medical staff said, "It's a miracle."

## BOOK READING LIST

*The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume 1: Edith Stein: Life in a Jewish Family*, trans by Sr Josephine Koepfel OCD, ICS Publications, Washington DC, 1986, pb 548 pages.

*Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume 2: Essays on Woman*, edited by Dr L. Gelber and Romaeus Leuven OCD, Trans. by Freda Mary Oben, PhD, ICS Publications, Washington DC, 1987, pb 290 pages.

*The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume 3: On The Problem of Empathy*, trans. by Waltraut Stein, PhD, ICS Publications, Washington DC, 1989, pb 135.

*The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume 4: The Hidden Life, Hagiographic Essays, Meditations, and Spiritual Texts*, trans. by Waltraut Stein, PhD, ICS Publications, Washington DC, 1992, pb 156 pages.

*The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume 5, Edith Stein: Self Portrait In Letters 1916-1942*, trans by Sr Josephine Koepfel OCD, ICS Publications, Washington DC, 1993, pb 357 pages.

*Carmelite Studies IV: Edith Stein Symposium and Teresian Culture*, Edited by Fr John Sullivan OCD, ICS Publications, Washington DC, 1987, pb 327 pages.

*Edith Stein: Philosopher and Mystic, The Way of the Christian Mystics, Vol. 12*, by Sr Josephine Koepfel OCD, A Michael Glazier Book, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN, 1990, pb 190 pages. Out of print.

*Edith Stein: A Biography*, by Waltraud Herbstrith, trans by Fr Bernard Bonowitz OSCO, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1985, hc 127 pages.

*Edith Stein: Scholar, Feminist, Saint*, by Freda Mary Oben, PhD, Alba House, New York, 1988, pb 80 pp.

*Edith Stein: Philosopher, Carmelite Nun, Holocaust Martyr*, by Jean de Fabregues, St Paul Books and Media, 1965, pb 103 pages.

