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Discalced Carmelite Secular Order

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Josefa Naval Girbes, OCDS
1820-1893

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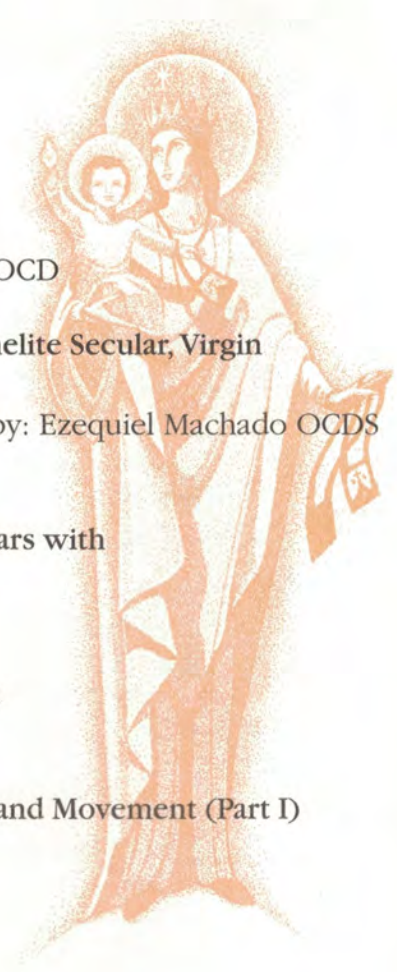


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*“Nobody should distrust God
because they see their own sins.
Our trust does not rely on who we
are, but on who God is and on
the merciful love He has for us.”*

Blessed Josefa Naval Girbes OCDS

Editorial

In order to preach for our missions in Nairobi Kenya, I recently took my letter of authorization and went to the designated parish of The Annunciation of Mary in Philadelphia. The rectory was near the church, and a brisk wind was blowing between the buildings. When I entered the sacristy I asked the teenager in charge whether my Kenny Rogers haircut was messed up, or whether it was OK for preaching. She said, "Oh, Father, you are beautiful." This answer distracted me from what I was going to say. I had to immediately forget what was said. Fortunately, since my memory was being purified for the last few years, this happened rather quickly.

Back in Washington, with Jessica Powers' book of sacred poetry, I discovered that the saints sought a holy beauty: holiness. They used their body-soul self to travel on this spiritual journey. They spent their years, whether few or many, pouring themselves out day by day in love of God and neighbor, unconcerned about whether they were advancing in age. Their attention was on advancing in wisdom and grace.

The saints had to remove their attention from other distracting areas of concern, and they also had to unlearn any false or trivial notions they had acquired from unholy sources. "Without Beauty" rang out with many practical reminders for me.

Our Blessed Josefa Naval Girbes OCDS is a beautiful saint. Unloveliness, by this world's standards, was not a problem. She answered Christ's call to holiness and grew in the virtues of prayerfulness, humility, meekness, and heroic charity. Irma Estrada shows us a Secular Or-

der Carmelite model who wanted to see God, and who was also a daughter of the Church. ■

Fr. Theodore N Centala OCD

Without Beauty

Sister Miriam of the Holy Spirit OCD —
Jessica Powers (1905-88)

The spirit travels unmolested
once she has measured beauty's worth
nor weeps to see herself divested
of every comeliness on earth.

The body may grow poor and charmless,
and age inscribe its added jest.
the mind may stand, a not too harmless
buffoon in its own blunders dressed.

The troublous heart that hurried after
each silly windfall of no gain
may starve and die. Lament and laughter
now ply their crafty trades in vain.

Unloveliness becomes her treasure
whom God's attraction pleases well.
she is His contrast and His pleasure
whose beauty captured her from hell.

And though she walks in rags and tatters,
her face is to a sunset turned.
and what she has no longer matters
before this light that she has learned.

For God within her stoops to sharing
the splendor that is His alone
which still were hid had she come bearing
one spurious beauty of her own.

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JOSEFA NAVAL GIRBES

Carmelite Secular, Virgin

1820-1893

Irma Estrada, OCDS

Translated by: Ezequiel Machado, OCDS
and Alicia DeMedina, OCDS

The original records of the (Secular) Third Order of Carmel were lost, mainly due to the devastation and fires of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The parish records have also disappeared, as well as those from the Carmelite Monasteries. Therefore we do not have the official text of Josefa Naval Girbes's registration in the Third Order of Carmel.

We certainly know, from declarations made during the Diocesan Process for Josefa's beatification, and from information collected in the "Serf of God: Josefa Naval Girbes's Biography", written by the priest, Bernardo Asensi Cubells (Valencia, 1957; 2a.1962), the following information. Blessed Josefa... "was registered in the Third Order of Carmel and requested that after her death she should be clothed with the habit of the Order of Carmel", that ... "she had special devotion for the Scapular of the Virgin", and that when she died her disciples dressed her in the Carmelite habit.

We also know from the book, "Algemesi and Its Patroness", (1907) that the El Carmen Fraternity of the Secular Order was founded in that city in 1854, and by tradition was kept in Algemesi and orally communicated by various people to the General Postulator during his visits to the city during the process of her beatification.

There were some chosen groups of Terciar- ios (Third Order Members) in several places in the Valencia Province, whose status was of "joined to the Third Order of this city". At the end of the 19th century, there was much com-

munication between the Third Order of Algemesi and the Carmelite Friars of Alboraya in Valencia, whose Secular community had been re-established in 1884. The records of the Third Order showed that there were more than a thousand members in 1891.

Vatican II opened the doors for the members of secular orders to be more active in the Church. Under this light, the Bishops Synod of 1987 studied the broad role the secular order members have in the Church and in the world. We present the life of Josefa Naval Girbes as a typical example of what this Synod proposed as a model of Christian life for the members of many secular orders, who now constitute a large number of Church members.

Josefa Naval Girbes was born in Algemesi, Valencia Province, Spain, on December 11, 1820. Algemesi was a highly agricultural village, with about 8000 inhabitants. It had only one parish, a Dominican Monastery, a hospital, a few educational centers and some basic industry. Her parents were Francisco Naval Carrasco, and Josefa Girbes, and her five brothers and sisters: Maria Joaquina (who died very young), another Maria Joaquina, Vicente, Peregrina (who died when she was fourteen years old), and the youngest Josefa who died just after being born.

From her parents Maria Josefa inherited her faithful spirit, her deep-rooted piety, her love for work and the ardent desire to always live in the state of grace. Maria Josefa was baptized the same day she was born, and soon she was

called only Josefa. Later some of her devout followers called her "Senora Pepa".

When Josefa was eight years old, she received the Sacrament of Confirmation. She acquired a basic education, which was enough to develop her life in that environment. She learned embroidery, an activity that she successfully taught her numerous disciples.

Her childhood passed without any special events. Her mother effectively collaborated in her religious formation. From her early years she learned to love the Blessed Virgin, who was venerated at the Dominican Friars' Monastery near her home. At a very young age she showed a strong energetic character that would be central in her apostolic activity. She made her First Communion when she was only nine years old, a bit of an exemption, since the custom at that time was to wait until the person was eleven years old.

Josefa's mother died when she was thirteen. While praying to the Blessed Virgin at the Dominican Friars Monastery, Josefa was assured that Mary would never abandon her. She then went with her father, brother and sisters, to live with her maternal grandmother.

Josefa turned out to be an ideal housekeeper. In addition to her own family duties, she added the exquisite care of her sick grandmother, without abandoning her life of piety. She did not make concessions to the routine of her life or to fatigue. Her grandmother died when she was 27 years old. Josefa continued to live in that house with her father, her uncle Joaquin and her surviving sister and brother, Maria Joaquina and Vicente.

Her father died when he was 62 years old, and Josefa was 42. Her sister Maria Joaquina got married, but died when she was 43. Her brother Vicente also married and had three children who died very young, as did his wife. A widower, he went to live with his sister.

Her uncle Joaquin, a saintly single man, died when he was 77, in the year 1870, the same year Josefa invited her disciple and confident Josefa Esteve Trull to live with her, and to

whom she left all her belongings to be used to continue her work.

Josefa was of medium height and build. Her skin was light and delicate, her face was oval. She had bright eyes that gave a sense of depth, but was very modest. She had deep brown hair that later became gray, and a soft and caressing voice. She used to smile frequently, but was never seen laughing. Her step was moderate, and she used to dress in dark colors, wearing low shoes and a long veil. Her overall appearance was simple and modest.

At 18 years of age, she chose Jesus as her only spouse, and on December 4, 1838, consecrated her virginity to Him forever, keeping her heart undivided (I Cor 7, 32-34). She made continual progress in her union with Christ and dedicated herself with all her strength, to answer the call to holiness and to the service of the Church and her neighbor. She demonstrated that virginity is a true sign of love and a very special source of spiritual fruitfulness in the world, (*Light to the Gentiles*, Ch 42).

Josefa looked for opportunities to praise Christ, by her word and by her actions, both to unbelievers, to attract them to the faith, as well as to believers to instruct them and confirm them in their faith and to stimulate them to a life of piety and fervor. With this goal in mind, she used to teach girls Christian doctrine. She also visited people, and provided counsel to the ones who requested it. She even helped restore peace in broken families. Josefa organized at her home a circle of mothers with the intention of guiding them in Christian formation. She guided women to virtue that had taken wrong directions, and she used to prudently admonish sinners.

