

*The Rule of Carmel:
A Rich Treasure of Our Spiritual Tradition*



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Cover Photograph: Pietro Lorenzetti, St. Albert giving the Rule to the Hermits on Mount Carmel. The work was commissioned by the Carmelites of Siena between 1327 and 1328. The painting represents different episodes of the Carmelite tradition.
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Sienna.

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From the Provincial Delegate

THE CONSTITUTIONS of the Discalced Carmelite Secular Order

In the last issue we focused on the Rule of Saint Albert, the primary inspiration for all Carmelites. In this column I would like to draw your attention to your Constitutions. This important document describes your identity and mission, and it contains the essential elements and values for your life.

The preface reminds you of the universal call to holiness and the fact that, by virtue of your baptism and profession, you share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ. Seculars, along with the friars and nuns, are sons and daughters of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus. As such you share in the same charism according to your state in life. The Virgin Mary is a model of faithfulness in listening to the Lord and in service. Elijah, the prophet, represents the prophetic tradition and inspires us to live in the presence of God.

The Rule of St Albert, as previously stated, is the original expression of the spirituality of Carmel. It challenges us to live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ, meditating on the Law of the Lord. The origin of the Discalced Carmel is found in St. Teresa of Jesus with the collaboration of St. John of the Cross. She is our Mother and Foundress. Her charism is ours. He is our Holy Father.

Christ is the center of our lives. The following of Christ is lived out by the profession of the promises

of chastity, poverty and obedience. The promises are a strengthening of your baptismal commitment. The Beatitudes are for you a plan of action. You seek to internalize and live out the dispositions contained therein.

You are to be witnesses of the experience of God. This is why your commitment to prayer, liturgical and personal, is so important. You are to be faithful to the practice of prayer so that you will recognize the Lord as he reveals himself, and his will, to you in all the events of your life. Fraternal communion is an important value for you. For this reason attendance to the monthly meetings is essential—so that you can learn from and support one another. Prayer for one another, mutual concern, and care for the sick and elderly are likewise important responsibilities.

The call to serve God's plan encourages you to apostolic service as individuals and, when possible, as communities. Your apostolic service flows from your experience of God and your life of prayer.

Formation, initial and ongoing, are essential elements of our spiritual life. The local council is the source of authority in the community. The Secular Order is juridically dependent on the Friars. We are here to encourage you in your vocation and are grateful for the support we receive from you.

Saint Joseph, the just man, silent and obedient, is for us a model and powerful protector. May he intercede for us.

Fr. Salvatore, O.C.D.

Albert's Way - Preface

The medieval church existed at a period of time, from about 1100 until 1500, which saw numerous creative, spiritual movements take shape. Among these was the establishment of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the Holy Land, a joint venture of a number of European countries which lasted from 1099 until 1291, approximately two hundred years. Somewhere in the mid-point of that Crusader Kingdom conditions allowed a small group to settle in a newly liberated area just south of the military capital at Acre. There, in a spring fed wadi of the Carmel mountain range overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, an anonymous band of Latin pilgrims, intent on following in the footsteps of Jesus in his native area, insinuated themselves into the blood soaked landscape that echoed with conflict back to the time of the revered prophets Elijah and Elisha. Even so, their devotion to these two ideal figures may stem less from contact with the Holy Land than from the medieval culture which saw in them the soon-to-come biblical figures heralding the end of the ages.¹

The Carmelites, then, represent one offshoot of that rich, fervent and creative society that formed Europe's medieval, and particularly Norman, society. The Rule which confirmed them in their "way of life" exists today, not only as an historical artifact, but in a way that continues to generate interest and activity. From the earliest times we find tension and conflict associated with those who put themselves under this Rule. Within the first century of receiving it we see a Prior General angrily resigning from office and retiring to a hermitage to protest the direction his fellow hermits-becoming-friars were beginning to take. Over the centuries reform movements would continue to address a perhaps indefinable, but no less real, call from deep within the tradition itself. Many, in all branches of the Carmelite Family, have struggled to make the Rule's inner vision speak more loudly to their contemporaries in the wider church.

The present state of the Carmelite family with all its divisions and sub-divisions reminds us of those creative tensions alive within the Rule. Why should we be surprised or saddened at this? The original group produced a text that linked together in a highly

suggestive way many insights from Scripture and from the earlier traditions of the Desert Fathers and later cenobitic communities, as they were then understood. Even to this day, as the papers presented here testify, we find ourselves struggling to comprehend the balances and meanings which this text has released in history and is still releasing today.

A dramatic instance of the change in perspective since the giving of the Rule is the active presence of women within the tradition of Carmel. While the Carmelites delayed establishing official enclosures for nuns within the Order for 250 years,² today the Order is widely regarded in the popular mind as "feminine." Even the saints which nourish the ideals of Carmelites of every age within the Order today are mostly women. While young men coming into the Order are given models such as Elijah or John of the Cross to emulate, the male saints seem to be either historically remote or somewhat "unreal." Elijah did the stupendous and then flew off to heaven. John of the Cross wrote mysterious and alluring poetry, but comes across as a complex and difficult person. Even Titus Brandsma, who helped establish the University of Nijmegen, is more remembered because he died a martyr's death in the concentration camp at Dachau.

By contrast, Teresa of Jesus seems immediately accessible, even from a distance of 400 years. Her common sense insights into prayer in her *Way of Perfection* still speak to us today. The pithy observations in her *Life*, as well as in the *Book of the Foundations*, give her a contemporary vividness that is amazing. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, whose autobiography has been familiar to more than one generation of "ordinary" Catholics, has just become the subject of a very successful movie.³ The journey of Edith Stein from being an associate and student of one of the founders of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl; her entrance into the Church, then into the Carmel of Cologne; her flight to The Netherlands in the middle of the night; to her death at Auschwitz in Poland on August 9, 1942, reads like a modern novel while making a moving witness to contemporary Carmelites, men and women alike.⁴

While it is the women of the Order who seem to have captured the "essence" of what being Carmelite may mean, this may be partially an illusion. The suppression of religious orders in Europe during the *Kulturkampf* of the nineteenth century,⁵ along with the emphasis on external discipline advocated for American clerics and religious after the Second and Third Plenary Councils of Baltimore,⁶ served to place the devotional life, common recitation or chanting of Divine Office and penitential practices in high relief. Such external emphases obscured the necessity of dialoguing with the traditions at a time when the Order found itself virtually incapable of realizing any deeper rapprochement with its own treasures. Coming out of such an externalized sense of religious discipline communities of women, as well as of men, find themselves living in an unfortunately deprived state of religious consciousness today. Unable to find entrance into the world of meaning that the Rule is designed to mediate, people have been obliged to turn to forms of devotional and ecclesial piety to fill the void.