*Edith Stein: Ways to Know God*, by Sister Teresia Benedicta of the Cross, OCD, trans. by Dr. Rudolph Allers, and *A Biographical Essay*, by Sr. Josephine Koepfel, OCD, An Edith Stein Guild Publication, New York, 1983, 54 page pamphlet. Now available from the Carmelite Monastery, 15 Mount Carmel Road, Danvers MA 01923-3796. 508-774-3008. \$3.00 plus \$1.00 for packaging and postage.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1891, October 12, Edith Stein is born in Breslau.  
1911 Graduation in Breslau with honors.  
1911-13 Higher Studies in Breslau; Psychology, German Linguistics, and History.  
1913-15 Higher Studies in Göttingen: Philosophy (Husserl), German Linguistics, and History.  
1915 State Exam in Göttingen, with honors. Service in Army Hospital for Contagious Cases with Red Cross in Maerisch-Weisskirchen.  
1916 Substitute Teaching in Breslau.  
Doctoral Exam in Freiburg, *summa cum laude*.  
1916-18 Assistant to Edmund Husserl, Freiburg.  
1919-23 Private scientific work; failed in attempts to obtain academic post.  
Read life of St. Teresa in home of Conrad-Martius in Bergzabern; decision for Baptism and Carmel.  
January 1, 1922. Baptism and First Communion in the parish Church of St. Martin, Bergzabern.  
1922 February 2, Confirmation in the private chapel of the Bishop of Speyer.  
1923-31 Teacher at girls' academy and teachers' normal school of the Dominicans, Speyer.  
Translations and other literary activities.  
Lectures, Travels in and outside Germany, (Switzerland & Austria).  
1932-33 Teacher at German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy in Munster.  
1933 October 14, Entrance into Carmel, Cologne.  
1934 April 15, Clothing as Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.  
1935 April 21, First Profession for three years.  
1938 April 21, Final Profession (not Solemn).  
May 1, Veiling Ceremony.  
December 31, transfer to Echt Carmel, Netherlands.  
1934-1942 Composition of her most notable works: *Finite and Eternal Being*, *Science of the Cross*, *Life in a Jewish Family*, and others including the essay, *Ways to Know God*.  
1942 August 2, Arrest and transport to Amersfoort.  
August 4, From Amersfoort to Camp Westerbork Netherlands.  
August 7, Transport from Westerbork to the east.  
August 8, Arrival in Auschwitz.  
August 9, 1942, Her death in Birkenau.  
May 1, 1987, Her Beatification in Cologne, Germany.  
1997, Her Canonization in Rome.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<b>1</b> <i>The Eucharist: The Body and the Blood of Christ</i> Saint Justin, Martyr	<b>2</b> <i>Marcellinus &amp; Peter</i> Listen to the prayer of my exiled soul. Therese	<b>3</b> <b>Sts Charles Lwanga &amp; Companions</b> You showed Carmel to me. Therese	<b>4</b> <i>We can and must place our soul in God's hands. Saint Benedicta</i>	<b>5</b> <b>Saint Boniface, M</b> <i>Dying of love is a truly sweet martyrdom.</i> Therese	<b>6</b> <i>The Sacred Heart of Jesus</i> With silence and joy God sustains us. St Benedicta	<b>7</b> <i>Immaculate Heart of Mary, Patron of our Province</i> Bl Anne of St Bartholomew OCD	
<b>8</b> <b>Tenth Sunday of Ordinary Time</b> <i>To ravish my heart you became man.</i> Little Therese	<b>9</b> <i>St Ephrem of Syria</i> God cannot inspire unrealistic desires. Little Saint Therese	<b>10</b> <i>Living on Love is imitating Mary (Magdalen).</i> Little Therese	<b>11</b> <b>Saint Barnabas, Apostle</b> <i>I can rest on your Sacred Heart.</i> Little Therese	<b>12</b> <i>For a long time I have drunk from the chalice of tears.</i> Therese	<b>13</b> <b>Saint Anthony of Padua, Franciscan</b>	<b>14</b> <i>BVM on Saturday</i> You (Mary) have protected me here below. Therese	
<b>OCDS Regional Congress in Long Island NY</b>							
<b>15</b> <b>Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time</b> Father's Day <b>OCDS Regional ...</b>	<b>16</b> <i>Where has that morning freshness of the soul gone?</i> Saint Benedicta	<b>17</b> <i>Joseph, O tender father, protect Carmel.</i> Therese	<b>18</b> <i>The Lord can give us what we need at any time. Saint Benedicta</i>	<b>19</b> <i>I have shared your cup of sorrows.</i> Therese	<b>20</b> <i>I adore and love your sacred Name.</i> Therese	<b>21</b> <b>St Aloysius Gonzaga</b> Summer begins	
<b>22</b> <b>Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time</b> Sts John Fisher and Thomas More	<b>23</b> <i>O my God, you surpass all my expectations.</i> Little St Therese	<b>24</b> <i>Birth of Saint John the Baptist</i> Stay near me till the last night. Little Saint Therese	<b>25</b> <i>Prayer is looking up into the face of the Eternal.</i> Saint Benedicta	<b>26</b> <i>And you still live for me on the altar.</i> Little Therese	<b>27</b> <i>Cyril of Alexandria</i> I am very young and already I am suffering. Therese	<b>28</b> <b>St Irenaeus</b> <i>Virgin Mary, I want to sing a canticle of gratitude.</i> Therese	
<b>29</b> <i>Sts Peter and Paul</i> Lord, to you alone have I given my life. Little Therese	<b>30</b> <i>First Martyrs of Rome</i> I do not fear, my virtue is You. Little Therese	<h1>June 1997</h1>				The Divine Office should be prayed as printed on the days that are boxed. On the other days a votive office may be prayed.	

