

CARMEL CLARION

November - December 2006 Volume XXII No. 6



St. Teresa & Prayer

CARMEL CLARION

November – December 2006 Volume XXII No. 6

Discalced Carmelite Secular Order, Washington, D.C.

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Editorial

This past year we have focused on the teachings of St. Teresa as understood by various Carmelite authors. In dedicating the entire year to Teresa's teaching, it was our intention to make additional resources available to each Carmelite community to enhance and deepen your formation as well as to build up your archives of formation materials on Teresian spirituality.



This coming year we will focus on the teachings of St. John of the Cross. We again hope to build up a body of articles that communities can use as supplemental material in their study of St. John of the Cross. As was the case with St. Teresa, the different authors will provide a great richness and variety of insights into the difficult teaching of St. John.



On a more practical level, you will be receiving a membership list in the next month that reflects our current records. Please make corrections on the sheet you receive and return it to us as soon as possible. The corrections are necessary so that we may keep our Clarion mailing list up to date.

Each community's Provincial financial responsibility for 2007 remains unchanged: \$25.00 for dues and \$10.00 for the Clarion for each community member. If you have not sent this year's dues in yet, please try to do so before the end of the year. I also ask each treasurer to collect the community's dues and send one check to us, made out to OCDS or Carmelite Secular Order.

In addition, I am asking each secretary to make a greater effort to send the forms indicating a member's change in level of formation, to the Central Office as soon as possible.

On behalf of the Clarion staff and Fathers Paul Fohlin, John Grennon and myself, I want to wish each of you and your families a very blessed Christmas and Happy New Year.

Fr. Regis, O.C.D.

The Marvels of Divine Union in the Last Mansions

Philip Boyce, O.C.D.



Part II

Part I of this article appeared in the September/October, 2006 issue of the Clarion.

The Nature of Complete Union

The first quality of this exalted union is its completeness. Grace and charity have attained to a state of perfection in the human soul. An indescribable fusion into “one” takes place: there is total possession of each other by the soul and God, and a certain mutual compenetration. Before this mystical marriage took place the relationship between them was provisional, and no definite bond had been sealed. Things are different now: there is a definitive surrender in love to each other, an interpersonal exchange at the level of being be-

tween these two protagonists of the spiritual adventure. It is a joining of spirit to Spirit, of human love to divine Charity; what is human becomes divine by participation; the divine Spirit transforms the human spirit, penetrating and beautifying it. St. Teresa regards it as the fulfilment of those words of St. Paul, “He who is joined or united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him” (1 Cor 6,17; IC 7, 2, 5).

Indeed, according to the Spanish mystics, there can be no higher state of union between God and the soul during life on earth. This however does not exclude growth in charity and fortitude within this union. Such progress, in fact, does continue until the end of life, “this great favor does not come to its perfect fulness during our lifetime” (IC 7, 1,1).

As well as being complete, this union has the distinctive note of permanency. The soul has a habitual awareness, at the deepest level of consciousness (the soul’s “spirit”) of the presence of its God: the divine Persons “never seem to leave it any more” (IC 7, 1,7). This permanency is not to be understood in the sense of always being at the same degree of intensity—a point to which we shall return later. Nor does it imply that the soul is “sure of its salvation and safe from falling again” (IC 7, 2,9). The soul never loses its freedom, and “if it were to withdraw deliberately from God, this remarkable blessing would be lost” (IC 7, 2,1). However, apart from such a tragedy, the covenant of love is permanent and per se indestructible: the two lovers are constantly aware of each other and can be no longer separated.

St. Teresa, wishing to impress upon her readers the closeness and permanency of this union, multiplies her comparisons.

God has desired to be so joined with the creature that, just as those who are married cannot be separated, He doesn't want to be separated from the soul . . . the union is like what we have when rain falls from the sky into a river or fount; all is water, for the rain that fell from heaven cannot be divided or separated from the water of the river. Or it is like what we have when a little stream enters the sea, there is no means of separating the two. Or, like bright light entering a room through two different windows; although the streams of light are separate when entering the room, they become one (IC 7, 2, 3-4).

As is evident from the foregoing, this union is also characterized by the intensity and intimacy of its love. In its "extreme interior, in some place very deep within itself" (IC 7, 1,7), the soul now enjoys the company of the Holy Trinity. The soul dies, as it were, in order to enter completely its new life in Christ, who asks it to consider itself as his bride and to act accordingly. What belongs to one, belongs to the other. "My honor is yours, and yours Mine . . . Because of this espousal, whatever I have is yours. So I give you all the trials and sufferings I underwent, and by these means, as with something belonging to you, you can make requests of my Father" (SpTest 31,1; 46).

It is love that unites the soul so closely to God: in fact, St. Teresa declares that "it is all a matter of love united with love: todo es amor con amor" (IC 5, 4, 3). No other power can unite two beings so closely as can the force of love. St. John of the Cross affirms that the more intense the degree of love possessed by the soul, the more it is one with God. "A stronger love is a more unitive love, and we can understand in this manner the many mansions the Son of God declared were in His Father's house" (F I,13).

St. Teresa's "Mansions" can rightly be understood in this way too: a progressive interiorization and growth of love in seven intensifying stages. God's initial choice of man was one of selfless and enriching love. The spiritual life of man begins with a response to this call, and its unfolding is equivalent to a development of love. Man succeeds only gradually in freeing his heart from all that binds it to creatures and to his own selfish desires. To the degree in which this liberation process advances, God's love enters the human heart and man surrenders himself more and more to its demands. This growth entails purification at the very roots of nature, in the area that is most costly. Thus the binding power of this deepest of unions is supernatural love, and the whole spiritual journey can be regarded as an awakening of love, a refinement and growth of love, and its fulfilment in the merging of human and divine love.

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Of course, the imagery of the mystics is misleading if we understand it in a gross and unspiritual fashion. The love they sing about and the union they describe are purely spiritual. St. Teresa is at pains to stress this point.

This spiritual espousal is different in kind from marriage, for in these matters that we are dealing with there is never anything that is not spiritual. Corporal things are far distant from them, and the spiritual joys and delights given by the Lord are a thousand leagues removed from those experienced in marriage (IC 5, 4,3).

Their language may at times seem remote to those who have little experience of things spiritual—and they themselves are the first to admit it in this case. Nevertheless, the reality they describe, although spiritual and hidden, is anything but unreal and unpractical. Genuine mystics who have attained the peace and joy of the union we describe, are the most practical and down-to-earth of people. They have reached the center of reality, and in it they live.

A final quality of this sublime union is its gratuitous nature. The soul cannot but acknowledge that all the marvels of transcendent beauty and perfect happiness which it contemplates and possesses, come from the merciful hand of God. It is all his doing. The soul has simply acquiesced. As Mother Teresa often repeats about her own heroic enterprises, “it is the Lord who does everything ... we ourselves do almost nothing ... I play no part in obtaining even a spark of it” (L 2I,II; 39,23). The attainment of sanctity and union with God no longer appears as a human feat, but as a divine gift and a human surrender. God receives the honor due to him; the soul remains in sincere admiration and gratitude, while the thought of self-praise simply never crosses its mind, or if it does it immediately appears ridiculous and despicable. Such a person is so conscious of his own misery and fragility that he cannot be puffed up in any way. Thus humility and truth become one.

When the soul does begin to consider its wretchedness, it is the Lord himself who intervenes, gently reproaching it and inviting it to deeper trust and gratitude. In this context the Lord says to St. Teresa concerning her soul, “It is not lowly, daughter, for it is made in My image” (SpTest 49). On its own, the soul is not worthy, but divine worthiness has been given to it by the accumulation of heavenly blessings and the infusion of supernatural charity which have transformed it into something divinely lovable, “God has given it such great dignity” (IC I,2,8; cf. I,1).

