

I Want to See God **The Father's Banquet**

Pere Marie-Eugene de L'Enfant-Jesus OCD

This is the last article in the series on *I Want To See God*.

This homily of Fr Marie-Eugene is a commentary on the parable of the guests invited to the banquet (Luke 14:16-24). In its brevity it expresses the dynamism that underlies the entire work *I Want To See God*. That is: to make resound in the ears of all the call to holiness, the call of God-Love who needs to give himself. The banquet he offers us is his son Jesus in all his mysteries.

The text has been transcribed from a recording made at Notre Dame de Vie, Sunday, June 16, 1963. The oral style has been kept, with its significant repetitions.

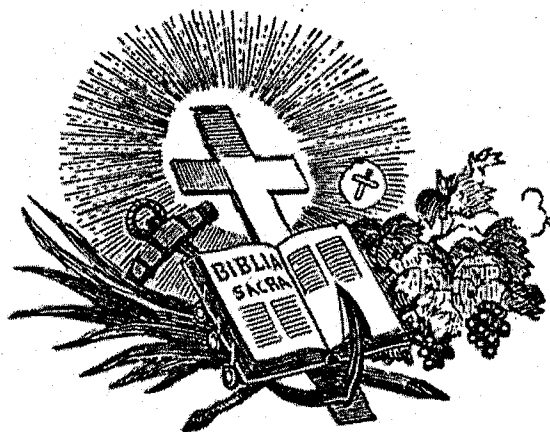
A man prepared a great dinner to which many were invited. At the time of the dinner, he sent his servant to say to the guests: Come, everything is now ready. And all, one by one, began to excuse themselves. The first one said: "I have bought some land and I must go see it. I beg you, please excuse me." Another said: "I have bought five pair of oxen and I must go try them out. I beg you, please excuse me." Another said: "I have just married and that is why I cannot come." Upon his return, the servant reported all this to his master. Then, filled with anger, the master of the house said to his servant: "Go quickly to the squares and streets of the village and invite the poor, the crippled, the

blind and the lame." "Master," said the servant, "your orders have been carried out and there is still room." And the master said to the servant: "Go to the ways and alleys and force the people to come in, so my house may be full. For, I tell you, not one of those invited will taste of my dinner." Luke 14:16-24

At this Mass today holy church has us reread this well-known page of Saint Luke's gospel, that of the banquet prepared by the Father to which he invited many of his friends. We ordinarily interpret this parable, this banquet, as the Eucharistic banquet. At first glance it does indeed seem to apply to it. It seems to me, however, that even more appropriately, it can be applied in general fashion to our Lord himself and all his mysteries.

The Mysteries of Christ

In fact, we are almost at the end of the liturgical cycle. We have seen our Lord appear here below. We have been present at the Annunciation, so to speak. The Father sends his Word and places it in the Virgin Mary's womb so she might give him this clothing of flesh that will permit him to be a man like us, among us, that will permit us to touch him, to see him under perceptible living forms, one like us -habitu inventus ut homo, in his state recognized as man (Ph 2:7). In every way, in all that he is, in all that we see, he is a man.



Having become man, Jesus appeared here below as a child and we have followed him in all the stages of his life. We have followed him in his life at Nazareth — it was a hidden life. We caught hold of him at the beginning of his public life, at his baptism. We have seen him penetrated by the Holy Spirit to go lead a singular combat in the desert against the devil whom he would vanquish, and then return to his public life. He did not merely overcome the devil once in this way; he would yet have to struggle against his deceptions in the world. For that, he would present himself to the world as he was; he would say what he was: I am the way, the truth and the life.

I am the one who was sent by God. He would show in his words, in his actions that this was true. He poured forth his blessings. He preached; he gave a sketch of the new Kingdom he came to establish by the Sermon on the Mount, by the other sermons and parables. All this teaching was given within our understanding to present and make explicit the life, the truth that was in him.

He was the light of the world, and he gave it to us in detail, in concrete fashion, in a conceptual fashion, so we could grasp it, at least in part. He thus showed the various facets of his personality, the riches that were in him.