# July 1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<b>1</b> <i>Bl Junipero Serra</i> He told us about the millions of souls being lost... <i>Teresa of Avila</i>	<b>2</b> <i>The brown scapular unites many of the faithful to us.</i> <i>St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross OCD</i>	<b>3</b> <b>St Thomas, Apostle</b> <i>I have the vocation of the apostle. Little Saint Therese</i>	<b>4</b> <i>Independence Day</i> <i>Give to Joan of Arc of France the halo and the altar.</i> <i>Little St Therese</i>	<b>5</b> <i>St Anthony Zaccaria</i> <i>BVM on Saturday</i>
<b>6</b> <b>Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b> <i>St Maria Goretti</i>	<b>7</b> <i>We revere Elijah as our leader and father.</i> <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	<b>8</b> <i>His spirit is active in a vital tradition and determines how we live. Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross OCD</i>	<b>9</b> <i>By living penitentially Elijah atoned for the sins of his time. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross</i>	<b>10</b> <i>To stand before the face of the living God: that is our vocation.</i> <i>St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross OCD</i>	<b>11</b> <b>St Benedict, Abbot, 480-547</b>	<b>12</b> <i>Let us live our lives as true daughters of the Virgin Mary and keep our vows...</i> <i>St Teresa of Avila</i>
<b>13</b> <b>Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b> <i>St Teresita of Jesus of the Andes</i>	<b>14</b> <b>Kateri Tekakwitha</b> <i>Saints can give to others out of their surplus. Teresa Benedicta</i>	<b>15</b> <b>St Bonaventure OFM</b> <i>In Christ God confronts us.</i> <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	<b>16</b> <i>The Solemn Commemoration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel</i>	<b>17</b> <b>Bl Teresa of Saint Augustine and her Companions, Martyrs, 1794</b>	<b>18</b> <i>In our self-denying we follow Elijah, strongly and zealously. Teresa of Jesus of Avila</i>	<b>19</b> <i>God is extravagant in proofs of love when God accepts a soul.</i> <i>St. Teresa Benedict of the Cross</i>
<b>20</b> <b>Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b> <i>Elijah the Prophet of Carmel</i>	<b>21</b> <i>Saint Lawrence of Brindisi</i> <i>Have patience with yourself, the Lord does. Teresa Benedicta</i>	<b>22</b> <b>St Mary Magdalen</b> <i>The destiny of women comes from eternity. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross</i>	<b>23</b> <b>Our Lady, Mother of Divine Grace</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Blessed M Pilar &amp; Companions, OCD, Martyrs 1936</b>	<b>25</b> <b>Saint James Apostle</b> <i>I have the vocation of the apostle. Little Saint Therese</i>	<b>26</b> <i>SS Joachim &amp; Ann</i> <i>Every creature has a unique purpose.</i> <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>
<b>27</b> <b>Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b> <i>Bl Titus Brandsma O Carm Martyr</i>	<b>28</b> <i>Bl John Soreth O Carm 1400-1471</i> <i>You cannot do business with God.</i> <i>Teresa Benedicta</i>	<b>29</b> <i>St Martha</i> <i>Charity is bearing with the faults of others. Therese</i>	<b>30</b> <i>To watch in prayer is the same as to stand before the face of God.</i> <i>St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross OCD</i>	<b>31</b> <i>St Ignatius Loyola</i> <i>Cordial friendship is a good and beautiful thing. St Teresa Benedicta OCD</i>	The Divine Office should be prayed as printed on the days that are boxed. A votive Office may be prayed on other days.	

# The Discalced Carmelite Laity: Vocation, Identity, & Collaboration Within the Order

Dr. Maria Lupi, OCDS

## 1. Introduction

The recent post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Vita Consecrata* (VC), has a passage that can serve as a paradigm for the goals of our congress: "We may say that, in the light of certain historical experiences such as those of the secular or third orders, a new chapter, rich in hope, has begun in the history of relations between consecrated persons and the laity" (VC, 54).

I feel there couldn't be a more authoritative approval of the value of our Secular Order or a more authoritative exhortation to pursue the fullness and richness of our study days here.

To open up a new stage in the relationship between religious and laity means for us to reflect together, we religious and laity, on just which image of a lay Carmelite we want to offer to future generations. We also strive to make the Secular Order relevant, alive, and ready to respond to the spiritual demands of a laity on its way toward the third millennium. All of us are called to apply our spiritual, theological, and experiential creativity to attain this goal.

I admit to a certain embarrassment which I shared with Father John Sullivan when he asked me to speak about this topic, because I am aware that my experience is very limited and in certain ways very individualized, thus making my analysis of necessity only partial.

All the same, I think that this is the forum for a useful exchange of experiences. As a matter of fact, one of the most deeply felt needs of the Secular Order is sharing, not only in prayer and in mutual love, but also in exchanges on problems, of experiences, and of the difficulties we all encounter in living out our vocation.

My contribution is therefore only introductory in nature. It cannot grapple extensively with all the aspects of its theme, but it will try to offer avenues of reflection with ideas that show the way to our discussions and work together. Without engaging in an abstract theological discourse, rather one that sticks as closely as possible to today's situation and experience, I would like to point out only those elements absolutely necessary for looking to the future. This involves reexam-

ing the essential points of our identity so that renewal might take place in fidelity to our vocation. We seek to place on the table some of the problems that seem to be the most urgently in need of a solution so we can effectively move ahead. Finally we seek to supply some indications, perhaps very personalized ones, to build a future for the Secular Order based on attention to the signs of the times and especially on concrete collaboration between the Carmelite laity and the religious.

## 2. The Vocation and Identity of a Carmelite Lay Person According to the Seculars' Rule of Life.

(Congress Seal by Peggy Wilkinson)



If we do not begin with a definition of our vocation and from our identity as persons called to live our own lay state through the spiritual charism of a religious order, I think it is impossible to look toward the future. In other words, we must have a clear notion of who we are, what is our goal, and how can we achieve it, before we present ourselves to the rest of the Order and to the church.