The Testing Signs of Union

It should not be imagined that this most sublime of mystical unions with the invisible God is a self-centered search, or a state of spiritual luxury to be egotistically enjoyed, or one that alienates a person from the affairs and duties and people of this world. No

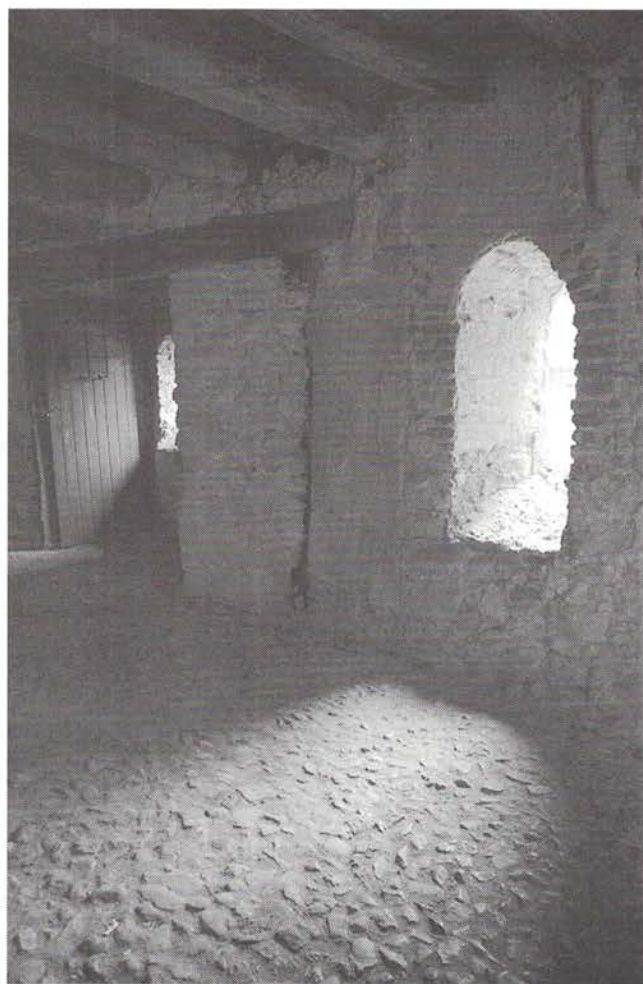
one is so far-seeking, no one so considerate and industrious as the true mystic. The genuineness of this mystical union can be gauged from what St. Teresa calls its effects. She does not place the criterion of authenticity in visions, ecstatic delights and frequent absorption in God, but in such practical qualities as fortitude of spirit, pacification of the soul, control of passions, unswerving fidelity to God's will, and the union of prayer and virtue in daily life.

Peace of soul: Probably the most striking effect in the life of a person thus united to God, is the imperturbable peace that reigns in his soul and has a beneficial influence on those whom he encounters. It is as if he had entered a haven of peace after a trying course on a stormy sea. "The passions are now conquered," declares St. Teresa (IC 7,2,11), and from this newly acquired dominion there arises inner quiet and harmony. The sensual part of the soul can no longer disturb the tranquillity of its higher part, all desires are now under the control of the will, the virtues are firmly established, while God himself is the guarantee of their strength and endurance. "God and the soul alone rejoice together in the deepest silence" (IC 7,3,11). Painful transports and raptures cease, since the soul is now stronger and has a greater capacity for the Divine.

The devil and other evil spirits may rage around the outer wall of the castle, but the soul no longer fears them and they cannot enter inside and harm it any more.

This state resembles that of primeval innocence and original harmony of being, in which all the powers of soul and body conformed, each in its proper sphere, to the divine design of a wise Creator. The essential quality of original justice was the perfect conformity of the human will to the divine will, a conformity that ensured sinlessness, friendship with God and perfect peace of soul. At the heart of redemption and deification at this final stage of spiritual maturity we find, according to the teaching of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, a similar conformity of wills. The truly just man "cannot sin because he is born of God" (1 Jn 3,9) – not that the possibility of sinning has been removed, but the will to sin no longer exists. And since all the powers of the soul are concentrated on Christ, nothing takes away or minimally disquiets the peace that reigns in the depth of its being. St. Teresa regards it as the communication of that Easter gift that Christ gave to his apostles: *pax vobis* (cf. IC 7, 2,6.3; Jn 20,19–20).

It does not follow, however, that the person who has attained this state will have no further troubles or trials to suffer. Indeed his life will be marked more deeply than ever with the sign of the cross. "Times of war, trial and fatigue are never lack-



ing” (IC 7, 2,10). From the accounts she wrote of her own spiritual life, we know that at times, even when in the highest Mansions, St. Teresa suffered from distractions, anxieties and a sense of loneliness, which now and again even hindered her prayer (cf. SpTest 53-55). On one occasion, while thus distracted, the Lord said to her for her (and our!) consolation, “Be patient, for as long as you live, a wandering mind cannot be avoided” (SpTest 39).

However, at the deepest level of consciousness there is peace in the presence of God; at a more outward level there is often a keen awareness of profound pain and distress as if the soul were divided in two against itself. St. Teresa compares these contradictory feelings to the peace enjoyed by a king in the security and seclusion of his palace while the tumult of war may rage in his kingdom, or to a man’s mind of peace while his body may be in pain (cf. IC 7,2,11). She then excuses herself for the ineptness of these comparisons, yet asserts that this state in which interior peace exists along with a struggle at a more superficial area of consciousness is absolutely true, “I know that I’m speaking the truth” (IC 7, 2, 10).

Total self-forgetfulness and interior freedom: Linked with the above-mentioned peace of soul, there is a deep forgetfulness of self and a resulting interior freedom of spirit. Since the soul is totally concentrated on Christ, it enjoys a serene detachment from all created things, even from its own self. It has acquired that perfect freedom of the children of God that makes life simple, beautiful and generous.

The soul’s strength is now totally spent in procuring the honor and glory of God. No selfish desires spoil the purity of intention that makes it zealous in good works. “One of these souls,” writes Mother Teresa, echoing a thought dear to St. John of the Cross, “does more good with its words and works than do many others whose works carry the dust of our sensuality and some self-interest” (Med 7,7). Its longing for solitude where it can praise God without distraction, is outdone only by its yearning to benefit and save souls who will praise him.

O my Sisters! How forgetful this soul, in which the Lord dwells in so particular a way, should be of its own rest, how little it should care for its honor, and how far it should be from wanting esteem in anything! For if it is with Him very much, as is right, it should think little about itself. All its concern is taken up with how to please Him more and how or where it will show Him the love it bears Him (IC 7, 4,6).

Even the thought of death no longer causes any trepidation, “it has no more fear of death than it would of a gentle rapture” (IC 7, 3,7). It would willingly die many times to save even one soul or to give God any extra honor, yet it possesses that holy indifference that springs from wholehearted conformity to God’s will,



“the soul doesn’t worry about all that can happen” (ibid., 2). The dominant attitude then, is that of wanting “neither death nor life” (SpTest 65,9), but only what may best serve God and souls.

Highest contemplation combined with fruitful service: The soul now enjoys a permanent awareness of God’s Trinitarian presence and of its own sharing in this divine life. Assuredly the intensity of its consciousness of being with God, and the light in which it contemplates him varies. “It should be understood that this presence is not felt so fully, I mean so clearly, as when revealed the first time, or as at other times when God grants the soul this gift” (IC 7,1,9). Nevertheless, the soul has a habitual awareness at its deepest level of consciousness of the presence of the Blessed Trinity, “the soul finds itself in this company every time it takes notice” (ibid.). We may compare it to the continuous remembrance of the heart, the mutual presence of lover to beloved that comes from deep love. This experience made St. Teresa understand the full meaning of Christ’s promise to come with the Father and the Spirit to abide in the soul who loved him and kept his commandments (cf. Jn 14,16-17.23; SpTest 13. 65,9; IC 7, 1, 6).

Rarely does this person experience aridity in prayer as he did in the former Mansions. Instead there is “a remembrance and tender love of our Lord” (IC 7,3,8). Should distraction or anxiety upset him, God himself recalls and refreshes him with gentle impulses of love. St. Teresa experienced these awakenings of love as if the Lord himself were pleading with her to remain in his presence. She calls them “a note or letter of His, written with intense love” to which the soul must be careful to answer interiorly with an act of love, even though it may be engaged in absorbing exterior activity (cf. C 7, 3,8-9). These expressions of divine love are a sufficient reward, she claims, for all the sufferings the soul went through during its life.

A radical change takes place in the existence of the person who teaches this sublime union: the center of his life is no longer his own self, but Christ. This is the most fundamental effect of union, while all the other ones of peace and detachment, of fortitude and joy, spring from ‘this total identification with Christ.’ St. Teresa makes her own, the words of the Apostle Paul in order to express this reality. “For to me life is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil 1,21), and asserts that it is true to say of any soul in this union. “its life is now Christ” (IC 7, 2, 5).

However, life of genuine union in the Seventh Mansions is not an idle and sterile one. On the contrary, it is full of fruitful activity and generous self-sacrifice in the service of others. The aim of contemplative prayer is not to give personal enjoyment but to impart “strength for service” (IC 7, 4,12). The evangelical activity of Martha and the contemplative solitude of Mary are personified in the life of the person who is joined to God in this deepest of mystical unions.