Perhaps because the external discipline of the Order, especially as captured in the familiar picture of high walled cloisters with grills and turns keeping the secular world at bay, has proved such a vivid cultural symbol, we have failed to appreciate the classic nature of the Rule which gave rise to such images. Although the rules of Benedict and Francis, and perhaps even *The Ancrene Riwe*,⁷ are more well known to contemporary scholars, nonetheless the Carmelite Rule certainly ranks among the classics of Western religious culture, no matter how few people are aware of it.⁸ The Rule is a classic, not because it is an artifact from the past, but because it is still operative and still has power to stimulate and guide the religious imagination of people eight centuries after it was given.

Yet the Carmelite Rule today is in danger of being under appreciated by the very people who profess their vows according to its authority. A classic on a bookshelf is not of very much use to anyone. After a certain amount of time it is possible to lose the key to the world of such classics. Much like pictures drawn millenia ago on cave walls and ceilings, it is possible to stand before the text of the Rule marveling and yet to have lost contact with the inner meanings it sought to enshrine. Like the cave paintings that were meant to express solidarity and communion with the mysteries of the earth that brought success in the hunt, so the Rule is a work of art that brings Carmelites into communion with the mystery of Jesus. The philosopher Hans-Georg

Gadamer calls a work of art "the expression of a truth that cannot be reduced to what its creator actually thought in it."⁹ Even though Carmelites must face a text without a clear author—a "work of art" with no definite artist there to claim it—its truth continues to demand our attention.

The Rule does not become a "work of art" just because it is well made, nor because it may be old, nor even because it is useful. An object becomes a "work of art" because it finds its place within a living community that values it through structuring itself and defining itself in the light of its terms. The art object expresses in a concrete symbol just what the community treasures within itself. In recognizing a "work of art" a society indicates its own inner openness towards the "objective" world, not in the sense of the here-and-now of what has already been accomplished, but in the sense of a world unfolding itself in the direction of its true meaning.¹⁰ That is, a society, a human community, moves towards the world and the truth of that world in a variety of ways. A society without "classics" is a community trapped in its own narrowness. A community that ignores its "classics" impoverishes itself and endangers its own future.

A "classic" is so named in terms of the culture that produced it and the wider world that recognizes it. This wider world is, first of all, that society itself as seen from the distance of later ages. A classic is a work that perdures and finds footings beyond the original designs of those who brought it forth. David Tracy calls its coming-to-be an "intensification" of the moment of experience joined to the moment of understanding.¹¹ In this moment the individual or community that has found itself a graced recipient of a particular aspect of reality finds the way to give shape and expression to it. What might have been only a fleeting experience of the divine can now be set down, meditated on and posed as a model to future generations.

If we take Tracy's insight seriously it becomes apparent that the Order was never set up to be simply a repository for the teachings of the past. It could receive ecclesial approbation only because it promised to foster a climate in which men and women could enter upon the very path towards communion with God which the original hermits followed so many centuries ago. The tapestry of the tradition demands only that certain themes and threads be employed from age to age. Above all, the Order is an opening for a "possibility." Heidegger talks about the struggle of Truth to find a

place in the Open.¹² Truth looks for ways of breaking into a world that might content itself with a great deal of deadness. At the same time, he says, "Truth is untruth, insofar as there belongs to it the reservoir of the not-yet-uncovered, the un-covered, in the sense of concealment."¹³ In this sense following the Rule slavishly and literally leads to the danger of falsification through unthinking obedience. Insofar as we presume that all the truth which the Rule has to tell has already been given and digested, we follow a spent beacon. At the same time, in presuming that everything has now been said, we claim for ourselves a "place" that is not really ours. Saints are canonized not because they have followed Christ as a mimic, but because they have understood the dynamism his Spirit has released in their own times through them. Orders contribute their charisms to the church only to the degree that they allow contemporary life stories to shape themselves around an ever-evolving truth.

If the truth has been totally spoken, then the Rule is essentially dead and following it would entail binding oneself to years of impersonal formalism. Yet what applies to uncovering the dynamics of Scripture also holds for the study of the Rule. Presumptions about its worn-out condition are premature. We find, instead, that we have hardly begun to explore the fertile ground of our own past. The Rule does not stop at the gates of medieval culture. In itself the Rule is both a mystical and mythical approach to living which has released enormous creative energy in ages past and keeps striving to do so. The Rule may be described as *mystical* in the sense that it describes a *way of life* that catches up the whole person in the disclosive life drama through which one wrestles with the very roots of revelation. The mythical dimension of the Rule refers to its inner directed communication of truth wherein the outermost layers of its language shield beginners from embarking too quickly on the truly radical nature of their calling. It is only after years of thinking one has been "observant" that one begins to suspect the real dimensions of reality to which one has pledged oneself, and which stay unsuspected until the appropriate moment of inner transformation.

Centuries after the Rule was formulated, Carmelites find themselves in lands unknown and even unsuspected by their founders. The Rule by which they lived has gone beyond the confines and horizons of their own times into the religious imaginations of many ages and cultures. It calls out to men and women from every part of the globe. As we take up the difficult call to return

to our own roots we liberate ourselves and future generations of Carmelites from turning anxiously in other directions in order to find authentic spiritual orientation.

We must take a very close look at our contemporary saints, and those whom we wish to bring forward in the church. Titus Brandsma was accepted for beatification under the title of "martyr" rather than "confessor." The debate that broke out in the Jewish community over the beatification of Edith Stein revolved around a similar point. They posed the question: Why is this woman being beatified? Was she not martyred only because she was Jewish? The logic here is arresting and calls for reflection. Both were Carmelites. Both have been put forward by the Order and have been accepted into the registers of the church. But are we sufficiently in touch with what it was that made them both "Carmelite saints"? How much of their writings and reflections is available to us even today? It is only in the last few years that we have finally seen a substantive work in English presenting the early history of the Order.¹⁴ Can we produce "Carmelite saints" or "Carmelite mystics" when we are forced to admit the terrible poverty of knowledge about our origins and traditions that afflicts the entire Carmelite family today?¹⁵

Today's Carmelite men and women find themselves trying to grasp an ideal that constantly alludes them. Our world seems to reach towards us with so many of its needs: prayer, hunger, disease, social reform, raising of consciousness, pre-Christianization, base communities, the dying, AIDS counseling, parishes, listening to dreams and fears. In various ways we move in and out of this society. Some plunge in deeply to minister directly to society's wounds, others back away to ensure that places of stillness and refreshment will continue to be available. Some survive what they undertake, others disappear into that world unable to mediate its double and triple horizons. Some carve out eremitical niches whether in the deserts or in the cities, others band together in convents and monasteries—all trying to make sense of this "call," this "way" on which they have embarked.

Often we look back only to find ourselves with so few resources. Even Elijah had a raven supplying his needs before undertaking the journey to Horeb! Our roads seems less certain—or just as uncertain. We might well ask, Have we abandoned or lost our "way" a long time ago, now only keeping up the outmost affiliations? While communal celebrations of liturgy and prayer,

coupled with meetings and get-togethers have often been taken for high-water marks of Carmelite living, has the true challenge to personal and communal inner renewal lain dormant in our self-understanding? Or might it not be truer to say that we really are deeply a part of the original mystery—like strands of starlight that have fallen on some planet in time zones far removed from where we first started, yet still one with their burning truth.

