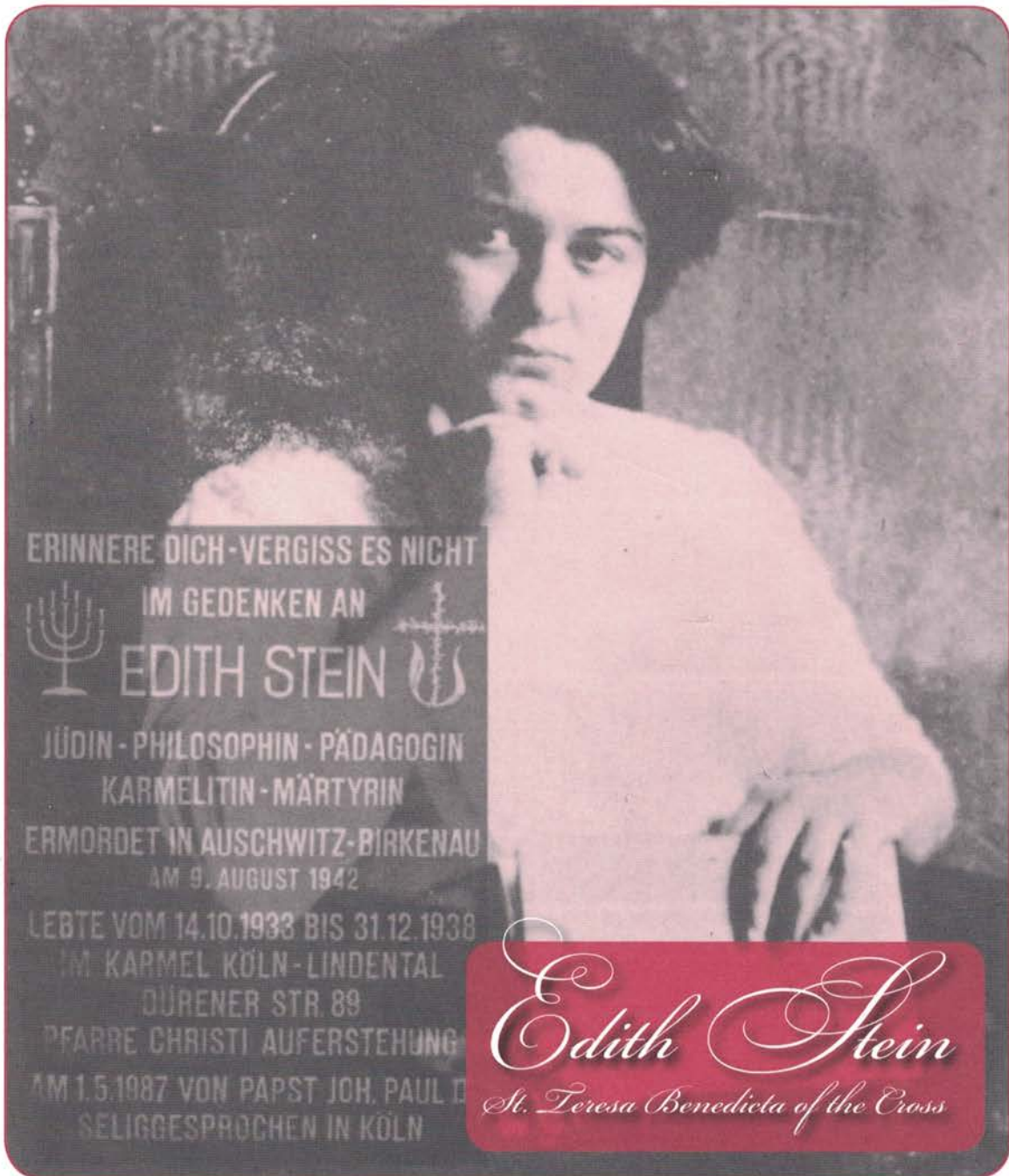


CARMEL CLARION

JANUARY – MARCH 2010 † VOLUME XXVI, NO. 1



ERINNERE DICH - VERGISS ES NICHT



IM GEDENKEN AN

EDITH STEIN



JÜDIN - PHILOSOPHIN - PÄDAGOGIN
KARMELETIN - MÄRTYRIN

ERMORDET IN AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU
AM 9. AUGUST 1942

LEBTE VOM 14.10.1933 BIS 31.12.1938
IM KARMELE KÖLN-LINDENTAL
DÜRENER STR. 89

PFARRE CHRISTI AUFERSTEHUNG

AM 1.5.1987 VON PAPST JOH. PAUL II.
SELIGGESPROCHEN IN KÖLN

Edith Stein
St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross

CARMEL CLARION

JANUARY — MARCH 2010 † VOLUME XXVI, NO. 1

Discalced Carmelite Secular Order, Washington, D.C.

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Editorial

In 2010, the *Clarion* becomes a quarterly publication. With this issue we begin a yearlong study of Edith Stein - St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, philosopher, convert, Saint, Doctor of the Church and Co-Patroness of Europe. Fr. John Sullivan, O.C.D., Provincial of our Province, authored our first article. It is an overview of her life and teachings. Fr. John spent more than ten years as a member of the Carmelite postulation team that led to Sister Teresa Benedicta's canonization. He introduces us to her life and works first as a well-known philosopher in Germany and later after her conversion from Judaism to Catholicism, which was inspired by her reading of the *Life* by St. Teresa of Jesus. Edith entered Carmel in Cologne in the 1930s. She suffered persecution as a female scholar and then ultimately by the Nazis for her Jewish origins. Even though she fled to the Echt Carmelite Monastery in Holland, she was arrested, deported to Auschwitz and killed in the gas chambers.

As you know by now, the Order, in preparation for the 500th celebration of our Holy Mother St. Teresa's birth in 2015, has laid out a reading plan for us to follow over the next five years. This year we are asked as communities and/or as individuals to read and meditate on the *Life*, Teresa's spiritual autobiography. To aid us in this undertaking the General Chapter distributed an article entitled: "I Was Born for You" on St. Teresa's feast day in October 2009. We have included its "Introduction," which describes the rationale for this five-year project focused on personal and collective renewal of our Carmelite charism. So that we may be united in this endeavor, a prayer to St. Teresa is also included. The full text may be found on the OCDS website under the section, NEWS FROM ROME, "V Centenary of the Birth of St. Teresa" at <http://www.ocdswashprov.org>.

To help us fulfill this request, Fr. Daniel Chowning, O.C.D. has written an overview "Reading the *Life* of St. Teresa of Jesus." He explains why she wrote two versions of the *Life* about 10 years apart and discusses the people who ordered her to write it. He also gives us insight into just how difficult it was for her to write her autobiography. She faced challenges, which ranged from her poor health to her constant travels establishing her Reform. Finally, Fr. Chowning analyzes of the structure of the *Life*, which will be of great help as we study and meditate on this great spiritual work of our Holy Mother.

Elda Maria Estrada's 5-part series, "Elizabeth of the Trinity - In Search of the Absolute" concludes with a discussion of her spirituality of interiorization. We hope you have enjoyed it and found it useful in your personal journey with the Indwelling.

Finally, a word about the newly approved OCDS Washington Province STATUTES. They are intended to be practical interpretations and expansions of the *Constitutions*, especially in areas where the *Constitutions* are not clear, or where there needs to be specific application in our Province. They are not written in stone. Over the course of time they may be changed or modified to meet evolving situations and new understandings within our Province. Additions or modifications will be published on the last pages of the *Clarion*, AT WHICH POINT THEY BECOME EFFECTIVE. If a specific question arises in your community concerning a particular STATUTE, its interpretation or application, please contact your Provincial Delegate.

Fr. Regis



Fr. John Sullivan, OCD, on June 6, 1996, the day Dr. Ronald Kleinman gave testimony to the Vatican Congregation's medical board.



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*Let us embrace the challenges faced by each and every OCDS community –
 United in zeal, prayer and action, we know that our Lord and Lady will bless and guide us.*

Resilient in Hope

John Sullivan, O.C.D.

Edith Stein (1891-1942), like any canonized saint, is first and foremost a gift of God for the church. “In crowning their merits, you crown your own gifts,” is the praise the Preface for the Saints in the Sacramentary directs to God. They are a “gift” because they have allowed the gifts of God visible in them to predominate throughout their lives.

St. Paul reminds us that there are “many different gifts” (1 Cor. 12:4; Rom. 12:6) among the faithful and the saints. Edith Stein, in this vein, was a multifaceted person of diverse gifts. The church’s process of discernment concluded she was someone who more than adequately qualified for sainthood; it acknowledged proof both of the heroic virtues in her life and of a death that fit the Vatican’s definition of martyrdom. In usual practice just one or the other is sufficient grounds to open the door to beatification for a “Servant of God.” In the case of Edith Stein the church wished to stress that it was her witness both in life and in death that merited this recognition.

As a leading thinker in the Catholic women’s movements of the German-speaking countries, a scholar of depth and originality, a proficient and prolific writer, and finally one of the millions of Jewish descent wiped out by the Nazis, she is a fitting representative of what Vatican Council II termed the “joys and hopes, the griefs and anguish” of the twentieth century. Though born before that century began, her life’s arc shows features close in rhythm and tone to our own. Her lessons continue. Much of what she did and wrote provides good advice for us to come to grips with the world around us, to contribute to it, and thus to prepare a richer future. Before considering that advice, it is worthwhile to review the life in which it was rooted.

When Edith Stein was canonized in 1998 she was the first Jewish-born Christian since the days of the early church to be added to the roster of the saints. She was the last of seven surviving children born to a Jewish couple in what was then still the German city of Breslau (now Wrocław in Poland). Before she was two her fifty-year-old father died of sunstroke. Although she was raised in an observant home, by the time she was a teenager she had ceased to practice her Jewish faith and considered herself an atheist. Later, in spite of abundant intellectual gifts that opened the way to university studies, she slipped into a depressed state and found herself “wishing to be run over by some vehicle” in the street.



Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)

During World War I she earned a doctoral degree in philosophy with full honors under the direction of her admired mentor Edmund Husserl, founder of the school of phenomenology. Significantly, she wrote her dissertation on the theme of “empathy.” She was one of the first women in Germany to earn a doctorate, and her brilliance was such that Husserl asked her to serve as his assistant, a position she filled for a year and a half. Nevertheless, the prevalent gender discrimination of the times prevented her from finding a university appointment. Instead,

she became a faculty member at a teachers' training college for young women in the historic town of Speyer. When she did later receive a position at the Catholic pedagogical institute in Münster, she was soon dismissed as a result of the anti-Semitic legislation imposed by the new Nazi regime.