... the soul is asking to perform great works in the service of our Lord and of its neighbor. For this purpose it is happy to lose that delight and satisfaction (of contemplative absorption in God). Although a person’s life

Should distraction or anxiety upset him, God himself recalls and refreshes him with gentle impulses of love. St. Teresa experienced these awakenings of love as if the Lord himself were pleading with her to remain in his presence.

will become more active than contemplative, and one will seemingly be the loser if the petition is granted. Martha and Mary never fail to work together when the soul is in this state. For in the active— and seemingly exterior—work the soul is working interiorly. And when the active works proceed from this interior root, they become lovely and very fragrant flowers (Med 7, 3).

We should never forget those programmatic words of St. Teresa, which should dispel all false notions of devotional quietism or sentimentalism from even the highest, strata of a truly mystical life. “This is the aim of prayer, my daughters, this the purpose of the spiritual marriage: that it may always give birth to good works, good works: de que nazcan siempre obras, obras”(IC 7, 4, 6).

It goes without saying that all this demands a life of deep humility, heroic virtue and exceptional generosity. Only such a person can become not only the slave of God but also the “slave of everyone, as Christ was” (ibid., 8). To arrive at this stage we need “more than prayer and contemplation”; we also require a life of solid, even heroic, virtue. Yet only a person who strives to live such a life, merits to be called “truly spiritual” (cf. ibid., 8-9).

Zeal for souls and for God’s honor and glory: This point has been touched upon already. It is sufficient to say that the realization that she is now the bride of Christ, and his request that she look after his honor as her own, makes her want to heap glory upon him endlessly in order to assuage her uncontainable desires of love, “she looks only for the honor and glory of God in everything” (Med 7, 5). The most effective way to do this is to enter as deeply as possible into the work of redemption, by converting and saving souls. For this reason, people who have arrived at this point of passive contemplation are at the same time the most alert and generous in charitable deeds. The divine love that consumes them is now the soul of their apostolate and makes their activity most fruitful. “The more they advance in this kind of prayer and the gifts of our Lord the more attention they pay to the needs of their neighbor, especially to the needs of their souls” (Med 7, 8),

Even the deep longing such people have for death which will unite them to their Lord forever without fear of losing him, now gives way to this overriding desire to live for many years. If we only had an inkling of the indescribable delight and glory they thereby defer for themselves, we should better understand the heroic quality of their active love. Truly, as St. Teresa says, “their glory lies in being able in some way to help the Crucified” (IC 7, 3, 6). And she admits that this readiness to live is the “most costly offering” they can present to God (ibid., 7)

Fortitude and joy in suffering: People sometimes desire to have the experiences of the mystics in the secret hope of enjoying their rapturous delights and penetrating insights. According to St. Teresa, this would be a “serious error.” The purpose of these extraordinary favors is not to give personal pleasure to the recipient, but to strengthen him for a deeper share in the redemptive Cross of Christ.

It goes without saying that all this demands a life of deep humility, heroic virtue and exceptional generosity. Only such a person can become not only the slave of God but also the “slave of everyone, as Christ was”

“I hold for certain that these favors are meant to fortify our weakness, as I have said here at times, that we may be able to imitate Him in His great sufferings” (IC 7, 4, 4).

Hence favored souls ardently desire to suffer and consider the Cross the greatest grace of all. “Give me trials, Lord, give me persecutions” (Med 7,8). It seems to them that it puts a seal of authenticity on all their mystical graces and spiritual favors. However, in the union of the Seventh Mansions, this desire no longer perturbs them: if God “desires the soul to suffer, well and good; if not, it doesn’t kill itself as it used to” (IC 7, 3,4). They even acquire an interior joy in the midst of trials and persecutions, and have no feelings of enmity or hatred towards those who offend or oppose them; rather, their heart goes out to them in an attitude of compassion and mercy (cf. Ibid.,6).

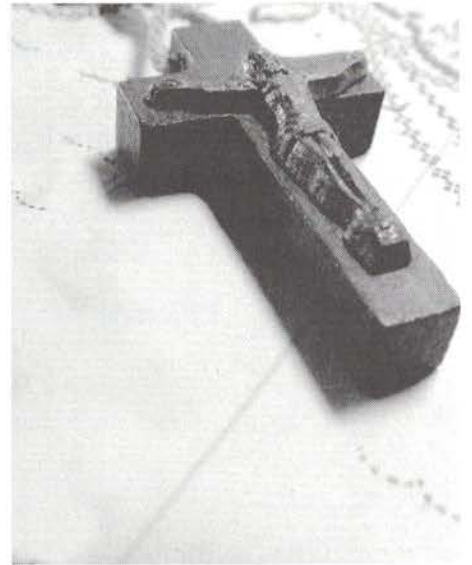
All this is possible because they have been fortified for the cross not only in the invigorating delights of contemplation but also in the infernal night of suffering and purification. Their one all-consuming desire now is, neither to die nor to live, neither to suffer nor to rejoice, but to do God’s will, whatever it may imply, and thus return love for Love.

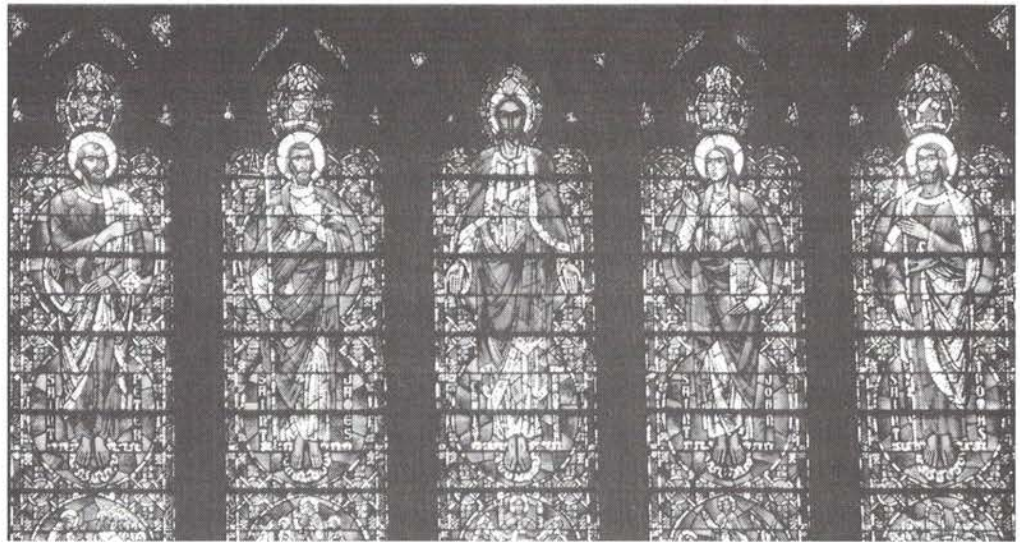
Conclusion

The marvels of divine union described by St. Teresa in these unforgettable pages may seem to the majority to be of little practical value or, at any rate, well beyond the capacity of ordinary Christians. However, this is false reasoning. At the very least they speak to us of the living God, they raise our minds to higher things, they invite and urge us to holiness. These heights in their essentials are simply the full development of baptismal grace. They belong to the Christian life. The saints who describe their own spiritual adventure invite others to follow them, stating their inner conviction that God will not refuse his best gifts to any generous and humble soul. The Carmelite Constitutions make the point for members of the Order,

The charism of St. Teresa and of St. John of the Cross and the type of spiritual life put forward in their writings, even in what concerns a deeper union with God and the experience of divine things, are not to be regarded as exclusively personal graces but as ones that belong to the heritage and the fullness of our Carmelite vocation.

Certainly, no one will have an experience identical to that of St. Teresa, just as her way to union, for all its resemblances, was not the same as that of St. John of the Cross. Nevertheless, the substance of union is the same for all: it is a matter of giving and receiving love. God for his part will not fail us: if we have the light beckoning us to the heights, it is because he is calling us. As St. John of the Cross said, “If a person is seeking God, his Beloved is seeking him much more” (F 3,28). The





innermost room of the soul is accessible to each and any daring soul. Even under the strictest rule of obedience, one does not have to ask any superior's permission to undertake this journey. The entry fee to the King's Mansion, however, is high. Many find it too costly. It demands complete surrender of the will to God's will and a consequent dying to oneself. "But alas for us, how few there must be who reach it" (IC 5,3,6) exclaims; St. Teresa. Yet she states a few lines previously, "there is no reason to doubt the possibility of this death any more than that of true union with the will of God." Any baptized soul can arrive at what is essential in this sublime union. Its degree and intensity will depend on God's eternal design for each one. It will not commonly take the road of mystical favors with experiential passivity and extraordinary phenomena, but its essentials of pure love and conformity of wills can be considered as a normal though heroic end for those who live their Christian commitment to the full.