He continued along his way; he was successful although his preaching was somewhat disconcerting. This is what he announced: I am the light. . . whoever does not drink of my blood, whoever does not eat my flesh, will not have life in him. He had already announced great things that were not understood. There were some disciples who, in the face of this preaching, were disturbed and wanted to leave. But Jesus had a plan; he wanted to give, to explain the truth. He presents to us then a spiritual, intellectual banquet, by his teaching, by his actions, and also by his suffering, by his attitudes, by the way he struggled, the way he bore

the suffering, the opposition, this opposition of Jerusalem. And yes! The great enemy, obviously was pride, intellectual pride, the pride of the successful, the powerful. They didn't want to accept that this newcomer, this prophet who proclaimed a mission, would establish himself in Israel, would establish his kingdom. They had their conception of the messiah and of the kingdom he would establish, a conception that obviously favored their ambition. They stood in opposition against him, they made war and the devil came to their aid. This devil now returns and enters into the struggle against our Lord.

We know the results. The passion he announced; these weeks in Jerusalem were the last in this struggle against the established powers. Moreover, these last weeks of discussions and struggles permitted our Lord to further clarify his teaching, to give very precious teaching, not only about himself, but also about the Jews and on what the Kingdom of God would be. Then on Palm Sunday came the announcement of his

kingship, which was about to be accomplished, but in a disturbing manner. Finally there was the institution of the Eucharist, the priestly prayer, the passion, the Resurrection of our Lord, the testimony that he was truly the , the Son of God, that he was indeed the light, the truth, the life, eternal life. This Christ, we well know, will never die again.

And what is even more disturbing is the Ascension. He ascended into heaven and left us. He left us because it was good for him to go. A new kingdom was to be established, that of the Holy Spirit, and for that he would have to go. He had to return to his Father in order to send us this third Person of the Holy Trinity, this substantial love, this place where the Father and the Son live. Jesus sends him to us to dwell within our souls, to dwell within the church, to be the soul of our souls, the soul of the church, to



reign there, to reign over us. This is his spiritual kingdom!

All this, all our Savior's deeds, his laws, all his teaching shed light on his actions, his attitudes. Our Savior's death, the Eucharist he left us, the Holy Spirit he sent us, there it is! The grand meal the Father has prepared for us. All this is the fulfillment of the Father's plan for the building up of the church, for the construction of this new reality that is the total Christ, the Church of God. We must enter into this total Christ for our sanctification, for our supernatural development, for the fulfillment of our divine vocation. Through the church we must truly become children of God.

Well! Here is the meal served to us by the Father. He so loved the world that he sent us his Son that he might act, speak, give himself and be our food. This is the meal to which we are invited, and to which, so to speak, are summoned all our faculties, our intellect, our heart and our faith. From this meal we are to be nourished in faith, in darkness, while waiting for the nourishment of eternity.

Throughout all eternity this Word of God, this incarnate Word, will be the light of paradise, of the eternal home. He will be our nourishment; we will live in him. In him we will eat of God and we will penetrate into God. This is the meal to which we are invited.

To enter into the desire of God our heavenly Father asks us to go to the room where he has prepared this meal in order to consume it. He has called souls, he has called the Jews, now he has called the Gentiles; he has called us, that we might eat this intellectual food, this food of light, this light of life. This is the meal we must eat. Here is our goal here below, to prepare ourselves for the supreme goal of our existence,

the food of God for all eternity. This is what we must do.

The Father calls all Christians, he calls friends, he has called us, us. Our Savior completes his teaching by telling us the replies he receives from the majority of people. "I have bought a pair of oxen, I cannot come. . . I got married, I cannot come, I have other things to do. . . Your meal is probably excellent but I have much better, at least I have much more pressing business. . ." This is the response our

Lord foresees, he who is the truth, he who

sees the present and the future.

Most refuse to come to this table so carefully prepared

by the Father. He has im-

molated his victims, deco-

rated the table. There is

plenty for all Christians,

for all humanity to eat.

And yet many refuse.

They don't have time.