Against this backdrop of challenges and questions we present the work of this First North American Congress on the Rule. We see brought together a variety of Carmelites. For those not present at this congress, it is not just the presenters that speak to us, but the unseen audience: men and women from every part of the Carmelite family. We consider the *Sitz im Leben* of any work to be of great significance in evaluating it. For this congress we find gathered together the complete spectrum: hermits and friars, cloistered and apostolic men and women, the general of one branch, the former general of an other, more than fifteen provincial superiors from as far away as Australia, Ireland, Great Britain, the Netherlands and all around North America. All these men and women in their various ways are attempting to live out the Carmelite charism in their own particular circumstances—and to listen more deeply to the call it makes to each of us today. Hopefully this will prove a sign to us for our future: that only by coming together, men and women of all branches of the Order, can we do justice to the task of understanding who we are.

In John's Gospel Jesus encountered a Samaritan woman at Jacobs well, but that water was no longer necessary for her. An eternally fresh source was springing up within her. So, too, this Rule need not be viewed as some stagnant cistern of brackish legislation that no longer enlivens the spirit, some dark reservoir of regulations, painstakingly scraped out by our ancestors of long ago, fenced around with hallowed memory, requiring the long rope of tradition, the pulley of ascetical strength and the bucket of submission before one can derive any benefit from its unseen depths. The papers that follow help to free us from the grasp of stereotyped visions of our origins. An attempt is made to rescue the language of the Rule from our over-familiarity with its phrases and our under-imagination of how it might be lived out, both on its historical level and in the hermeneutical horizons that it continues to encourage in us.

Michael Mulhall, O. Carm.
Niagara Falls, Ontario - 1989

1 Frequent artistic representations of one or both these prophets abound in the medieval cathedrals, although the two biblical figures are not, in fact, named in Rv 11:3-12 and are subject to various identifications. Cf. John M. Court, *Myth and History in the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), pp. 82-105.

2 Joachim Smet, *Cloistered Carmel* (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1986), p. 10. He notes that while all the other Mendicant Orders set up such institutions immediately, the Carmelites only obtained this privilege from Pope Nicholas V with the decree *Cum nulla* of October 7, 1452. Cf. p. 26

3 The movie *Thérèse* won 7 Césars at the 1986 Cannes film festival.

4 Cf. her uncompleted autobiography, *Edith Stein: Life in a Jewish Family 1891-1916*, Vol. I of *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, ed. by L. Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, OCD. (Washington, D.C. : ICS Publications, 1985).

5 Joachim Smet says that the suppressions of the 19th Century were in many ways more severe and more destructive to religious life than the Reformation itself. Cf. his work *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (Darien: Carmelite Spiritual Center, 1985), IV: 1-18.

6 Peter K. Guilday, *A History of the Councils of Baltimore (1791-1884)* (NY: The Macmillan company, 1932), pp. 207-249. The Third council (1884) repeated many of the disciplines of the Second council (1866) which set down norms of clerical and religious decorum, forbade such things as attending the theater, practicing medicine or card playing, and mandated the use of the Roman collar in the streets and the cassock in the rectory.

7 A thirteenth century English rule written for women hermits attached to local parish churches; cf. Michael Cox, *Handbook of Christian Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 131.

8 A selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club a few years ago was Robert Payne's book *The Dream and the Tomb: A History of the Crusades* (WY: Stein & Day, 1984). Payne was praised for his command of scholarship and his attention to history in tracing the history of the crusaders from the beginning of the First Crusade up to the fall of Acre on May 18, 1291. Yet not one word is devoted to the origins of the only Western order to be founded in the Holy Land at that very time.

9 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 95-6.

10 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (NY: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 13-87.

11 David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (NY: Crossroads Press, 1981), pp. 125-126.

12 *Op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

13 *Ibid.*

14 Joachim Smet, *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Cannel* (Darien, IL: Carmelite Press, 1975-1987), 4 vols. Even here one sees the first 300 years compressed into one volume, covering the richest period in the Orders history.

15 In addition to the problem of getting good histories of the Order in English is that of having access to the writings of other Carmelites. So far only Titus Brandsmas short series of lectures, published as *Carmelite Mysticism: Historical Sketches* (Darien, IL: The Carmelite Press, republished in 1986) has been available.

What is The Heart of The Rule?

More than seventy commentaries on the Rule are known.¹ Practically all of them consider Chapter 7 to be the central nucleus of the text, and of the way of life it proposes. It reads: "Let all remain in their cells or nearby, pondering day and night the Law of the Lord and being vigilant in prayer, unless engaged in other lawful occupations" (*Maneant singuli in cellulis suis, vel iuxta eas, die ac nocte in lege Domini meditantés et in orationibus vigilantes, nisi aliis iustis occasionibus occupentur.*) At least implicitly the current Constitutions of the Order retain this position (cf. nos. 10 and 59). One can, therefore, speak of a traditional and almost universal conviction about what constitutes the "heart" of the Rule.

Only recently have doubts begun to be expressed about the centrality of Chapter 7.² Egidio Palumbo, a young Carmelite who has studied commentaries on the Rule from the various centuries, writes:

We have to ask ourselves if the centrality of Chapter 7 is a "necessity" arising from the text of the Rule, or whether it is a subjective understanding on the part of the reader who is conditioned by the idea of the perfection of Christian life as seen in its solitary and eremitical forms. The history of the interpretations of the Rule does show one fact: when the centrality of Chapter 7 shut out other "truths" of the text, which did not belong to the subjective vision of the reader, this preconditioning was changed into a prejudice and the reading of the Rule became restricted and static.³

We are convinced that the centrality of Chapter 7—especially as it is understood in the tradition as emphasizing solitude and prayer—has to be

profoundly rethought and transcended. According to recent Italian studies, the center of the Rule's way-of-life is to be found in the group of chapters from seven to eleven, with Chapter 10 (the oratory and daily Eucharist) being the theological and central focus. The Rule does not refer principally to isolated persons praying in their cells, but rather to a *fraternity*; that is, a group of "brothers" who are totally committed to a journey in unity, in co-responsibility, and in dedication to the Lord, even though they may have different backgrounds and personal needs.

Here then is our topic and what we wish to illustrate and demonstrate today.

I. THE ROAD TO THE NEW INTERPRETATION

Working from 1981 to 1983 a group of Italian experts brought forward a new interpretation of the Rule. They sought an interpretation that would be truly based on its text and on its historical origins. They wished to respect fully the intrinsic unity of the text as well as all of its individual parts, even fragments that might seem banal or secondary. They used the new hermeneutic methods available from the disciplines of anthropology, history, linguistics and theology.⁴

They did not begin with the idea of finding a confirmation of some pre-construed meaning; however the traditional assertions about Chapter 7 were not taken as an absolute. The aim was to recover the vital *logos* contained in the text, even if this were not always explicitly expressed. It was only

in this way that one could hope to rescue the Rule from being a quasi-archeological, lifeless curio—the state to which it had been finally reduced—so that it could once again be the bearer of a vital and inspirational vision as well as of fresh impulses, always open to new historical realizations.