In conclusion, it is fitting to pay a tribute of gratitude to the spiritual parents of Carmel for the treasure they left us in their writings and the living spirit they handed down to their spiritual family. They were favored with exceptional graces because of the special mission they received and the singular generosity of mind and heart they displayed. We may not emulate them in all their spiritual feats, but we are given to share in the charism that was personally theirs. "All of us who wear this holy habit of Carmel are called to prayer and contemplation" (IC 5,1,2). Their writings open up a new world for us, a world they were given to explore and enjoy through sheer mercy on God's part. They did not learn from books what they handed down to us: St. Teresa wrote the *Interior Castle* in two months of effective work, St. John of the Cross the *Living Flame* in two weeks. It's not mere information they provide: it is life. What we can glean from their works should not simply be increased knowledge of spiritual things, but a deeper participation in life—in that Life which lasts forever and which the Son of God came into this world to share abundantly with us.

Spiritual Direction in the Major Works of St. Teresa

Pierluigi Pertusi, O.C.D.

Part II

Part I of this article appeared in the September/October, 2006 issue of the Clarion.

Direction

The preceding treatment sought to bring to light St. Teresa's profound knowledge of illusions in the spiritual life. An analysis of all her works would multiply instances of this knowledge. There is no psychic phenomenon along the way of perfection about whose origins St. Teresa did not wonder: whether it comes from God, from virtue, or, on the contrary, whether it is a deception of the devil, or, simply a product of the lower psychic forces. The great mystic of Avila never loses sight of the influence of these forces in describing the whole spiritual life, and, consequently, in her advice for spiritual direction.

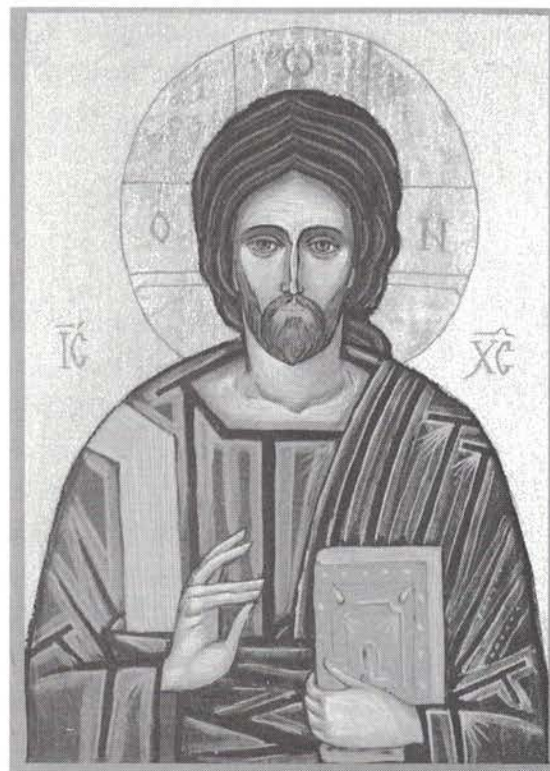
I intend to examine spiritual direction according to St. Teresa precisely under this aspect. For brevity's sake, the study embraces only the essential points; besides, as has been said, we have the good fortune of possessing a complete study of spiritual direction according to St. Teresa in the fine book *I Want To See God* by Fr. Marie -Eugene (II, ch. 8).

I shall speak of the need for direction, of the behavior of the penitent in direction, of the qualities of the director and of the way he should deal with the penitent: all envisaged in relation to illusions and the influence of the subconscious.

Need for Direction

To prove the need for spiritual direction, St. Teresa stresses the two following reasons: the need of knowing oneself perfectly, as one is before God, and the need to proceed in everything as God's will requires by leaving aside one's own will. The depths of the subconscious are hidden from us and their influence makes matters of conscience appear to us under a false light. As a result, it is impossible for us to direct ourselves according to objective reality or conformably to the real will of God.

Naturally, this need of spiritual direction admits of degrees according to individuals and the phases of the spiritual life. Direction becomes strictly necessary



when the spiritual life presents extraordinary phenomena. But a certain spiritual direction is necessary at every stage of the spiritual life and for every individual, if he really wishes to advance toward perfection. The primary need to escape from the detrimental influence of the subconscious is the basis of this general necessity for direction.

We can see how St. Teresa proved the great benefit of spiritual direction in the marvelous 5th chapter of the Foundations. The saint wishes to explain to us that obedience is the shortest way and the most effective means for arriving at perfect



conformity to the will of God, a conformity equivalent to perfection: "We are not masters of our own will so as to be able to employ it entirely for God, until we have subjected it to reason." Now, St. Teresa sees the insurmountable difficulty that the subconscious opposes to this subjection: by ourselves we shall not reach it; obedience alone can lead us to such control of our will. "It is not by the help of nice reasoning that we reach it," we read in the Foundations: "our nature and our self-love are so inventive in this area that we shall never attain it. In fact very often the most reasonable thing looks like folly to us because we have no desire to do it. I should never finish if I had to describe here the struggles that go on within us and all that the devil, the world and our sensuality raise up against us, to make us turn from right reason." Another person can see clearly more easily than we can in this struggle between the requirements of the will of God and the reasons formulated by a mind clouded by unknown influences. In the case of spiritual direction, taking his superior or confessor as arbitrator, a person may also trust in these words of

our Lord: "He who hears you hears me." Surrendered into the hands of his director, he no longer has to fear that the deceits of "nature" and "self-love will influence his decisions." (F5,11).

We find the same reasoning in the Third Mansions teaching prompt obedience in spiritual matters. Certain people who are extremely structured in all their activities and to whom the Lord has granted and is granting his consolations, seem particularly prone to believe themselves in possession of true virtues. To know themselves well and really give themselves to the practice of virtue, they must obey a director. "And even if they are not members of a religious order, it would be a great thing for them to have—as do many persons—someone whom they could consult so as not to do their own will in anything. Doing our own will is usually what harms us. And they shouldn't seek another of their own making, as they say—one who is so circumspect about everything; but seek out someone who is very free from illusion about the things of the world. For in order to know ourselves, it helps a great deal to speak with someone who already knows the world for what it is." (IC 3,2,12).

In St. Teresa's thought, then, obedience to a director is an effective means of gradual liberation from illusions and from the influence of the subconscious: a person thereby comes to know himself as he really is and to act with full freedom of spirit.

The Role of the Directee

For direction to bear its fruits of light and liberation, a person has to know how to practice it. I shall limit myself to showing how St. Teresa taught others, and practiced herself, extreme openness in direction. "Reveal to your superior and to your confessor all your temptations, your imperfections and your repugnances." (Maxim 18). This openness should be absolute, and should be practiced with candor and simplicity. "I have never heard anyone say that there can be anything better than obeying the confessor in everything and not hiding anything from him." (W 39,3; 40,4). "What is necessary, Sisters, is that you proceed very openly and truthfully with your confessor. I don't mean in regard to telling your sins, for that is obvious, but in giving an account of your prayer. If you do not give such an account, I am not sure you are proceeding well, nor that it is God who is teaching you. He is very fond of our speaking as truthfully and clearly to the one who stands in his place as we would to him and of our desiring that the confessor understand all our thoughts and even more our deeds, however small they be." (IC 6,9,12). St. Teresa is speaking here of people who are very advanced: in order to judge the extraordinary graces which they receive, their director has to be able to rely on an openness that is perfectly exact. But the advice is proportionately applicable to all states. St. Teresa herself always acted in this way, at least from the time when she had directors: "I always tried to speak with complete clarity and truthfulness to those with whom I conversed about my soul. I desired that they know even about any first stirrings, and I accused myself of matter that was doubtful and questionable with arguments against myself." (L 30,3).

It is not necessary to emphasize to what extent the practice of this advice is apt to unveil the influence of the subconscious in the spiritual life. When a person manifests all his thoughts, and, as far as possible, even his first stirrings; when he gives an account of his works, "even the smallest," in the long run everything hidden deep in the soul comes to full view. And the director, on the strength of this knowledge, is in a position to interpret the person's behavior and to show him the way to go. The directee, in turn, must make up his mind to follow the advisements of obedience at any cost. The subconscious does not cease to exert its influence upon the speculative judgment just because we commit ourselves to obedience. St. Teresa foresees the interior struggle that must be waged not to depart from the direction received: "... now entirely annihilating our own desires, now the direction received: winning only after a thousand battles, and thinking the judgment given in our case to be folly, we shall come, by means of this painful exercise, to resign ourselves to doing what we are commanded. We shall do it in the end, whether it costs us pain or not ..." (F 5,7). And St. Teresa gives such submission its proper

name: not abdication of personality, nor slavery, but liberation and self-mastery. The person gains control of himself, becomes fully master of his mind and will, and in future is beyond the influence (unconscious, but real and tyrannical) of hidden tendencies.