Throughout this period, Stein's spiritual life was marked by an earnest quest. Gradually she found herself questioning and ultimately abandoning her atheistic outlook, until eventually she decided to receive baptism as a Catholic in January of 1922. The next decade of her life was devoted to growing assimilation of all that her newfound faith offered and also to assisting Catholic women in their growth professionally and at home. At Speyer she taught equally by word and by lifestyle, since she led an exemplary life as a laywoman.

The sadness that her Jewish mother, Auguste Stein, experienced at Edith's baptism affected Edith deeply, and she was forced to bear up under yet more maternal distress when she decided to enter a Discalced Carmelite monastery in 1933. As much as this choice left her mother despondent, the adoption of religious life was the fulfillment of a dream Edith had nourished from the time of her baptism. The advent of Germany's anti-Semitic laws, which made it impossible for her to teach, offered a further inducement to take this step.

The years in Carmel brought her new responsibilities; still, her superiors invited her to write articles, then books, to share her talents with a wider audience. Her mother died at home in Breslau while Edith was a junior professed nun in Cologne Carmel. From there she saw members of her family start emigrating from an increasingly intolerant Germany, especially in the wake of the violence wreaked on the Jews by Kristallnacht, the infamous pogrom of November 9-10, 1938. Though now a nun in perpetual vows she too felt the pressure of Nazi anti-Semitism. For her own safety and that of her community she went into exile on the last day of that year. The Discalced Carmelite nuns in Holland welcomed her to their monastery in the little town of Echt.

But this move offered only temporary refuge. In 1940, Germany occupied Holland and Belgium and implemented their persecution of the Jews. Stein's status as a religious did not protect her. After the Catholic bishops of the country courageously took a stand against the Nazis' anti-Semitic measures, all the Catholic Jewish converts in Holland were deported to concentration camps.

On August 2, 1942, she and her sister Rosa, now too a convert to Catholicism, were seized during an SS raid. A few days later, in a transit concentration camp located in northern Holland, she told a visitor of her horror-filled apprehension for the well-being of her fellow deportees in these words: "I never knew people could actually be like this ... and I honestly had no idea of how my brothers and sisters were being made to suffer." She took special measures in the days ahead to care for the terrified and neglected children in the camp. She provided for them a share in the support she had once described in one of her philosophical treatises: "In the knowledge that being holds me, I



The baptismal font in the parish church of St. Martin where Edith Stein received the sacrament of new birth on New Years Day, 1922.

rest securely. This security, however, is not the self-assurance of one who under her own power stands on firm ground, but rather the sweet and blissful security of the child that is lifted up and carried by a strong arm” (see “Letting God’s Plan Guide Us”).

Radiating her inner strength and peace of spirit to all in the concentration camps Edith Stein went to her death on August 9, 1942, one week after her arrest, in a gas chamber at the Auschwitz/Birkenau death camp. Forty-five years later Pope John Paul II declared her Blessed in Cologne on May 1, 1987, and then proceeded to canonize her in 1998. Less than a year later he proclaimed her co-patroness of Europe along with St. Bridget of Sweden and St. Catherine of Siena.



John Paul II honors Edith’s courage to represent the people of God.

The wisdom of Edith Stein was not simply the fruit of intellectual genius. In the crucible of human suffering she learned what sympathy, or suffering with others, could do to alleviate their burdens. In the midst of her sometimes jumbled existence she provided an unintended epitaph in a sentence formulated in her magnum opus, *Finite and Eternal Being*: “What was not included in my plan lay in God’s plan.” Regardless of what happened to her, she embraced God’s plan with hope, confident that “from God’s point of view nothing is accidental,” trusting it would lead her through all the trying situations life sent her way. That spirit of trust in divine providence is one of the key legacies of her life.

Committed Spirituality

The stress of contemporary living frequently induces an impulse to withdraw inward. People care intensively for their own small group, while regarding others with fearful suspicion. This attitude often overflows into their religious loyalty, causing them to be satisfied with mere rote repetition of standard tenets. Edith Stein never gave into such parochialism. She embodied a spirituality that was always open and connected to her surroundings.

At the time of Stein’s canonization an introduction to her philosophical thought was published with the significant title “Person in the World.” Those four words capture a deep truth about her. Edith Stein always strove to craft accurate descriptions of the nature of the human person, and she always considered the person in direct relation to the world, our home — a temporary home perhaps (Heb. 13:14), but our current home nonetheless. One could not be abstracted from the other; both the human person and the world go together in Stein’s thought and spirituality.

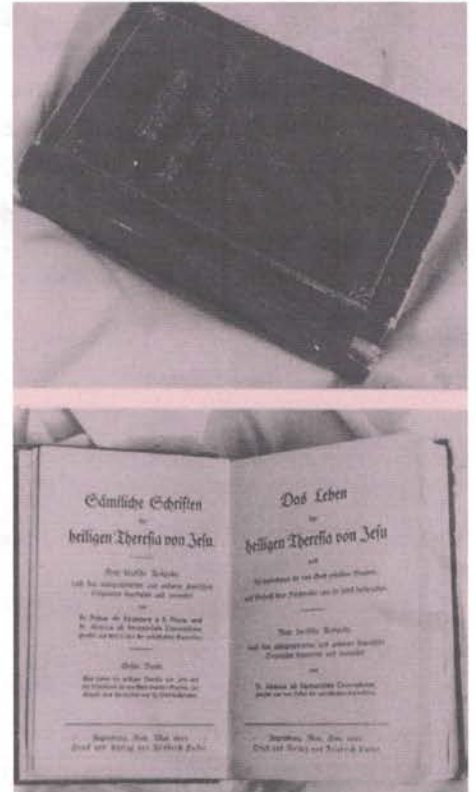
Maintaining her coherence of thought, Stein kept a vigilant eye to hold those two realities together and to avoid artificial opposition. Among her spiritual attitudes this was a guiding principle: never to lose contact with the real world, never to underestimate the salvific plan of God for creation (see Gen. 1:31). Despite its fallen condition, the world remains the theater where the drama of God’s designs for our happiness and sanctification takes place. For this reason she applied her gifts of sharp observation to discern the

“signs of the times,” to keep in touch with the ups and downs, the ins and outs of salvation history and its current throughout her life. Many a disappointment and contretemps encountered along the way offered her ample reason to check out or close in on herself: when employment was denied her on account of her sex, or later on account of her Jewish birth. And yet she went on seeking to observe and plumb the hidden meaning of it all.

The motivational force that led her to remain open is described in a letter she wrote while still a laywoman to her friend Sister Callista Kopf on February 12, 1928: “I realized that something else is asked of us in this world and that, even in the contemplative life, one may not sever the connection with the world. I even believe that the deeper one is drawn into God, the more one must ‘go out of oneself’; that is, one must go to the world in order to carry the divine life into it.”

At the time of this writing it was just a little over six years since her baptism, which had followed by only a few months a fateful evening when she had stayed up all night reading the Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila, concluding, by morning, with the exclamation “This is the truth.” The great St. Teresa had opened the door to her; she developed a resultant desire to seek out a contemplative life like Teresa’s. An experienced spiritual director, however, had convinced her to defer such an ambition for the time being and in the meantime to place her great intellectual gifts in the service of other Catholic women. Thus, in her letter to Sister Callista she assured her friend that “in this world” we shouldn’t break our links to the world even if “thoughts of the Divine... in the contemplative life” are so admirable and desirable. On the contrary, closer proximity to God or “the deeper one is drawn into God” invariably leads a person “out of oneself” and “to the world in order to carry the divine life into it.” We do not turn away from the world, we do not shun it, nor do we act as if it does not exist. Rather, we draw upon our relationship with God to “carry” or spread its fruits wherever they will do the most good.

The deep import of this passage is the expression she put within quotation marks: “go out of oneself.” With it she evoked the Greek term *exstasis*, drawing on Pseudo-Dionysius. However, she chose to broaden the notion of “ecstasy,” which is usually taken in an introverted and mystical way, and thus passed beyond the realm of visionary delights to establish the idea of an ecstatic act of sharing. We must not stay transfixed solely where and when we feel most uplifted in our enjoyment of an altered-state experience; rather, we should allow ourselves to go out to others, reassuring them on the basis of our experience that God does indeed lift us up. God is present and concerned with us. We establish contact with others in this kind of ecstasy because God wishes us to do so. We are sent from contact with the Divinity to proclaim that the “divine life” can be reached by all. A little further on in her letter, Stein expands on this, advising that one should “consider oneself totally as an instrument, especially with regard to the abilities one uses. We are to see them as something used, not by us, but by God in us.”



Her occupation with the Life of St. Teresa of Jesus brings to an end a long struggle in her and allows her to reach the decision to enter the Catholic Church.

At a time when “flight from the world,” or *fuga mundi*, was the safe recipe for any Catholic earnestly searching to lead a holy life, Stein said one can find God in the world by bringing God to the world. Adapt your abilities to the people and the situation, and God will take over as God wields the instrument his grace has finely tuned. Stein’s corrective to what had become a classic principle of religious life slipped deftly between the opposed dangers of mere passivity on the one hand and spiritual hubris on the other. This is practical advice since it avoids the expected (for those times) exhortation to heavenly considerations of an altogether ethereal sort. “Something else is asked of us in this world,” she wrote; so leave enjoyment of spiritual delights to the next world’s state of rest. The proper forum for spiritual exchange between humans and God is right here. We court a great risk by thinking we can find it in a refined atmosphere devoid of real-life situations.

In canonizing Edith Stein the church points in the direction of a spirituality that includes new forms, “beginning with people as they are...in ways they can understand.” To ask them to abandon their nature and aspire to a higher realm runs the risk of creating a dichotomy between the spiritual and the ordinary. Edith Stein says balance is attainable, and she would hardly have recommended it unless she thought it possible.

Compassion for Hesitant Pilgrims

The tendency of people to focus on their own clan or societal group leads them to disregard the sufferings and needs of others. They cannot be bothered by the “troubles” of others because they feel overburdened by their own. Edith Stein followed another way, the way of compassion for her worried and harried fellow travelers; and she offered a model for exercising compassion toward others.

As a laywoman, Edith Stein was well attuned to the preoccupations of her students. Many hours of counseling troubled individuals led her to write the following lines that show her keen empathy as a teacher: “Surely the children who attend convent schools should gain there the strength to form their lives in the spirit of Christ. Surely it is most important that the teachers truly have this spirit themselves and vividly exemplify it.

Today’s young generation has passed through so many crises — it can no longer understand us, but we must make the effort to understand them; then perhaps we may yet be able to be of some help to them.”

Stein wrote these words in October of 1932. For the young German women of whom she speaks it was one of those “between-the-wars” years when Germany lurched back and forth in societal and political upheaval that only increased with the Nazis’ rise to power. W. H. Auden described the century accurately as an “Age of Anxiety.” Edith was taking the proper measure of the raw material fed into her classroom when she claimed on behalf of her students the presence of “so many crises.”