The primary task to which she addressed her care and energy was the Christian education of young women. She opened a free embroidery school at her home, and also taught manual skills which she knew very well. This workshop was assiduously and enthusiastically attended by many young women from all social levels. It became a center of community living, of prayer; a

place for praising God and reading and explaining sacred scripture and eternal truth.

In this way she effectively contributed to the religious growth of her parish, forming good mothers, promoting vocations to the consecrated life and teaching all to be good citizens of the people of God. Because of this, she acquired great esteem and fame of sanctity among both the clergy and the laity. Even after her death, on February 24, 1893, (at the age of 73) her reputation kept increasing due to her life of holiness and works of charity.

Clothed with the habit of the Third Order of Carmel, she was placed in a simple coffin. The next morning, February 25th, her funeral Mass was celebrated and she was buried in the afternoon. Her coffin, draped with white ribbons, was carried by four of her youngest disciples. Dofla Josefa Esteve Trull, her preferred disciple, placed her coffin in a temporary acquired niche, and later moved it to find her definitive resting place in 1902.

There, she remained, incorrupt, until her transfer to the parish, on October 20, 1946. The Archbishop of Valencia, and the clergy initiated her Cause for Beatification with an Informative Diocesan Process, celebrated during the years 1950 to 1952, which was followed by an Additional Process in 1956.

On January 3, 1987, his Holiness John Paul II approved the decree on the heroic virtues of Josefa Naval Girbes. On September 1, 1988 the proposed miracle for her Beatification was accepted. The Beatification ceremony was celebrated in Saint Peter's Basilica on September 25, 1988. In our liturgical calendar her feast is celebrated on November 6th.

A Vocation to the Secular Order of Carmel

Josefa Naval Girbes is, without any doubt, an example for all who are called to holiness of

life without abandoning secular society, that is, without leaving their home, their family, and their professional work. She remained in the world to be a model of holiness, and a model for secular society. Josefa did not profess the vows of the consecrated religious life. She did not enter a convent, for some desire for comfort or to escape the severity of close family living. She remained in secular society. Without leaving her home, she fully lived the evangelical counsels, and she became a model for the majority of the daughters and sons of the Church, its secular members.

Josefa was fully conscious of her secular state of life in the Church. She was an ideal housekeeper at thirteen years of age, managing a large family of seven members. She walked her roads of holiness, totally devoted to God, in service to her neighbor. To her secular way of life she freely added the gift of her virginity, which united her in intimacy with God and made her available for an apostolic action that was visibly fruitful. Josefa was a secular virgin, enjoying the two vocations at the same time.

Josefa Naval comes to the world of today with her virtues and apostolic activities as a much-needed example to guide us along the roads of sanctity: a replicable role model for the secular members of the Church.

This saintly woman from Algemesi lived, as a secular person, a life of evangelical holiness. She devoted herself to an apostolate among the young women in her village, providing an invitation for a life of virtue and faith. She, who helped fill up many cloistered convents with novices for virgins in the consecrated life, remained in secular society to provide testimony. She was a witness of how consecration to God is a sign of love and a very special source of fruitfulness in the middle of the world. "Sanctify yourself and sanctify others!" This was a guiding principle of this blessed virgin: always and in



everything, to follow God's desire, in her ordinary life circumstances and in her secular duties.

Undoubtedly, Josefa pondered the possibility of devoting her life within some convent. For sure she shared this possibility with her spiritual director, but with the light given by the Lord, which she humbly and obediently received, and with her director's counsel, she clearly saw that she should stay in secular society to help guide individuals who needed her direction, her example of devotion to God and the benefit of her apostolic activities.

Her place in the Church was always well defined. Remain in the world, but be not of the world. Josefa assumed her call to holiness through her union with God by love, faithfully living His will, in her secular condition.

Josefa fully lived in the love of God and shared that love by reaching out to others, and in this manner, she shared her road to holiness. "Search for holiness by simplicity," and "Reach holiness no matter what the cost."

What she taught her disciples, Josefa lived to the fullest. In the middle of secular society, simply and naturally as a consecrated virgin, our Josefa grew to holiness; holiness that other individuals reached in the silence of the cloisters.

Vocational Ideals

Josefa Naval Girbes, opening wide her soul, used to say: "My ideal is not to lengthen my life, but to sanctify my life." She practiced to a heroic degree the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. This exercise, as we Carmelites well know, leads to self-denial, abandonment, and surrender of ourselves as vocational ideals.

Her life was all for God: "We have to twist our will in order to make it loose all that is not God's will." God's will was revealed, with a deep spirit of faith, in Sacred Scripture and in the understanding of the obligations of her secular state of life. The joy of fulfilling those duties, which she taught to her disciples, is expressed in the following words: "The fulfillment of our duties is the way; the degree of love with which we comply is the measure of the virtue our soul has."

Josefa always had a clear knowledge of God's goodness, which is why she placed all her trust in Him. She, who sought all the eternal goods and worked to achieve them, relied always on God's help. To accomplish this, she consecrated her whole life: by her suffering, which was not small, mainly caused by her sickness which accompanied her since she was thirty years old, until her death; by her labors, the domestic ones which she had to face since being thirteen years old, and the ones she imposed upon herself at the workshop-school she founded; by her apostolic restlessness which led her to have deep concern for all who lacked material or moral things.

She always placed her trust in God's Providence and it was her duty to inspire that trust in her disciples. So she used to tell them: "Nobody should distrust God because they see their own sins. Our trust does not rely on who we are, but on who God is and on the merciful love He has for us."

Josefa was a humble serf of the Lord. The humble person recognizes her nothingness, her complete dependence on God, and trusts in God's hands. She humbled herself at Church, before God's majesty; and in that humble attitude she spent the entire day, while dedicating herself to all kinds of work, even the most humble jobs. She never accepted the help of her disciples with domestic duties. She loved to retreat and to be unnoticed. She did not speak about herself, or about her accomplishments. Wishing her disciples to love the virtue of humility, she used to tell them: "We are what we are before God; we ought to do everything, with great purity of intention. If afterwards we are scorned, we must keep silent, without arguing, even if we are humanly right."

Josefa's life was steeped in God's love. Her faith enabled her to see God as infinitely kind. She felt that He, who is Absolute Goodness and satisfies all the person's aspirations, deserves to be loved. Her love was a deep love in abnegation, sacrifice, and total devotion to fulfill His will: "To love God is to surrender; to love God



is to suffer; true love is proven in sacrifice.”

Josefa also knew that God’s love acted through her to God’s people: She loved others on behalf of God. This love started with the conviction that we are all children of God, all brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. She always kept in mind the word of the Lord (1 Jn 4, 20). She loved her relatives: her parents, her grandmother, her uncle, her sisters, and her brother Vicente, who had an unkind attitude toward her. This love continued even when Vicente, as a widower, came back to live with her. She loved her superiors, especially the priests, including her wise spiritual directors. She loved her disciples, with a proportionate passion to her zeal. But over all, she loved the poorest, to whom she dedicated her greatest zeal.

Her love of the Cross was a constant message for all her disciples. She was accustomed to saying: “Let us conform ourselves to the sacrificial love of Jesus revealed in his passion. You must carry your cross, fulfilling your duties as

required by God. Suffer with love; take advantage of all uncomfortable situations. Love, love and suffer in silence; Love is proven in sacrifice. Sacrifice your desires.”

Experience of the Carmelite Charism

As a contemplative person, Josefa was always striving for holiness. To reach it, she made use of all the means the Carmelite Charism offered.

Prayer - Josefa Naval was a person with a deep interior life. Her faith led her to the conviction that God, One and Three, lives in our souls in grace. She fully lived that counsel of Jesus Christ: “Who loves me, will be loved by my Father, we will come to him, and will make in him our home” (Jn 14.23). She was immersed in all these truths, and many times she seemed transfigured in the middle of her duties. More than once she had to go to her room, where once recollected, she would join her hands and close her eyes, and dedicate a long time to contemplation.

She nourished her interior life with the Eucharist and prayer: oral prayer that was learned from her mother; mental prayer that she would do in the early hours of the morning at the Parish. After daily Mass and Communion, she spent quiet, intimate spiritual moments with her Spouse, Jesus. At the closing of her daily work, before retiring for the night, she dedicated some time to an intimate spiritual moment with the Lord. In this secret communication with God, Josefa experienced moments of ecstasy that she humbly kept silent.

During her work, she acknowledged God’s presence with short prayers. She fully lived the presence of God, and fervently told her disciples: “Let us acknowledge the presence of God,” and “Let us have much devotion to the Holy Trinity, who lives in our soul in grace”. From this, her devotion to the Holy Spirit flowed. How she used to celebrate this annual holiday! Pentecost was an opportunity to promote in her disciples the love for God who loves us so much. During this holiday, she or-

ganized groups of prayer and penance for three days.

Each day Josefa prayed the Angelus at noon with her disciples, in addition to other pious practices, including the Rosary. This was her repeated message: "Prayer, prayer; pray for awhile each day, and life will be easier and bearable. Learn to speak with God without words and, in this way, practice the prayer of meditation. Be faithful and reverent before the Lord." This last expression was in reference to her deep devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist.