Openness in direction alone obviously cannot give the director complete knowledge of the person, as modern schools of characterology, biotypology and psychoanalysis intend to; such knowledge, without being absolutely indispensable, is nonetheless very useful for understanding people's behavior. St. Teresa had the intuition that this was so, and, beside advising the sisters to be open with the prioress, she wished the latter to make a study of each one's temperament and life, so as to know each one thoroughly. "We may conclude from these examples and from many others, how useful it is for each nun to make her prayer entirely known to the prioress. For her part, the prioress should examine very carefully the temperament and the virtue of the sister, and inform the confessor of it, so that he may be able to judge with greater certainty." (F 8,9). Certainly the intervention of the prioress with the confessor is a very delicate matter and repugnant to our mentality. But it remains true that candid openness with the superior, the daily witness of the conduct of the subjects whose temperament he studies, obtains abundant light for getting to know ourselves, light that will then show up in our manner of dealing with the confessor: we shall be more sincere, more objective in speaking of personal matters.

Qualities Required of the Director

According to St. Teresa, the director must have the following qualities to obtain deep knowledge of a soul: good judgment, some experience, adequate training. A good acquaintance with psychology, which takes into account nature's possibilities, as well as some solid theology, which knows how to appreciate the efficacy of grace in the psychological life, are also valuable in a director.

Following St. Teresa we must emphasize fully another quality demanded of a director for perfect knowledge of the penitent: sanctity, along with an indispensable detachment from created things. St. Teresa counsels this very thing to persons who wish to know themselves well and not allow themselves to be caught by the mirage of their own reasonings, to choose a director "free from illusions about the things of this world." (IC3,2,12). Interior purity, the fruit of detachment, seems to be the best disposition for understanding what is confided to him, without allowing himself to be imposed upon by the directee's words. As we said at the beginning, there is no doubt we owe St. Teresa's inspired psychological intuitions not only to her natural perceptiveness and her penetrating mind, but to her great interior purity.

A close connection exists between this purity and that gift of discernment of spirits that St. Teresa often mentions. Perhaps this gift does not always signify a true grace gratis data; sometimes it seems to indicate a natural gift of psychological intuition that experience and, above all, great interior purity have sharpened.

Behavior of the Director in Regard to the Directee

The need for the director's vigilance in the matter of illusions is clearly shown by the preceding remarks. St. Teresa's teaching illustrates splendidly this principle of spiritual direction. The greater a person's progress in prayer, the stronger is St. Teresa's concern that he avoid illusions. The Mother of Spirituality ("Mater Spiritualium") has a passion for walking and enabling others to walk in the truth. Truth here is to mean not only the exclusion of all duplicity and hypocrisy—which is obvious; but also in the sense of excluding even unconscious illusions, as for example taking for humility what is basically nothing but cowardice, etc. An act which proceeds unconsciously from the depths of the psyche does not constitute a sin, it may even be meritorious in the eyes of God; but the continuance of mistaken conduct, the persistence of an error of judgment affecting the spiritual life is bound at least to hinder the soul's progress.

Hence the need that the director, if he does not wish to fall into illusion, be alert and know how to discern the effects of grace from manifestations of deep natural tendencies, tendencies perhaps too much repressed, which have had to be modified, transformed, disguised, even under the most specious spiritual forms in order to come to the surface. In this discernment, the director, as we saw above, can base himself upon the openness of the penitent and an attentive examination of his actions.

Once the influence of forces alien to the spiritual life has been discovered, the advice St. Teresa gives for different cases will guide the director in the practical judgment he ought to make. It is not a matter of always eliminating at any cost the influence which has been uncovered, but of using it, if possible, to lead a life that is more virtuous and more united to God.

Thus, for example, faced with transports of sensible fervor, the saint advises simply modifying them, as we have seen in the first part—allowing them to go on, since they may do good. Purification will come in its own time.

As for illusions that concern virtue, the case is different: these are dangerous. It belongs to the director to disillusion the penitent, by inducing him (according to St. Teresa's advice) not to set so much value on his own thoughts and desires, and to test himself by his works.

With melancholy, the case is still more complex. It is worth the effort of following the saint's advice in detail. The best remedy for people afflicted with melancholy is to keep them busy with duties so that their imagination has no leisure to work itself up. Also one should shorten their prayer-time, forbid them to fast. Medicine is an option, but St. Teresa does not seem to have had great confidence in

Truth here is to mean not only the exclusion of all duplicity and hypocrisy—which is obvious; but also in the sense of excluding even unconscious illusions, as for example taking for humility what is basically nothing but cowardice, etc.



the rudimentary medicine of her day: "From time to time medicine may be used to relieve this humor and make it more bearable." (F 7,8).

The saint is categorical about how to deal with the sick person: the sister afflicted with melancholy must give up her whims. To obtain this result, gentleness is to be used, and, if that does not suffice, severe commands: "... they must understand well that they are not going to follow their whims, and that in no way will they be allowed to follow them when the time comes to obey." If she wishes to attain her end, the prioress should behave with great love, like a true mother, but without allowing the sick sisters to perceive it. "Tenderness and skill" will "easily" obtain submission. (F 7,9).

Sometimes, the saint knows by experience, good manners are not enough. Then recourse must be had to all possible means to reduce the sick ones to submission; going on even to applying the severest punishments, including confinement. This particular remedy, among many others adopted, is, according to St. Teresa, the most effective way to save these people who remain untouched by any loving remedy.

I should like to stress the saint's observations concerning the influence of the will in crises of melancholy. In many cases the will is free to some extent and the person is responsible for the evil done; on the other hand, for an honest and virtuous person melancholy can be a source of great merit. This gives an indication of what directors have to instill in these sick people. A serious effort of the will is demanded so as not to offend God and to progress in doing good. St. Teresa insistently exhorts the melancholic individuals to be humble and obedient, to fear and love God. It comes spontaneously to mind to ask psychologists whether this effort of the will also has a therapeutic effect on melancholy.

We would ask them the same question in regard to the attitude to take toward melancholic people, as St. Teresa indicates. I mean especially the vigor the saint calls for to prevent, by necessary threats and punishments, the faults the sickness brings on. Is this manner of treating the sick solely a means of preventing very great evils, especially in community life, or can it be also part of a specific remedy for the disease?

The advice of psychologists may also help directors on the other two points examined in the first part: suspensions and interior words. St. Teresa's advice can be

summed up in a few words. It is possible to resist prolonged absorptions, and a person must do all that he can to distract himself and not allow himself to be deceived. People subject to these suspensions should be occupied with duties that distract them. In case of weakness, penance and fasting must be forbidden and more food and sleep ordered.

As to interior words, St. Teresa thinks that they can be eliminated easily; all that is needed is not to make much of them and not sustain a desire for them. With melancholic individuals, the best remedy is always to keep them "as busy as possible" so that they pay no attention to what they believe they hear.

The task of directors is to point out to souls the safe path to follow; to fulfill this duty they will find firm support in St. Teresa's advice.

She places great trust in directors. She never ceased urging strict obedience to the spiritual father as the most fitting means to avoid illusions and comply with the will of God. When this obedience and real concern not to offend God is present, the saint wishes us to act with all confidence and peace. To people who believe they are in some mystical state, but do not show the signs characteristic of it, she says: "If one proceeds with humility, strives to know the truth, is subject to a confessor, and communicates with him openly and truthfully, it will come about . . . that the things by which the devil intends to cause death will cause life, however many the haunting illusions he wants to scare you with." (W 40,4). In the saint's thought, the effectiveness of this spiritual attitude is not limited to illusions of diabolical origin, but extends to all illusions.

This openness of conscience with the director and with superiors is really at the heart of the teaching St. Teresa has left us on how to thwart the subtle illusions of our subconscious. It seems to me that it is above all by fidelity to this Teresian doctrine of spiritual direction that Carmel has produced and continues to produce a whole line of souls who are spiritually complete and completely balanced.

It is for directors to make themselves worthy of the confidence St. Teresa places in them and to acquire the qualities she wishes to see in a good director, especially purity of life and genuine knowledge of the depths of God and the depths of the soul. St. Teresa, who so loved learning, would have watched with satisfaction the present-day progress of psychology. She, who already called on the rudimentary medicine of her time in pathological cases, would certainly have taken advantage of the scientific conclusions that have been established and proved useful for the spiritual life.