Every generation has shifting matrices for its growth pains; only the perceptive educators like Edith Stein have both the insight and the courage to declare candidly what



they are. And yet, beyond the shifts, Edith's words designate also what can be termed a "generation gap," and they call for compassion toward the alienation of youth that requires extra efforts to ease communication and to take the initiative.

Stein's great concern about the troubles of the people she taught carried through to care for children in the very final stage of her life. Arrested on August 2, 1942, by the SS, she died one week later not very far from her home city of Breslau in the Auschwitz extermination camp. In that last week of her life she passed through the infernal network of Hitler's "final solution." She saw two intermediate transit camps in Holland, first Amersfoort, and then Westerbork. Others who passed through Westerbork have described the deep sense of despair that overcame women with children in the camp. Understandably, the children were neglected, and an eyewitness account shows that Edith Stein did much to look after them. As Julius Marcan, a survivor, testified, "It was Edith Stein's complete calm and self-possession that marked her out from the rest of the prisoners. Many of the mothers were on the brink of insanity and had sat moaning for days, without giving any thought to their children. Edith Stein immediately set about taking care of these little ones. She washed them, combed their hair, and tried to make sure they were fed and cared for."

From Westerbork Edith was able to send back a compelling message to the nuns at her monastery in Echt: "We place our trust in your prayers. There are so many persons here in need of a little comfort, and they expect it from the sisters." She had only herself to give: her attentiveness, the time she took away from her own worries, and her sense of religious hope. She gave all that she had, because she was fully present with and to the others, and she was willing to do as much as she could to share their burden of suffering so as to lighten the load. She acted as a compassionate sister to the suffering, to "be of some help to them."



Loving Knowledge of the Faith

It is commonly observed among seminarians or younger religious today that, while they abound in zeal to serve the church and extend its outreach, they often lack a grasp of fundamentals of their faith. Edith Stein would have regarded this as a deficiency, and in her own way she worked to rectify it.

Her last major writing project was a commentary on St. John of the Cross, noted mystic and collaborator of St. Teresa of Avila in the reform of Carmel. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1926, and her book, *Science of the Cross*, was to be a contribution to the fourth centenary celebrations of his birth in 1942. Due to her arrest by the SS the manuscript lacks some finishing touches and a formal conclusion. She made the following trenchant remark in the introduction, entitled "Meaning and Basis of the Science of the Cross": "Many Christians feel depressed because the events of the Gospel do not — or do no longer — impress them as they ought and fail to affect and shape their lives. The example of the saints shows how it ought to be: where there is truly living faith there Christian doctrine and the mighty deeds of God are the content of life which shape everything and before which everything else must give way.... If a saintly soul thus

assimilates the truths of faith they become the science of the saints. If the mystery of the cross becomes its inner form it grows into the science of the cross.”

This perceptive and timely passage houses an acute preoccupation of St. Edith. After judging the generalized world situation with deserved reservation, she moved on to the religious sphere as part of a general malaise. Christians were depressed because they, like others, did not “react to facts according to their true value.” Unfortunately, they shared in a “lack of sensibility” to reality because they showed less than a “truly living faith.” Her estimate of the situation did not flow from pessimism, but from realism. Sr. Teresa Benedicta wrote her study on St. John of the Cross during World War II, and the judgment of history confirms her sense of a real paralysis and breakdown in morale that allowed so many atrocities to occur.

Stein assigned a cause for the state of depression among Christians. She claimed that if “Christian doctrine and the mighty deeds of God... [were] the content of [their] life” they would react to events differently. What is lacking is effective assimilation of the faith on the part of those who by the rebirth of baptism are expected to participate actively in the church. In fact, Stein used the word “assimilate” twice, and made it the heart of the matter. If alive today she would call upon the church to supply more effective ways to assimilate the riches of the faith. Ever an alert pedagogue, now a canonized saint, she continues to stand for an intellectual apostolate among Catholics. She also reminds us that effective catechetical methods and outreach are indispensable means to meaningful participation by Catholics in all dimensions of public life, be they directly related to the church or found in the mainstream of secular life.

If believers die of hunger for want of proper understanding of the teachings transmitted to them from Christ in the Good News of Salvation, the world will lack the beneficial leaven that Christianity can offer. In parallel fashion, Stein’s text warns about a diminishment of holiness in our midst: there will be no science of the cross at work because those who are called to be saints will hardly craft it into that “inner form” they would educe out of the “truths of the faith.” The blockage they suffer and the lost contact with Gospel values will stunt their growth. Edith Stein invested in a deepening process of her faith; from her baptism onward she considered assimilation of the faith an extremely precious exercise of her life. Not even monastic life kept her from culling from her own ongoing experience lessons capable of sharing growth in the knowledge of the faith. During the first few years in the monastery at Cologne she wrote concise articles about spiritually significant persons or themes from Carmelite history and placed them in various German newspapers. What she did showed she would not just lament poor knowledge of the faith in others; instead she strove to make up for the deficiencies. Healthy vigilance of that kind will remedy flagging knowledge and promote better appreciation of the faith in the future.

Respect for Riches of the Spirit in Those Seeking God with Sincere Hearts

Edith Stein highly prized her relationship to the Jewish people and their religion. There was no root incompatibility for her between being a Christian and her esteem for Judaism. She supposedly told her pious mother that as a Catholic she had come to appreciate

as never before the grace-bearing elements that Judaism offered. It was, ironically, the discovery of Christ and his cross that had for her opened her eyes to those wellsprings of grace. Stein's appreciation and gratitude for her Jewish roots are reflected in the fact that she chose to write a loving memoir of her childhood, *Life in a Jewish Family*, at precisely the time when anti-Semitic hatred was breaking out in Germany.

The way Edith related to her mother is paradigmatic for the way she related to her former religion. Her mother was for her an alter ego in so many ways, not only as she was growing up but in all the phases of her life. Tenacity, honesty, and devotion were three precious values Edith derived from Auguste Stein. Her attitude toward her mother's death clarifies extremely well Stein's respect for the way God works in other religions. Regard for the signs of God's presence beyond the borders of her own faith system was carefully maintained and recommended by Edith Stein.

Auguste Stein died on September 14, 1936. Edith included news of her mother's passing in nine letters in all. Every one of them shows Edith admiring the faith of Auguste and the fruits of her God-fearing life. Perhaps the most significant of them was sent on October 4, 1936, to Sr. Callista Kopf, the same recipient of her letter from 1928 about ecstasy. With the following words it stated the reason why Stein felt her mother had gone to heaven, even as it excluded any possibility her mother might have converted to Christianity: "The news of her conversion was a totally unfounded rumor. I have no idea who made it up. My mother held to her faith to the very last. The faith and firm confidence she had in her God from her earliest childhood to her eighty-seventh year remained steadfast, and were the last things that stayed alive in her during the final difficult agony. Therefore, I have the firm belief that she found a very merciful judge and is now my most faithful helper on my way, so that I, too, may reach my goal."

By being always faithful and true to her belief in her own God Frau Stein found a "very merciful" judge at the end of her days. Fidelity to the faith of her ancestors saw her through and crowned her perseverance, even in spite of the final "agony" caused by a stomach tumor. In referring to the trust her mother had in the Lord, Edith notes it was the "firm confidence she had in her God." The basis of her religious respect is not so much the presence of any good deeds her mother did, but that "firm confidence" that fed her mother's devotion for the God of Israel. In spite of the difference between her and her mother, Edith esteemed her tenacious devotion, nor would she think to criticize it in the least.



Stein family photo, 1894, shortly after father's sudden death.



Rome, May 13, 1986, Rabbi Elio Toaff and Pope John Paul II

The epistolary remarks taken together prove Edith adopted an enlightened stance toward interreligious relations between Catholics and Jews. Oftentimes harsh and hurt feelings arise around her status as a convert, but greater awareness of the “spiritual ecumenism” she cultivated would defuse a good number of the emotional reactions her name can provoke. Further confirmation comes from what she wrote about the second most influential adult in her life, her revered “Master” Edmund Husserl. As the Protestant founder of phenomenology lay dying, she penned a letter to her sister phenomenologist Adelgundis Jaegerschmid, which contained these far-seeing thoughts: “I am not at all worried about my dear Master. It has always been far from me to think that God’s mercy allows itself to be circumscribed by the visible church’s boundaries. God is truth. All who seek truth seek God, whether this is clear to them or not.”

Integrated “Vita Devota”

The Catholic Church today often reflects a certain stress between groups that take divergent stances regarding the content and rate of renewal since the Second Vatican Council. Even though Vatican II remains the reference point and rich watershed of efforts toward revitalized church life, there is a desire on the part of some to return to practices that held sway before that great ecclesial event. Longing for a “golden age” of liturgical practice (something that never actually existed anyway, though they don’t usually grant that point), they want no more changes in liturgical observance and even flirt with temptations to reinstall abandoned rituals. In this area of mystagogy and liturgical piety one finds a path forward with the help of Edith Stein.

The year 1937 marked a midpoint in Edith’s growth in her vocation as a Catholic contemplative nun. She had entered Carmel late in 1933 and would die in the summer of 1942 at Auschwitz. She had ample opportunity to delve into Carmelite spirituality and form herself in the mold of monastic life. This did not mean, as some feared, she was losing contact with usual church life around her. On the contrary, she kept keenly in tune with the ebb and flow of events and even the surges of disagreement that can occur.

One such disagreement concerned the liturgy, the “prayer of the church” that she had found so nourishing and important for her spiritual life. The situation can be summed up as follows: a clash over the proper balance between liturgical and individual piety was brewing from the mid thirties on, primarily in Germany. Some felt that renewed liturgical practices would offer an adequate source of inspiration and make it possible to do away with devotional practices of more recent vintage. Those who favored the latter opposed the liturgical partisans and branded liturgical practices as “externalist” and “activist” with harmful consequences for individual spiritual progress. A solution suggesting coexistence between the two concerns, i.e., between ritual participation and interiority, would be the obvious answer, but when controversies move toward a flash point they tend to invite extreme formulations that often further widen the breach.

Sr. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross knew well the mentality of the liturgists: she had had frequent contacts with the archabbot of Beuron, the famous



South German Benedictine abbey, and had worshiped there during school vacation time. On the other hand, but not in opposition to the Benedictine vision of worship in common, she also had opted to join the Carmelites, an order known for its promotion of silent, meditative prayer with a mostly austere devotional style.

She decided to offer ideas from her own experience to ease the rising tension at that time. The result was a small essay/ treatise called *The Prayer of the Church*, published in 1937 in a book that offered other essays weighing some of the factors involved in the ongoing debate in Germany. Her reflection was a clear attempt to strike a balance, and the following passage (taken from the full text of the essay found in the selection “Daily Work, ‘A Single Liturgy’”) demonstrates how successful she was in doing so: “The monks ‘resembling angels’ surround the altar of sacrifice and make sure that the praise of God does not cease, as in heaven so on earth. The solemn prayers they recite as the resonant mouth of the church frame the holy sacrifice. They also frame, permeate, and consecrate all other ‘daily work’ so that prayer and work become a single opus Dei, a single ‘liturgy.’”