Being lay persons and participating in a spirituality proper to religious can seem to be a contradiction in terms, but actually the apostolic exhortation *VC*, 54, considers doing so a great sign of the times. This happens precisely when religious are being asked to share their own spiritual treasures with lay persons, by allowing the laity to acquire for themselves their own theology and a spirituality suited to them, but freed from any imitation of a monastic life-style. This is not really something new for us. The Foreword of the Seculars' *Rule of Life* expresses this clearly. Carmelite laity derive from the Order's spirituality "effective inspiration and sustenance both for their interior life and also for their apostolic endeavors, in circumstances proper to their state of secular life." And it is exactly with the *Rule of Life* that we must start in order to define who we are and what is our goal.

Our first task then is attentively to reread the *Rule of Life*, written after Vatican II, for it captures the new approach to the laity. The *Rule of Life* seems to me to sketch the identity of Carmelite lay persons in a very updated fashion, situating their vocation in the baptismal vocation of every Christian and in the universal call to holiness. It does so by applying the teaching of *Lumen Gentium*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* of Vatican II, about the priestly, prophetic and royal mission of every Christian (*LG*, No. 34-36), and the teaching of *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, about the specific role of lay people in the church's mission (I am thinking of the frequent quotes from *Apostolicam Actuositatem*: No. 2 and, especially, No. 4). There you have a teaching that, even 30 years after the Council, remains the firm center of a theology of the laity picked up by subsequent documents of the Magisterium like *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *Christifideles Laici*, and the *Code of Canon Law*.

With its reference points in texts of the Council, the *Rule of Life* sets Secular Carmelites free of any religious life-style that in the past could have created some inconsistency, and places them right in their own state of life. But at the same time, it offers them the riches of Carmelite spirituality to realize their own Christian vocation. It stresses that they really do belong to the Order, founded as it is on a juridical bond but above all else on a share in the same Teresian Carmelite charism.

After a fashion it precedes what the Pope recently has affirmed in his exhortation *VC*, where he asks religious to "offer a generous welcome and spiritual support to all those who, moved by a thirst for God and a desire to live the demands of faith, turn to them." (*VC*, No. 103). The Teresian Carmelite Order offers its spirituality to the laity and to laity who feel called to live it are invited to incarnate it in their daily lives, in their lay mission.

This is the kernel of our vocation and it is that which distinguishes us as lay Carmelites: "to carry to the world a witness specific to Carmel: 'The Lord is living in whose sight I stand.' *I Kg 17, 1*" (Foreword). To witness to this, in other words, is to show with one's own life that God is present in the world, that God invites us to share in the divine life, and in God's friendship. We all have in mind the vocational ideals expressed in Article 2 of the Seculars' *Rule of Life*.

This is our vocation and we cannot avoid it. All renewal, every rereading of our identity in order that we might meet the demands of the future must begin right here, in "faithful creativity". These are the words of the exhortation *VC*, "there is a pressing need today...to return to the *Rule of Life*, since the rule ... provide[s] a map for the whole journey of discipleship, in accordance with a specific charism confirmed by the Church." This will be "a reliable criterion in their search for the appropriate forms of a witness which is capable of responding to the needs of the times without departing from the institute's initial inspiration" (*VC*, 37).

The Secular Order is frequently taken for a left-over from the past, a form of lay embellishment that the new ecclesial movements have surpassed. Instead, a reading of *VC*, makes us take stock of our timeliness: for example, its reminder in No. 55, "the spread of a fruitful spirituality beyond the confines of the institute," is just what we have always been striving to live. But how is one to propose and reply to the call for a spirituality that fits the spiritual demands of our contemporary lay people if it was created for consecrated persons and now is to be embraced by lay people?

### 3. Timeliness of the Secular Carmelite Vocation

In the first place, if God's salvific plan includes all in a call to share in God's divine life, I feel that Carmelite spirituality in itself fits Christian doctrine perfectly and all the passages from our Carmelite saints quoted by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* bears this out. Carmelite teaching offers our contemporaries a privileged path to answer God's plan for them, by helping them understand what it means to be called to holiness and providing a prayer method enabling them to form an intimate personal relationship with God. This spirituality is proposed even to lay people called, in virtue of their own vocation, to reach God through a commitment in the world and by immersing themselves in sec-





ular realities as they act out their reply to the primal purpose God has desired for (*LG, No. 31*).

The Carmelite lay person therefore is a Christian who wants to live the daily reality of God's presence together with God. Bringing God along, they broaden God's action in the world, they build up a world that corresponds to the aims of creation, that is, a world suited to the children of God. God has entrusted creation to us and the laity's characteristic function is to continue God's action by crafting things through work. This [creative] action they carry out among persons by their words, witness, the educational mission of the family, and school, so as to form other persons who, like them, seek to bring the world closer to God.