It is with the same breadth of view and the same desire for truth that we ask of the humane sciences the light to penetrate more deeply into the psyche. (Trans. K. Kirk).

Father Pierluigi is now a missionary in Japan and has held various teaching posts in the Discalced Carmelite Order. This is a reprint of an article which appeared in Carmelite Studies: Spiritual Direction, 1. Now out of print.

Elizabeth and the Trinity: To the Glory of God

Jennifer Moorcroft



At the Heart of Our Faith

Some stars are older than the universe. The vast majority of us, apart from a handful of experts, must take this statement on faith, and also have faith that these experts will eventually be able to resolve the mystery. And if the created world is so mysterious and beyond our ken, how much more so is the God who created it! God is a Trinity: three persons with one nature. We cannot come to this knowledge through our own efforts. It had to be revealed to us by the One who really knows, the second person of the Trinity. We trust Jesus, because he is the expert in this matter. We can, in fact, have some appreciation of the Blessed Trinity, because God has revealed himself to us; and we can also turn to the experience of those close to God, who can speak to us of this tremendous mystery at the heart of our

Christian faith. Elizabeth of the Trinity has been called a saint for our times, and her approach to this awesome mystery can help us in our own faith.

Elizabeth, like every Christian, was incorporated into the life of the Trinity by her baptism ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Mt 28:19) – one being in three persons. Just as newborn children grow by living, and not at first questioning how they grow, so we as Christians can grow within the life of the Trinity without at first attempting to define it with our minds. We take it for granted. Within the pages of the New Testament, we search in vain for a definition of the Trinity. However, we do see the Trinitarian life welling up there, especially in St. Paul’s letters, which Elizabeth loved, and where we see it in worship and the outpouring of his heart. Paul has given us one of the best-loved doxologies: ‘The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all’ (2Cor 13:13). In this passage, we do not so much define the doctrine of the Trinity as pray it, and allow its truth to penetrate our lives.

In the Life of the Church

This is how the early church lived their life in God: receiving their faith in the Trinity mainly through prayer and worship. In AD 155, St. Polycarp, for example, went to his

martyrdom, singing: "I praise you for all things; I bless you and glorify you through our eternal high priest in heaven, your beloved child, Jesus Christ, through whom be glory to you and to him and to the Holy Spirit, now and for the ages to come. Amen." It was not until the fourth century, after the Arian controversy, that the church enshrined her belief into dogma.

In the same way, Elizabeth nourished her faith through the prayer and worship of the church – and, in Carmel, through the scriptures. The church's prayer and worship is wholly Trinitarian and soaked in scripture: to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. The psalms in the Divine Office end with the doxology, 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.' The Mass, above all, is totally Trinitarian in its prayer and action, in which Jesus Christ is offered to the Father through the Holy Discovery of the Trinity.

Elizabeth came, early in life, to an understanding that she was the dwelling place of God. On the afternoon of her first communion she went round the corner from her home to the Carmelite monastery, where she met the subprioress. Mother Mary of Jesus gave her a small holy card, which explained that her name, 'Elizabeth,' meant 'House of God': This notion became central to Elizabeth's spiritual life. She loved the teaching of St. Catherine of Siena on the 'inner cell,' which she could enter interiorly at every moment to be with God. This insight deepened during Elizabeth's teenage years. It seems that this was not at once an understanding of the indwelling of the Trinity: her spirituality, especially at that time, was focused primarily on Jesus. The autobiography of Therese of Lisieux came out in 1898. Elizabeth devoured it, and Therese's Act of Oblation to Merciful Love made a deep impression on her. It is noteworthy that this self-offering, which Therese wrote on the feast of the Trinity, is addressed to the Trinity, whereas Elizabeth's early oblation, inspired by that of Therese, is addressed to Jesus. Christ was her entry into the mystery of the Trinity, just as he revealed it to us in his coming to us as man.

Shortly afterwards, though, Elizabeth experienced something new in her spiritual development – a feeling of being dwelt in – and she spoke about this to the Dominican, Fr. Vallee, who would become her confessor and adviser. He explained that it was the Holy Trinity that was dwelling within her. He then began to go into the theology of the divine indwelling, but soon realized that Elizabeth was no longer listening to him because she was experiencing what he was describing. "I saw her borne away as on a tidal wave," he said later. After Elizabeth entered Carmel, her experience of the life of the Trinity deepened and broadened.

Prayer to the Trinity

In November 1904, Fr. Fages preached the community retreat, taking the forthcoming Advent season as his theme, and interweaving it with the annunciation. He explained that what happened in a unique way to Mary happens spiritually to all Christians:

Do you want the Word to live in you: do you want the Incarnation to bear its fruit in you? There is only one way. The Holy Spirit caused the Son of God to be conceived and grow in the womb of the Virgin. Well, it is He again who will cause Him to live and grow in you.

This inspired Elizabeth a few days afterwards, on November 21st, feast of the presentation of our Lady, to go to her cell after the community had renewed their vows, and to write her famous Prayer to the Trinity— a prayer that is quoted, in part, in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#260). This is the fullest expression of her devotion to the Trinity, profoundly influenced by the mystery of the annunciation as she pondered on the work of the Holy Spirit: —“come upon me, and create in my soul a kind of incarnation of the Word: that I may be another humanity for Him in which He can renew His whole Mystery.” Elizabeth wanted Jesus to enter into her so that the Father, bending over her, might see in her only his Beloved Son. But her Beloved is crucified; and so, as “a bride for [His] Heart,” her way must also be the way of the cross.

Listen and Contemplate

Elizabeth wanted to spend her life listening to Jesus, in his inner promptings and especially in the scriptures which are God’s love letter to us. So deeply did she absorb them, especially the writings of St. Paul and St. John, that the scriptures became an expression of her own inner life. She also wished to have her inner gaze continually focused on Christ. She wanted to be so dazzled, so fascinated by him, so absorbed in him, that she could not take her eyes off him. If her gaze was on Jesus, then it was because his gaze was continually on her, and it worked the transformation in her, making her “another humanity” — another incarnation of Christ.

The Trinity is God who is totally self-giving. The Father gives himself totally in love to the Son, and the Son gives himself totally in love to the Father — all this in an outpouring of love which is the Holy Spirit. True prayer must reflect this self-giving love. Elizabeth’s Prayer to the Trinity was a prayer for the gift of contemplation, but this was not a self-absorption, a turning-inward on herself. She had her gaze fixed on Christ so that she could be, as it were, a conduit who would allow God’s life to flow out, through her, to the whole world. It was apostolic contemplation. She wanted to remain beneath God’s gaze, “staying by this source like someone who is starving; and this is how I understand the Carmelite’s apostolate as well as the priest’s. Then both can radiate God, give Him to souls, if they constantly stay close to this divine source” (L 158).

Praise of Glory

Elizabeth pondered long on the first chapter of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, his great hymn on the plan and purposes of God for us: that we are predestined for the praise of his glory. For her, ‘predestination’ did not have the narrow exclusivity given it by Calvin. No, this is the calling of every human being. Elizabeth, toward the end of her



short life, realized that her vocation was to bring souls to enter within themselves, that they might be united to God and transformed into”Praises of Glory of the Most Holy Trinity” (HF 41). So profound was Elizabeth’s understanding of this that she took the words, ‘Praise of Glory,’ as her new name. She loved to use its more solemn, Latin rendering, *Laudem Gloriam* – not grammatically correct for a name, but she had copied it as it appeared in the Vulgate Bible (Eph 1:6.12.14). This truly Trinitarian passage is a hymn to the glory of God the Father, through his beloved Son Jesus Christ, in whom we are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

God is Love

When Moses asked God’s name, he received the reply: ‘I AM’ (cf. Ex 3:14). In a further revelation, through St. John, we are told that “God is love” (1Jn 4:8.16). The reality of Being is Love. From the very beginning, Elizabeth realized that to grow in love was to grow into God. In Carmel, if love were absent from the convent, then the life of the nuns would be futile. “If [God] did not fill our cells and our cloisters, ah! how empty they would be!” she once wrote (L 123). She was called to love – not with her own limited capacity for love, but with the very love of God himself. Therefore she had to let herself be loved, as she said in a letter which she left for her prioress (LL; L 337). We have to experience and expand in God’s love for us, in order to give his love to others. Love was Elizabeth’s life in the Most Holy Trinity.