As in so many other passages of Stein’s works the very terminology she adopts houses clues to understanding. Three points emerge from her creative insight. She stressed the two major axes of public worship, namely, the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. They are described in non pragmatic terms, too, so Stein avoids what is sometimes called the “service station” model of liturgy, or one that subordinates worship to the moral effects it produces after worship time is over. The words “praise of God” and “resonant mouth of the church” bear this out. The monks are granted by vocation a holy leisure (otium sacrum) that allows more time; thus it is easier for them to embellish praise by the beautiful cadences of their singing. Still, all liturgy, wherever it is celebrated, needs to stress gratuitous praise of God, and Stein reminds us of this. Her text goes further.


She then links the prayers of the monks to activities outside the worship area, because those prayers are also a setting for (they “frame”) daily work, and they both permeate and consecrate that work. Our faith vision posits a difference between cultic and non-cultic activities but not a gap between them. Benedictines themselves take for inspiration the motto “Ora et labora.” The same can be said for differences between cultic acts and acts of piety by individuals or smaller prayer groups: they might take place according to different rhythms, but they do not call for a choice of one over the other, certainly not one against the other.

It is precisely people with many obligations and who are fully involved, Edith Stein argued, who need communion with themselves where God dwells in us. She teaches us that we do not need to be in a church to do this; one can catch one’s breath spiritually anywhere.*

Finally, Stein claims there is a unified notion embracing both worship and noncultic acts: prayer and work, she wrote, “become a single opus Dei, a single ‘liturgy.’” When one bases individual prayer on the Mass and the prayer of the Hours, when one infuses daily work with them both, work acquires a spirit of service of God (opus Dei). To the ex-

tent work is directed to praising God in the Mass and in the Hours it becomes “liturgy,” whose root meaning is “work of the people.” It seems Stein was trying to bridge the gap between worship and work in themselves, as much as she wanted to close the widening gap between the liturgical enthusiasts and the pietists. Her insight can help worship flow over smoothly into daily tasks; and the fulfillment of those tasks can itself prove to be worshipful activity. This requires vigilance in a hyper-busy world, so full of excuses to avoid forms of godly activity, but Stein reassures us that the challenge is worth accepting. No genuine Christian spirituality can survive without the integration of both liturgy and devotion that she promoted.

The “emphases” above accompanied other spiritual interests of Edith Stein/Sr. Teresa Benedicta. They obviously do not overshadow attention paid by her to such questions as the relations between men and women, contacts between philosophy and the theological enterprise, empathy and faith, or religious experience. One could add still others such as the education of children, individual and communal rights and obligations, peace and violence, coresponsible living in society, especially in the face of a quickly expanding consumerism, or the role of the church in the protection of the persecuted.

Attention to Edith Stein is on the rise since her canonization. Sensitive individuals will mine her thought for new lessons of hope for new generations. She would be busy doing that very thing if she were still alive. And her courage to come to grips with reality as an ever-alert person, seeking the truth, will surely attract others to follow in her footsteps. 

* Edith Stein, *Her Life in Photos and Documents*, Maria Amata Neyer, O.C.D., English translation 1999, ICS Publications, Washington, DC, Page 38

In Remembrance

Margaret Meissner, OCDS, *Theresa Margaret of the Sacred Heart*, who made her Vows on November 4, 2005, began eternal life on February 23, 2010. She was a member of the St. Joseph Community in Palm Bay, FL.

James Zink, OCDS, *Joseph the Worker and Provider*, began eternal life on March 10, 2010. He was a member of the St. Joseph Community in Erie, PA.

John Murphy, OCDS, *John Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection*, who made his Definitive Promise on October 19, 2008, began eternal life on March 12, 2010. He was a member of the Jesus Author of Life Community in Terre Haute, IN.

Mirella Losacco, OCDS, who made her Definitive Promise on November 21, 1994, began eternal life on March 14, 2010. She was a member of the St. Joseph Community in Havertown, PA.

Helen O’Brien, OCDS, began eternal life on April 24, 2010 at age 91. She was one of the earliest members of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Teresa of Jesus Community in Roxbury, MA.

Mary Phillips, OCDS, *Mary Joseph*, who made her Definitive Promise on November 8, 1997, began eternal life on May 16, 2010. She was a member of the Mary and Joseph Community in Danvers, MA.



From the pen of Fr. Ted Centala O.C.D.

Dear Carmelite Brothers and Sisters,

Someone once asked me to share my life's story:

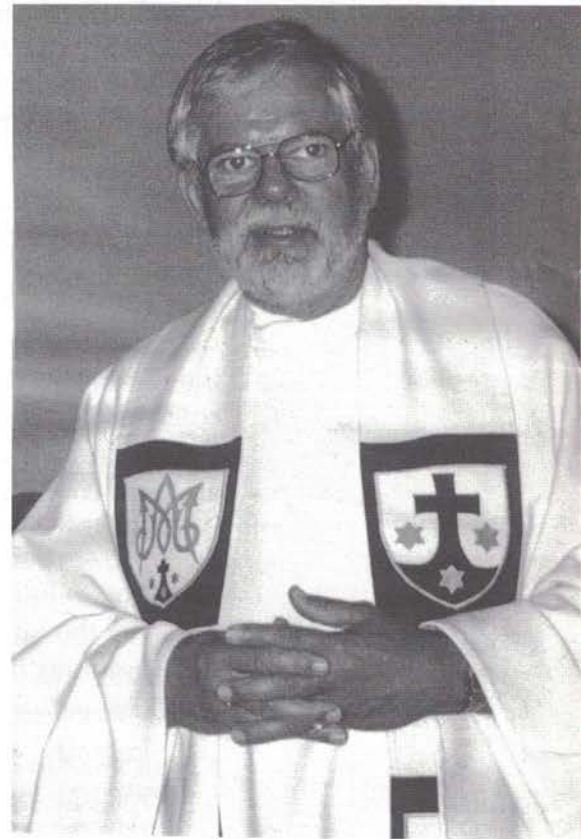
My family were Polish immigrants who in 1869 settled in the Cleveland OH and Milwaukee WI areas. They then moved to northern Michigan, 250 miles north of Detroit and 70 miles south of the Mackinaw Bridge to the Upper Peninsula, where free land was available by a homestead agreement.

I am from the 3rd generation, born (7-22-36, feast of Saint Mary Magdalene, who loved much) and raised in Metz, a very rural township, near a State Forest, without electricity. We were 4 girls and 4 boys. I was the second oldest; I had an older sister. We lived in Detroit when Dad worked in the factories during WWII. After that I entered the public one room schoolhouse on the hill for 2nd to 8th grades. Then attended the public high school 12 miles away in Rogers City. I graduated in 1954. I had done some part time work on the farm, in the forest, in carpentry, as a gunsmith, baby-sitting, water well drilling, selling Christmas trees, tinkering with old cars, etc. I was not interested in electricity or travel.

We knew where eggs came from, also milk, venison, beef, pork, chicken, and all the garden products. We liked the out-of-doors, but did not cry over eating food, like the animal nuts do today. I was not interested in being a priest at first but finally agreed and attended a diocesan seminary college for three years, working on the Great Lake freighters for three summers.

After reading *Story of a Soul* I switched from the diocesan seminary (for Polish candidates, named Orchard Lake) to the Carmelite Monastery. A nursing student, Donette, from Uniontown, had suggested that I read Little Therese. I visited the Carmel of our Nuns in Detroit and joined the Third Order while waiting for the next class of Friars. I entered our novitiate in Boston in 1957, and took my vows on August 15, 1958.

I attended our Carmelite College of Philosophy in Wisconsin at Holy Hill, from '58 to '61; and then at our Carmelite College of Theology here in Washington DC from '61 to '65. I became acquainted with electricity, amateur radio and broadcasting. I was ordained June 5, 1965. I then went to Marquette University in Milwaukee WI for a Pastoral Theology course. I also took courses in Mass Communications and Sociology. I volunteered for our Missions, so 1967 found me studying Tagalog at the Ateneo University in Manila.



From June '66 to August '74 I worked in the Philippines, setting up broadcast radio stations for the Church for Evangelization. I did the same in Central America the summer of '75, returning with a bit of a facility in the Spanish language. All this electronics, legalities, etc., was right brain work, so to speak. I was in my right mind. The radio engineers were not ready for Carmelite spirituality.

Then I had to tidy up the left side. I worked as a hospital chaplain from '77 to '84. I was not interested in this type of ministry at first, but a gut feeling told me it was just what I needed. Neither the doctors and nurses, nor the patients were ready for Carmelite spirituality. It was not part of my job description on this assignment either.

Then, in '84, as a normal person, I began to work with the Secular Order, sharing our Carmelite spirituality. Even though I was not interested in doing this at first, I came to know that this is what I was called to Carmel to do. I could wait no longer. I was starting to show some signs of aging. My mother died at 72 in 1986, and my father died in 1993 at 93.

At this time I was also elected superior of our monastery for three terms of three years each. The years have been quite full of surprises. There have been many interesting events now and again. I was vocation counselor for the friars for three years. Also, I was promotion director for our Spiritual Life magazine for three years. I did some work with poetry, songs, pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and a visit to Poland preaching for our foreign missions. During one sabbatical I helped with the archeology work rebuilding the stones of the oratory on Mt. Carmel near the Spring of Elijah. I attended Secular Order Congresses in Rome and Mexico. I have met many new people, made many friends, loving some more than others, became an international person: a Christian in the fuller sense of the word. I have been in about 20 countries and 48 States, but not South Dakota or Wyoming.

The most fulfilling task has been working on a new view of the human person (not following the one we inherited from the pagan philosophers, Plato and Aristotle). This Christian view is taken from the New Testament and our main Carmelite authors. The result is a new paradigm for the teaching of religion, and all the human sciences. It is not yet finished.

I was appointed to the OCDS Main Office until 2002 and then became Provincial Delegate for the Northeast. Please continue to pray for me, that I put holiness first in all situations. Thank you for adopting me. I will also pray that each one of you strives for holiness, as your first priority.

Sincerely yours in Carmel, Father Theodore Centala O.C.D.

