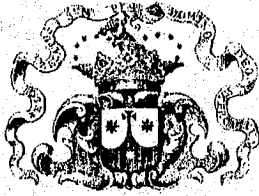


The Holy Hill Carmel Clarion



OCDS Newsletter

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VOL 3, NO. 2

MARCH--MAY 1999

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CARMEL
ESPECIALLY THE CARMELITE SECULARS
FOR WHOM I WORK, AND FRIENDS,

I know this will get to you in Lent. So, I wish you a successful Lent. That means ONE improvement. In my 36+ years as a priest I have heard countless people tell me they would never sin again. But. . . the truth is that God does not want us to brag, but to make some improvement. If we made one improvement every lent.... who would recognize us?

And I wish you a very Happy Easter. Others can play with easter eggs and the like. But we Christians can and need to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, our Lord. This is a special time of joy for the faith-filled! Happy Easter!

Now, from the sublime to the mundane.

One image that tells alot about our study of spirituality is that of, would you believe, the shopping malls.

Some years ago I met the owner of a big shopping mall. He explained to me that it was important to have two anchors, big department stores--like Sears, Pennys, or the like. And then many little specialty stores.

I see our Teresian emphasis as having John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila as our two anchors. And all the other Carmelite Saints and Blesseds and writers (including myself!) as the little specialty stores peddling Carmelite spirituality. You can find kitchen miscellaneous in the big anchor stores. But the little stores will have more items. So, Teresa of Avila will refer to the Trinity. But, Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity will go into more detail.

NOBODY BUYS EVERYTHING IN THE LITTLE SPECIALTY STORES. And no-one finds it important to buy into every concept of every Carmelite Saint or Blessed or writer. As we walk in the presence of God with Jesus and Mary and our favorite Saints,

we are inspired to shop in one or another of the little stores of Teresian Carmelite spirituality to buy into ideas that will help us become the people God wants us to be. Of course, this means offering to the universal Church the benefit of our being pray-ers and sharing what we can.

--Fr. Pat, OCD

MANY HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION OF THE CALENDAR--which only the midwest Clarion offers. And it has offered it since 1996 by the grace and hard work of the OCDS of Pittsburgh. They plan to offer it until November 1999. At that point --for the Dec/Jan/Feb (2000) issue-- We need some other OCDS Community to take it on as a community apostolate to other OCDS members.

I, or my successor, (though I don't envision getting laid off after May/June elections of our Washington province), would provide material for the project. Any takers?

The advantage of a whole OCDS Community doing the calendar is that the burden is spread around.

SOME "ESTABLISHED" OCDS COMMUNITIES ARE EARLY AND SOME ARE LATE in the triennial elections. But I ask you to at least read SEC VII of the Statutes. Article 1 of that section says, "The Community elections shall be held every three years in the spring prior to the Provincial elections of the Friars." Do what you can. At least, know what the OCDS (USA) statutes ask of you.

THE CENTRAL province of Oklahoma (which goes to the Atlantic via Georgia!) is about to have a regional congress in 1999.

The theme is: CARMEL AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD THE FATHER.

It will take place at the HARVEY HOTEL DFW AIRPORT, IRVING, TEXAS FROM THURSDAY, AUG 26TH THROUGH SUNDAY AUGUST 29TH.

The Congress fee is \$190 per person BEFORE MAY 16th, 1999. After that, it will go up to \$200 per person.

Cf. ANN DAWSON, P.O. BOX 1082, GRAPEVINE, TX, 76099 both for info and to register.

However, each member must make his/her own hotel reservations:
1-800-922-9222 or 972-929-4500
The single/double occupancy rate is \$72 per day. For the three nights: \$216.

In order to receive the contracted rates, please identify yourself as Secular Carmelites attending the Congress.

Reservations should be made by July 31, 1999.

DOES YOUR OCDS COMMUNITY KNOW YOUR NEXT OF KIN? Does your "next-of-kin" or person with power of attorney know about your OCDS Community? I will never forget a case where a very loyal and regular member was missing. "She must have a good reason."

The reason was that both she and her husband were in the hospital. He died first. When she died a few weeks later, there was a very sad OCDS Community--because they did not investigate why she was not at meetings. They learned of her death in an obituary notice. They regreted that they had not visited her in the hospital. They did not know she was there. Can that happen in regard to someone in your OCDS community?

READ THE SECULAR ORDER RULE OF LIFE. Do not confuse it with any commentary on it, even my comments on it! Hundreds of times I have heard people refer to what the "rule" says. And it isn't in the Rule! Nor in the Statutes for the USA. Sooooo, READ THE OCDS RULE OF LIFE ITSELF.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL OTHERS ABOUT PRAYER?