Reprinted from: Mount Carmel, July/Sept, 2006

Archbishop Celebrated Basilica Dedication Mass at Holy Hill



Catholic Herald/Sam Lucero

Carmelite Fr. Phillip Thomas reads the decree designating the shrine as a minor basilica.

Archbishop Timothy Dolan was the main celebrant of the dedication Mass celebrating Pope Benedict XVI's granting Minor Basilica status to Holy Hill, National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians on Sunday, November 19, 2006.

The Mass, open to the public, included musical selections performed by singers and musicians from local parishes in the area. A featured piece was the "Salve Regina," sung by the Discalced Carmelite Friars.

With the new status, the internationally-acclaimed church will be referred to as The Basilica of

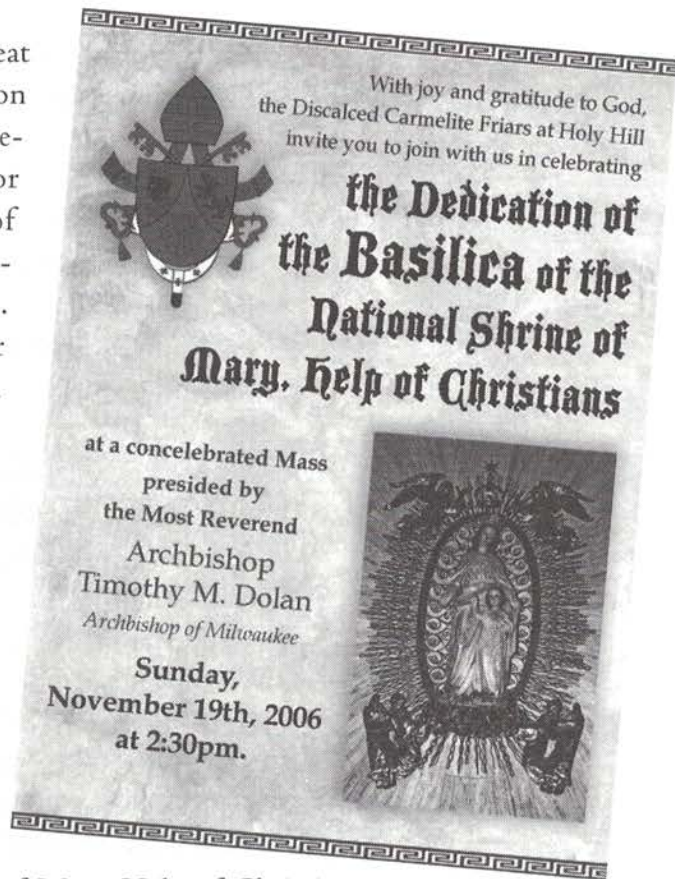
the National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians. According to Archbishop Dolan, the archdiocese will refer to the beloved sacred site as The Basilica of Holy Hill.

The Mass drew religious dignitaries from across the Midwest and local civic leaders. The Friars are celebrating the 100-year anniversary of their arrival to Holy Hill.

During the dedication, symbols representing Pope Benedict XVI were displayed, including his Coat of Arms, and a red and gold paneled umbrella. The umbrella symbolizes earlier times when it was held over the head of the pope as he visited a basilica. There was also a small bell used when announcing the pope's coming and a plaque of dedication located in the back of the church. "Holy Hill is a national treasure of the Church, richly deserving of this status," Archbishop Dolan said. "The dedication Mass provides a wonderful opportunity for people of all faiths to attend and understand the Church in the midst of history and universality. Under the care of the Discalced Carmelites, Holy Hill and the National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians, remains a wonderful conflu-

ence of natural beauty, peaceful prayer, great spiritual nourishment, evangelical mission and the focal point of a vibrant local, regional and national church." The Minor Basilica status makes Holy Hill one of nearly 60 churches and the second in Wisconsin so honored in the United States. The Basilica of Saint Josaphat, a Minor Basilica, was named by Pope Pius XI in 1929.

The basilica process, initiated by the Discalced Carmelite Friars and supported by Archbishop Dolan last April, required dossier materials documenting Holy Hill as a place of pilgrimage and special devotion, and a center of historic significance, characterized by architecture and artistry. Annually more than 250,000 people visit Holy Hill. Ethnic groups from around the world make yearly pilgrimages to the National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians.



With joy and gratitude to God,
the Discalced Carmelite Friars at Holy Hill
invite you to join with us in celebrating

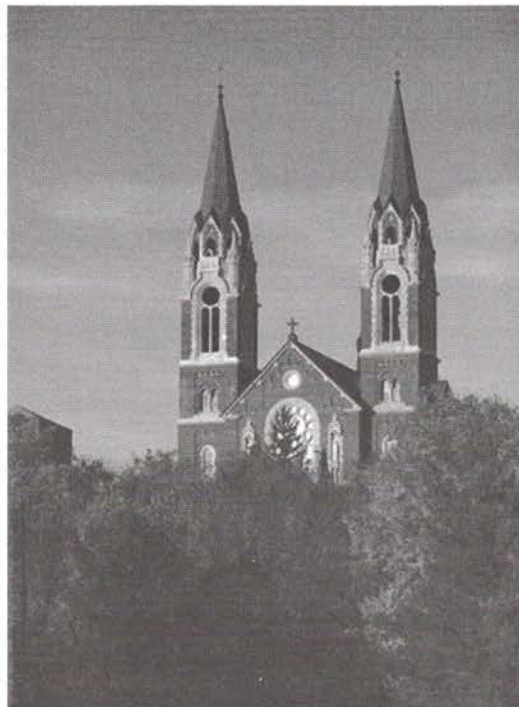
**the Dedication of
the Basilica of the
National Shrine of
Mary, Help of Christians**

at a concelebrated Mass
presided by
the Most Reverend
Archbishop
Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of Milwaukee

**Sunday,
November 19th, 2006
at 2:30pm.**

Holy Hill History

The history of Holy Hill extends back to the evangelization of the region by French explorer Jesuit Father Jacques Marquette, who is said to have surveyed the expansive beauty of the region from atop the hill. Since then the hill has become a special place of prayer and faith.



The early settlers to the Holy Hill area came in 1842 from the counties of Kerry, Cork and Waterford in Ireland. Around 1863 a French layman, Francois Soubrio, established for himself a small hermitage on the side of the hill. The locals, at first skeptical, eventually befriended him and sought his wise and prayerful counsel. Local farmers are said to have joined with him to build a cabin for the hermit and at

The basilica process, initiated by the Discalced Carmelite Friars and supported by Archbishop Dolan last April, required dossier materials documenting Holy Hill as a place of pilgrimage and special devotion, and a center of historic significance, characterized by architecture and artistry.

the same time they made plans to build the first log chapel, the first permanent structure on the hill. At the first Mass, Father George Strickner dedicated the simple new chapel as the Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians.

In the mid-1800s, German immigrants began to settle and farm in the area. In June of 1906 the Discalced Carmelite Friars arrived at Holy Hill from Bavaria at the invitation of Archbishop Sebastian Messmer. Best recognized by their brown hooded habits, the Friars are responsible for the ministry, as well as the stewardship and care of the church and Shrine.

Following the French, the Irish and the Germans whose communities continue to be drawn to Holy Hill, Hispanics now come to make Corpus Christi Processions and Vietnamese come to walk the Way of the Cross.

A registered Wisconsin and United States landmark, Holy Hill and its accompanying Shrine and Monastery, sit atop one of the highest points in the southeastern part of the state. Located 1,350 feet above sea level, visitors are offered a commanding view of the area. Holy Hill remains a revered pilgrimage site for its religious significance, beauty and period architectural style.

In Remembrance

Kay Garvey, Sr. Immaculate of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, OCDS began eternal life on October 20, 2006. She was a member of the St. Joseph's Community in Havertown, PA.

Alan Foster, OCDS began eternal life October 18, 2006. He was a member of St. John of the Cross Community in Ann Arbor, MI.

Myrlmarie Farrell, Mary Teresa of the Blessed Sacrament, OCDS - sister of Fr. Patrick Farrell, OCD began eternal life on September 19, 2006, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Community, Washington, DC

Mary Niemann - Mary Dolores of the Sorrowful Mother, OCDS, age 85, entered eternal life on August 1, 2006. She was professed February 11, 1989, Our Lady of Divine Providence Community, St. Paul Minnesota.

Special Meeting of United States OCDS National Council and Provincial Councils

Suzanne Treis, OCDS



A historic meeting was held at the Holy Hill Monastery in Hubertus, Wisconsin on November 2 – 5, 2006. The National Council met for their 2006 session, while the Provincial Councils from the Washington Province and the California-Arizona Province met concurrently for independent sessions. We had a wonderful time sharing prayer, fellowship and information at the beautiful setting of the Basilica Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians,

which has been under the stewardship of our friars for 100

years! The meeting culminated with a Plenary Session attended by the National Council and Provincial Council members from the three U. S. Provinces.