Penance and mortification — Since Josefa was aware of the difficulties encountered on the way to holiness, she used to say to her disciples: "My daughters, we do not have to fear the difficulties of the road we have taken; 'It is true that it is rough cobblestones full of trouble and sacrifice, but it is also true that our Divine Captain traveled it during his life, passion and death.'" She always lived united to Christ's pain. To those redeeming sufferings of Christ, she offered her own headaches which she suffered from the age of thirty until her death, and penances, including physical ones such as wearing a hairshirt that she imposed on herself, with the permission of her directors. She heroically practiced the virtue of fortitude, which is the virtue that gives one integrity to serve God without avoiding anything, even the fear of death itself.

She was as demanding of herself as she was of others. To exercise fortitude, she practiced and proposed to her disciples the practice of mortification. Simple mortifications saturated with self-surrender, little by little, prepared them to more generous offers. She told her disciples: "My daughters, fortitude is necessary to undertake the road to union with God, we must also accept what He sends or permits for our purification, such as discomfort, sickness, scorn..."

Temperance - was another of the virtues that Josefa heroically exercised, for it is necessary to moderate our affection for sensory pleasure, which can prevent holiness and the search for union with God. She adopted a rule for her life that Saint Paul promoted: "I punish my body

and I reduce it to obedience" (I Cor 9,27). She punished her body, but with outstanding prudence. Her food was moderate, small in volume, and sometimes not tasteful. She ate meat only by medical prescription, and she frequently fasted. In Holy Week she did not eat from Holy Thursday until Easter Sunday.

Above all, she accepted with love all that God sent her. Her crosses were a gift. She never spoke about her pains, which were many. External mortification was surpassed by the interior one, self-surrender that she hid with a perennial smile. Nobody guessed that she was watchful over her own passions, because she behaved very naturally, very smoothly, and with great equanimity.

Apostolate - Josefa was an apostle of her time, a person devoted to God, in service to young women, mainly the ones from the lower social strata of society. Her keen spirit noticed the young women's needs, which were deeply influenced by their surrounding environment. She was not the only one in her time willing to take Christ's salvation to the most needy women, but she was one of the most dedicated and persistent in this evangelistic work. Her apostolic work flowed from her secular virgin status; from her humble condition as an embroidery teacher; from her deepest religious convictions; and mainly, from her intense love for the persons redeemed by Christ.

Josefa pre-empted Vatican II, living her secular status in the middle of the secular world for the service of the Lord in concrete apostolic works. She devoted herself to the apostolate of serving the most humble people at a time in which the working class was emerging to defend their material interests and moving away from the Church. She performed these tasks with the gentleness of a woman who was totally devoted to God, desiring to take everyone to Christ.

When Josefa turned thirty years old, her confessor, after much thought, approved the creation of her workshop-school as "God's gift!" That house, which she inherited from her grandmother and where she lived, produced

fervent religious women, selfless wives, dedicated mothers and young women, who lived a consecrated secular life. Young women were attracted by the ardent fervor of their mistress, by her great faith, her spirit of love proven by sacrifice, her optimism, her joy and the spiritual nourishment she provided them. She did all this out of her love of God and her ardent love of her neighbors.

Josefa's daily schedule was very tight. She woke up very early to participate in the first parish Mass, she received Communion and practiced mental prayer. Upon her return home she dedicated some time to cleaning and other household duties. Then her workshop-school schedule began and ran from nine to twelve, and from two until six in the evening.

Josefa taught embroidery, but this was almost a pretext to provide formation to her disciples in the love for God. Prayers and sacred songs accompanied their work. Between gospel readings and passages of Christian doctrine her voice was heard, soft and energetic at the same time, explaining the most outstanding matters in these readings. Those readings were complemented with vocal prayers, and long silences that Josefa provided to promote mental prayer. There, in that peaceful environment, young women embroidered their trousseau to get married, or their dowry if they were entering the convent.

Her kindness to others always had some spiritual objective. She insisted that parents baptize their newly born infants as soon as possible. She visited the sick who were in danger of dying, saying that they should receive the Last Sacraments. She clothed poor people, exchanging their dirty, damaged clothes for clean ones. More than once her house was an orphan's home, for on two long occasions she lodged children who had lost their mother, taking care of them with maternal love. Josefa's works of charity really shined during the cholera epidemic in 1885, when she was 65 years old. She, and some of her disciples, dedicated themselves to assisting sick people, mainly the poorest ones.

Her charity work also included small activities, such as patiently listening to afflicted people who came to her seeking counsel. She was very respectful of people's reputations and she did not allow her disciples to criticize others. She prayed for the souls in Purgatory, and taught her disciples to do the same.

United to her Divine Spouse, it was fulfilled in her what He said: "Who remains in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit." (Jn15, 5).

Evangelical Counsels

In her own home Josefa Naval Girbes fully lived the Evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, which are the standards for consecrated souls. She lived chastity in full, making a vow of virginity when she was eighteen years old. Her virginity enabled her to form a more perfect union with Jesus Christ and gave her a better disposition to foster and enlighten others consecrated to God, as faithful daughters of the Church, whether single or married. By her virginity she demonstrated that total consecration to God could be lived in the middle of secular society. With her virginity she taught that this total giving of self to God is one of the ideal ways to obtain sanctification. She was a faithful observer of the virtue of purity. She lived the strictest purity of the body and soul and taught her disciples to live by it. She recommended modesty in speaking, dressing and gesture.

As a virgin and secular, she opens new roads to sanctity for the majority of members of the Church, who like her, live as people in society. Josefa lived and died in secular society, as a model for single women, who made a promise or vow of chastity. The Lord granted that her virginal body remain forever incorrupt after her death.

Poverty came as an inheritance to Josefa. She cultivated it by giving up all that was not useful or necessary for her apostolate; detachment from things, material goods, things of the world, even her family itself, without the smallest sample of selfishness. She correctly taught her disciples the counsel of poverty.

Obedience is a Christian counsel and a virtue, which inclines us to submit our own will to our legitimate superiors, who represent us before God. Obedience is a love offering to Him who has absolute dominion over us. Josefa was always obedient, imitating Jesus, her Divine Spouse.

Exercising this virtue, she drew a plan that covered her duties as a housekeeper and as a teacher at the workshop-school, fulfilling her religious duties and her apostolic duties. Obedience to her spiritual director was an unquestionable rule for her behavior. She tested her most advanced disciples in obedience, sometimes with the excuse of a change in the color of the flowers in their embroidery. The parents of these young women were delighted when their daughters also practiced this virtue with them.

Spiritual Life

Josefa's spiritual life was fully and deeply cultivated. It was not a closed field for her own pleasure. She stated the necessity of persistent zeal, and worked to help save many young women menaced by the bizarre environment of her century. It seems as if Josefa would have felt by intuition that sentence of Vatican II, as firm and urgent: "It should be considered as useless that member who does not contribute, according to his capacity, to increase the mystical body of Christ." (AA, 2). She understood at her time, that in the midst of the world, the secular person must act as leaven, and in order to be effective, it is necessary to live united in Christ: "Who remains in me and I in him, will bear much fruit, because without me he can not do anything." (Jn 15,5).

One of her disciples describes for us the quiet environment of her workshop-school: "In that house one breathed a faithful atmosphere, piety and Christian virtue and, mainly, happi-

ness and charity. Our teacher inspired devotion and recollection: she lived her spiritual life with much truth and simplicity, and fostered in us the desire to become better each day".

During the class hours, she particularly assisted the young women who needed special care. In her prayer room she received the young women who requested to see her or the ones she called for. Sometimes there were young girls wishing to learn mental prayer; other times they

were the older girls, for whom she helped to eliminate doubts and prejudices, so they could remain in peace and joy.

Adults who were just beginning to live a Christian life went to see Josefa. She prudently oriented their lives and gave them a great interior peace. One of her recommendations was to have a permanent confessor, to trust him and to obey him. Young girls sent to Josefa's workshop-school benefited from her care and her elementary catechism lessons.

The most accomplished disciples used to remain after finishing their daily duties, to continue their spiritual growth in the house garden. From this chosen group many young women became religious; so many, that Cardinal Guisasola, Archbishop of Valencia, in a pastoral visit to Algemesi, full of admiration said: "What kind of town is this that has sent so many nuns to all the convents of our archdioceses?"

However, Josefa did not neglect the young women with a vocation for marriage. She also dedicated time and effort to them and many good spouses and mothers were developed in her school. The Sunday school after the evening Mass at the parish was another workshop where Josefa forged young women in the love of God. Let one of them describe the environment of those meetings on Sunday afternoons.

"Our teacher's house was a house of prayer. Her conversation was about spiritual matters,



prompting us to follow our vocation. Her words infused in us a desire for the things from heaven. She took us to God by her love. All her disciples, including those called by the Lord to marriage, were full of piety, taking in their souls the effective remembrance of her spiritual advice. She told us: "You must carry your cross and fulfill your own duty as God has ordered, single persons as single persons and married persons as married persons".

When Josefa was fifty-seven years old, one of her disciple's family offered her "the Orchard of La Torreta" covered with orange trees and other fruit trees, for her recreation and that of her disciples. There she went with her select disciples in the evening on spring or summer days.