First of all, don't let them (including clergy) be scared. Sometimes even priests and deacons are scared about Teresian Carmelite prayer. Are you a mystic? Possibly so. Are you an ascetic? Most likely. Here is a simple explanation.

PRAYER IS COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOU AND GOD, OR, BETWEEN GOD AND YOU.

If YOU are doing the communicating, in one of the levels/types of prayer, it is "ascetical". If God is doing the talking/communicating, it is "mystical".

What is so scary and complicated about talking/conversation? What can be easier? You just want to say something to God or allow God to talk to you? YOU DO NOT HAVE TO TIGHTEN UP AND PERFORM...TO IMPRESS GOD! You just have to be you. God knows all about you anyway. He keeps you in existence! Every bit of you!

The "types"/"levels"/whatever of prayer all have one thing in common: communication between you and God, and God and you.

Liturgical prayer--Mass, Divine Office, sacramental, is one type. You are simply joining Jesus in His action of sacrifice, praise, or action when He deals with us.

Usually, that involves some form of what I will call "vocal prayer". Vocal prayer is the "level" or type one. We use formulas--like the Our Father, the Hail Mary, psalms, etc.. What is the rule to follow in that?

MAKE VOCAL PRAYER AS MUCH YOURS AS YOU CAN. St Teresa points out that if you do, it is already mental prayer. And, ... if you don't, it is not prayer at all! Sort of like talking to the wall instead of to somebody. You may be expressing yourself. But, for what reason?

WHAT IF YOU PRAY WITH OTHERS? Listen to people praying the Our Father together. Some are finished a half minute before the others! Group vocal prayer offers a few extra difficulties, doesn't it? But, if you are praying by yourself, TRY TO NOTICE WHAT YOU ARE SAYING. AND TO WHOM.

(Cont. from page 2): PRAYER...

With vocal prayer, we don't want God to ask, "Do you really mean that?" We want what we say to God, whether in formulas or otherwise, to be ours--at least, somewhat.

A SECOND "LEVEL" OR "STAGE" OR "TYPE" OF PRAYER IS WHEN YOU FREELY SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS/HEAD WITH GOD.

As His creatures and adopted children, God likes us to share our thoughts. Like, "What a beautiful sunset" or something more profound. We aren't really telling God anything. Our Three Divine Persons, the Trinity, planned all this! But God likes to hear from us. What we understand, appreciate, and know....

Has anyone told you what they discovered in life? If so, you have a glimpse of what God hears in our prayer of level two. We freely share our head. Have you amused God this way? May He smile on you! Many people will have their thoughts, but not share them with God. Nor even think of doing so.

Level or stage three is not necessarily better than level two, just different. We share freely our feelings.

Ideally, we want to tell God how much we love Him--after all, we are alive, we can see, or hear, or do things--which some cannot, etc.. But. . . sometimes our feelings are not so much loving and appreciative, but panicky. We feel worried, scared, insecure, etc.. So, we freely cry "Lord, have mercy" (Lord Jesus, help me!) God is honored when we freely share our feelings.

All of this is called (to use complicated jargon) "discursive prayer" or talking prayer.

Now, for the level four of ascetical, not mystical prayer.... First of all, ascetical speaks of what we do, what we control, etc.. It does not mean emaciated, starved, pained, etc.. So, level four is not a painful experience!

Level four is when we freely share both our head and heart--and simply, without lots of words--with God. We don't have to talk endlessly to God, do we? Just be there with Him.

Prayer, cont.:

This type/stage four is sometimes called "acquired contemplation" or a loving stare where we CHOOSE to give God loving attention.

Contemplation is nothing more or less than a loving stare--whether we choose it (as in this level of prayer) or whether (in levels five to eight, or more) God decides about it.

In polite society, you DON'T STARE at people. Right? At least, at times. But God doesn't mind if you CHOOSE to stare at Him. St. Teresa strongly suggests we start with the humanity of Christ, but we may not have to stop there. A veil, as in the Letter to the Hebrews, is meant to reveal something later. Jesus' humanity is meant to reveal (eventually) His Divinity and infinite Love.

However, there is a problem with the level four or "acquired contemplation". If you are led (by ordinary graces from God) to this, you might tend to always want to start at level four, disdaining "lower" levels of prayer. There are times when you NEED to simply pray vocally, or to speak at great length about your thoughts to God, or to speak at great--or short--length about your feelings, your heart, to God.