It is of the nature of a *Rule* that it condenses and organises in its language, structures and intellectual framework of a particular epoch, a way of life that is destined to motivate later generations which are historically and culturally quite distinct from those of its origins. The richness and fruitfulness of a *Rule* are to be found more in the power of its vision, in its capacity to show direction and values, than in its restrictions through norms or rigid forms. The interpretation of a *Rule* should have the ability to invigorate its hearers so that the written words be transformed into a source of new undertakings which enshrine the vital *logos* which lies hidden in the text.⁵

Such richness seemed lost or very weakened in the recent history of the Order, notwithstanding efforts at new critical and systematic reflection on the Rule. There have been investigations of various kinds: historical-juridical studies⁶ examined its nature and meaning in the context of the crusades, and its similarity to the monastic tradition of the Desert Fathers;⁷ it has been scrutinized in relation to the eastern monastic tradition;⁸ the reasons for the mitigations have been carefully explored,⁹ along with the "Teresian" interpretation of the "Primitive Rule."¹⁰ But none of these studies has given rise to any new inspiration. They have, indeed, extended our historical and empirical knowledge. They have left unsatisfied, however, any desire for a dynamic, visionary or vital reading that would do justice to the text itself, taken as a whole, or answer the needs and sensibilities of our time.¹¹

1. Unity and Stabilization of the Text

Let us consider, then, the way in which the Italian group set about its task. The members first sought to discover the unifying inner principles of the various parts of the text. It would be a faulty reading of the text which would focus attention only on some chapters (for example 7, 14, 16) and, as a result, would minimize or ignore the value of the remainder, or reduce it to incidentals. This latter way of interpreting the Rule does violence to the unity of the living experience which predated the work of legislation. Codification is added to this unity which furnishes the vital foundation for the work of legislation. The presence of several experiential *stages*¹² in the internal composition of the Rule led us to study the dynamic of this accumulation in order to get a sense of the *whole*, rather than a mere historical illustration of the reasons for the different strata of the text.

The current theology of charism¹³ guided us in our reading. Moreover, the way a charismatic impulse matures gave us the key to the unity of the text. The theology of charism shows that a text like the Rule is the result of a genetic and evolving process which begins from a stage of birth (*statu nascenti*) in which it is indeterminate and unexpressed. It then passes through the stage of being a "lived identity," though not yet codified. There follows an organic elaboration of the principal elements of the identity. Finally, there is a definitive, mature and conclusive stabilization of the genetic process. A sign and fruit of the stabilization is a definitive *official text*, which is called a rule, constitutions, statutes, etc. Today this thesis or explanation is quite clear and developed. It can explain the process that takes place when isolated persons, or small units of persons, move to establish themselves as a religious group and attain a collective consciousness of an identity that is preserved in a definite form and authoritatively

acknowledged. This is the genesis of religious institutes, and also the key to understanding their foundation history—from the initial birth-pangs to the clear and definitive identity, canonically recognised.¹⁴

In our case the application is clear. The global way of life of the Rule is to be read in the *final stage* of its evolution and clarification, that is, in the form we call "institutionalized." In fact, the Carmelite Rule gathers together, expresses and codifies a reality which reached its definitive and stable form only in 1247 with the approbation of Innocent IV. There is evidence of earlier phases in the text: directly or indirectly, expressly or in its aims, symbolically or structurally, the text testifies to intermediate stages in a process of maturation. These phases cannot be considered as a "more perfect form" of its identity.

More must, I think, be said. When one speaks about the different versions of Albert and of Innocent IV, as if it were a matter of some "loss of rigor" or of some *process of mitigation*, one is clearly superimposing on the historical facts some deeply held ideological positions which have neither historical nor theological foundation.¹⁵ The intervention of Albert is undoubtedly most important, but it is *a stage* in the transition towards full identity.

Albert had three roles: 1) He had a *social* role, in so far as he united in one association (*in unum collegium*), now juridically autonomous, a group which hitherto recognised B[rocardus] as leader, but without the necessary legal requirements. 2) He had a *cognitive* role, in that he gave the group's existence a rational structure. He enriched it with symbolism; that is, he pointed out and codified an aim which went beyond the merely visible, material facts. 3) He had a role of *affective orientation*, because in using the word "brothers" (*fratres*), he channeled the feelings

of the "hermits" in the direction of a warm, shared fraternity. In other words, through Albert the ethos, which had been lived without organic thematization, assumed a nature as well as institutional, linguistic and symbolic forms which were allied to the social and ecclesial needs of the time.

After Albert there came the return of part of the members to Europe. They faced the immediate difficulty of an ecclesial situation in which new forms of institutionalized presence were emerging. Events showed, then, that the process was not complete and that the (Albertine) Rule did not yet correspond fully with the needs of the group's life. At the instigation of those who were now "Carmelites," acting through a discernment process at the highest level (general chapters), the popes successively revised the text and its interpretation which had not yet reached mature form. This last arrived with the definitive text in the bull *Quæ honorem Conditoris* of Innocent IV, on October 1, 1247.¹⁶

Perhaps providentially, editions of the text before 1247 have been lost. Later reconstructions of the Albertine formula (the so-called "Primitive Rule") from the middle of the 14th century are hypotheses which are reasonably founded, but lacking in full historical certainty. The literature on the "Primitive Rule,"¹⁷ and attempts to return to the primitive model as the authentic one, must today be seriously demythologized, and thus refuted as being historically uncertain and theologically misleading.

This is the first path of research which we followed. It can be seen to be quite new and revolutionary when compared with existing models of interpretation. Furthermore, this way of approaching the Rule has the possibility of ending the complexes about primitivism and mitigationism that color relations between the O. Carm. and O.C.D. branches of the Order.¹⁸

2. The Rule: From Process to Way of Life

The demand for a global unity of the text led us, secondly, to distinguish in the Carmelite Rule between the traces of a *process* to a collective, codified and stable identity, and the way of life (project) which the rule codifies and transmits. Thus we began to speak of the *Rule as process* and of the *Rule as project or way of life*.

In the technical language of linguistics, "codification" is a second degree language (a meta-language); it is an *objectifying discourse* marked by a historicity that is bound up with existing conceptualization. Though it serves to explicate profound experiences and vital meanings, "codification" cannot either explain or reveal them fully. For an exact interpretation of a text like the Rule it is precisely these vital meanings that have to be recovered, so that fidelity to them can in the future give rise to new, existential forms of life.