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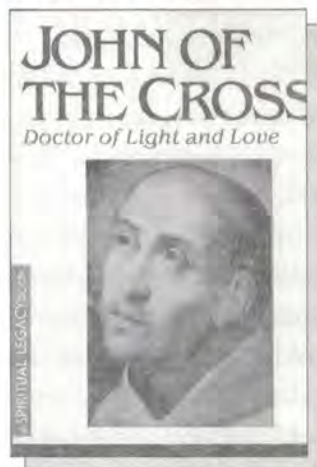
JOHN OF THE CROSS *Doctor of Light and Love*

St. John of the Cross is one of the greatest mystics of the West. He lived in the sixteenth century in Spain, was a monk, reformer, and best known for *Dark Night of the Soul* and his deep friendship with St. Teresa of

Avila. St. John is considered one of the most important poets of the Spanish language.

This new addition to Crossroad's Spiritual Legacy Series offers an accessible, fascinating introduction to his life and work.

Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. is a Carmelite priest and lives in Washington, DC. \$16.95



There, at sunset, Josefa showed her talents as a catechist: "My daughters, let us pretend that we are here like the Lord with his apostles. I, in His name, tell you: "Be good, do everything out of love; have much charity between you; live with abnegation and with a spirit of sacrifice."

On those delightful evenings at "the Orchard of La Torreta", the mistress's voice sounded clean, as that of a well's water: "Our devotion to God, must exclude all mundane customs, that is: the attachment to things or to people who do not let us fulfill God's will; the sensorial life which opposes the holiness that God asks from us; and the superficial life that looks for our own pleasure."

Josefa trained her disciples to face the challenges of life. She was like their "spiritual mother". To her they went for advice at the time of choosing their state in life. With certainty that resulted from her intimate union with God, she said to some: "You, should be married"; to others: "You, should go to the convent".

Parish priests of Algemesi prudently and with discretion went to Josefa with whom they had delightful conversations on high spiritual matters. Those visits of qualified priests increased her disciple's admiration and respect for their mistress.

The actions of her spiritual directors helped Josefa in her formation. At her time she was fortunate to interact with the well-educated, some saintly people and expert parish priests who put at her service their capacity for guiding others. She always gave high importance to spiritual direction. As a true daughter of Saint Teresa, she recommended it to her beloved disciples: "Be simple when submitting your behavior to your director, obey him faithfully and with perseverance; it is forbidden to speak about the confessors..."

When one of her spiritual directors was moved to the town of Alara, Josefa went for his direction every two or three weeks for six years. She walked this distance usually with one of her disciples, with whom she had close spiritual conversations.

She bravely fought against mediocrity and never accepted a languid spiritual life. Her intransigence with evil had human connotations. She had a strong character and without becoming rough in her manners, administered in favor of her beloved disciples with great leadership qualities.

She lived closely with people and found that fostered the way to holiness. Her convent was her grandmother's house where she went to live when her mother died. The convent bell - her superior voice, the community life - the monastic rules that secure the good road. . . . All this convent structure was wisely reduced by Josefa to be faithful to God's will. Centered in prayer and with the prudent advice of her spiritual directors, Josefa remained in secular society to be an example of sanctity for all people.



Marian Life

Josefa seemed to love the Virgin Mary from her early childhood. Her love was revealed in the following comments: "Mary, my mother, teach me to be faithful and to please God." "Virgin Mary, make me pure, chaste, good and saintly." "Come to the Blessed Virgin so that she can teach us and help us to be faithful to God."

Lover of purity, which she lived fully, she would recommend to her disciples; "Be clean and neat in your manner of dressing, and be honest like the Virgin. All virtues enrich the soul, but purity does so in a very special manner, by becoming similar to the angels."

Josefa's faith showed itself in her deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin. As proof she always wore her scapular and a rosary as a necklace. All of her disciples said the Angelus when the church bells rang at noon and a Hail Mary was said every hour. On Saturdays, morning prayers were said in Mary's name.

She prepared and celebrated with fervor all solemnities in the name of the Virgin Mary. The whole month of May was celebrated in the

workshop school with songs, prayers and offerings in honor of the Virgin. With what happiness and joy Josefa celebrated in 1854 the dogmatic declaration of the Immaculate Conception! In order to remember such a festive occasion, Josefa created "Mary's Court" in Algemesi.

As a secular Carmelite, Josefa had a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel. As such she repeatedly requested that at her death she be clothed with the habit of Carmel, a wish that was faithfully granted. Her filial Marian devotion was demonstrated with the following testimonies: In one of the homes in Algemesi, a statue of the Virgin of Carmel remains embroidered in gold and silk. It was made by Mrs. Vicenta Moran under the direction of Senora Pepa, as Josefa was known at the time. Another fact mentioned by her biographer relates that, on the eve of one of the feasts of the Virgin of Carmel, one of her disciples was lying on her death bed and she was heard saying: "Blessed Mother of Carmel, come for me." The biographer continues: "This happy soul learned perfectly both the doctrine and the spirit of our saintly mistress."

Community Life

To live fully in God's love, and to prove that love by the open reception of our neighbor, was the rule of her behavior. This love was the basis for her strict care of her neighbors and her desire to teach this way of thinking and living.

Josefa was gifted with a lot of natural talent, light and grace from God. She had a big mother's heart, which burned in love for others that she wanted to lead to salvation. All of this engendered the great love, obedience, and faithfulness that her disciples felt for her.

Josefa penetrated the interior spiritual life of some individuals. She already knew what were they going to ask, before they spoke. She read their hearts. These qualities gave her a great prestige and authority in her town, where everybody loved, respected and obeyed her.

To attract others, she first treated them with kindness and tenderness. Once she won their confidence, she energetically stimulated them to

do more, not less, to better serve God and their neighbor. Her language was simple, modest and humble. She always started saying: "My daughters..." She exhibited no sense of vanity or conceit when people went to her seeking counsel. Many people contacted Josefa as her reputation grew as a prudent and saintly person. Later, when speaking with her disciples, she did so with such fire and intense spirit that one of them tells us: "When she spoke about God, she had such devotion and so much emotion, that tears showed in her eyes."

What she planted produced much fruit, which was evident during her last days on earth. She was confined to her bed for fifteen days during February 1893, having a premonition of her closing hour of death. On the 22nd she asked for her confessor, and on the 23rd she received the Last Sacraments. Her disciples filled her house, as



all of them wished to be with her at her death. With that lucidity that God always gave her, Josefa told them: "My daughters, daughters of my heart, not one of you must miss meeting me in heaven.

After my death, will you abandon the road we have begun? . . . Always go forward, never backward. . ." And slowly she said with eyes barely open: "My daughters, remain united, like the Apostles. Just like live embers that are very close keep the fire alive; those who speak about the things of God will keep the fire of faith alive. But if you are separated and quit tending those spiritual things, the fire will go out. I am leaving, but I hope you persevere in the kind of life you have learned."

On the 24th Josefa entered a state of lethargic sleep, preceding her death. All day long her eyes were closed, she was quiet, like in ecstasy, but whispered very softly, asking others to pray for her and expressing gratitude for how much consolation she received. That night, just before dying she opened her eyes, and whispered: "Are you all here?" "My daughters I will leave you! Be united, be faithful, sacrifice yourselves for Our

Lord". She looked at them for the last time and told them: "My daughters, daughters of my soul..." and expired; it was eight fifteen the night of February 24th, 1893. She was 73 years old.

Ecclesial Life

Josefa was a faithful daughter of the Church. For her, the Church was Jesus Christ's masterpiece. With great conviction she talked to her disciples about the veneration we ought to give to the Pope, to Bishops, to priests and to religious men and women. She told them: "My daughters, obey and support the Pope, pray much for his intentions and necessities. Love the Church very much, and pay attention to her orders and councils". She passionately loved the Church and instilled that love in those close to her. "Let us love the Church to which we ourselves belong and use its means of sanctification. Let us respect and venerate God's ministers."

Josefa lived and died in a difficult century for the whole Church. She was aware of what was happening and she suffered with the Church and shared its happiness. Two Popes suffered exile from Rome; the Papal States were lost and the workers movement blew up with unstoppable force.

Pope Leo XII, who reigned for six years, promoted the missionary activities of the Church. New dioceses were created throughout the Roman Catholic Church. New treaties were signed between the Vatican and foreign states. However, the 19th century Church in general, deficiently fulfilled its social duties and for this reason it was guilty of the working class revolt, from which a good share of its members became bolcheviques, a fundamentally atheistic movement. "The great scandal of 19th century was to loose the working class" exclaimed Pius XI some years later.

To the activity of Leo XIII and of Bishop Ketteler in favor of the working class, we have to add the action taken by other diverse church members, to increase the religious level and even cultural level of the proletarians of that time. Valencia could not stay out of that fight. Since 1808,

various archbishops started in different ways, the religious restoration of their archdiocese. In Algemesi, without a doubt, these actions found special acceptance, since there was a deep religious fervor and priests and laity (Josefa) who were devoted to the service of the parishioners.

Our blessed Josefa experienced the parish in the Church. Her love and service to the parish is one of the most outstanding forms of her ecclesiastic spirit. The parish priests were models of pastoral diligence, so Josefa found in them safe guides for her spiritual life and wonderful assistants in her apostolic work. In that agitated environment of the 19th century, a time that was full of civil, social and religious unrest, a secular virgin named Josefa started a workshop-school for the formation of young women, married women and mothers. This work of charity was her contribution to the social movement of the Church to bring Christ to less fortunate people.