I always say that the Christian's mission is to leave the world better off than she or he found it, by extending a greater scope of action to God than there was previously. We think of today's problems: wars, all kinds of horrendous violence (especially imposed on the weakest of individuals like babies and women), permissiveness beyond control, meanness, selfishness, individualism, the triumph of countervalues (such as power, money, success, personal advantage), but also lack of respect for nature (pollution) and the search for substitutes for the supernatural (parapsychology, satanic sects).

We frequently hear people say: "Where is God? Why does God allow all this to happen? Why does God not intervene? Has God forgotten humankind? God is where we take God. The more numerous are those who live united to God, the more God is present, operative; the more numerous are the persons who live according to God's Word, who fulfill God's will, and answer God's call, the more the world is impregnated with God. If, instead, we neglect our interior dimension, do not live in God's presence, or do not allow God space in our lives, that is, if we do not bring God to others, God cannot rule over our world. The Chris-

tian, and in particular, lay Christians living immersed in earthly realities, is called to remove the world from negative influences (see Lazzati).

If I live fully the priestly, prophetic, and royal mission given to me in baptism, I contribute to the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. Yves Congar said in 1953 that the lay person's task is to "lead history and the world back to God in Christ. Many centuries before that, the author of the *Letter to Diognetus* wrote that Christians are not distinguished from other persons in externals, but "are the soul within the world." The Dominican theologian, Schillebeeckx, wrote in 1949 that the lay person is called "to live as a human person in a divine way."

If all this is true for the lay person in general, it applies especially to the Carmelite lay person called to live to a fuller measure the presence of God: in personal friendship with God, in a prolonged daily conversation with God, in imitation of Mary. Let us not forget that Mary was a lay person, the mother of a family, a housewife, but one who lived constantly immersed in contemplation of the divine mystery: "Mary kept all these things in her heart" (*Lk 2:51*). According to Saint John of the Cross Mary never acted under the impulse of creatures but "was always moved by the Holy Spirit" (*3 Ascent 2:10*).



As in the times of St. Teresa, "the world is in flames" today (*Way 1,5*) and we, like her, are called to make prophetic choices and reply to the overtures of our times. She assembled in her "dovecotes of the Virgin" companions who would pray and sacrifice themselves for the world's salvation. Women can also have other functions in the church but the remedy for the world's ills is still the same: make more room for God in our lives, regardless of what shape we find ourselves in.

I think this is at the heart of our vocation in all that distinguishes us as lay people and as Carmelites, but are we fully aware of this identity of ours, as it commissions us to be effective witnesses to the presence of God in the world?

A new stage for the Secular Order cannot begin until this self-awareness becomes apparent to and lived by a majority of the members. Without great experience of the situation of the groups throughout the world, I still think that the road ahead will be rather long.

#### 4. The Current Situation with its Problems

I have often noticed that currently there is a certain crisis of identity in the Secular Order. What gave me most cause for thought in the replies to the questions put to us two years ago and in the discussions they sparked, was the acknowledgement that among us there are quite diverse ways of considering one's belonging to the Order, of living the *Rule of Life* and community life, and of viewing one's own lay status. On the one hand and especially on the part of those who entered long ago, some follow a lifestyle close to that of the religious life. They find membership in the Secular Order a surrogate for the religious life, having not been able to enter it due to circumstances.

On the other hand, some approach Secular Order life like any of many pious associations that, along with other improvised groups nowadays, do not require a stable allegiance. You stay with it as long as your needs are satisfied, but then either you tire of it or get bored with the other members and you start looking for something else. Maybe one belongs simultaneously to several [ecclesial] movements or groups, and you end up with incompatible commitments and the problems this involves. Finally, some even think that being a Secular Carmelite is a private matter suited to life at home without any great need for life with others. One can find a great amount of confusion; and there is great need for clarifying things, especially through in-depth formation.

This leads me to another big problem our fraternities suffer from: insufficient Christian and Carmelite lay formation. Previously you could assume solid basic Christian education in those who entered the Secular Order, backed up by a Christian context to live in, wherever one was living in a country with a Catholic majority. Nowadays one just cannot take for granted

that persons asking admission to the Secular Order know what are the meaning and obligations of Christian life. Doctrinal and moral ignorance is of dramatic proportions; social mores are far-removed from Christian values and the latter are poorly assimilated even by practicing Catholics. You cannot tackle formation for Carmelite spirituality unless you have first supplied doctrinal and moral Christian training. Perhaps failure to confirm this basic training leads to another problem: allowing persons to enter the Secular Order who haven't understood its essence and whose minimal efforts at discernment misled them to believe they have a vocation.