They are taken up with

other occupations, by

other attractions and they

neglect the Father's table.

So what does the Father do?

He sends his servant along the roads.

The table, the room must be full. He gathers

all people, sends out his call to come into this house and consume the meal he has prepared.

This is the image presented to us by our prophetic Lord that applies to the entire history of the world, not only to the first years of Christianity.

Few people come to this divine banquet. Few are prepared to enter the room for the eternal banquet that is the Holy Trinity. This is sad for us, isn't it? It is our obligation to our Lord and to our

heavenly Father to share his sorrow, his disappointment in some way, to see that very few souls in humanity respond to his call. Very few understand all the mercy, all the love he has expressed in the sending of his Son, in all the deeds, in all the teaching of his Son prepared for us.

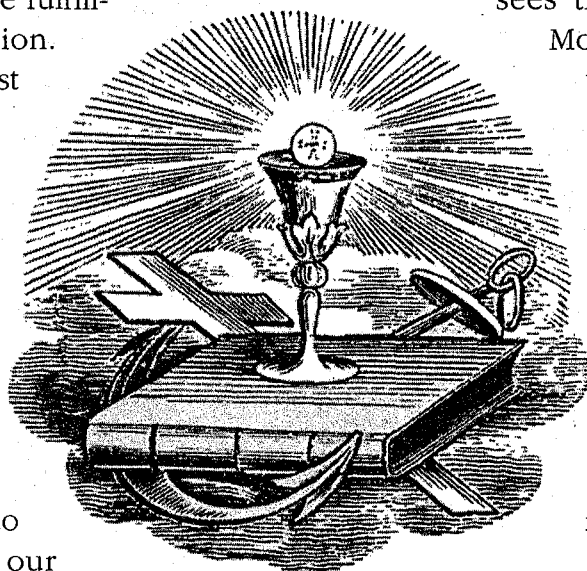
It is not enough to share the sorrow, the disappointment of the Father, of our Lord him-

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self and of the Holy Spirit, of all those who have contributed to setting this table, to putting out the dishes that we must consume. There is a call in this parable. We are the servants the Father sends along the roads to call those passing by, all those who are there, and all those who have no right to this banquet. We are to call them, to make them come, to tell them: Come and see, eat and drink; be fed and be prepared, by thus nourishing yourselves on this light, you will be nourished by God and his Christ throughout all eternity.

Yes, we are called to go out along the roads. Listen to the second call. The Father has chosen us for this. Not only to take our place at this table but to call others there, to fill the room. That is our vocation. And here, we must call everyone, not only those who have a right to it, those who have been summoned, those who have received the formal invitation. Not only those who seem to have the natural means to sit at this table, to be nourished by the intellectual light, by the divine food that is served. No, all — that all may come! By entering the room, they will find grace; they will find themselves suited to be nourished by this meal. They will learn to eat, to be nourished by the light, to be nourished by Christ's flesh. We will give them the vocation by calling them, by gathering them together, by leading them into this room.

Recall the second call of the Father that responds to his desires, the call that would fulfill his entire plan: to have consummated all the love he wants to give us. Consider Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus before this spectacle of infinite love that thirsts and hungers to give itself, before this infinite source that thirsts to be drunk, before this fire that burns for food to consume, to ignite. Saint "Thérèse rightly had pity on this hunger, this thirst, this need of the Father, this need of an eternal fire that is substantial love. She desired to satisfy it, first of all, by offering herself. "Few souls understand you, few souls understand God's hunger and thirst. . . let there be at least one who understands!" And she offered herself to this infinite Fire to be en-

lightened, to be consumed in the flames of love, and that not merely to receive this love and light. She did it for a loftier, much more sensitive reason. She did it to please God, to please this infinite fire, this infinite love that hungers and thirsts to give itself. And if she called souls, it was of course so they would receive this love, but it was especially to increase God's joy, to please God.