Josefa dedicated her effort and attention to love, support and help the parish, because that was her vision of the parish community. Her home was the place where the white liturgical clothes, and those for the great solemnities, were sewed, and ornaments were fixed and embroidered in silk.

Even today, descendants of those young women, who with Josefa cleaned the church, keep doing it. This proves that Josefa's attitude, behavior and labor, marked the way for her disciples.

Conclusion

Josefa Naval Girbes, virgin, while secular in the world, opened new roads to sanctity for the majority of Church members who live in the secular world. Consecrated life is important, but sanctity made for the love of God and love of neighbors, does not end in the convent or in the priesthood. Josefa, virgin and secular, is an example.

She lived and died in the world leaving after her a light, which continues illuminating those who, in secular society, look for Christian holiness. Her world, the 19th century, was a time of unrest. Her home, her workshop, her catechism, her women's formation circles, her charity works, were her convent. To them, she radiated love, love that she fed with an intense interior life, that grew with dedication, while never losing contact with people. She lived with them, she helped them in their necessities, and shared their lives, helping them to advance in holiness, all within her secular state of life.

Example and word! How clearly Josefa saw the duties of the secular Christian. She walked the narrow road to holiness, leading others on the way. The Church and the Body of Christ are richer for her legacy. ■

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Journey and the Joy

Journey and the Joy is a spiritual quarterly written and published by the Carmelite Nuns of Eldridge, Iowa. The purpose behind it is to make the Carmelite themes better known and to invite all people to the awareness of the gift and joy of Everyday Mysticism. To order please write or contact:

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 St Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, OCD 1873-1897 How sweet is the way of love. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	2 The Guardian Angels For me prayer is an aspiration of the heart, it is a simple glance directed to Heaven. <i>Little Therese</i>	3 Prayer is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy. <i>St Therese of the Child Jesus</i>	4 St Francis of Assisi St Teresa of Avila dies in 1582 Carmelite Hermit Rule changed to Friar, Mendicant Rule in 1247 at Aylesford, England	5 Finally, prayer is something which expands my soul and unites me to Jesus. <i>St Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face</i>	6 St Bruno Bl Marie Rose Durocher As long as you are humble, you will be happy. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>
7 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time Since Our Lord dwells in our souls, His prayer is ours. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	8 I renounced for the sake of His love everything other than God & began to live as if only He and I existed in the world <i>Brother Lawrence</i>	9 St Denis & Companions Humility is happy to be despised, to be without anything. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i>	10 Human hearts love one day and are indifferent the next. God alone does not change. <i>St Teresita of the Andes</i>	11 St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1998	12 St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross born in 1891 and entered Carmel in 1935 on this day.	13 I must always think of Queen Esther who was taken out of her people in order to stand up for her people before the King <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>
14 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time O, how everything that is suffered with love is healed again! <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	15 St Teresa of Jesus, OCD Foundress, 1515-1582 One act of humility is worth more than all the knowledge of the world. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	16 St Hedwig St Margaret Mary Alacoque Never think that the good or evil you do will remain a secret. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	17 I tried as hard as I could to Keep Jesus Christ Our God and Our Lord, present within me. That was my way of prayer. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	18 St Luke, Evangelist St Teresa of Jesus receives the grace of spiritual marriage at the Carmel of the Incarnation	19 North American Jesuit Martyrs St Therese became a Doctor of the Church in 1997	20 St Paul of the Cross St Therese had audience with Pope Leo XIII in 1887 and asked to enter Carmel at age 15
21 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time It is an honor for me to call the Church my Mother. <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i>	22 We cannot exchange a look with Christ and not be overcome with a total conversion. <i>Pere Jacques</i>	23 St John Capistrano I did not know you my Lord because I still desired to know and delight in things. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	24 St Anthony Mary Claret I have been captured in the loving nets of the Divine Fisherman. <i>St Teresita of the Andes</i>	25 It is impossible for me to become great, yet I will seek out a means of reaching heaven by a little way. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	26 In the difficulties of life and in the moments when we are tempted...let us hold fast to the bark of Peter. <i>St Raphael Kalinowski</i>	27 Jesus told me that He did not congratulate me because this was not customary between spouses. He only gave me presents! <i>St Teresita of the Andes</i>
28 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time Go cheerfully about whatever service you are ordered to do. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	29 You ask me for a method of attaining perfection. I know of Love and only Love. Love can do all things. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	30 I want to be transformed in Jesus Christ, so that my life may be more divine than human. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	31 Vigil of All Saints Day Let us accept everything with indifference from the hand of God, and we shall be happy. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i>	 <h1>October 2001</h1>		



November 2001

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 All Saints Day It is the habit of God to take away before their time the souls that He greatly loves. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	2 All Souls Day I delight in fasting in this life, it will prepare me for a banquet in heaven. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i>	3 St Martin de Porres The most common things were divinized in her, because the Virgin was always adoring the gift of God in all her actions. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>
4 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time God's presence in the heaven of my soul, is wonderful. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	5 I cannot understand ...why God granted me so great a favor as that of calling me to this paradise of angels. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i>	6 Bl Josefa Girbes Naval, OCDS, Virgin 1820-1893 If we want to become saints, we must work and suffer in silence. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i>	7 Bl Francis Palau y Quer, OCD, 1811-1872 I have only to love Him, to let myself be loved, at all times, in all circumstances. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	8 Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity, OCD, Virgin 1880-1906 In the measure you desire Him, you will find Him. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	9 Dedication of St John Lateran in Rome We are also hosts which Jesus wants to change into Himself. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	10 St Leo the Great I wouldn't consider any spirituality worthwhile that wants to walk in ease and run from the imitation of Christ. <i>St John of the Cross</i>
11 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Without perseverance there can be no salvation. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i>	12 St Josaphat If you purify your soul of attachment to and desire for things, you will understand them spiritually. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	13 St Frances Xavier Cabrini Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified was beatified today in 1983	14 All Carmelite Saints Nothing is more pleasing to God than for us...to withdraw and adore Him present within. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>	15 All Carmelite Faithful Departed St Albert the Great Death can hold no terrors for it means being with God. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	16 St Gertrude St Margaret of Scotland Let us not waste time, for every moment is precious. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i>	17 St Elizabeth of Hungary Mary's life was so simple, absorbed in God, that it is scarcely possible to say anything about her. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>
18 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Everything is possible for one who believes. <i>Brother Lawrence</i>	19 St Raphael Kalinowski, OCD, Priest 1835-1906 If we try, we can become saints with God's help. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	20 Slowly put on the obedience of Jesus, His humility, His love of meekness, & above all His love. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i>	21 Presentation of the Bl Virgin Mary Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity wrote her Prayer to the Trinity in 1904.	22 St Cecilia It is trust and nothing but trust, that brings us to Love...Fear brings us only to justice. <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	23 St Clement I St Columban O my God, fill my soul with holy joy, courage and strength to serve you. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	24 St Andrew Dung-Lac & Companions Do not go in pursuit of Him outside yourself. <i>St John of the Cross</i>
25 Feast of Christ the King Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity was beatified today in 1984	26 Holy Spirit enlighten me. What must I do and how should I do it, to find Jesus? <i>Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified</i>	27 <i>Miraculous Medal</i> Abandonment by the Lord is one of His greatest favors, for He does it so that we might be humble... <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	28 Discalced Carmelite Friars start in 1568 at Duruelo with St John of the Cross and Fr Anthony	29 Bls Denis and Redemptus, OCDS, Martyrs Our falls are due to the weakness of our wills. <i>St Teresa Margaret Redi</i>	30 St Andrew, Apostle Lord, you return gladly and lovingly to lift up the one who offends you. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	

Saint Elijah and the Universal Church

Gavin Boyd OCDS

The Carmelite Orders honor St Elijah as their founder, and celebrate a feast in his honor on July 20th. On that day he is also honored by Eastern Rite Catholics in communion with Rome. For the development of the Liturgy in the Third Millennium it would now be very appropriate to



extend the feast of St Elijah to the universal Church. The future prophetic mission of St Elijah is to be extraordinarily comprehensive and inclusive, a profound work of restoration. This has long been a tradition of faith, founded on Our Lord's prediction about the prophet.

With the new emphasis on God's Divine Mercy that has been introduced into the liturgy at the beginning of this millennium it can now be understood that the restoration to be achieved by Elijah will be a merciful design of enormous proportions, involving multitudes from all parts of the world. Reflection on this can be aided by the inspired writings of other prophets, especially Isaiah, who were privileged with great visions of the centrality of Israel in the universal restoration.

The prophets received showers of light in the evening knowledge of God, in their visions of all that was to be ennobled and perfected by the Savior through the sanctification of human endeavors. In a special sense they are our fathers, and devotion to them is a preparation for reception of their greetings, with those of all the saints and angels, in the festivals of Heaven. To enrich knowledge of His personality Our Lord

spoke at length to the two disciples, on the road to Emmaeus, about all the writings of the prophets, making it clear that many reflections of His redemptive healings, teachings, rescues, liberations, and sufferings were to be seen in the visions of these inspired friends.