Editor's Note: In recent years, Fr. Ted was in residence at Holy Hill WI, Hinton WV and Washington, DC. As his Alzheimer's continues to progress, we are reassured by our Lord's words, "unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). You may send cards to him at his current assignment:

Fr. Ted Centala OCD
Sacred Heart Home
5805 Queens Chapel Road
Hyattsville, MD 20782

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	120-P	Teresa of Avila, Mary, and the Reform of Carmel	Emmanuel Sullivan O.C.D.
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I Was Born For You

Fifth Centenary of the Birth of Saint Teresa of Jesus

Introduction to 2008 O.C.D. General Chapter Document

The title of this document comes from a poem that describes life as the gift of God's love and as an offering made to him. The life in question is that of St Teresa of Jesus, our Mother. What made her the person she became was the inherent dynamism of the truths of revelation, experienced in a personal way (cf. DV 8): the human being, created by God in God's own image, finds redemption in Jesus Christ; through him, every human being is called, and awaited; with him, we are led to our salvation; in his likeness, human life comes to fruition in obedience to the Father's plan. However, this spiritual experience of Teresa's was not only a happening affecting her; it is at the root of the calling of all of us: "the origin of our family in Carmel and the very nature of its vocation are closely bound up with the life and charism of St Teresa, especially with the mystical graces which led her to undertake the renewal of Carmel and make prayer and contemplation its total commitment [...], totally pledged to living the Gospel and keeping the 'primitive Rule'" (Const. 5).

We know that "our ideal finds a living expression in these two Saints [St Teresa and St John of the Cross] and is clearly portrayed in their writings. Their charism and the spiritual lifestyle they propose to us - even their intimacy with God and the experience of things divine - are not just purely personal gifts of their own, but part of the heritage and vocation of the Order" (Const. 13). In recent chapter documents the Order has emphasized the return to the sources, which is taking place in Christian faith and life today. In this 90th General Chapter we wish to return to the sources of our Teresian charism, proposing a step-by-step reading of St Teresa's works. Carried out at both a personal and a community level, this will help us to take hold afresh of who we are and what we are called to in today's Church.

The context for this reading of St Teresa is the lead up to the Fifth Centenary of her birth (2015). Direct contact with her writings, read in a meditative way, will enable us to share the human and spiritual adventure which she herself lived and which she holds out to us. We want to wake up again to her spirit, take hold of her wisdom, approaching her writings with a listening ear, as disciples and sons, so that our lives and our service of the Church and the world will be shaped afresh by her charism. We want to get in touch with her message as a source of hope in our human, Christian and Carmelite lives.

In issuing this invitation, we are conscious of the call to read the signs of the times, which are signs of God himself (cf. EN37). In today's world we see a renewed concern for spirituality and interest in the mystics, and this in turn calls for a profound, dynamic spirituality, rooted in the gospel, attentive to the mystical dimension, able to face into the insecurity and uncertainty characteristic of our times. "Is it not one of the 'signs of the times' that in today's world, despite widespread secularization, there is *a widespread demand for spirituality*, a demand which expresses itself in large part as *a renewed need for prayer*?" (NMI 33a). This 'widespread demand for spirituality' bears a clear relation to the great Christian mystical tradition and, specifically, to the witness of the Carmelite mystics: "How can we forget here, among the many shining examples, the teachings of Saint John of the Cross and, Saint Teresa of Avila?" (ib. 33b).

The present document, arising from the reflections of the Discalced Carmelites at the 90th General Chapter, is addressed principally to the friars. We also wish to extend its invitation to the Discalced Carmelite Sisters and to the members of the Discalced Carmelite Secular Order. Indeed, its scope includes the whole Teresian family, aiming at strengthening our fraternal unity and so expressing in a concrete way the richness of St Teresa's charism in the Church. We know that the family, which Teresa founded, is an open family: down through the centuries, new members, new associations and institutes have enriched it. We are also very conscious of the young people who are being called to Carmel, and who are a source of new life, just as children bring new life to a family. Furthermore, we wish to extend a special, fraternal invitation to our Discalced Carmelite Sisters to join us in this spiritual pilgrimage towards the Centenary celebration. United with them, and with the whole Carmelite family, our wish is to carry forward the torch of the Teresian charism, focusing first and foremost on the value of prayer in the heart of the Church and on the apostolic power inherent in a generous gift of ourselves. ☩

Complete text may be found at:

http://www.ocdswashprov.org/Teresa_500/I%20WAS%20BORN%20FOR%20YOU.pdf

Prayer To Saint Teresa Of Jesus

*Saint Teresa of Jesus, holy mother,
wholehearted servant of love,
teach us to walk with determined fidelity
along the path of interior prayer,
attentive to the presence of the Blessed Trinity;
the Lord, dwelling deep in us.*

*At the school of Mary our Mother,
strengthen within us these foundations:
a genuine humility,
a heart free from attachment,
and an unconditional love for others.*

*Share with us your intense apostolic love for the Church.
May Jesus be our joy,
our hope and energy,
an unquenchable fountain
and our most intimate Friend.*

*Bless our Carmelite family.
Teach us, make your prayer our own:
"I am yours; I was born for you.
What is your will for me?"*

Amen

Reading the *Life* of St. Teresa of Jesus

By Daniel Chowning, O.C.D.

Editor's Note: Sketches of Teresa's life from the Spanish Carmelite publication "teresa de jesus, no 71, septiembre-octobre 1994."

The *Life* of St. Teresa is a difficult book to read. Teresa's digressions, her sudden meanderings from one topic to another, her explanations of some of the mystical levels of prayer in her teaching on the "four ways to water a garden," and her visions of the Risen Lord Jesus present challenges to many readers. Just the psychological nature of the *Life* can be difficult to follow for some readers. Despite these challenges, in the words of St. Teresa, the *Life* is a "jewel," her "jewel" and "soul." It reveals its riches only little by little. For those of us who have the love, patience, and perseverance to prayerfully read it and try to relate our lives to what she shares about her journey, we have a doorway into the heart and charism of Teresa of Jesus.

History of the *Life*

Teresa wrote the book of her *Life* twice. She wrote the first redaction at the age of 47 in Toledo where her superiors had sent her to console the noble widow Doña Luisa de la Cerda. Around this time, Teresa began to experience deep fears instilled in her by the religious environment and confessors who believed the devil deceived people through spiritual experiences and in people, especially women, who practiced interior prayer. Fear of the devil was prevalent in her culture. Teresa had already begun to experience "the wonderful delight" of the prayer of quiet, and even of union. (*Life*.23.2) Yet fear gripped her. "I began to fear and wonder whether the devil, making me think the experience was good, wanted me to suspend the intellect so he could take me away from mental prayer." (L.23.2) Moreover, some confessors and spiritual people frightened her by telling her that she was being deceived by the devil because she lacked the virtues necessary for such spiritual graces. "As a result, I saw the devil everywhere. I was like a person in the middle of a river trying to get out; wherever she goes she fears greater peril there; and she is almost drowning." (L.23.12) Teresa, a woman who always sought the truth, began to confess to a certain Father of the Company of Jesus. She gave a frank account of her whole life in a general confession. She hoped that by the power of the sacrament of confession the confessor would enlighten her "since the Fathers of the Company (Jesuits) were experienced in spiritual matters." (L.23.14) As preparation for her



Teresa, on the death of her mother, comes before the statue of the Virgin to ask her to take her place

confession, Teresa put down in writing all the good and bad things committed in her life - “as clear an account of my life as I knew how to give, without leaving anything out.” (L.23.15) Most likely, this is the first draft of her *Life*. She finished it in the spring of 1562. She submitted it to the Dominican friar, Garcia de Toledo, to whom she was confessing during her stay in Toledo. Although this first copy has been lost, the content of it remains in the second redaction that has come down to us today.

In 1565, at the age of 50, Teresa took up her pen a second time and wrote her interior journey. This time, however, she wrote it from her cell in her newly founded convent of St. Joseph’s in Avila. Two groups of people required her to set down an account of her interior life. First of all, her confessors wanted a deeper understanding of her spiritual experiences in order to judge their authenticity and to direct her more effectively. “Since my confessors commanded me and gave me plenty of leeway to write about the favors and the kind of prayer the Lord has granted me, I wish they would also have allowed me to tell very clearly and minutely about my great sins and wretched life. This would be a consolation. But they didn’t want me to. In fact, I was very much restricted in those matters.” (L. Prologue. 1) One confessor in particular, the Dominican friar, P. Garcia de Toledo, who became Teresa’s confessor, intimate friend, and supporter wanted a deeper insight into her inner world because her mystical experiences had awakened in him a wave of longings and hopes.

The second group of people requiring her to write an account of her spiritual experiences came from the Inquisition, in particular the Inquisitor Soto. Soto wanted the Master Juan of Avila to scrutinize the text.

Teresa wrote all during the year of 1565. Upon completion, she gave it to two Dominican friars, Garcia de Toledo and Domingo Báñez. At first, Báñez judged it unfit for publication and threatened to burn it! (Later on, Báñez deeply appreciated the text, held his own copy and distributed copies privately to a select group.) In 1568, Teresa gave it to her friend Doña Luisa de la Cerda who took it to John of Avila who read it and returned it to Avila. A few years later, in February of 1575, the Inquisition asked for it and submitted it to the tribunal of Valladolid where it was then put into the hands of the supreme tribunal of Madrid. In May of 1575, upon request of the Inquisitors, P. Báñez, examined it in Valladolid and voted in its favor. He signed his approval of the text on July 7, 1575. Despite the Inquisition’s approval, Teresa’s “jewel”, a mirror of her “soul,” remained in the hands of the Inquisition until her death in 1582. Ana of Jesus recovered it in 1586 and put it into the care of friar Luis de Leon who edited it two years later.



Teresa plays chess with her father

Teresa as a Writer

What was Teresa’s attitude toward writing her *Life*? In the *Prologue*, Teresa tells us, “the Lord had wanted this of her for a long time.” (L.P.2). Nevertheless, she often complains throughout the book that she is “without learning or a good life, without instruction from a learned man or from any other person, and almost stealing time because it prevents her from spinning and this is a poor house with many things to be done.” (L.10.8), that she has a “a bad memory” (L.11.6), and has “little time at her disposal, without time and calm to write.” (L.14.8) She also recognizes the societal and ecclesiastical prejudices and sexism about being a woman who writes on spiritual matters. “As for everything else, just being a woman is enough to have my wings fall off-how much more being both a woman and wretched as well.” (L.10.8)

Despite Teresa’s complaints and misgivings, she feels that she has something to say. She writes from her experience. “I can speak of what I have experience

of.” (L.8.5) She is convinced that her experience can help us in our spiritual journey. God gave her the grace to communicate the graces His Majesty bestowed on her. For instance, when she was at a loss on how to communicate the prayer of union, the Lord granted her the prayer of union after receiving Communion. “He put before me these comparisons, taught me the manner of explaining it, and what the soul must do there.” (L.16.2)

Teresa believed that her experience of the Lord’s enduring love and friendship would be a source of inspiration, love and freedom to all who read her work.

Structure of the *Life*

A careful reading of the book reveals an internal structure that Teresa followed. We can divide the 40 chapters into four parts to prove the general thesis: Prayer transforms our lives and serves the Church.