On the other hand, a vocation crisis is growing, at least among us, due to so many choices of spiritualities offered by numerous [ecclesial] movements and frequently by younger people's reticence to commit themselves in a serious and definitive way. Add to this our own occasional inability to show ourselves as credible and enthusiastic witnesses of our spirituality.

The main cause of these problems is apparently the minimal acceptance and interiorization of the *Secular Order Rule* either by Carmelite laity or religious owing, probably, to the fact that its appearance in 1979 was not always accompanied by adequate formation and updating among long-time members who, in turn, were not always capable of putting it into practice or effectively presenting it to new members.

So, the image of the Carmelite lay person that I have just tried to sketch according to the *Rule of Life* has not always been appropriated by the members of the Secular Order nor understood by the religious. Above all else, it has not been assimilated well enough to allow the formation directors to explain the *Rule of Life* in context or to make it applicable to all settings by helping the fraternities' members to make it influence their daily, down-to-earth existence. What then are we to do?

## THE RULE OF LIFE SECULAR ORDER DISCALCED CARMELITES

Maybe, as noted in many replies to the questions tendered, we need a commentary on the *Rule of Life* to delve into the theological-spiritual riches it houses, to lay out all its contents, to illustrate its biblical, conciliar and Carmelite heritage allusions, and apply them to the daily experience of lay people. All of this is to draw out the true and practical identity of a Carmelite lay person so that new generations can follow.

## THE WORD OF GOD

### 5. Collaboration Within the Order

Our goal can only be realized by contact with Carmelite religious and by close collaboration with them.

I do not want to dwell here on the juridical bond between the laity and religious, something sufficiently clarified by the *Rule of Life*. It is precisely this bond that prompts the Carmelite religious to give special attention toward the Secular Order, although in qualified terms, but even more so that to other forms of lay association.

I do not even dwell on the need for logistical backup by communities, either of friars or nuns, for the secular fraternities (in the form of meeting rooms, chapels, practical support for organizing initiatives) because this is easy enough to arrange on the local level.

I would rather analyze two particular groups' contribution to the revitalization of the Secular Order, by trying to point out what Carmelite lay people expect of the religious and what, in the other direction, they think they can offer to the religious. As for what expectations the religious have of the laity, I believe the religious will mention them and we will be glad to hear what they are.

Perhaps this is a topic not much concentrated upon or analyzed after the Council's *aggiornamento*, even if in our Italian meetings we have been aware of it as a deeply-felt problem. With respect for their separate autonomy, and therefore avoiding any assumption of one's lifestyle by the other, we need to see growth in reciprocal trust, reciprocal awareness, reciprocal esteem, but especially in reciprocal assistance.

So, what then do the laity expect of the religious?

The first requirement, I feel, is for the religious to take their consecration seriously, that they be faithful to it, and that they help the laity to understand the radical following of Christ: that is, its riches with the demands it makes in life, as we are reminded by *No. 55 of Christifideles Laici*. Everyone should be him/herself, should live fully a witness to the Teresian Carmelite charism in the context of one's own state of life, whether it be religious or lay and without mixing up roles. In the final analysis, variety produces richness: if we were all equal we would not offer reciprocal enrichment. And precisely for this reason, better training about one's specific spirituality provides us necessary and likewise greater awareness of respective lifestyles.

At the same time the religious are requested to believe in the importance of the Carmelite lay vocation, thereby overcoming a certain widespread mistrust or skepticism. The latter is derived either from mistrust toward the possibility and the roles of the laity in the Church in general, or from mistrust toward forms of spirituality and organization deemed by many to be obsolete or superseded by new [ecclesial] movements.

Lay Carmelites expect the religious to know the Secular *Rule of Life* with very special attentiveness to it when thinking of other forms of lay associations. But briefly, our Secular Carmelites need to be trusted; they wish to be heard more easily, to see collaboration, to see assistance.

Furthermore, the laity need spiritual and doctrinal backing from the religious, from whom they request formative support for new members, for the continuing education of those in for a longer time, and for the training of those who impart formation.

Even more necessary is the task of spiritual direction, preached retreats, schools of prayer, and guidance for the application of the *Rule of Life* to day-by-day spirituality, just as *No. 55 of VC* reminds us. Last but not least, the laity request of the religious, as directors of conscience, to become cultivators and discerners of true lay Carmelite vocations by empathetically instructing, encouraging, and preparing persons for the spirituality of the Secular Order.