To grasp this project we made abundant use of different interpretative schemata that are provided by the various hermeneutical theories of our time, such as cultural anthropology, collective imagination, linguistics, the function of symbol, myth and culture, the history and sociology of institutions, the role of models and utopias, etc.¹⁹ There was, naturally, a special place for a knowledge of the history of spirituality, of the monastic traditions of the time, for the symbolism of the crusades and for the inspirational force of the movements of evangelism and of the Christocentric eremitism of the 12th and 13th centuries.²⁰

It is particularly useful to hold together the various hermeneutical elements of a text. By this I mean: 1) the multiple experiences of Albert and of the group; 2) the legislation that was ordered to the way of life (the project); 3) the fact that the Rule

was given in the literary genre of a letter; 4) the active reception of the rule by the brethren; 5) the decoding of what is signified by signs; and 6) the open and dynamic process of identification. This work was very extensive and very complex. We had to grasp exactly the single project of life which itself was the fruit of various personal and collective experiences. All this is condensed in a single text which is quite limited by its style and development, by its background and subjective exponents.

In fact, we tried various hypotheses for a unified reading. Our concern here was that the hypotheses would have the capacity to retain their interpretative value throughout the various historical levels of the text, and the different collective and ecclesial situations of those involved in the project. Many of the classical interpretations give the impression of being *ideologically superimposed* on the text. This goes for the eremitical interpretation, as well as for the symbolic (prophetic/Marian), historico-juridical and ascetical ones. These restrict the meaning to a few isolated elements which are then partial truths. The rest is emasculated and rendered insignificant.

Not many people take into consideration the fact that an obstacle to correct interpretation is the traditional way of dividing the Rule into short chapters (eighteen altogether, along with a prologue and an epilogue). Even the titles which were given to these chapters are a secondary element, and are in fact misleading when one attempts to understand the structure of the text, its literal meaning and the thrust of its words. These headings reflect a juridical preoccupation, even in the way they are formulated. They encourage a fragmentary, moralistic and legalistic reading of the Rule. They are a categorization much later than the origin of the Rule, to be precise from the

16th century (1585).²¹ Since they reflect a canonico-legalistic mentality, they can with profit be set aside and rejected in favor of other titles that are more faithful to the text and more inspirational.

By avoiding a preoccupation with the old titles and the subdivision into chapters, we were able not only to find new titles but also to bring to light deeper unities between groups of chapters, which then became an instrument for a new interpretation of the text. (See the proposal in *Figure 1*.) This is the general scheme we adopted: we respected the subdivision in chapters as it was well-known and easily perceived; we gave new titles, which are for the most part renewed translations of the older ones; we blocked various chapters in sections.

3. A Central Nucleus as Heart of the Rule

From this work a central nucleus appeared which is comprised of Chapters 7 to 11. In it we find reflected the classical form of community in the Acts of the Apostles (2:42-47; 4:32-35). It seemed clear to us that through a communitarian activity articulated in structures, themes, institutions and living collective experiences, there is a desire to reproduce a way of life which would have its orientation from the Jerusalem model.

If we compare the configuration of the primitive community in Acts with the contents of Chapters 7 to 11, we find a clear parallel. It appears evident, therefore, that the Rule is conditioned by and wishes to reproduce this model in a quasi-perfect manner. The values emphasized in both texts are the following:

- a) fidelity to the Word (Chapters 4, 7, 14, 17, 18; Acts 2:42);
- b) perseverance in prayer (Chapters 7-8; Acts 1:14; 2:42, 46; 4:24-31);

- c) sharing of goods (Chapters 4, 9, 15; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:3);
- d) fraternal unity (Chapter 11; Acts 2:42, 44, 46; 4:32);
- e) the centrality of daily worship in the temple, the place of the mysterious presence of the Lord (Chapter 10; Acts 2:46; 5:12).

This last value is highlighted by the setting of the place itself. The "oratory in the middle of the cells" (Chapter 10) evokes a whole prophetic symbolism concerned both with ancient Jerusalem (Ez 46:13; 48:8; Hg 2:9), and with the Savior in the midst (*beqereb*) with his fruitful and consoling presence (Zep 3:14-17; Zec 9:9 f.; Sir 24:10-12).

From the historical point of view we know that the spirituality of the time discovered, and later emphasized, a series of values clustering in the idea of Jerusalem: the ever-inspiring primordial experience of Christianity; the goal of pilgrimage to the Holy Land; a model of evangelical life in fraternity; also, a utopian dream with some apocalyptic expectations.²² It would not be at all strange, therefore, if the hermits of Carmel made Jerusalem their own by inserting it into the center of their project of life.

One must allude also to a certain monastic spiritual tradition which was taken up and underlined—particularly in the 12th and 13th centuries. According to it, fasting and abstinence were values which the Apostles practiced fervently (cf. for example Acts 13:2-3; 14:23; 2 Cor 11:27).²³ In this perspective one should add, therefore, Chapters 12 and 13 (fast and abstinence). These chapters, too, could be understood as a call to "apostolic community." The modifications to the text of Chapter 13 in the approbation of Innocent IV did not weaken, but rather reinforced in a new form the summons to

Figure 1.

Constitutions 1586	Constitutions 1971	Secondin
Prologus	Prologue	PROLOGUE Greeting The following of Christ
I. De priore habendo et de tribus sibi promittendis II. De receptione locorum III. De cellulis fratrum IV. De communi refectioe V. De non mutando nec permutando cellulas VI. De cellula prioris	The election of a prior and the profession of the brothers Foundations The separate cells The common refectory The allotted cells not to be changed The priors cell	STRUCTURES OF THE COMMON LIFE 1. The prior and the sacred bonds 2. Places to live 3. The cells of the brothers 4. The common table 5. Fidelity through stability 6. The prior's cell
VII. De mansione in cellulis VIII. De horis canonicis IX. De non habendo proprium X. De oratorio et de audienda Missa quotidie XI. De capitulo et correctione fratrum	Solitude and continual prayer The canonical hours Individual property and common possessions The oratory and daily Mass Fraternal discussion and correction	LIVING FOUNDATIONS OF FRATERNITY 7. The Word, fullness of solitude 8. Celebration of praise through the Psalms 9. Communion of goods and poverty 10. Place for prayer and daily Eucharist 11. Dialogue and fraternal correction
XII. De ieiunio XIII. De abstinentia carniarum	Fasting Abstinence	BODILY ASCETICISM 12. Fasting 13. Abstinence
XIV. De armis spiritualibus XV. De assiduitate operationis ad evitandam otiositatem XVI. De silentio	The souls armor Work Silence	TO FORTIFY THE INTERIOR MAN 14. The spiritual combat 15. Work 16. Silence
XVII. De humilitate ad Priorem exhortatio XVIII. De honorando Priorem ad fratres exhortatio	The prior to serve his brothers The prior to be honored as Christ's representative	SERVICE AND AUTHORITY IN THE MATURE COMMUNITY 17. The prior, a humble servant 18. Obedience to the prior
Epilogus	Epilogue: Generosity to be guided by common sense	EPILOGUE Generous fidelity and discernment

apostolic community. This is so because it adds the model of itinerant preaching ("frequently beg while traveling," *frequenter mendicare itinerantes*), which is a typical imitation of the mission of the disciples (cf. Mt 10:1-42; Lk 10:1-16).²⁴

This discovery of the *Jerusalem community archetype* is accepted today almost unanimously by the experts who have studied those of our writings which have propounded it.²⁵ We can thus consider it to be a new acquisition for the interpretation of the Rule. It is not, however, a completely new idea in the spirituality of the Order. We have found traces of it in the most ancient texts of our spirituality, such as *The Fiery Arrow* (the *Ignea sagitta* of Nicolas the Gaul, 1270),²⁶ in the earliest extant constitutions (London, 1281),²⁷ and in other texts of Carmelite spirituality, for example the Carmelite Rite, the Teresian project, Mary Magdalene di Pazzi, etc.²⁸

4. A Unitary Project

The third stage was to place this central nucleus in an organic relationship to the rest of the text. In this way other complementary meanings would come from the other parts which would then be seen to take on significance in terms of the dynamic unity of the whole text. When we studied the themes of the other sections, we arrived at the conclusion that the Rule not only proposes a unified way of life (project), but it also furnishes criteria of discernment for evaluating fidelity to the project.