1. Chapters 1-10. In these chapters, which are foundational to the entire book and understanding of Teresa’s experience of and doctrine on prayer, we read about the conflict that she suffered for almost twenty years between “friendship with God and friendship with the world.” (L.8.3) For almost twenty years she voyaged on a tempestuous sea with failings and risings, and “a life beneath perfection.” (L.8.2) Teresa was not always faithful to God’s call to deeper intimacy, to the truth of her being. She writes: “I was living an extremely burdensome life, because in prayer I understood more clearly my faults. On the one hand God was calling me; on the other hand I was following the world. All the things of God made me happy; those of the world held me bound.” (L.7.17)

The “world” of which Teresa writes is not the physical or material world, but Teresa’s “inner world” of disordered affectivity that poured itself out in dependent relationships at the expense of her own inner truth. It is the world of “mediocrity” in her search for God, her tendency to follow “the way of the many” (the collective expectations of her convent); it is the world of her attachments to people and things outside herself, trying vainly to find in them ultimate satisfaction of heart. All the while God was calling her into an intimate relationship of love with God.

Finally, in chapter 9, we read of Teresa’s conversion before an image of the wounded Christ, an “Ecce Homo,” during Lent of 1554. Her surrender before Christ began a conversion process.

2. Chapters 11-22. In these chapters we have Teresa’s treatise on prayer and the key to the entire book: prayer, as understood as an intimate sharing between friends, transforms our lives! It is as though Teresa tells us, “For years I was unfaithful, a sinful woman, but something changed me. Prayer as “taking time frequently to be alone with the one whom we know loves us” transformed my life. (L.8.5) Teresa gave space for Jesus to love her into a new person. Just as in human relationships, there are degrees of intimacy, so it is with God. The image of four ways of watering a garden symbolizes that our relationship with God is dynamic and our intimacy with God deepens.

3. Chapters 23-31. Within these chapters we read of the harmony that developed between God and Teresa. A new life began with Teresa through intimacy with Jesus found in prayer. In Chapter 23 when she returns to the account of her life, after having digressed to discuss the degrees



Teresa discusses her vocation



Peter de Cepedo's encouragement to read "The Third Spiritual Alphabet" by Francisco de Osuna deeply impacted Teresa's view of the Interior Life


of prayer, she writes: "I now want to return to where I left off about my life, for I think I delayed more than I should have so that what follows would be better understood. This is another new book from here on – I mean another new life. The life I dealt with up to this point was mine; the one I lived from the point where I began to explain these things about prayer is the one God lived in me." (L.23.1) Thus begins Teresa's mystical life: the life that God lived in her.

4. In chapters 32-36 Teresa gives us the history of her foundations. Teresa provides an account of the intensification of her intimacy with Christ in chapters 37-40. She shares with us about the foundation of St. Joseph's and enlarges on it by stressing that this was God's work. God is the author of this new religious community. She was only the instrument. God is powerfully at work in community and in the Church. Also in chapters 37-40, Teresa narrates new graces she received "so that some soul may benefit by seeing that the Lord has desired to favor a thing so miserable," as Teresa herself. (L.37.1)

Less than a month before Teresa died, she wrote a letter to a priest who had read the story of her life. She gave him the title she wanted for her book: "I entitled this book, "About the mercies of God." Teresa's life is about the great mercies of God in her life and about her way of prayer. "May God be blessed forever, He who waited for me so long." (Prologue.) The *Life* is about mercy meeting misery, about the experience of God's liberating love in the heart of Teresa who struggled to remain open to God's advances and finally surrendered

completely to her Lord. It is about the transforming love of God infused in contemplative prayer and its fruitfulness for the Church and community.

Prayer in the *Life* is defined as "taking time frequently to be alone with One whom we know loves us." (8.5) Prayer is coming to know God's love for us, allowing God to love us, and loving Him in return. It is opening ourselves to God's love which always takes the initiative, goes before us, and satisfies the deepest hungers of our hearts. Prayer is also facing the truth of who we are: our dignity and worth as a dwelling place of God, but also our brokenness and sinfulness, creatures who are dependent on the merciful love of God. The deeper we enter into friendship with God through prayer, the more passive we become, allowing God's life to fill us and transform us. In chapter 11, Teresa tells us that to pray is be "a servant of love." This says it all. Teresa wants to teach us to be "servants of love," growing in the love of Jesus our Friend and loving one another as Jesus loves us. She invites us to be open to God's powerful transforming friendship in order to experience ourselves LIFE TO THE FULL.

I will conclude with what I always feel is the Good News according to Teresa of Jesus. "O my Lord, how You are the true friend; and how powerful! When You desire You can love, and You never stop loving those who love You! All things praise You, Lord of the world! Oh, who will cry out for You, to tell everyone how faithful You are to Your friends! All things fail; You, Lord of all, never fail! All fails me, my Lord but if You do not abandon me, I will not fail You. Let all learned men rise up against me, let all created things persecute me, let the devils torment me; do not You fail me, Lord, for already I have experience of the gain that comes from the way You rescue the one who trusts in You alone." (L.25.17) 

Elizabeth Of The Trinity

In Search Of the Absolute

Elda Maria Estrada, OCDS

Editor's note: This is the final part of a retreat originally recorded and distributed as an audiotape album by ICS Publications. We hope you enjoyed it printed in its conversational style as a 5-part series.

Part V: Elizabeth's Spirituality of Interiorization

Interiorization is the characteristic reality of the life and spirituality of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity. It is her personal charism that defines her and differentiates her from other persons.

Her spirituality of interiorization has a human foundation that demands a theological response from us. To be interior does not mean just to go toward the most profound center, but it means in truth allowing God to be God in us, which means we allow ourselves to be penetrated, invaded, and possessed by this reality. This then empowers us to go out in the name of Jesus and practice the loving mercy that we receive from the Trinity.

Elizabeth had a permanent tendency to live her life in her most intimate center, regardless of what was going on outside of her. For us as secular Carmelites, this is of supreme importance, whether we are at work, whether we are shopping, whether we are watching a movie, taking care of our children or grandchildren, or doing any ministry in our parishes. Whatever the case may be, we must do it for Him, with Him, and particularly and especially in Him. All contemplative souls that really know God by experience have to live in this specific dimension if we are going to be true to our vocations.

It is also a theological demand that flows logically from her experience of the loving knowledge of God that she received living in the very heart, the very bosom, the very essence of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. For Elizabeth to live spiritually really meant to live with, communicate with, commune with, and to live abundantly with God. It was not the transcendence of God that captured her heart, but the imminence of God, the nearness of God, the intimacy that she, a creature had with the Creator. That loving, continuous, never-ending, perennial presence of God that permeated her whole being, transforming her, calling her constantly to a deeper union, a complete surrender of self coming from her most profound center, in the innermost mansion where the Lord, the King of the Castle dwells.

Like Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross, Elizabeth gave us a program for the spirituality of interiorization that a Carmelite person and a committed Christian must follow in order to reach an encounter with the Living God in the depths of our very being, within our bodies, our souls, and our spirits. We have to pray to discover the mystery of the presence of God within. This is the mystical life. We already have it. It was given to us at baptism. It is already ours, a free gift from the merciful heart of the Father,



Elizabeth's view of the quadrangle from her cell

through the sacred heart of Jesus and through the immaculate heart of Mary in the power of the Holy Spirit. But we have to activate that gift. We have to personalize it. We have to claim it. We have to bring it to fruition through fidelity first and foremost, to a very dedicated, constant, loving prayerful encounter.

The whole life of the Carmelite or for any devoted Christian has to be a life of prayer. We need those special, strong times to be alone with God alone, so that this reality can mature in us, so that we become united with Him, so that we become the spouse of Christ, so that we become friends. This is our calling, that we become holy. We have many good Carmelites, including friars, nuns, and seculars, but we desperately need holy, saintly Carmelites, who will live the ordinary things of life, in an extraordinary way. Every day we have to prepare the space, that inner receptivity; empty the vessel, in order to be replenished, invaded, and possessed.

That divine presence is always and forever active and operative within us, calling us to a deeper knowledge, to a deeper intimacy with God. Once we are replenished, He says go and share with others. Tell them who I am. Tell them how much I love them. Tell them how much I want to purify them like fire-tried gold so they can become holy, truly the image of Jesus the Lord.



The spirituality of interiorization of Elizabeth, like the spirituality of Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross is one of going within, indwelling. He dwells inside, calling us to a total freedom from all attachments, all bondage, and all distractions, so that we can be free; free like the eagles to fly to the heights. It is a spirituality of searching and knowing that we would never begin searching if we did not already possess what we are looking for. It sounds like a paradox. But we would not search for God if we did not already possess Him in some degree. What I am telling you in the name of the Lord, my dear brothers and sisters, is that it is not OK to be content with living a very good life. No. You have God inside. You have a vocation to be Carmelites, which means a vocation to be holy and become saints, to be true contemplatives who have experienced, and tasted experientially who God is. You know His love. So we must search more deeply in faith, hope and love to complete a tremendous exodus. The more theological we are, the more knowledge we have in our intellect, the more difficult it becomes. The great exodus for all of us is to move from the intellect to the heart and from thoughts and images to the silence of a purified heart and an open spirit always eager to receive.

If we understand properly what I have shared with you during this 5-part series, our lives cannot continue to be the same. In the words of St. Paul, we have to experience urgency. He says that charity urges us. We have to allow the prompting of the Holy Spirit within us to lead us to this union. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that God gave us this great gift of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, so that we can joyfully experience His presence, His love and His action within us, as much as is humanly possible.

The other reason God gave us this most exalted of all gifts, the tremendous gift of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, is that God becomes in truth, our Father, through fusion of the gift of piety, and above all, our friend through an intimate knowledge, intimate sharing, and intimate love, whereby we become one with Him.

St. Teresa said to her nuns, "My daughters, I want you to know that for this reason and this reason only, God gave us the highest gift of spiritual marriage so that from it may come works, works." She repeated "works" because what the Lord desires is works. The spirituality of interiorization is an interior movement that supersedes the psychic order. It is a spiritual movement because it establishes us in a theological order that says yes, I'm not alone. Yes, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dwell in the deepest recesses of my being and lead me to a radical experience of the God who lives and loves within.

Elizabeth's spirituality of interiority is a spirituality of plentitude. That's what her name means. Remember, not only does "Elizabeth" mean the house of God, but also it is the fulfillment of God. It's the plentitude of God. God gives himself totally for us and we have the awful capacity of limiting His life, His love, and His action in us. Surrender. Surrender. Become like Mary. Open up and make room to receive the gift of God.

The spirituality of the interiority of Elizabeth has concrete dimensions that are very well defined. The first one is interior silence. If there is equilibrium and balance within, it is conducive to the unity of the spiritual self and leads to recollection and solitude, in the sense of the transcendence of the spirit.