Only if this takes place will it be possible to build a constructive collaboration that, along the lines of the

exhortation *VC No. 55*, will lead to a deepening of the Teresian Carmelite spirituality and its spread beyond the religious life.

I understand that these requests have considerable implications; but, all the same, the laity is convinced they can be forthcoming to the religious, especially by helping them grasp day-to-day life and this world's problems, that is, the world in which lay people are immersed and which they surely know better than the religious (*Christifideles Laici, No. 55*). This also goes for understanding the contemporary problematic situations, loaded with the pain and fatigue that assail lay people at home in their families, at work, in politics, from the economy, and in the education of youth. Still relying on *VC*, I can say that the laity can help religious discover unexplored aspects of their spirituality (*VC 55*). Finally, they can help the religious live fuller religious lives by showing that they also in many ways recognize its meaning and respect its demands.

Two extremes in this regard are to be avoided: the risk the laity will allow the religious to direct them as they remain passive without initiative, as in the past; or the chance that autonomy be mistaken for independence by the laity with a resultant mistrust by the religious.



Above all else it is necessary to set up between both of them an effective and wide collaboration built on the basis of reciprocal dignity and trust. With respect for the "competencies" of each, it will be possible to work together, promote initiatives, and to draw up projects. All this with an eye to that which is surely the main apostolic commitment of the Order: spreading the spiritual charism and teaching of St. Teresa of Avila and of St. John of the Cross, acknowledged masters of authentic Christian life. Thus we will provide an answer to the growing need of interiority and of spirituality among our contemporaries. Unfortunately they often seek for satisfaction in superstitious or pseudo-mystical practices that serve as substitutes for the supernatural they desire but have lost track of.

The laity should serve as a bridge to these otherwise unapproachable persons and *milieux*, helping them become familiar with a spirituality of a life of prayer and union with God as well as our Order's special mission in the church and in today's world.



This can be accomplished also by lay collaboration with the Order's magazines, by participation in reciprocal formation, just as *No. 61* of *Christifideles Laici* calls for, but especially through initiatives that give ever-expanding groups of lay people the chance to learn prayer methods and even serve as founders and directors of prayer groups.

In particular we need close collaboration aiming at a new phase for the Carmelite laity: an absolute prerequisite is to make better known the true make-up of the Secular Carmel, making it more vibrant and applicable to the life of today's Christians.

## 6. Consequences and Proposals for the Future

In conclusion I would like to list some proposals that might help serve as a starting point to begin our discussions. They are personal proposals, but I do hope they capture concerns shared by all.

The first task should be to rethink and restudy the identity of lay Carmelite life and the role of Carmelite lay members in the Order and the church, out of fidelity to the Secular Order's *Rule of Life* and the demands of life today. To do this we will remember to blend the specific competencies and experiences of the laity with those of the religious who will then be able to provide a contribution rich in complementarity because they will grasp questions from two different perspectives. One outcome of such study will be deeper study aids for formation that can be of use to the entire Secular Order. Previously I pointed to a commentary on the *Rule of Life*, but diverse study helps can be imagined such as formative syllabi, anthologies of texts, etc.

The second task concerns apostolic ministry: promoting Carmelite spirituality and proposing it to a wide range of lay people in parishes and churches of our Order so as to create a large pool of lay persons who are familiar with, esteem, and live our Carmelite spirituality. They might even form a lay Carmelite movement out of which vocations could spring more easily into a stable commitment in the ecclesial structure that is the Secular Order.

The third task concerns adequate education of present and future members about God's plans (biblical-theological formation), about the theology of the laity, and about Carmelite spirituality as applied to the lay state. This involves basic formation for candidates that leads to an informed choice before taking promises. It includes ongoing formation imparted by religious and lay members for everyone and without exception. It embraces the training of formators who, capable not only of training others, will be able to rethink and re-read their charism creatively in line with the demands of differing settings and persons.

The fourth task is the joint promotion by religious and laity of apostolic initiatives that would suit the spirituality and contemplative vocation of the Order and meet our contemporaries' need for interiority, for spirituality, and for the divine dimension. I think this is the great apostolic task of Carmelite laity: surely with a share in a social, catechetical, or liturgical apostolates in their usual surroundings, according to the teachings of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No. 73, but whose primary duty is to devote time to a spiritual apostolate.

They ought to spread the Carmelite method of prayer, to explain God's call to union, to offer to their contemporaries a reply in prayer taken as a friendly conversation with God to the pressing need in all of us (created to the image of God) to transcend sensate and visible realities, by drawing near to the very source of all reality which alone can satisfy our thirst for infinity. "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You" (St. Augustine). □

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(The smaller paragraphs, photos, and paraphrasing of some of the ideas is the work of the various translators and the editor. The official English text will be made available later this year.)