Enter into the light of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus who hovers over this infinite fire, who understood what God is, who understood God's infinite thirst. Fulfill this parable presented

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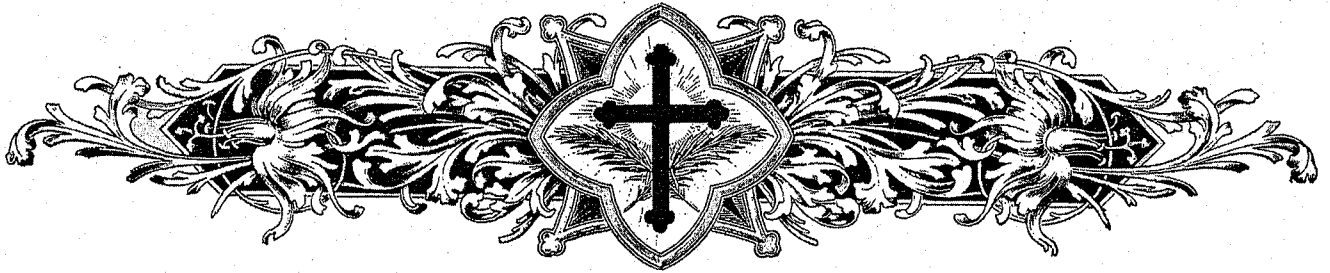
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to us by our Lord. *Fecit cenam magnam*, he prepared a great dinner. Yes, the room, the table is measured for humanity and even surpasses it for it is served by God. The food served here is nothing other than God himself, infinite God love, God light. Therefore, this room will never be full, nor the number of guests complete. There will always be room for others. Listen to the call of our Lord, of the Father, and go out along the highways and byways, into this pagan world, wherever we find it, wherever it is, to call souls to the banquet.

What will we say to these souls? What the gospel tells us: a room is prepared, a table is set where there are extraordinary dishes. . . come! We have nothing else to do but give testimony of what the Father has done. Give testimony of God's love. Give testimony of the accomplishments of our Lord, of his deeds, his words, of all he did. Give testimony of the Holy Spirit who continues his work, who prepared everything — he who is the architect, the worker who must bring us into Christ.

This is the meaning of the parable, the broadest, the deepest; I was going to say the truest meaning of this parable given to us by our Lord. Remember it, fulfill it, obey it. Our Institute was made for this. To give testimony of God, of God's life, of God's love, to stir up hunger for God, to feed and maintain the hunger for God in souls. Saint Gregory tells us in the homily: other foods fatigue us; they satisfy but leave a certain distaste. But the food that is God, on the contrary, does not fatigue us. The more you eat, the hungrier you are; the more you drink, the thirstier you are. Repeat this so souls learn to abandon their occupa-

tions at least for a few moments, so they learn to give themselves over and respond to God's call.

This is what we must proclaim to the world. Certainly we must relieve human poverty here below, reduce physical hunger, increase well being to a certain extent and improve the conditions of life. We will do this particularly by feeding souls with the divine. Our mission is especially to call them to the eternal banquet, don't forget it. Do not let yourselves be troubled by the calls that come from elsewhere, that come from the prince of this world who would like to make of this world a paradise, to establish conditions here that would make us forget God, forget eternal life. Put things into perspective in order to know how to discern true values: the temporal values that certainly have their importance, and the eternal values, the only ones that remain, the only ones that are worthy to be pursued and desired in an absolute manner.

Let us ask the Blessed Virgin to explain this parable to us, to make us hear in the depths of our souls the call it represents for us, for each of us — that our whole life, our prayer, our suffering, our activity will only be a response to this, God's call. God's call makes us messengers of his divine banquet, the divine banquet to be served beginning here below, the eternal divine banquet. Yes, let us ask the Blessed Virgin to fix that in us, to make us hear this call often, that it may detach us from all secondary things and that we may learn how to give ourselves to the one thing necessary: the response to be given to God, to the eternal, infinite love of God. ■

Mother Therese of Jesus O.Carm.

Carmelite Monastery
Saint Therese's Valley
3551 Lanark Rd
Coopersburg, PA 18036-9324

Dear Friend of Carmel, Praised be Jesus Christ!