The second great element of this spirituality of interiorization, naturally, has to be prayer.

When talking about solitude and silence of recollection, Elizabeth most imitates John of the Cross, but her life of prayer is fundamentally Teresian. She follows the style of our Holy Mother.

I want to say a word about inner silence. Inner silence is the vital atmosphere that is absolutely needed for the development of the spirituality of intercession. The silence, understood as the medium, as the means, as the environment, that is needed for lovers to encounter and exchange their love.

This silence is founded in two personal realities of the life of Elizabeth. First, the experience of the living God present within her; second, her mission, of being a praise of glory in the Trinity. The perception of God present and operative in her spirit commits and convicts her whole complete, entire being: body, soul, and spirit. It asks of her a total unconditional gift of self, because the Absolute asks to be looked for, searched for, and loved absolutely in the same manner and degree that He gives Himself to us.

Elizabeth's mission as a praise of glory obliged her to be an echo of the silence that exists in God. Interior silence and the Trinitarian spirituality of Elizabeth are in a positive sense, the stage of the person given exclusively to the love and service of God. This silence is obtained through self-control. We have to make conscious efforts to be silent. It was also for her sublimation, and her spiritual orientation, which brought about liberation of the spirit. She had to part from any material reality that distracted her. She lived in a monastery with monastic discipline, but for us it's more difficult, but it can be done. It is a science and it is an art, both things. I've been telling you the science of interiorization and going to the center throughout these articles. But you and only you can cultivate the art. You know what works for you best. You must learn what's most helpful for you to live constantly in the presence of the living God.

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Our fullness of life in this world and in the one to come depends entirely on this principle: the practice of the presence of God. That interior silence present in the life and the spirituality of Elizabeth has two different aspects, which I mentioned earlier. First, it is active, which means there was a conquest that she had to make, like we do, through effort, blood, sweat and tears. The second element is passive. Once we are receptive, God comes in. This second element is purely a *gratias*, a gift of God.

Active silence was the purifying process that Elizabeth realized in her person as the necessary condition to become a praise of glory. Notice in our lives how many useless, silly things we say: the gossiping and idle talk, the excessive watching of television and the practice of seeing and considering so many things that are not of the essence. We have to apply in our spiritual life from now on what St. Ignatius of Loyola called the *tantum, quantum rule*. What does this mean? Ignatius said, "In as much as this person, this activity, this endeavor, this ministry, this work; in as much as it helps me to obtain the goal of my existence, which is union with God, I do it. In as much as it doesn't help me to achieve my goal, I don't do it. Elizabeth practiced this rule. She probably never knew that it was St. Ignatius, but she lived it in her own life ruthlessly because she was consumed by the passion of only God.

Teresa of Jesus offered her the aesthetical program to clear her inner castle in the *Way of Perfection* 28:12:



12. So that the soul won't be disturbed in the beginning by seeing that it is too small to have something so great within itself, the Lord doesn't give it this knowledge until He enlarges it little by little and it has the capacity to receive what He will place within it. For this reason I say He is free to do what He wants since He has the power to make this palace a larger one. The whole point is that we should give ourselves to Him with complete determination, and we should empty the soul in such a way that He can store things there or take them away as though it were His own property. And since His Majesty has the rights of ownership, let us not oppose Him. [Even here below guests in the house are a bother when we cannot tell them to leave.] And since He doesn't force our will, He takes what we give Him; but doesn't give Himself completely unless we give ourselves completely.

This fact is certain; and because it is so important, I bring it to your minds so often. He never works in the soul as He does when it is totally His without any obstacle, nor do I see how He could. He is the friend of all good order. Now, then, if we fill the palace with lowly people and trifles, how will there be room for the Lord with His court? He does enough by remaining just a little while in the midst of so much confusion.

The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila
Volume Two, Translated by
Kieran Kavanaugh O.C.D. and Otilio Rodriguez O.C.D.
Pages 144-145

John of the Cross also gave to Elizabeth the spiritual dynamism of the *nadas*, of nothing, nothing, nothing; founded on the purifying force that faith leads a person to-

ward evangelical radicalism of a total gift of self. A Carmelite is a person that lives and breathes gospel values. And if we don't, two things: 1) We are not Carmelites; 2) we are not even Christians.

Elizabeth said, "Carmel is like heaven. We have to abandon everything in order to possess the One who is all." We don't like to think about it, but these spiritual purifications were indispensable in the process of becoming, for Elizabeth. The purification of her human sensitivity and the purification of her senses were her starting point. The Fathers of the Church taught that the very first thing we need to practice in order to achieve this interior silence and attachment and purification is something this generation doesn't know, doesn't want to know, or ignores completely. That is a simple practice called the custody of the senses. Today we want to see everything and hear everything. We are so "programmed" to have noise, to have entertainment. No wonder we are so dichotomized psychically and have psychological troubles. Because of that we are depleted of our inner energies or the custody of our senses. Remember to apply this rule and remember how important it is to live the practice of God in our everyday life.

So, we have to become purified. We have to become empty. Whether we like it or not, we have to go through the desert. We have to be stripped of anything and of everything that is not God in our lives. Remember what Ezekiel 36:24-28 says, "In His immense mercy, I will lead you. I will bring you to your own land. I will cleanse you from all your impurities, from all your idols, I will purify you." So this means that I have to be in such union, such a fusion with the Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother, who perennially directly and without deviation takes us to her Son, to that Jesus who takes us to the Father, and this Father who in unity of love wraps us up in His Holy Spirit.

He is doing it right now in your lives, guaranteed. You might be more or less aware, but I know, in the name of the Lord Jesus, that He is very active in you. However, He wants more, much more because He can never be content. This empty vessel has a particular quality that no other vessel has. The more it receives, the larger it becomes. As we become larger, only God can satiate the deepest existential hungers of our hearts. Only the Lord can quench all of the existential thirst that consumes us. Please, let's not waste more precious time going all over the place drinking from those broken cisterns that cannot supply what we need most. I hope and I pray, that you and others who will read these articles, will be determined with a very determined determination, not to stop this process of interiorization, this process of becoming, this process of deification, of searching for union with God, which is the goal of our existence. Even if the whole world collapses, we will not stop because our eyes, as the Psalmist says, will be fixed upon the Lord who is always calling us and leading us and helping to bring us to a deeper relationship with Him.

In this last period of the life of Elizabeth, in the synthesis of her life, when she becomes more and more a praise of glory, her aesthetical spirituality is eminently Christocentric, centered on Christ. It is also profoundly, Marian, as you cannot do it without her, and essentially Trinitarian. Here again, she lives the doctrine of St. John of the Cross in faith, dark faith. Faith is the initial step, followed by hope, strengthened by charity and



love. That is why faith is the key virtue of Elizabeth's spiritual life. She said on October 10, 1906, "The Carmelite is a soul of faith" meaning it's a person of faith, dark, naked faith.

Because she was wrapped in faith, she saw the hand of God in every circumstance of her existence. And she said that every event of life, of course with exception of sin, is a sacrament that reveals the Triune God to us. Elizabeth saw that we must become like a child, *très petite*. She saw everything in her life in and through God, and saw God in everything. Her special formula, which explained it all, was "my faith in love."

It reminds me of one of my favorite Psalms: 144:2, "He is my love, my fortress, my stronghold, my shield, my place of refuge, the One in whom I trust." It is in the hour of suffering that her supernatural, heroic faith is most evident. Elizabeth is a praise of glory, and the glory of God consumes its victims. Her desire to become identified with Christ, the crucified One had become for her a surrogate humanity. This is why she took upon herself, given by God, of course, the role of adorer, atoner, and savior, uniting her sufferings with the sufferings of Christ. She knew her death was not going to be a sweet ecstasy, but would be the abandonment that Jesus Christ experienced on Calvary. She said, "I am going to die in pure faith."

Elizabeth pronounced at the top experience of her life, the culmination of her mystical itinerary, a revealing word, which expresses the depths of her process of purification. She said, "nescivi," which translated means "I did not know anything else." This is the doctrine of "not knowing" from John of the Cross, nada, nothing, nothing, nothing, lived in all of its consequences.

Most of the time we do not know whether we are coming or going. However, there is one thing we do know, and that is what Our Lord says 366 times in the Bible, "Do not fear." He has given us this message for every day of the year, plus one. Fear not. Not because He wants us to be superman or superwoman. No, the opposite; we are weak and wounded and broken. But don't be afraid because He says, "I am with you. I take you by the hand. I do the journey with you." It was the complete opening of her intellect to the supernatural world in order to be illumined by the Word of God. The silence of the will led Elizabeth to become detached of all her natural inclinations in order to act always in conformity with the Divine Will. This is something we must strive for and ask the Lord what he wants us to do. This discernment should not only be for the great decisions in our life, should I marry, etc., should I enter the Order, should I make vows, should I separate from my spouse? No. This has to be a reality for a Christian who lives the gospel values daily, it should be a constant exercise throughout our days asking, "Lord, what would you like me to do?"

There are some things that do not involve a profound discernment process. If you're hungry, it's obvious that you go and eat moderately. However, it is that attitude of a listening heart that is always in unison with the Beloved, and so is asking. We have to forget about the "I" and the "you". It has to become a "we." We have to develop a psychology of a married person with the Lord. Good marriages don't make unilateral decisions. They consult about everything. At least they should. They have to if they want to be one mind, one heart, and one spirit. The same thing is true with the Lord. Invite Him into every activity of your life. Jesus, let's go shopping, and please get good bargains for me. I tell Him that rather often. Jesus, let's go to the movies. Jesus, let's go to this wedding and



let's enjoy ourselves. If you're dancing, dance the best because in enjoying yourself with Him, in His name and for His glory, you are becoming holy and having a wonderful time. Do you realize that? When you are loving your spouse with passion, with eroticism, what you are doing is sharing God's own divine life that instituted that sacrament of marriage so that you will enjoy yourself to the utmost as humanly possible and that you will become open to the gift of life and love in a child, and become holy doing it.

Many of us Catholics have some very strange ideas sometimes. We think we have to have sour faces. That's the most anti-Carmelite thing I could ever think of. Look at St. Teresa of Jesus. She was joyful, absolutely filled with the spirit of joy. She used to say from *santa trista* to *trista santo*. A sad saint is really a sorry sight. That's one of the assurances of the presence and the action of the Holy Spirit in people's life, joy. I don't mean ha ha ha. I don't mean these artificial smiles that are so fake. I mean joy, peace, and equilibrium. Of course, we have every reason to be so because the Kingdom is within.

I want to say a word about the unity of the spiritual self. The aestheticism of the interior silence creates the unification of our spiritual and of course our psychological self. As I mentioned before, Elizabeth's spiritual life is dominated by two key ideas: the mystery of Divine Presence within her and the aesthetical doctrine of Carmelite spirituality. We have to practice self-control, we have to be disciplined, we have to do penance and we have to check all our passions and tendencies, in order to arrive at the goal of our life, which is union with God.