Don't be at once proud and stupid--wanting only to pray on level four. Or, you may not have any prayer at all.

PRAY AS BEST YOU CAN, WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHAT IF YOU ARE SICK? St. Teresa points out that that is no reason for not praying. Your prayer may be more a groan than a marvellous discourse to God. But every bit as good! Maybe even better--since you are counting on the Holy Spirit to translate your groans into words of love for God the Father!

LEVELS FIVE AND SIX ARE TOTALLY UP TO GOD. But they involve God grabbing your heart or head.

LEVELS SEVEN AND EIGHT are when God grabs both head and heart at the same time--sort of like level four, but totally God's action.

MARCH 1999

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 God's grace is like a torrent. Let us examine our conscience...make way for grace and make up for lost time. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>	2 God wants obedience more than sacrifice. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	3 I was convinced the Lord would not fail those who had no other concern than to please Him. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>	4 He will not suffer your foot to slip. <i>Psalms 121:3</i>	5 The martyrdom of the heart is no less fruitful than the shedding of blood. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	6 Come, we go for our people. <i>St. Teresa Benedicta a Cruce</i>
7 3 rd Sunday of Lent Ever prefer to be taught by all rather than desire to teach even the least of all. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	8 You will see the mercy of the Lord and how His majesty does not abandon the one who desires to serve Him. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>	9 My people shall be filled with my blessings, says the Lord. <i>Jer 31:14</i>	10 The good God has always helped me. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	11 Live in love, live in heaven, live in God. <i>St. Therese of the Andes</i>	12 Never give up your works because of a want of satisfaction and delight in them, if they are fitting for the service of God. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	13 May the Lord have a hand in all that I do so that it may conform to His holy will. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>
14 4 th Sunday of Lent Yet in my flesh shall I see God. <i>Job 19:26</i> 4	15 Suffering united with love is the one thing we should desire. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	16 I feel Him so alive in my soul. I have only to recollect myself to find Him within me. <i>Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	17 St. Patrick Take care always to be inclined to the difficult more than to the easy. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	18 Humility and the virtue of detachment, it seems to me always go together. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>	19 St. Joseph And you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." <i>MT 1:21</i>	20 For the Lord will not reject His people; He will never forsake His inheritance. <i>Psalms 94:14</i>
21 5 th Sunday of Lent I fear only one thing - to keep my own will; take it, my God, for I choose all that You choose. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	22 Pay no heed to things out in the world, for God has already withdrawn and released you from them. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	23 I was convinced the Lord would not fail those who had no other concern than to please Him. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>	24 Serve the Lord with gladness. <i>Psalms 100:2</i>	25 Annunciation I do not want to be a saint by halves. I am not afraid to suffer for you. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	26 Christ wants your life in order to give you His. <i>St. Teresa Benedicta a Cruce</i>	27 Strive to be incessant in prayer, and in the midst of your corporal practices do not abandon it. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>
28 Palm Sunday It would be a good exchange to give up everything for the enjoyment of everlasting abundance. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>	29 Monday of Holy Week How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! <i>Psalms 139:17</i>	30 Tuesday of Holy Week Abandonment alone guides me. I have no other compass. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	31 Wednesday of Holy Week The greater perfection a soul aspires to, the more dependent it is upon graces. <i>Br. Lawrence</i>			