The Carmelite Sisters of St. Therese's Valley in the diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania, would like to share with you our Community endeavor — privileged to take place during the Carmelite Marian Year — 2001 — and the 750th Anniversary of the giving of the Scapular.

A plan for the reconfiguration of our Grotto/Mausoleum has been formalized in preparation for the final resting place for the members of our community. The present structure was able to accommodate eight sisters. The re-design will allow for the entombment of thirty-five sisters.

On Tuesday, August 21, 2001, after a blessing by Father Michael Lawrence (Monastery Chaplain) and Father John Little, the construction process was initiated. Mother Therese of Jesus O.Carm. was the first sister to be disinterred. Upon removal of the cement casing and metal

vault. Mother Therese's deteriorated casket was revealed. Upon the removal of the shroud covering Mother Therese, it was noted that her body was intact. In addition, the palm branch that was placed in her casket at the time of her death was found green, and was in its original form.

We wanted you to be aware of this sacred event. Our initial thoughts were solidified with the disinterment of the remaining sisters.

At this time we are trying to decide if there is enough material to begin proceedings on the Cause of our beloved Foundress, Mother Therese of Jesus.

Please join with us in praying that all will be done for the greater honor and glory of God and the good of souls. ■

Sincerely in Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
Carmelite Nuns of Allentown



MOTHER THERESE OF JESUS, O. CARM.
1877—1939
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Cloistered Carmelite Nuns of the
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CARMELITE NUNS OF ALLENTOWN

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The 2-volume set (usually not sold separately) *I Want to See God* and *I Am A Daughter of Church* by Fr. Marie-Eugene OCD, from Christian Classics, should be able to be ordered from most book shops. It is usually priced at \$44.95. There may also be some discounts for quantity purchases.

One of our Secular Order members, Sharon Riggins who has a book shop, is willing to make the 2-volume set available to us at a variable discount of:

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Formation Outline for *I Want to See God*

Fr Theodore N Centala OCD

The Table of Contents for Volume I could be categorized and coded for the various stages of formation for our Secular Order in the following manner.

GT stands for the period of formation for guests and/or candidates. Our new Constitutions suggest one year for this initial period of formation and can be extended for another year if necessary. Those individuals who are weak in Adult CCD should also enroll in some Adult CCD Course in a parish. Those individuals who are weak in Scripture, especially if they interpret Scripture as the Fundamentalists do, will distort the Scripture quotations of our Carmelite Saints. They need to enroll in some Adult Catholic Bible Study Program. The candidates should also read *A Welcome to Carmel* by Fr Michael Griffin OCD, 1525 Carmel Rd, Hubertus WI 53033-9407.

SC is the category of formation material for two years for those who have received the Scapular and are in their second period of formation. Spiritually speaking they are now Secular Carmelites. Legally speaking, not yet. Our National Statutes allow for an extension of one more year.

The TP category of formation material is for the 3-year period during Temporary Promises. Our National Statutes allow for an extension of up to three more years to allow for Providential Events which may not allow some members to complete this period in just three years.

The DP category is for the Members who have taken their Definitive Promises. Recall that our Superior General, Fr Camilo Maccise OCD, at the International Congress in Rome in 1996, mandated that we have five more years for On-Going Formation after Definitive Promises. Volume II: *I Am A Daughter of the Church* is the official text for this period of formation for the Washington Province.

Please notice that the various Chapters of both volumes of our text books have ample footnotes for supplementary readings, because each chapter is a summary of the teaching on that topic from five of our major Carmelite Saints: Teresa, John of the Cross, Little Therese, Elizabeth of the Trinity and Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection. It is obvious that there is a need for the Members to acquire some additional books. Most Catholic bookstores carry these books, especially our ICS Publications, here in Washington at our same address.