Elizabeth lived that immutability of God. She was anchored in Him. I thankfully speak from experience, we have a natural tendency, a product of original sin and also compounded by our personal sin, of going in and out of the fire. Today, yes. Tomorrow, no; or maybe I'll just wait until next year, I'm really not that bad. It's a pitiful condition. Elizabeth was in it for the whole nine yards. Interior silence is the unity of the Spirits. What she tried to do constantly, especially when she had a little time going from one place to another, or between one duty and another, was to go inside to her most profound center. She descended to the inner, unfathomable abyss in which God dwells. There she became replenished, nourished, strengthened and revitalized. We need to do that many times during the day, many times. Otherwise, the crazy lives that most of us live will literally eat us up. Because, we need to BE, even if it's for a few seconds, it doesn't matter. God is faithful, even if it's an instant. The more we do it, the better we do it. Good practice brings mastery. Even if it's just for seconds, go in. By putting ourselves in the presence of God, we become recharged. All the gifts and powers and fruits and charisms of the Holy Spirit become reactivated in us when we, as Elizabeth said, "are alone with God alone."

I want to read some words that she said. "If you would only know what God demands of me in spite of the fact that He hides Himself so much from me." You know that whole experience when the Lord sometimes likes to hide Himself. He's nowhere in sight. The more you look for Him, the more He hides. This is a game of lovers. You know that also by experience. "In spite of that, He doesn't allow me even a look outside of Himself." He's a very jealous lover. He's very, very possessive. Inner solitude, of course, is not an individualistic trip. On



the contrary it's being alone with Him so we can find the Trinitarian plentitude, become converted, transformed, sanctified and go out to others, helping them in this process of becoming.

I want to say a very short word on the life of prayer of Elizabeth. Prayer is the integrative element of Elizabeth of the Trinity's spirituality. She lived her prayer life, as I mentioned before, in the style, in the spirituality of her mother, Teresa of Jesus. So, what did she do? She exercised a process of interiorization by entering her interior castle, by entering within herself where God dwells. The second reality is a story of friendship. What she did inside was *tatalia mystad* an intimate sharing inside the very nucleus, the very core of the Trinitarian intra-relationship. She said that prayer was a cordial dialogue with her Three. In other words, prayer is life in the intimacy of the presence of God. So, besides the spirituality of presence, what Elizabeth of the Trinity lived to the fullest has very strong Teresian connotations. That is a spirituality of spousal love, of being the spouse of Christ, in and through the power of the Holy Spirit. The spouse of Christ, that's what every Carmelite is called to become: friar, nun, or secular. Only with that profound transforming union with Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives, will we be able to arrive at that transforming union that really gives the essence, the weight, and the quality, to our spiritual lives. It is possible. You know, it is possible.

I'm asking, with these, my final words, that we take this very seriously. That this be is our *raison d'être*, the reason for our lives, by which God calls us to Carmel. This is the call for every baptized Christian, that we really and truly allow God to be God in our lives, that we remember in very simple terms that the only ministry in the spiritual life, as we minister to others, is to know and love Jesus and to make Him known and loved. Please, in the spirit of Elizabeth, become present to presence. Amen. 🌹

Retreat News from the Northeast Region

July 23-25, 2010 District I: "The Journey of the Soul into the Depths of God." given by Fr. George Mangiaracina, O.C.D., at San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Branch, NJ Cost: \$190. Please make checks payable to: OCDS District 1. Mail to: Martha Stefanchik, OCDS (Treasurer) 151 Hamilton Avenue, Princeton, NJ 08540. For questions, and registration, please call her at (Home) 609-924-8231 or on her (Cell) 609-558-5104, or e-mail: toglorify@aol.com

September 24-26, 2010 District VI: Fr Thomas Ochieng' Otang'a will give an OCDS weekend retreat at the Franciscan Guest House, St. Anthony's Monastery in Kennebunk, ME. Deposit: \$50 (non-refundable) due on or before May 1, 2010. Total costs: \$185 for double...\$145 for single. Final payment due July 1, 2010. If there is room, other members may apply. Contact: Sharon Beaver, 3 Wanda Lane, Nashua, NH 03062, sharon@secularcarmelite.com

October 8-10, 2010 District III: "Good Friends of Jesus" by Fr. David Centner, OCD weekend retreat at Christ the King Retreat House, in Syracuse, NY. Cost \$165. Contact Joyce Ponsarella: cell phone 518-248-4291; email: SrMarySunshine@aol.com.



Nairobi News

Self-reliance of the OCDS is not simply a question of pulling our own weight. It also means that we have the ability to respond in a proactive way to the needs of the Church. Since 1995, in the Washington Province, one way we have been called to support the needs of the Church is to support the Kenya Mission. To date, eight priests and two deacons have been ordained, with several more to be ordained soon. The Church in its evangelizing mission plays a critical role in the development of the Kenyan people. The Washington Province trains Africans to become Carmelites so they can become instruments of God's Love and care for the sick, the hungry, the poor, and the powerless.

"I take great joy in telling you that most of the OCDS communities have made this cause their own. They have sacrificed their material resources and offered their prayers to encourage the work of Carmelites in Kenya. These are the practical ways in which Jesus continues to feed so many with so little, and He continues to do this through us, His disciples... When we work together, Jesus will multiply the bread in our hands and bless our work.

One of the OCDS communities, St. Joseph and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, in Harrisburg PA collected a little money at each meeting and sent it in specifically for my tuition. I was asked by Fr. Provincial to send them a note of gratitude, which I did. And over time, they did not only send the little donations they had, sacrificing their money, but also took their time to pray for me. They took time to sign birthday cards each year and notes to find out how I was doing. And in those difficult times I could look around and see real brothers and sisters in Carmel who were supporting me on my journey; they were very encouraging, especially, when I needed it most. I deeply acknowledge their contribution to my formation in Carmel and hope that all of you can find some way by which you can contribute to the ongoing efforts of the Washington Province."

Remarks by Fr. Thomas O'tanga at the 2009 OCDS Congress

"We have corresponded with Fr. Thomas for almost 15 years, since we started supporting him in Kenya, never really imagining that we might ever meet in this world. It has been a blessing to our community to watch him grow through formation, hear about his struggles and aspirations, marking the milestones of his profession as a Carmelite and his ordination to the priesthood. He has been our brother all these years, and we have been able to share our community's struggles and growth with him, and receive his advice, his words of wisdom, and his friendship. To be able to now meet him in person, have him visit our community and share in our meetings, have him celebrate Mass for us, and to hear his preaching, has made us proud and grateful – proud to see his great spiritual growth in Carmel, and grateful that he wants to come and share that with us and instruct us. He has many sisters and mothers and brothers among us! Knowing him as we do has also linked us to the larger global Carmelite family – particularly the Friars and the Kenya Mission."

Remarks of the Harrisonburg PA, St. Joseph and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, OCDS Community



Coming soon...

How you can adopt a brother in Kenya...

CHANGES to the Washington Province OCDS STATUTES:

Effective immediately upon publication in the *Clarion*

It is the responsibility of each council to integrate his information with content of 12/19/2009 OCDS Legislation Booklet

ADDITIONS:

Community Life Section, page 31

5. While the size and unique circumstances of various communities point to a local approach to the specifics of attendance policies, some general principles should be kept in mind:
 - a) The need of each member to receive complete formation
 - b) Recognition that members have legitimate obligations and God-given responsibilities that may at times conflict with responsibilities to the OCDS community. Such conflicts should be the exception in an OCDS vocation.
6. Definitively Promised members who become homebound continue to be full extended members of the local community. The community will show fraternal charity to these valued members and make every effort to maintain communications with them.
7. Local Councils may grant Leaves of Absence to any Promised member who is unable to attend meetings due to a temporary change in life circumstances. Any Leave of Absence:
 - a) Will be granted for 1 year.
 - b) May be extended, at the discretion of Council, for 6-month increments.
 - c) Council members who are granted a leave of absence must resign from the Council. (Const. # 47d)After consulting with the Council, members on Leave of Absence may return prior to the expiration date of the leave.
8. Members who stop attending meetings without communicating with the local council will be dropped from the community roster and will be considered inactive members if they do not respond to correspondence from local councils.
9. A member who has been dropped from the roster must contact the Council if they are interested in returning to active status. The Council will then inform the Main Office of the member's return.

REVISIONS:

The OCDS Provincial Council Section, page 48, # 2

ORIGINAL:

The OCDS Provincial Council shall consist of at least seven definitively professed members of the Washington Province,

TO READ:

The OCDS Provincial Council shall consist of at least five definitively promised members of the Washington Province,

The OCDS Provincial Council Section, page 48, #4

ORIGINAL:

4. A quorum for a valid vote consists of one less than the current active membership of the Council, one of whom must be the President or the presider. This number shall never be less than four. If a deciding second ballot is needed in order to break a tie vote the President will cast the deciding additional ballot.

TO READ:

4. A quorum for a valid vote consists of one less than the current active membership of the Council, one of whom must be the President or the presider. In the absence of the President the senior promised of the members present will be the presider. This number shall never be less than four. If a deciding second ballot is needed in order to break a tie vote the President will cast the deciding additional ballot.



Reminders

The Mission Of Preparing New Priests In Kenya

All who are involved in this challenge need much prayer, encouragement and financial support. It is always easier to support a cause when the fires from within are ignited. So, above and beyond God's Grace, how long does it take to make a Carmelite priest?

- † Candidates must graduate from high school with eligibility for university education.
- † Postulants live in a house together for 6 months to a year. They are exposed to the Carmelite way of life and assist in the general tasks required to support 30 men.
- † The Philosophy Program lasts 3 years, and candidates attend Consolata Institute of Philosophy during this time. Upon completion, if discerned to have a vocation, students are eligible to make temporary vows.
- † The Novitiate Program, which lasts 1 year and is focused on learning how to practice the life and spirituality of the Order in conjunction with major teachings of the Church, is spent in Malawi, another country in southern Africa.
- † The Theology Program lasts 4 years and our brothers attend Tongaza College, which is a constituent college of Catholic University of Eastern Africa, and is affiliated with Urbian University in Rome. Upon completion, they have both a certificate of Religious Studies and a BA in Sacred Theology.
- † A Pastoral Year then follows with experience in Tindinyo or Kisii, where our nuns have convents, or Upper Kabete, which is a suburb of Nairobi. Solemn vows are made at the conclusion of this time.
- † After making solemn vows and being ordained to the diaconate, our brothers spend six months to a year before being ordained as a priest.

Would you like to see our mission in Kenya and meet some of our "vocations in process?"

Check out the video on <http://ocdswashprov.org/kenyamission.html>