One could illustrate it visually as an arc. At the two ends of the arc are the two principles: 1) the following (*sequela* from the Prologue) and 2) the awaiting of the Lord (Epilogue). The apex of the arc is the presence of the Mystery (Chapter 10). Between these three reference points all the rest of the Rule rotates, either as a consequent actualization or as dynamic referent. (*Figure 2* gives

the complete scheme of the general project in a graphic illustration.)

I. The basic principle: following Christ (*obsequium Jesu Christi*). This is to be generous, without ambiguity either individual or communitarian (Prologue). A profession of fidelity to Christ the Lord with the support of the Holy Spirit (the salutation) nourishes this foundation and guides the authoritative discernment requested from Albert.

II. Structures of the common life: the presence of a representative authority chosen from within and elected by the collegium of the *brothers*; the reciprocal bonds (vows); the material disposition of places; co-responsibility in matters deemed important, that is, in decisions that influence the life of the group in a significant way; the administration of goods. All these structures are found in Chapters 1 to 6 and also 9.

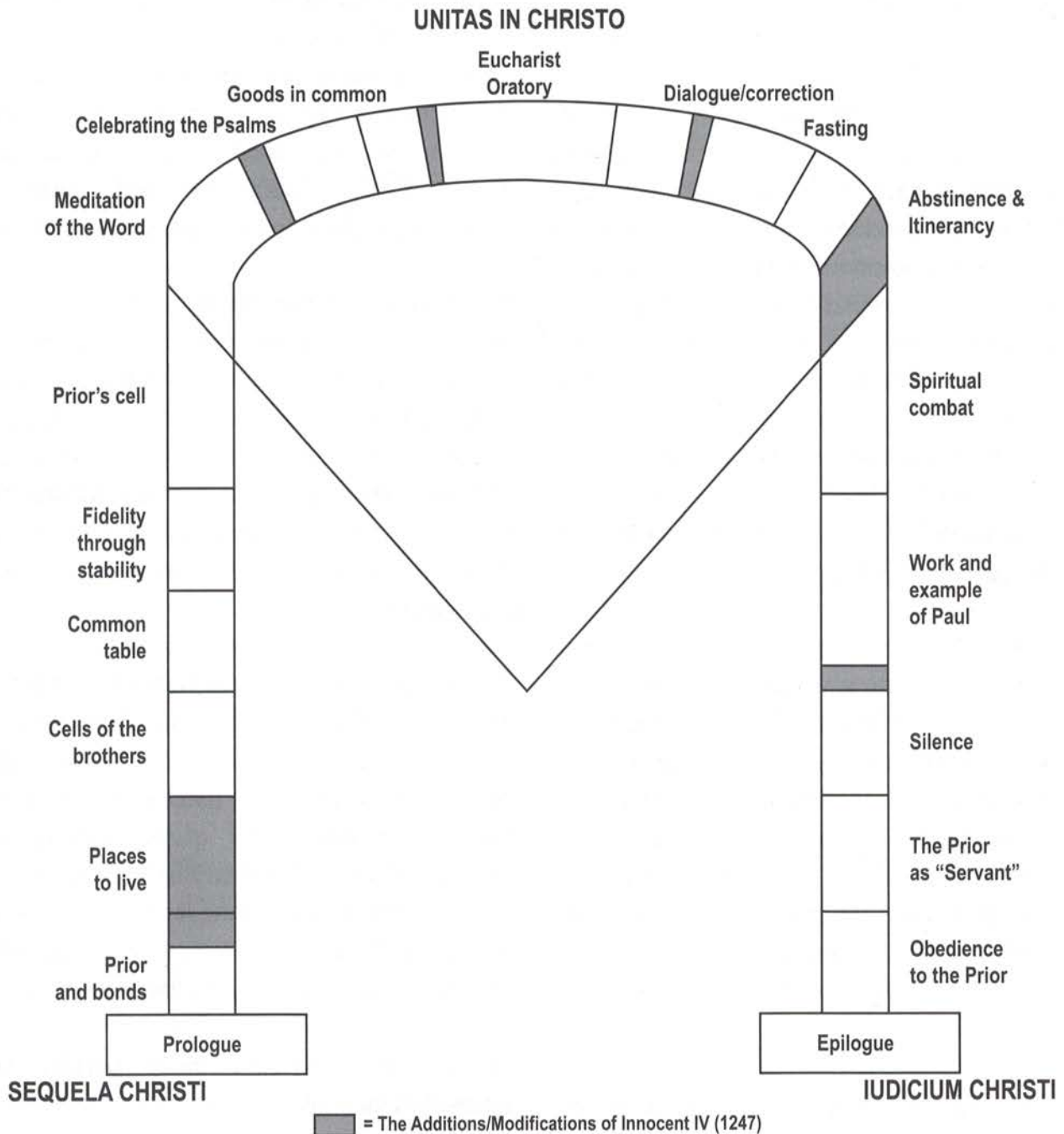
III. Living foundations of fraternity: Word and prayer; fraternity in the community of goods; periodic verification of fidelity; fraternal reconciliation. Central above all is the paschal memorial (daily Eucharist) in the "center" of the community. All these are found in Chapters 7 to 11. In them we see reproduced the model of the Jerusalem community, and implicitly also the Jerusalem utopia of the prophets and the apocalyptic literature

IV. Strengthening the inner person: some necessities for a full and renewed spiritual life.

- *bodily asceticism:* fast and abstinence (Chapters 12 and 13) to arrive at an existence free from hedonistic tendencies, and to imitate "apostolic" asceticism.
- *profound integration* for an *authentic "life in Christ"* (in the Pauline sense, 2 Tm 3:12): the necessary path is spiritual warfare, sharing

Figure 2.

The "Arch" of the Rule



in common work, imitation of the Apostle Paul, the wise use of speech in interpersonal relations ("silence favours holiness," *cultus iustitiæ silentium*). These are the matters treated in Chapters 14 to 16, which we have called the "spiritual code" (and which is

probably of pre-Albertine origin). In this section concern for personal spirituality is harmonized with attention to others: love of God and love of neighbor lead to a "devout life in Christ" (*pie vivere in Christo*—Chapter 14), which remains faithful even in difficulties.