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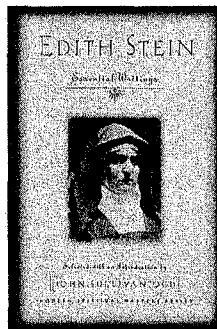
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <h1 style="text-align: center;">May 2002</h1>			1 St Joseph the Worker <i>Pope John Paul II beatifies Teresa Benedicta of the Cross in 1987</i>	2 St Athanasius National Day of Prayer O how everthing that is suffered with love is healed again! <i>St Therese of Lisieux</i>	3 Sts Philip & James, Apostles If you do not strive for the virtues and practice them, you will always be dwarfs. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	4 If we thought more about our 'origin', dependence on created things would seem so futile that we'd only despise them. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>
5 6th Sunday of Easter Would to heaven that we would do what we know we must. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	6 A Praise of Glory is a silent soul, which remains like a lyre beneath the mysterious touch of the Holy Spirit. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	7 I am not afraid of dying...you do not frighten me and death was not created to frighten me. <i>Pere Jacques</i>	8 Suffering is an invitation to be more like the Son in doing the Father's will. <i>Pope John Paul II, OCDS</i>	9 Ascension of the Lord All who seek truth seek God, whether this is clear to them or not. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	10 On earth, the soul can have no other heaven that the will of God. <i>Bl Anne of St Bartholomew</i>	11 The Virgin...is the pattern of those listening souls in whom the High priestly prayer of Jesus is forever renewed. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>
12 7th Sunday of Easter Simplicity is the beginning and the end of the virtues. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	13 <i>Therese is miraculously cured by the smile of the Bl Virgin in 1883</i> The world is your ship and not your home. <i>Little Therese</i>	14 St Matthias, Apostle One must go to the world in order to carry divine life into it. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	15 St Isidore the Farmer If Christ Jesus dwells in a man as his friend and noble leader, that man can endure all things. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	16 St Simon Stock, O. Carm., Priest 1200-1255 O God to love you so much and yet to be capable of offending You... <i>Bl Mary of the Angels</i>	17 Pope Pius canonizes Therese of the Child Jesus in 1925 Love follows me everywhere. <i>The Little Arab</i>	18 Pope St John I When a soul is happy, living in close union with God...it is never lonely again. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>
19 Pentecost Sunday Our love for our brothers and sisters is a measure of our love for God. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	20 St Bernadine of Siena A supernatural soul does not stop to deal with secondary causes, but solely with God. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	21 By keeping silence, knowing how to listen to God the soul grows in wisdom & God teaches it what it can't learn from man <i>Bl Anne of St Bartholomew</i>	22 St Joachina de Vedruna de Mas, OSC 1783-1854 Be a friend of the Passion of Christ. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	23 It can happen that God will permit days of severe temptation in his servants for their greater good. <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	24 Religion isn't something to be relegated to a quiet corner or for a few hours, but must be the root & basis of all life <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	25 St Bede Venerable, Pope St Gregory VII St Mary Magdalene de'Pazzi, O.Carm 1566-1607
26 Holy Trinity Sunday Consider that God reigns only in the peaceful and disinterested soul. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	27 St Augustine of Canterbury 'Let yourself be loved more than these' is your vocation. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	28 The only essential is that one finds, first of all, a quiet corner in which one can communicate with God. <i>St Teresa Benedicta</i>	29 What hope can we have of finding rest outside of ourselves if we cannot be at rest within? <i>St Teresa of Jesus</i>	30 Humility has the effects of charity: it neither esteems nor seeks its own, thinks no good of self but only of others. <i>St John of the Cross</i>	31 Visitation of the Bl Virgin Mary It is simplicity that, hour by hour, increases our resemblance to the divine. <i>Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity</i>	



*Lindsay Younce who plays
St. Thérèse in the film.*

St. Thérèse Film

Saint Luke Productions hopes to inspire millions of people through their newest film *Thérèse*. St. Thérèse's autobiography *The Story of a Soul*, is the basis for this screenplay which has been a live drama touring the U.S. for three years, and has received tremendous acclaim.

Leonardo Defilippis, founder of Saint Luke Productions and award-winning actor and director, is currently working on post-production of their first feature film. Defilippis said "*Thérèse* was the most challenging production of my career, and its exceptional cinematographic quality, the result of many people's spiritual impact, was beautifully translated to the screen by the talented members of our cast and crew, who gave this film their whole hearts."