APRIL 1999

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Holy Thursday He will wipe every tear from their eyes. <i>REV 21:4</i>	2 Good Friday Whether you eat, or drink or speak...or do anything else, you should always do so with desire for God. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	2 Holy Saturday O sparkling nature, if I did not see God in you, you would be naught but a great tomb. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>
4 Easter Sunday Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has been raised. <i>Luke 24:5</i>	5 Easter Monday We must always continue to labor, since in the life of the spirit, not to advance is to fall back. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>	6 Easter Tuesday In all things, both high and low, let God be your goal. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	7 Easter Wednesday I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and terrible day. <i>Malachi 3:24</i>	8 Easter Thursday Do not omit mental prayer for any occupation, for it is the sustenance of your soul. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	9 Easter Friday O Jesus, may I one day die of Thy Love. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	10 Easter Saturday Put your hand to the plough. If you work as you should, be assured that you will soon see the fruits of your efforts. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>
11 2nd Sunday of Easter In heaven and on earth, always the lowest and last place and office. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	12 Poverty of spirit is a good that includes within itself all the good things of the world. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>	13 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. <i>John 14:18</i>	14 Be deeply sorry for any time that is lost or that passes without you loving God. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	15 Not for us, Lord, for we don't deserve it, but for the blood of Your Son and His Merits. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>	16 Keep my heart pure, shield me with Thy presence, just for today. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	17 Bl. Baptist Spagnoli - Carmelite In the midst of your work, console yourself with Him as often as you can. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>
18 3rd Sunday in Easter Let nothing reign in your soul that does not lead you to sanctity. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	19 If you return to the almighty, you shall be built up. <i>Job 22:23</i>	20 Birth of John the Baptist There is nothing annoying that is not suffered easily by those who love one another. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>	21 Always be more disposed toward giving to others than giving to yourself. <i>St. John of the Cross</i>	22 To live by love is to banish all fear, all remembrance of past faults. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	23 Bl. Teresa Manetti - Carmelite Everything done with a pure intention is perfect love. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>	24 I do my work in simple faith before God, humbly and lovingly. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>
25 4th Sunday of Easter You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. <i>Acts 22:15</i>	26 Do what best stirs you to love. <i>St. Teresa of Avila</i>	27 Prayer is a cry of gratitude and love, in the midst of trial as well as in joy. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	28 Christ wants your life in order to give you His. <i>St. Teresa Benedicta a Cruce</i>	29 St. Catherine of Siena Nothing is sweeter than to think well of one's neighbor. <i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i>	30 The Lord has been mindful of us: he will bless us. <i>Psalm 115:12</i>	

MAY 1999

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						<p>1 St. Joseph the Worker Those who are devoted to prayer should cherish devotion to St. Joseph.</p> <p><i>St. Teresa of Avila</i></p>
<p>2 5th Sunday of Easter My soul doth magnify the Lord.</p> <p><i>Luke 1:46</i></p>	<p>3 Sts. Philip & James My spirit rejoices in God my savior.</p> <p><i>Luke 1:49</i></p>	<p>4 I have found my heaven on earth, because heaven is God and God is in my soul. <i>Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity</i></p>	<p>5 St. Angelus – Carmelite Without making His voice heard, Jesus teaches me in secret.</p> <p><i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i></p>	<p>6 All praise of God is through with and in Christ.</p> <p><i>St. Teresa Benedicta a Cruce</i></p>	<p>7 With silence and Joy, God sustains us.</p> <p><i>St. Teresa Benedicta a Cruce</i></p>	<p>8 Bl. Aloysius Rabai - Carmelite You have been my help ... my soul clings to you.</p> <p><i>Psalm 63</i></p>
<p>9 6th Sunday in Easter I do my work in simple faith before God humbly and lovingly.</p> <p><i>Brother Lawrence</i></p>	<p>10 God created all things – and in them, he left a trace of Himself.</p> <p><i>St. Teresa Benedicta a Cruce</i></p>	<p>11 The important thing is not to think much, but to love much.</p> <p><i>St. Teresa of Avila</i></p>	<p>12 Prayer cannot be accompanied by self-indulgence.</p> <p><i>St. Teresa of Avila</i></p>	<p>13 I will not leave you orphans, I will come back to you.</p> <p><i>John 14:18</i></p>	<p>14 St. Matthias, apostle A pure heart create for me, oh God, put a steadfast spirit within me.</p> <p><i>Psalm 51</i></p>	<p>15 Virgin Mary, I want to sing a canticle of gratitude.</p> <p><i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i></p>
<p>16 7th Sunday of Easter We should not weary of doing little things for the love of God.</p> <p><i>Br. Lawrence</i></p>	<p>17 May the God of peace make you perfect in holiness.</p> <p><i>Theo. 3:23</i></p>	<p>18 Love: silence and prayer is the essence of the life of Carmel. <i>Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity</i></p>	<p>19 Listen for the voice of God in the Eucharist.</p> <p><i>St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross</i></p>	<p>20 My soul is thirsting for the living God.</p> <p><i>Psalm 42:3</i></p>	<p>21 I thank you for making me mass through the crucible of suffering.</p> <p><i>St. Therese of Lisieux</i></p>	<p>22 St. Joachim de Vedruna – Carmelite Find joy everywhere doing little things for the love of God.</p> <p><i>Brother Lawrence</i></p>
<p>23 Pentecost Sunday Jesus is the image of the living God.</p> <p><i>Col. 1:15</i></p>	<p>24 The temple of God is holy, and you are that temple.</p> <p><i>1 Cor. 3:17</i></p>	<p>25 St. Margaret Magdalene de Pazzi - Carmelite We can never finish studying the gospels.</p> <p><i>St. Teresa Benedicta a Cruce</i></p>	<p>26 St. Philip Neri In all things ... let God be your goal.</p> <p><i>St. John of the Cross</i></p>	<p>27 He must increase; I must decrease.</p> <p><i>John 3:30</i></p>	<p>28 Sometimes we should ask for His grace, and sometimes we should offer Him our suffering.</p> <p><i>Brother Lawrence</i></p>	<p>29 Christ's suffering and dying are continued in His mystical body and in each of His limbs.</p> <p><i>St. Teresa Benedicta a Cruce</i></p>