Christians in the Third Millennium can now see great continuity between the works of the prophets and the writings of the New Testament saints. More and more of the hidden wisdom regarding the things of Heaven has been gradually revealed. This has opened up possibilities for liturgical development which can be intended, through faith, to give the Church ever new and ever joyful alignment with the festivals of Heaven. We know of these festivals because of the brief statement by the Apostle about our drawing near to myriads of angels in festive gathering, and because of Our Lord's affirmation about the rejoicing among the angels over repentant sinners.

In the Heavenly festivals Elijah, we can well believe, is among the just men made perfect, and he would seem to have a special relationship with the rejoicing angels. He was present at the Transfiguration, conversing with Jesus about His coming death. In this conversation Elijah and Moses were no doubt expressing joyful praise of the Lord, since praise is fitting for loyal hearts, and they were undoubtedly receiving magnificent enrichment in their evening knowledge of God.

On the Feast of Elijah the Church would reflect on his mysterious departure for Heaven, in

the sight of his successor Elisha, Elijah was taken into Heaven, and devout consideration of this can be linked with St Paul's prediction that, at Christ's coming, the faithful on earth will be caught up to meet Him in the air, a prediction that we are to meditate on and speak about for our consolation. The privilege given to St Elijah is to be in some way given to the last Christian communities.

The primary objective of instituting a universal feast in honor of Elijah would be to inspire devotion to him as the supreme missionary of the future, who is to bring about the magnificent restoration, in preparation for the creation of the City of Heavenly Light. Intense and prolonged prayer throughout the Church is undoubtedly intended to contribute to that restoration. In all the themes of adoration, praise and thanksgiving that give a symphonic quality to the liturgy, it would be very fitting to have a gradually increasing orientation toward the great returning prophet, which would begin with a single annual celebration of his fidelity to His Divinely appointed tasks, and of his exceptional rank as the saint who is to come from Paradise with intensely purifying eloquence and great power. In memory of the prayer of Elisha, before Elijah was taken, the entire Church can pray for some of the spirit of Elijah: vast numbers of the faithful could thus become intimately associated with the mission of restoration.

The principal expression of the spirit of Elijah, inspired by the preparatory mission of St John the Baptist, who was given that spirit, as Our Lord has indicated, will have to be a great upsurge of trust in God's Divine Mercy: St John powerfully attracted and healed the contrite. The main thrust of his mission has been given more profound significance by the devotion to God's Divine Mercy which has been given special prominence in the Liturgy for the Third Millennium.

St Elijah, then, is to see that all the faithful are oriented toward greeting Our Lord as the Merciful Savior, listening for the first sounds of His voice. We can conclude this by reflecting on

Our Lord's prediction of the task that has been set for Elijah, and on the statements about Our Lord's return that He is believed to have made to St Faustina.

Many themes in the Psalms and the prophetic writings, we can expect, will be given more profound significance through the eloquence of St Elijah, for the great restoration. A preparatory liturgical adaptation, then, could be especially appropriate in the rich mingling of adoration, praise and thanksgiving that draws the Church more and more into the evening and morning knowledge of God. The logic of preparatory devotion is reflected in the scriptures, and is clearly intended to be continued in the life of the Church.

The opportunity for the Carmelite Orders to give leadership for the extension of the Feast of Elijah to the entire Church can thus be seen to have double significance. What is hidden, for devout reflection, is the regal splendor of the Heavenly Mother's role in the great restoration as Elijah devotes his energies to that task. That great work, moreover, is to bring new honor to Elijah as the Father of the Carmelites. All the members of his order, it seems clear, are to contribute to his triumph, through the eternal causality of grace. Seeking truth in faith we can understand that, in a special way, St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross, with all the reformers of Carmel, have been contributing over long periods to the great future task of Elijah.

A new dimension of Our Lady's role as Cause of our Joy can inspire meditation in the context of the mission of Elijah. With all the Old Testament prophets he was, as we must now understand, a son of the Mother of Mercy, the Queen depicted in the Psalm celebrating the procession to the palaces of Heaven. One reason why we are encouraged to have faith in the return of Elijah is that this, together with the vision of the Transfiguration that was given to Christ's close friends, can help us to be aware of Divine power exercised through eternity as well as within the limitations of time and space. There is a reflection of childlike confidence in

this power in the promise of St Therese of Lisieux that she would descend from Heaven to give favors to her friends on earth.

Extending the Feast of Elijah to the whole Church can be expected to deepen understanding of God as the Holy Mighty One honored in praise of His Mercy. Elijah, before he was taken into Heaven, was a dramatic instrument of Divine Power, and the promise of his return for a great future mission encourages faith in the capacity of that Divine Power to introduce extraordinary changes into history. We can pray then with renewed fervor, with St Paul, for transforming knowledge of the height, depth, and breadth of Divine Wisdom, the deepening combination of evening and morning knowledge as Heavenly light is sent forth into the Church, for the work of Elijah and the final restoration that is to follow.

The transforming knowledge to be hoped for is a profound awareness that God is rich in

mercy. This is knowledge imparted most eloquently by Isaiah, prophet of Divine Mercy, then by St. Paul, followed by St Gertrude, Saint Margaret Mary, Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska and our own Little Therese of the Child Jesus. In this context, at a very high level, can be seen the significance of the observation by St Thomas Aquinas that persons are led to God, each one by the others, that is in a complex order of descending and ascending light, with many multiplications of grace. The richness of Divine Mercy becomes evident in great diversity, and especially in splendid liberality which reveals some of its infinite resources. In prayer to Elijah, then, his mission must be seen with deep confidence in and profound praise of the Great Mercy which has entrusted him with his mission.

In the wide perspective of faith the celebration of St Elijah by the Carmelite Orders reflects understanding that the reform led by St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross was essentially a great continuity of allegiance to St Elijah. This reform of the Order which continues to honor him as its founder was clearly appropriate well before his return. If this Order now gives leadership for his veneration throughout the Church that will also be very appropriate.

The Divine command for reform of the Order which was given to St Teresa of Avila did not explicitly affirm that this would honor St Elijah. This however was a clear implication which must have become evident as his feast was celebrated with new fervor after the reform began. The subsequent global expansion of the Order has now opened the way for a new enrichment of the liturgy of the entire Church through a concerted contemplative initiative. This could be based on the simple reflection on St Therese of Lisieux's spirit of innovative childlike fidelity, expressed, we may well believe, when she sang the office of St Elijah, as much as when she promised to do good on earth while living in Heaven. Her intercession may now be helpful for the endeavor to give to St Elijah the veneration of the entire Church. ■

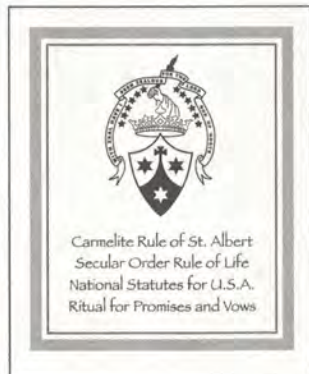
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I Want to See God Structure and Movement

Raymonde Regue

I *Want to See God*. This title in itself expresses everyone's destiny, the goal of one's life: to see God. It indicates as well the way to arrive at this: to find God and live with him. Thus can the person quench his thirst for the infinite and for happiness.

Fr Marie-Eugene, son of Carmel, borrowed from Teresa of Avila, when she was still a child, this cry of her soul, and rooted his own proper synthesis in the framework of the Teresian work, *The Book of the Dwelling Places*. He did so to respond to this search for God, always present in the heart of each person, with a practical, living and extremely relevant teaching.

This work deals with the dynamism of the grace of baptism and its development as divine life by the privileged means of prolonged prayer. Prayer is the specific function of Carmel in the church. The doctors and masters of Carmel have a mission to teach on this subject. Prayer expresses "the living, personal relationship of man with the living God," and is universal (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church). In order to appreciate the teaching contained in this work, which may appear dense, let us look at the table presented by Fr Marie-Eugene at the beginning of the book.

Teresian spirituality is used in *I Want to See God* to name the stages, the two clearly characterized aspects of the spiritual life.

The first stage insists on the reasonable activity of the person who, by a continuous effort, is seeking God who helps him (by a general help), who attracts him and calls him to his in-

most depths. (These are the first three Dwelling Places).

The second stage, the most important one, shows the progressive action of the wisdom of God on the person who opens himself to it (the fourth to the seventh Dwelling places), by the gifts of the Holy Spirit (particular help). Man, the image of God, by his immortal soul and especially by grace, must allow himself to be conformed to Christ. The Wisdom of love, says Fr Marie-Eugene, launches a pressing, general call to the mystical life: to live under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. All Christians, by the grace of their baptism, are called to this. The Holy Spirit himself, interior master, builder of the church, wants to lead the soul to the transformation of love so that his mission in the church might be accomplished in the person.



Fr Marie-Eugene

The whole of this five-part work (two for the first stage and three for the second) presents a noticeable balance of composition in the number of chapters. Each chapter was written by Fr Marie-Eugene in the form of a little treatise on the question in order to emphasize its importance in the spiritual journey and shed light on a practical point, to provide a concrete teaching.

The synthesis presented in this volume throughout the process of spiritual growth expresses the personal part brought to it by Fr Marie-Eugene and gives evidence of a spiritual experience of high value.