The release date for the film is September 2002. *Thérèse* is the first feature film ever to be funded entirely with donations. Saint Luke Productions is a small Catholic non-profit company committed to bringing the lives of the saints alive. Funds are still needed to complete post-production work. You may contact them at: St. Luke Productions, P.O. Box 761, Beaverton, OR 97075, (800) 683-2998, www.stlukeproductions.com or www.theresemovie.com. ■

Carmelite Mission in Uganda



*Br Bernard Olk OCD, Lillian Kelly OCDS,
Fr David Costello OCD and Bert Wooning.*

Dear Fr. Theodore,

Thank you for asking for a few words for the Carmel Clarion as we begin our Carmelite mission in Uganda. When a coworker learned that I was going as a missionary, she asked if I was going to tell people what they were doing wrong. I explained that I would be doing there what I had been doing here: praying, and doing the work at hand.

Fr. David Costello, OCD, was the Spiritual Assistant of the OCDS community where I began in 1991. When he left to go to Kenya in 1994, I thought we would never see him again! In May 2001 Fr. David held a discernment weekend for interested OCDS and lay volunteers at the Carmelite Mission Office in Oakville, California. He asked about our experience, reason for wanting to go, and understanding of community.

I am both a nurse and an environmental health professional. I began in public health nursing in New York in 1970. During the

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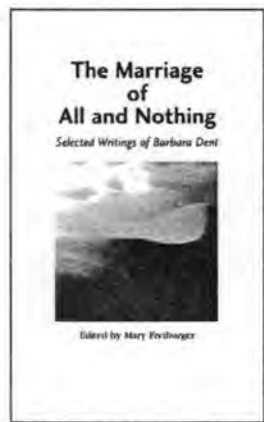
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Vietnam War I joined the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps and was stationed at Camp Pendleton, California. While married, I worked mostly in hospitals, returning to public health as a single parent. I went to Nicaragua to teach about intestinal parasites while completing a Masters in Public Health. Later, I went to Nepal with a medical team to conduct a health assessment and water system survey in a remote village. Nepal taught me that I could not have imagined Third World poverty. Recently I worked with the State Health Department devel-



oping a new program. Br Bernard Olk OCD, from our Washington Province and a pioneer on the Nairobi foundation, will be lending his skills to help turn the rectory into a Carmelite monastery for the friars. The new foundation is located in Kyengeza, a little off the road from Kampala to Mubende.

For me, community is different from just working in a Third

World country. Community is formed by prayer, our Carmelite charism. Our nuns have been in Uganda praying for 35 years and now our friars are preparing to fully establish the Order, bringing seculars with them. My OCDS community is participating in the mission by accepting change, sending a monthly contribution to the Carmelite Mission Office, and praying for the mission. My son is concerned about reports of diseases and unstable governments but I let him know that the mission has been prudently planned, with confidence in God for the unexpected.

As we are sent, I keep St. Thérèse's words to her sister Celine as my prayer. Celine told Thérèse that she would go to Saigon in her place and Thérèse told Celine the only reason for going is God's good pleasure. For information about how you can participate, contact the Carmelite Mission Office, P.O. Box 347, Oakville, CA 94562-0347; Tel/fax 707-944-1520; DavidUg@juno.com ■

Lillian Kelly, OCDS
St. Elijah OCDS Community
Berkeley, CA

The Love That Keeps Us Sane

Living the Little Way of St. Therese of Lisieux

Marc Foley, O. C. D.

"Seeing Life In Light of Eternity"

This is not a book about using Therese's "little way" as a path to holiness. Therese's spirituality is often dismissed as cloyingly sweet and sentimental, useless for modern seekers. This new Illumination Book uncovers how Therese's sweetness was just a stylistic convention expected in the religious writing of her day. Beneath the form, says the author, is a straightforward spirituality that offers a practical, concrete, and very realistic method for preserving one's sanity in an often-insane world.

Marc Foley O.C.D., is a Discalced Carmelite priest. He is currently the rector of the Edith Stein House of Studies in Chicago, Illinois. He is also involved in retreat ministry and spiritual direction.



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