MORE TERESA "WAY OF PERFECTION" QUESTIONS:

Ch 22, n. 5:

O.) Do you praise God for all the marvels of nature--the beautiful sunsets, etc.? Or do you, as Teresa advises, praise God also for giving you a good attitude as to what makes a person important/valuable?

P.) Can you think of any illustrations of "how blindly those who are in the world spend their time"?

(Memo: the Bible sometimes distinguishes between those with mundane and passing glories and those who live with these projects as part of their response to God with love--not for the project/aims as such, but for a higher motive.)

n. 6:

Q.) Have you recently spoken to God about your need for help in getting human eloquence and wisdom both in order to explain your faith--knowledge and understand more of *Who this Lord and Good of ours is?*

n. 7.:

R.) Before you pray, do you pause to consider to Whom you are speaking? And, how you make Him happy by your behavior/actions?

n.8.:

S.) What *"other things while speaking to God" have you been thinking about?* And, what can you do to re-direct them to God--so they become part of your prayer?

CH 23, n. 1:

A.) When you pray are you giving attention to God? Or just lending it, before taking it back?

And, what has been your experience of "displeasure felt by the borrower when the object is taken back"?---especially if the borrower has given you many gifts without taking them back?

Or, what does this say about a good attitude to have when you pray? Are you a lender in God's view?

n. 2:

B.) If prayer is giving a little bit of our time and attention to God, and we take it back to give our attention to ourselves, who should thank us? And/or, if we do the same through distractions to give our full attention to someone who will not thank us for it, how do we come out ahead--unless by sharing these concerns with God?

n.3.:

C.) How aware have you been that God understands you completely? That God sees your physical/mental indisposition? Or your just occupation with other matters? Or your way of giving?

D.) If God is not petty, but generous (as Teresa reminds us), He will reward us for even raising our eyes in remembrance of Him. Can you think of occasions when you did that? Or its equivalent?

n. 4:

E.) Are you--or can you be--one of the "determined souls" St. Teresa speaks of? And, do you know what this determination is that Teresa speaks of, the attitude she says "no one knows how important " it is?

F.) Do you yourself or others you know have experience about being unstable and changeable?

n.5:

G.) You may not have, but have you experienced the friendship and favor God shows to those who journey on this road of prayer?

n.6:

H.) Do you have any personal experience of the "hundredfold" of benefits that St. Teresa reminds us of, or of the other, a lack which prompts us to "Ask and you shall receive"?

I.) How many people have you--including yourself--encouraged to at least TRY the "journey of prayer"?
(Cont. next issue)

SOME THINGS I HAVE NOTICED ABOUT OCDS LIFE:

1.) Although some groups meet twice a month, most meet once a month. Although some groups meet from 10AM to 3PM, most meet for a much shorter time, especially if it is in the evening. Each OCDS group that I have met (about 110 of them) does things differently. And that is okay. If every family had to have supper at the same time..., wouldn't our world be different!

Hence, regulations have been kept to a minimum for all groups, giving the local Council (Art.24) authority to decide what to ask of its members. And, even there, certain members may not be up to what the rest are--like night driving. Sooooooo, I recommend that members explain problems to the President or Council members. Christian love is the Rule of Rules. But information helps.

More observations about OCDS practices:
 For some the Liturgy of the Hours or Christian prayer with its psalms can be replaced by "other prayers" (Rule Art.5). But weekday pressures and the like (visiting the hospital, getting breakfast for husband and kids, then off to school or work, etc.) may not apply to the once a month meeting where the Office is recited. Distinguish what is possible and what is not.

When the monthly meetings offer so little time for Teresian Carmelite topics/study/discussion, encourage those who want to discuss trips/pilgrimages or gossip to do so after the meeting period.

More and more. OCDS groups have mailing and phone lists. Apparitions and locutions happen--e.g.: St. Paul had one of Jesus! But they should not pre-empt such a short meeting time once a month. If you feel it important, discuss them later. Don't be an unwitting enemy of Carmel. As many Carmelites would say, "Balance is important".



Address Correction Requested

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Holy Hill Monastery

Eastern Province

OCDS Newsletter

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