**THE FACES OF SAINT THERESE.** This 20-inch full color circular 400-piece jigsaw puzzle is a lovely devotional work of art. It is based on ten authentic photographs of Little Therese. The cost is \$10.95 plus packing and postage. Only \$79.00 for a carton of 12. Write to: Monastery of Saint Therese, Discalced Carmelite Nuns, 35750 Moravian Dr, Clinton Twp MI 48035-2138.



**SAINT THERESE CENTENARY MEDAL.** This oval (actual size above) commemorative medal is available in bronze @ \$12, and silver @ \$22, postpaid. All profit to be sent to the Missions. Write to: Loretta Gallagher OCDS, 36 Virginia Ln, Newburyport MA 01950, 508-462-1057.

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## **OCDS EASTERN REGIONAL CONGRESS**

### **AUDIO TAPES.** Prices later. General Sessions:

"Therese - Help of the Secular Carmelite and Ordinary Christians," by Rev. Patrick Farrell OCD.

"Some Special Personal Focuses on The Little Way," by Rev. John Sullivan OCD.

"St. Therese: Spiritual Guide," by Rev. Kevin Culligan OCD.

"The Primacy of Love in Therese of Lisieux," by Elda Maria Estrada.

"The Final Consumation - What Makes a Saint," by Rev. Benedict Groeschel FFR.

"The Little Way - A Perfect Act of Love," by Rev. Salvatore Scieurba OCD.

### **Workshops:**

"St. Therese and St. John of the Cross," by Rev. Kieran Kavanaugh OCD.

"Therese's Way and Our Way," by Rev. Anthony Haglof OCD.

"Life and Message of St. Therese" - Slide Presentation by Rev. James Hannon.

"Our OCDS Promise - To Tend Toward Perfection in the Spirit of the Beatitudes," by Rev. John Moran MM OCDS.

"Fire at the Heart of the Church," by Mrs. Peggy Wilkinson OCDS. Prices to follow.

### **ST. THERESE: DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH.**

For years we have been preparing for Little Therese to be proclaimed a Doctor of the Church. Finally there is tentative approval and a date: August 24. Once it is final the details will appear in the news.

**HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM HONORS FR JACQUES BUNEL OCD.** A special exhibition on April 15th told this story of his heroic efforts to save Jewish lives. This eventually led to his incarceration and death.

### **ELECTIONS AT THE GENERALATE LEVEL.**

Held every 6 years, the first 4 have been re-elected.  
Superior General: Rev. Fr. Camilo Maccise, Mexico.  
1st Councilor: Fr Flavio Caloi, from Venice, Italy.  
2nd Councilor: Fr. Charles Serrao, Karnataka, India.  
3rd Councilor: Fr. Jean Sleiman, from Lebanon.  
4th Councilor: Fr. Maximiliano Herraiz, Spain.  
5th Councilor: Fr. Jeremiah Fitzpatrick, from Ireland.  
6th Councilor: Fr. Ulrich Dobhan, from Germany.  
7th Councilor: Fr. Dominic Nirmal Kumar, India.

**ALBA HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS.** A flyer was sent around Easter time to each of the Groups on the Audio and Video cassettes that are currently available from Alba House on our major Carmelite saints, especially on Little Saint Therese. Some of these items have been available for many years, while others are quite recent. Alba House will not carry them forever. Many Groups could benefit by acquiring some of these tapes for their formation programs.

**CARMELITE GREETING CARDS.** A new line of greeting cards, were developed from prayerful and contemplative themes, mostly from our major Carmelite saints. Themes: Interior Castle (St Teresa); Caverns and Reflections (St John of the Cross); Heart of Love (Teresa, John, Little Therese, and Bl Elizabeth); Medieval Mystics (Julian of Norwich & Hildegard of Bingen); Prayer, Wisdom & Nature Scenes. Cost: \$4.00 plus packing & handling for 2 of each of 4 different designs. Write to: Carmelite Monastery - Notecards, 25 Watson Ave, Barrington RI 02806.

### **BL TERESA BENEDICTA TO BE CANONIZED**

The tentative time and place has been changed from the Eucharistic Congress in Poland to sometime this summer in Rome.

**Letter To The Editor.** The information in the Clarion is very very helpful and very practical - doesn't get much better than that! Even my cat, Sweetie, (who is also a contemplative) seems to enjoy the Clarion. She plays with it all the time, always trying to get under it (seeking deeper meaning, perhaps?) A.C.

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## **OCDS NEWSLETTER**

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