V. Maturity of fraternity: the verification of the maturity achieved is found in the role which the Word has in all. The Word is embodied and fruitful in the role of service, which characterizes the prior, and in the spirit of the faith of the brothers towards his authority (Chapters 17-18). The project is realized fully if the Word is heard and put in practice by all ("have in mind and put into action," *habeatis in mente et servetis in opere* Chapter 17).

VI. Discernment and generous fidelity: discernment and generous fidelity (Epilogue) are further signs of a path which, if successfully pursued, leads to wisdom of heart and serene stability. But it is also a disposition for mental openness to what may be new, seen in the perspective of Christ who will return, and of the Spirit who guides with the gift of discretion.

5. Intermediate Conclusion

It is clear that we are dealing with a model of life of a dynamic and open type, that is, it favors the transformation of the structures of the individual consciousness of each one in order to introduce him into the global whole of the collective meaning that is being sought. But this latter meaning remains open to being expressed in new possibilities according to changing historical and socio-cultural contexts, and to the unforeseen action of the Spirit who calls for the embodiment of new experiences.

One should note the following about the new interpretation which we have offered, especially with respect to other readings or commentaries. It partly confirms them in that all include certain fundamental elements, such as the following of Christ, interiority, prayer, mortification, silence, work; but it partly transcends them in its new, more complete and dynamic synthesis. This is because it gives a dynamic value to every fragment of text

in the perspective of a project open to a new and developing fidelity.

It seems to us, therefore, that this interpretation shows clearly that the heart of the Rule and its way of life cannot be found in Chapter 7, taken in the traditional concept of solitude and prayer. A centrality of Chapter 7 gives pride of place to an anthropocentric, individualistic, and eventually isolationist, reading of the Carmelite path. In our interpretation the center appears as the result of a multiplicity of "concentrations," or concentric circles. (See *Figure 3* for diagram)

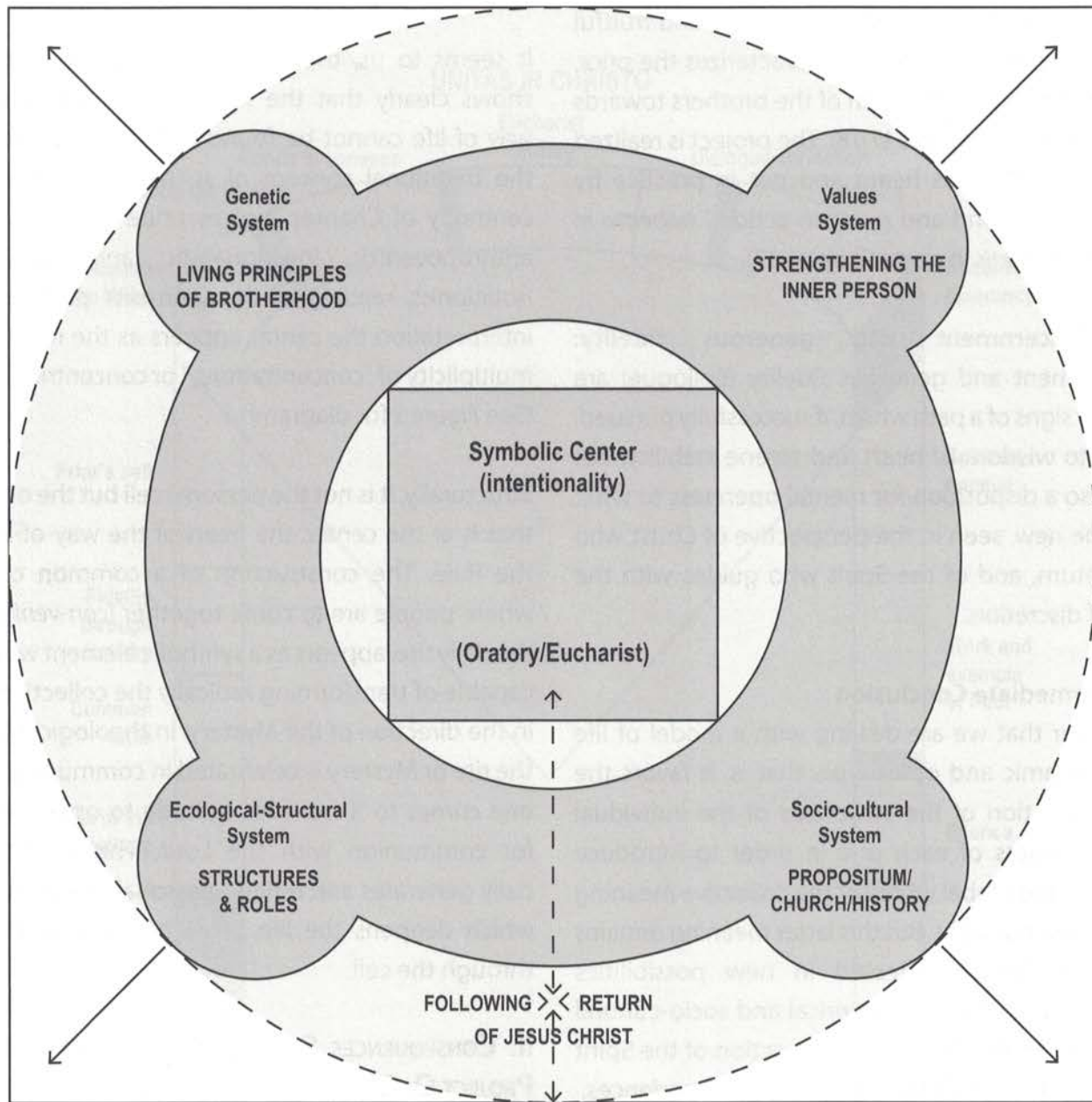
Structurally, it is not the personal cell but the oratory that is at the center, the heart of the way-of-life of the Rule. The construction of a common center, where people are to come together (*con-venire*) for the daily rite, appears as a symbolic element which is capable of transforming radically the collective ego in the direction of the Mystery. In theological terms the rite or Mystery is celebrated in community; each one comes to it from his solitude to open himself for communion with the Lord. This celebration daily generates and renews personal ethical fidelity which deepens the life of each one later in and through the cell.

II. CONSEQUENCES FOR SPIRITUALITY AND FOR THE PROJECT OF LIFE

It is clear that this general outline of the Rule does not reduce it to a cold, distant or purely ideographical historical memory—like the map of a territory. Rather is it inserted well into values which form every Christian life even today, and must become the living foundation of the spiritual life even for us. At the same time it demands developing a new commentary on the Rule which, unlike almost all previous ones, is *not* constructed on individual chapters *taken in isolation*. What is needed is a

Figure 3.