I Want to See God is to be taken in its entirety, for in each of the two stages, Fr Marie-Eugene

first gives the essential notions, that provide the basis for and shed light on the growth of the spiritual life, and in particular provide the foundation for the mystical life and contemplation. First stage: first part: Perspectives; second stage: third part: Contemplation and the mystical life.

Let us briefly consider the different parts of the work remembering that the spiritual knowledge of the masters of Carmel is a knowledge of love.

FIRST STAGE, FIRST PART

Perspectives: Nine Chapters

This general term “open the way of perfection,” presents in profile a summit. Fr Marie-Eugene presents Saint Teresa of Avila (ch. I, the book of the Dwelling Places), “sublime contemplative, tirelessly active woman,” as Paul VI defined her when proclaiming her Doctor of the Church. Seated at the banquet of Wisdom. . . under the influence of her grace of spiritual maternity, she wants to form spiritual men and women, apostles of consuming zeal...contemplative apostles (ch. 8, the Teresian Spirit). In other words, the baptized desirous of arriving at the fullness of the Christian life and of supernatural charity brought to completion in the second to the last and the last chapter of the work, “transforming union” and “the saint in the total Christ.”

This implies that the Christian grows in union with God - to know God, his love and action in regard to man, his preferred creature (cf. chapter 2).

God, Creator and Father. Grace

The Blessed Trinity is present in the soul by a creative presence, then by the presence of the Father who resides in the soul as in his preferred temple. The grace of baptism, the participation in the divine life, creates new relationships. It establishes between the soul and God a recipro-



cal rapport of friendship and filial relations. Begetting it in the spiritual life by the gift of his grace, God communicates to it his life as a father to his child and with his life yields to the soul his secrets and treasures. It follows that the spiritual life consists essentially in a complete union of the soul with God by a transformation, which makes the soul like God, thus the terms transforming union or union by resemblance of love.

Man — Chapter Two, Self Knowledge

The truth about what he is before God is fundamental - a weak being and a sinner. Nonetheless he possesses in himself supernatural riches capable of permitting him to become a true son of God, a real image of Jesus Christ.

In considering man as creature, we can nonetheless admire how the different aspects of his being, the physical, the sentient, the intellectual life of the soul and the divine life are remarkably ordered and harmonized so that grace can assume the whole and bring man to his end: to know, love and see God.

Prayer

The way of this relationship of friendship is prayer which brings to its service all the powers and natural faculties, the contact of the living being that we are with the living God who dwells in us. Prayer is a means of contact with God, an actualization of the supernatural union that grace establishes between God and our soul, or again an exchange between two loves: that which God has for us and that which we have for him.

The benefits of prayer are to be noted. It strengthens convictions and sustains the generous resolutions to work and suffer. It is the source of light and fulfills in regard to charity the role of the intelligence vis-a-vis the will; prayer precedes, directs and enlightens it at each step. It demands energy, generosity, perseverance and humility (ch 6).

Spiritual Growth — Chapter 9

It can only be accomplished by growing in this union with Christ. Saint Teresa states that

the soul does not grow in the same way the body does. This growth between two loves remains complex and mysterious; it takes place in darkness.

It is a mystery because of the action of God. The mercy of God affirms its liberty here in its choices and gifts.

It is a mystery because of the life of grace which cannot be observed and because of the mobility of the soul. Grace taking hold of the human, submits to the trials and tribulations of the person's reactions; this growth knows highs and lows, light and darkness. Fr Marie-Eugene gives us insights into the subject of the logical order of the Dwelling Places. But the wisdom of God follows the chronological order of his mercy.

A Struggle — Chapter 7, The Devil

The spiritual life is a struggle, not only against the evil tendencies we bear, but against the devil, the adversary of Christ himself, the power of darkness, the father of lies, active to tempt and to test - this struggle enters into the purifications of the Christian life. For weapons the Christian has faith and humility.

Jesus and the Church —Chapter 5

If it is placed here at the end of this part, it is to emphasize that the foundation stone of spirituality is Jesus, the Incarnate Word, the only Son of the Father. Jesus is the master, companion, brother, source of grace, the life of our life. One can only progress through the mediation of Christ. We must, in every stage of the spiritual life, return to the humanity of our Lord. Jesus bears in himself the uncreated light that is God and all the light that God desired to manifest to the world, the life that is in the bosom of the Trinity and the life that God desires to pour into our souls.

He gives us the filial spirit. The nature of our grace reveals to us our dependence on Christ and our union with him. . . We have received a filial spirit. . . In the bosom of the Holy Trinity we are sons or we are not. . . We can only enter into the Trinity by the favor of an adoption and by a

power that creates a certain union with one divine Person.

We are of Christ and therefore of the church, Christ diffused, expanded in his members. Thus this serious statement: We will be of Christ or we will have no supernatural life, we will be sons with the Incarnate Word in the bosom of the Holy Trinity or we will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. In these chapters of Perspectives our supernatural life finds its foundation.

SECOND PART

First Stages: Ten Chapters

The saints are seekers of God, therefore they feel immense pity for the person separated from God by sin, by ignorance. This is why they turn with solicitude to those whose Christian life is nonexistent or very weak.

“O souls redeemed by Jesus Christ” (Saint Teresa, Life). To understand the beauty of a soul in the state of grace, we must read the description of it given by the Saint after the vision of the “castle of the soul”.

The Beginnings

When the desire for God is awakened in someone, under the influence of a special grace, he begins to advance in the first Dwelling Places of

the spiritual life (ch I). As a beginner, the attitude that must be taken is clear, as Fr Marie-Eugene tells us, following the teaching of Saint Teresa. For her, the orientation to God must be primary: to call upon God, seeking him with courage, to arm one self with great desires by practicing a certain detachment from external things and especially by fleeing the occasions of sin (point of departure, ch 2). To create an organization of life will demand great will power and self-mastery in these beginnings.



The First Experiences Of Prayer — Chapter 3

In order to encourage souls to place themselves immediately in the school of Christ as a “living book,” Fr Marie-Eugene enumerates all the forms of prayer the church gives to nourish the intelligence on which faith is grafted. In “spiritual readings” (ch 5) he awakens the attention on the person of Christ in the Sacred Scriptures.

Recognizing the weakness of the human person and his needs, he encourages by explaining the causes of burdensome “distractions and dryness” which a confident humility helps to overcome (ch 6). He shows the value and the support of “spiritual friendships” (ch 7), insisting on the quality of the friendship, likewise for “spiritual direction” (ch 8) about which certain pages are to be read attentively.

Prayer of Recollection — Chapter 4 Simplified Prayer — Chapter 9

All that has just been said is to lead the person to take up the custom of penetrating into silence to truly establish contact with God and to be occupied with him. This is the prayer of active recollection, to bear the gaze of faith on Christ, so that the effect of this exchange overflows gradually on every aspect of one’s life.

The persevering effort leads to an ordered life (ch 9, third Dwelling Place). Creating a certain self-pride, it may give the Christian the impression of having arrived at the summit of the spiritual life and mask real perfection. “The love is not strong enough to overwhelm the reason,” says Saint Teresa, therefore Fr Marie-Eugene elaborates on the wisdom of Christ on the cross (supernatural wisdom and Christian perfection, ch 10). The Christian must engage himself in another stage, but to do that he must understand what it consists of.

THIRD PART

Contemplation And The Mystical Life: Ten Chapters

This part introduces the most important stage of the spiritual life, that of the mystical life,

that is the progressive predominance of the action of the Holy Spirit on the soul (particular help); that of contemplation.

The Wisdom of Love

This first chapter places us at once in the mystical body of Christ, the church to which we belong by virtue of our grace of baptism. God’s eternal design is the church, the end and reason of all things. Each of us has his marked place in it.



Since Christ’s Resurrection, the Holy Spirit sent by him has the mission of accomplishing this great work by diffusing the grace of Christ into all hearts. He is the builder, the accomplisher, the sanctifier, and this is why the Christian, if he wants to retain his place of baptized member in the church and fulfill his apostolic mission, must place himself under his action and be docile to it. The wisdom of love orders and disposes everything for the accomplishment of God’s design. It conquers souls, less for themselves than for his work . . . It sanctifies them to make them enter into the unity of the church and uses them for its works . . . The dwelling place of this wisdom is the created humanity of Christ, ornate with marvelous privileges, inseparably linked with the divinity for the Redemption and the church: the Virgin Mary, the saints and ourselves.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit — Chapter 2

Beginning with these chapters, Fr Marie-Eugene will develop the teaching of Saint John of the Cross. Convinced that “the true children of God and those who are moved by the Spirit” (Rm 8:14), Fr Marie-Eugene states that the role of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is of capital importance. Established on the essential aptitude of charity to receive, these supernatural, permanent and receptive qualities, received in the grace of baptism, give the Holy Spirit the freedom to act on the faculties of the soul. This free, mysterious action, both purifying and creative of

love, manifests the inexhaustible mercy of God. It will become progressively qualified and will act in the increasingly greater depths with spiritual growth. The quality of the gift received, however, is most often experienced negatively, that is by its opposite (e.g. strength by weakness). Under this influence the Christian is brought beyond his natural capacities of understanding and acting; he is adjusted to the design of God, moved by his motion, illumined by his light. His freedom is not destroyed for it finds, on the contrary, its true nature which is the capacity of obeying God and being docile to his action. The theological virtues, particularly faith, can therefore posit their proper acts in perfection and adhere perfectly to God (cf. the chapter "effects of the night," part five).