In attendance at the Plenary Session were:

Fr. Phillip Thomas, OCD, Washington Province Provincial

Fr. Regis Jordan, OCD, Fr. Paul Fohlin, OCD and Fr. John Grennon, OCD, the Provincial Delegates for the Washington Province

Fr. John Michael Payne OCD, Provincial Delegate for the Oklahoma Province

Fr. Patrick Sugrue, OCD, Provincial Delegate for the California/Arizona Province

The Provincial Councils from the Washington, Oklahoma and California-Arizona Provinces.

The National Council gave a report on the work of their meeting and the Highlights of the meeting follow in this issue of the Clarion. Pedro Gonzalez, Mary Giggey and don O'Meara represented the Washington Province at the National Council Meeting. The three Provinces then shared their progress working with the new OCDS Constitutions within their provinces. The Oklahoma Province has completed their statutes, had them approved by Rome and have been busy implementing them. They have published both hard and soft cover copies of their statutes, which are available through their province website. The California/Arizona Province has recently completed their statutes and



In St. Therese Chapel at Holy Hill: Back row: John Leidy, Fr. Patrick Sugrue, Fr. John Grennon, Fr. John Michael Payne, Fr. Regis Jordan, Thomas Moore, Don O'Meara. Second row: Tom McCabe, Patricia Thibodeaux, Elizabeth Korves, Chris Hart, Virginia Black. Front row: Annie Lex, Ginny Chromczak, Kathryn Blumbagen, Suzanne Treis, Sue Williams, Pedro Gonzalez, Cindy Sliger.

sent them to Rome and approval will have been granted by the issue of this report. Now they begin the task of disseminating the statutes to all of their communities and completing a handbook that will supplement the statutes. Our Provincial Council met for the second time at this meeting and continue working on the statutes for our province.

As Tom McCabe, our Provincial Council President said at the meeting, we gathered as family. Within that family and shared spiritual heritage, there are many expressions. Each province has their own unique spirit, traditions and application of the principles of our Rule and the OCDS Constitutions. The statutes developed and being developed, reflect that diversity.

Our Washington Province has been in the U.S. for 100 years now, and began when friars from the Immaculate Heart of Mary Province in Bavaria came to the U.S. to take care of the Holy Hill Shrine, Mary, Help of Christians. We have grown to over 4,200 OCDS members, 147 communities, and reside in 22 states, our nation's capital and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The Oklahoma Province was settled by friars from the Valencia Province of St. Therese in Spain. Fr. John Michael Payne, OCD, reported their history as follows: "They were missionaries in Mexico when Pancho Villa ran them out of the country in 1914. They came to Holy Hill and wrote home to their Provincial for instructions on what to do. They were told to stay in the United States, found Wisconsin in April much too cold, so took the train down to

Kansas and Oklahoma where they were accepted." They are commonly called the Oklahoma Province and have 800 OCDS members in 40 communities. They reside predominantly in the central and southeastern states

The California-Arizona Province started out in two states - in California as a mission territory of the Anglo/Irish Province, and in Arizona as a mission for Catalonia, Spain. The two joined together in the 1980s to form the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph. This history explains the two states named in the Province's official name and also the beautiful Irish brogue of many of their friars. The last Catalonian friar passed away last year. The province includes 13 western states, has over 60 groups and communities and about 1200 OCDS members.

Our meeting provided us with an opportunity to share our work, challenges and successes. There was a lot of interest shown in the fact that the Oklahoma Provincial wanted the members of the Provincial Council to perform pastoral visitations to all of the secular communities in the province, thereby freeing the Provincial Delegate for other matters. The Province has set up a well organized process for completing the visitations and generously shared their work and experience with us.

We used the opportunity to explore the relationship between the National Council and the three Provincial Councils. All agreed that the National Council provides a good vehicle for the three provinces to have official contact annually and to work together on areas of common concern such as inter-provincial transfers, communication, formation issues and the coordination of regional Congresses.

A lot of discussion about the structure of future Congresses ensued and was a continuation of what the National Council had discussed. It was determined that the individual Provincial Councils needed to clarify their thinking and make decisions on how they would like to proceed. The different models of what the Congresses could be like are defined in the Highlights of the National Council, that follow this report.

All agreed that our time together was very fruitful. Lines of communication were opened, relationships begun and renewed and it was a grace filled time for the participants and hopefully will bring good fruit to our province. Fr. Philip Thomas, OCD, our Provincial was with us for much of the meeting and reminded us that seculars are being asked to take on more responsibility for our Carmelite life because of the challenge to the laity of the Vatican II. It was a great joy to have him with us. Our province is blessed with a Provincial who is engaged with and cares deeply about our secular vocations.

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Highlights of the 2006 Meeting of the OCDS National Council of the United States

Don O'Meara, OCDS

OCDS Provincial Council Presidents (left to right):
Chris Hart, California-Arizona Province, Elizabeth Korves, Oklahoma Province, Tom McCabe, Washington Province



Meeting held Nov 3 & 4, 2006 at Holy Hill, Hubertus, WI

1. The OCDS National Council of the USA is currently operating on an interim basis pending the approval by the General Definitory of the final draft of the By-Laws of the National Council. The final draft of the By-Laws will not be considered until after all three Provinces have their Provincial Statutes approved by the General Definitory .
2. The Oklahoma Provincial Statutes and Formation Guidelines have already been approved and are published on two websites: the Oklahoma Province website: http://www.geocities.com/korvesem/Province/oklahoma_province.htm or on the OCDS National Council website: www.ocds-us.org, managed by Chris Hart whose e-mail address is: thekingshouse@hotmail.com .
The Oklahoma Provincial Council's process for visitation was discussed at some length.
3. The California-Arizona Provincial Statutes have recently been approved by the General Definitory and will be published on two websites:
The California-Arizona Province website: <http://www.ocds.info/> and the OCDS National Council website: www.ocds-us.org .
4. The Provincial Statutes of the Washington Province are currently in process. The Washington Province website is: <http://www.ocdwashprov.com/secularorder> .
5. The 2007 Regional Congress will be held from Friday June 15 to Monday, June 18, 2007 at the Bellevue Hilton Hotel in Bellevue, WA, near Seattle. Cindy Sliger,

co-chair of the Congress, announced that reservations are now being accepted. A reservation form is available on the website: <http://congress.ocds.info/>. The theme is the Rule of St Albert: Fount of Living Waters.

6. Chris Hart, Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the National Council reported a balance of \$265.14 in the National Council Treasury. She noted that the 2006 contributions for support of the National Council in the amount of \$500.00 from each Province are now due.
7. The 2008 Regional Congress has been scheduled for September 11 to 14, 2008 at the Wyndham Greens Point near Houston, Texas.
8. The next meeting of the National Council was scheduled for Thursday, June 14, 2007 and Friday AM June 15, 2007 at the Bellevue Hilton, just before the Seattle Congress.
9. Much of the meeting on November 3, 2006 was devoted to extended discussion of the value, purposes and format of the Regional Congresses. The traditional convention model consisting of conferences and workshops is organized more from the top down. Concerns expressed were:
 - a) that they were directed more to personal enrichment than with progressing with one another toward a common goal; and
 - b) that they excluded those who couldn't participate by reason of finances, time or disability.A "Chapter" model was suggested. This is organized more from the bottom up with issues and agendas proposed by the members and their communities and devoted more to local issues and governance. A third or "hybrid" model was also discussed which might have some features of a chapter as well as a convention along with inter-community socializing. There was general consensus that the provincial councils should further discuss the nature of the regional congresses.
10. There was consensus among the delegates that the National Council has important value and it remains committed to its mission which is to:
 - a) provide a National Congress every 10 years
 - b) foster communication between the provincial councils
 - c) coordinate inter-province transfers
 - d) make recommendations to the Provinces
 - e) coordinate other activities where deemed useful or necessary for the good of the Secular Order in the USA.
11. The Saturday morning session was devoted essentially to continued drafting and refinement of the National Council's own By-Laws. Work remains to be done on the final draft of the By-Laws and will be continued at the Seattle meeting.
12. This meeting of the National Council was chaired by Pedro Gonzalez of the Washington Province. The position now rotates to the Oklahoma Province and Elizabeth Korves is the present Chairperson of the National Council and she will serve until the conclusion of the next meeting.

OCDS NEWSLETTER

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