Universal Action

Fr Marie-Eugene, anxious to show that this influence of God is offered to all and that it is manifested in the simplicity of the activities of an ordinary life, gives in the chapter "the call to the mystical life and contemplation" (ch 8) a definition of the mystical life and of contemplation. He adds: the mystical life and contemplation require no other powers than those that baptism gives to each soul, that is the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit .

The mystical life is not to be confused with mystical experience which is only the awareness in man's perception of the effects of God. This experience of awareness can even not exist in the quality of the most prodigious grace received (such as the Christmas grace of Therese of the Child Jesus).

The chapters entitled "faith and supernatural contemplation" (ch 10) and "contemplation" (ch 7) give essential teaching for understanding and living contemplative prayer, this contact of the union of love with God.

Faith and Supernatural Contemplation — Chapter 10

Faith, the theological virtue, is the only proportionate and immediate means to attain union

with God. Grafted on our intellect (the natural faculty of knowing), faith is a supernatural, constant aptitude for knowing God as he knows himself and for receiving his light; it makes us capable of adhering to God, e.g., the hand immersed in the ocean. It is by this contact of faith that sanctifying grace will develop and that the transformation and union of the soul with God will be accomplished. But God is a mystery for our natural faculties. The penetration of the divine truth remains obscure. Faith, this gaze of our supernatural life on divine truth, a living and certain reality because of God, immerses the intellect into the obscurity of the mystery. The Christian believes, he does not see. To sustain this gaze of faith, God intervenes by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Contemplation — Chapter 7

From the obscurity of the mystery springs forth, by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, an indistinct clarity, an "I don't know what" that allows one to find peace and delight in the mystery, that retains faith in it or brings it back to it by disengaging faith from the discursive operations of the intellect making it find rest and support in this surpassing of all distinct lights. An intervention of God is brought about by the gifts of the Holy Spirit who has perfected faith in its theological act, transformed it into living faith and produced supernatural contemplation. Contemplation is essentially an act of the virtue of faith perfected by the gifts, which tend toward God-Light.

Fr Marie-Eugene strongly emphasizes the role of love: It is love that is at the principle of the movement of faith toward divine truth, it is by love that God intervenes; (. . .) it is to a union of love with God that it leads, it is love that engenders the knowledge of the mysteries of God.

Speaking of theology and contemplation without opposing them - for they need each other - (ch 9), Fr Marie-Eugene tells us: theology makes scholars, contemplation makes saints. Thy will be done. To obtain mercy, there is an interior disposition.

The Gift Of Self — Chapter 3

The fundamental disposition of Christ, the complete gift of self is a fundamentally Christian disposition. The gift of ourselves delivers us over to the grace of Christ; it is a call to a complete surrender, an imploring of divine mercy. The gift of self can be lived in all states of life.

Humility — Chapter 4

Humility irresistibly attracts God and increases the receptive capacity of the soul. At immense distance from reasonable humility is fervent humility, produced as it is under divine light, and which, discovering the transcendence of God and illumining the poverty of the soul or a mystery of Christ, puts the soul in its place in the perspective of the infinite or in the light of Christ. This humility will be opposed to all pride; it will be at the basis of the spiritual doctrine of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus.

Contemplation requires a climate of “silence” (ch 5) which gives to God’s action its entire efficacy.

Solitude — Chapter 6

Solitude assures to silence the quality and depth that are lacking to it in action. In this chapter we will find Fr Marie-Eugene, Carmelite, fascinated by the prophet Elijah in whom is accomplished the harmonious union of contemplation and action. This harmony is within the reach of every Christian.

At the moment of gasping her last breath, Teresa of Avila pronounced her name for eternity “I am a daughter of the church.”

Such is the general title given by Fr Marie-Eugene to these fourth and fifth parts that will lead us to the last end pursued by Wisdom: the perfect reign of God in the soul by the transformation of love and the building up of the church. ■

✉ Letters to the Editor

I want to thank you for the “Carmel Clarion.” I am in a spiritual desert here in Oregon. Without the Clarion and the Eucharist I would be perishing. I miss every one at Carmel and I miss the structure of monthly meetings. Let everyone in Washington, DC know that I am thinking of and praying for them. I especially hold dear, in my heart, the new Teresa Benedicta of the Cross group. May the Blessing of Our Lord Jesus, and His Holy Mother follow you today and always.

S.F. OCDS, (isolated member)

The recent Clarion has been awaiting my attention in the clamor and demands of life. When I finally read it today. I found it so strengthening and inspiring. The vocation and goals of a lay Carmelite can seem so foreign and peculiar to our companions in day to day life. So this publication goes a long way to unite and vivify us on the pilgrimage.

“A picture is worth a thousand words”. And

those photos of the “Carmels of Africa and the Islands” touched, amazed and thrilled me! “Laudate Dominum omnes gentes!” It is so exciting to see the charism that has captured our own hearts finding expression throughout the world. I look forward to the anticipated interface.

C.G., OCDS, Bethesda, MD

I receive the Washington Province’s Carmel Clarion regularly and enjoy it very much. It’s a first rate publication and I utilize the material in it a great deal. This is especially so for the art work; but also for many of the articles that you publish. They make great Formation handouts.

T.M., OCDS, California-Arizona province

I have one Clarion down here in the art studio that I am using for painting reference material, and the others I have in the office. I like some of the articles very much, and particularly the art work.

A.C., OCDS, Richmond VA

Nairobi — Summer 2001

Frs Gene Wehner and Steven Payne OCD

The photo below was taken after the renewal of vows of eight of our students on July 16th. As I write this letter. . . I pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (especially as it comes to us in the Eucharist), the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit may be with you all.



Since you heard from Fr. Steven Payne in the last newsletter, our eleven philosophy students have successfully completed their academic year. Eight of them, who studied at Consolata Philosophicum in Nairobi, and Fr. Dennis Geng have recently returned to our community following their holidays. The three who just graduated from their philosophical studies in Morogoro, Tanzania will return soon, together with Br.

Thomas Otang'a and Br. Joseph Abwanda who attended their graduation.

The postulants have successfully completed their orientation program at Consolata Philosophicum and are now home for a three-week vacation. The two will begin philosophical studies at Consolata on the 20th of August.

I have more good news. Five candidates arrived for their second live-in experience. Hopefully several of them will begin postulancy on the third of September.

Most of this newsletter will be devoted to an explanation of the various apostolates that are conducted by the members of our community. Our primary apostolate is the service we give to one another, whether it be manual labor, sacramental ministry, other liturgical ministry, spiritual direction, or accompaniment (mentoring).

However we also minister to people outside of our community. As I write, Fr. Steven is directing a retreat for the Carmelite Missionaries, a community of women religious who live nearby. Two of these sisters work for us. Sr. Maria Dolores is the administrator of our retreat house and Sr. Jacinta



has been helping us with our finances while Fr. Dennis was away on vacation. The retreat house is our primary apostolate to people living outside our community. In addition to serving

many people, both retreatants and various groups that meet here, it also brings in 30% of our total operating costs. So it is of tremendous value to us and to others. One group that meets monthly at our retreat house is our local community of Secular Carmelites. I am the Spiritual Assistant for this fraternity, consisting of ten members and eight aspirants.

Another important apostolate, almost a monthly service, is giving days of recollection. Over two hundred people, mostly women religious, participate. These days begin with a talk, presented by a staff member, and continue with a reconciliation service, opportunity for individual confessions, and Mass.

A final ministry at our house is our service to the poor of the area. Because we have plenty of pure water, we daily share it with those who are not so blessed. Those with other needs may inquire for assistance at our reception area. There they are helped by some of the Kenyans in our community who form our "Hope Apostolate." It was formerly called our "Home Apostolate" until Fr. Steven typed "hope" instead of "home" one day. This service gives hope to many people each weekend who are in need of medical attention, food, clothing, payment of school fees, etc.

Beside apostolates conducted at home, almost all of our community members are engaged (at least during the academic year) in outside apostolates. Br. Louis-Made Lutomantima, our deacon, and Br. Ghislain Metetera teach members of another community - the Teresian Carmelite Missionaries. Others in our community have done a variety of apostolates in parishes, hospitals, and sundry other places. One, Br. Santulino Ekada, has even ministered to soldiers

on an army base. Some have met with small Christian communities, some have ministered to parish youth, and others have helped street boys.

Yes, of course, the mission theme is very strong here, and our Carmelite students get teased sometimes for doing so much praying instead of being out in the bush. But we reply that

our prayer itself is an apostolate for the good of the Church, and (as Therese says) without it no mission can be effective.

In the last newsletter, Fr. Steven informed you about a generous benefactor supplying funds for a new monastery for our philosophy students. The money will cover the purchase of ten acres of property and the building of the monastery, but it will not defray the cost of other improvements on the property

and the upkeep of the new monastery. Thus, if you have been considering making a donation, this is a good time to do it.

Please keep us in your prayers so that our community may continue to grow and to minister to the needs of the Church and the world for the glory of God. We continue to pray for you and your intentions. ■



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