The Rule As An Open System



The *circle* (dynamism), the *square* (static state) and the *diagonal arrows* (depth and development) indicate the achievement of harmonic maturity (continuous lies)—involving both novelty and stability—and openness to ever-new horizons (broken circle) which nevertheless preserve identity (external square indicating a continuum).

From the center of the collective 'ego,' charged with vital energy, emerge centrifugal forces in the four fundamental directions: by means of this communication, this coming and going back and forth between synchronicity and diachronicity (between continuity and innovation), personal structures of consciousness are transformed, and what has been experienced by the group receives a variety of expressions and adaptations from individuals.

development of the *wholeness* of each single value: from Christocentricism to the experience of prayer; from the celebration of the Mystery to spiritual warfare; from intracommunitarian relationships to the concept of relationship with Christ and with history. Recently we have begun trying to develop this new type of commentary which goes through the text in a global way. It requires a delicate theological and spiritual sensibility to be able to rescue the text from an earlier overly rigid and moralizing interpretation, and hence to place it in a wider perspective.²⁹ We will now try to show concretely, with examples, how one can draw new consequences from a fresh reading of the Rule in line with our new interpretation.

1. The Following of Christ

The first thing to be said about the new interpretation is the great prominence it gives to the theologically solid value of the following of Christ (*sequela Christi*). Hitherto the phrase at the beginning "in obedience to Jesus Christ" (*in obsequio Jesu Christi*) was emphasized and defined as the specific aim of our life. We know well that the phrase represents a declaration of intent about our life and that it reflects our continuity with the great tradition of historic monasticism. Rather than defining what we are, however, it defines where we are in order to find the foundation and the total meaning of our life, that is, in the historical conviction that following Christ is a law common to everyone.

This historical and spiritual law is taken as the supreme and fundamental norm also for the hermits of Carmel. One senses the concentration here on the essential Christocentricity of the Christian life of a Stephen of Muret or a Francis of Assisi. The early "Carmelites" were men of their times. As Cicconetti has pointed out, we find also the concepts of the crusades and of allegiance (*obsequium*), and of

service (*servitium*), fidelity (*fidelitas*), "way-of-life" (*propositum*), etc.—all of which were characteristics of the time.

A first observation, therefore, on "following" according to the Rule is that it is to be understood as a global principle, unifying both life and the spiritual tradition. The rest of the Rule makes no sense unless one arrives at an authentic following which, though gradually realized, proceeds from a loyal and profound commitment: "from a pure heart and faithfully in clear conscience" (*de corde puro et bona conscientia fideliter*). The remainder of the Rule has value and meaning only in the perspective and framework of "following" Christ. A word about the phrases "pure heart" and "clear conscience:" from a "pure heart" (*de corde puro*) indicates a disponibility arising from the depth of our basic life orientation. From a clear conscience (*de bona conscientia*) suggests a way of acting that chooses appropriate steps and means of realization. Otherwise we remain in the area of the vague and the superficial.

Continuing still in general considerations, we come to the most important summons of the way of life (*propositum*). The Latin word indicates the commitment typical of the crusade movement (a pledge to go to the Holy Land); it is also a way-of-life, which is already present in deeds, but will have henceforth a greater solidity and clarity. It is the synthesis of multiple experiences of both individuals and of a group.

Albert took account of this lived reality which had to be subject to the universal law of following Christ, and which also had to condition the actual concrete forms in which the following was to be actualized. It was not a matter of some utopian ideal, of some generic or vague statement. To

the universal and traditionally esteemed value of the following, he added their own specific experience, their life, their rule-of-life as already being practiced ("according to your way of life"—*iuxta propositum vestrum*, Prologue). The procedure here is very important: it indicates the necessary personalization and concretization, as well as an attention to contextualization and adaptation. As a result, the whole Rule has to be read as an adaptation of the universal law of the "following" to a particular group with its experiences and needs (the way of life—*propositum*). In other words, the concrete reality is concerned with this "following," the primacy of Christ is lived in a particular way.

This is the perspective in which we are to read the injunctions about the material surroundings (Chapters 2-6, 10), about the relation of members within the structures (collegial decisions: Chapters 1-4, 7, 10, 11, 15), about the way in which the realization of values is conceived, such as authority, the Word, prayer, reconciliation, celebration, work, subsidiarity and a practical pluralism. We have also to consider relationships *ad extra* in the same context of the "following" being concretized in the Rule according to the way-of-life (*propositum*). Here we consider the fact of benefactors, the arrival of visitors, generous hosts, social conditions (journeys), the ecclesial tradition of lived reality, and the mentality and culture of the time.

From all this we can easily deduce that the law of the "following" is transformed in the perspective of the Rule into four main themes.

Firstly, there is a *community of authentic discipleship* under the guidance of the *Master* who teaches and presides, who is at the center of their daily and weekly meetings. His law accompanies them in their solitude, he judges all activity, and he is

the mysterious power that sustains all activity. He will come at the end, but he also comes each day, and remains with the one who "lives in Christ." The material surroundings should also favor this formation of a *community of disciples*.

Secondly, there is the orientation of a style of life. There is the ascent towards Jerusalem which is now rethought in new formulæ, not solely in terms of geography, but in terms of interiority. There is the following which acquires depth in the whole of existence and not merely in an earthly or social sense. There are Paschal events: daily in the Mass, weekly in chapter, and annually in the fast. These last indicate that time finds its vital meaning in Christ. The style of life is evaluated in terms of "a warfare to live in Christ" (Chapter 14), a powerful notion which calls to mind the structure of baptism, which is here being brought to fullness. There is also the fact that work contributes to the formation of authentic disciples of the Lord, since it is proposed and esteemed by that great witness to Christ, the apostle Paul. Indeed, to work is to follow a holy way ("this way is holy and good"—*hæc via sancta est et bona*, Chapter 15); work is journeying and following.

Thirdly, there is an aim which is clearly and often repeated: it is to serve Christ faithfully (*fideliter*, Prologue); it is to be a servant in the community as an expression of fidelity to Christ (Chapter 17); it is "to live in Christ," and so merit a favorable judgment when "the Lord will return" (Epilogue). The return of the Lord overshadows the whole project of the Rule: it acts from within both to relativize all self-sufficiency and to look forward to a future "judgment."

Fourthly, St Paul is also found in this project of the community of disciples. The law of serious manual work and the avoidance of idleness are proposed

according to his example. In addition to the value of work, Chapter 15 clearly shows Paul as a model of life and the exemplification of a set of values which are to be realized through perseverance. Thus, he is described in Christological terms ("in whose mouth Christ speaks"—*in cuius ore Christus loquebatur*, Chapter 15). There is, moreover, the final exhortation to walk (*ambulare*) in this way in order to serve Christ and the Gospel without duplicity.

It should be noted that the Rule does not propose an "imitation of Christ" in the way spirituality was to be taught for so many centuries after St. Thomas. The Carmelite Order would later devote much attention to the imitation of Christ and to a multiplicity of associated devotional forms, for example, devotions whose focus was the Child Jesus, the Crucified One, the Precious Blood, the Scourging at the Pillar. The Rule, however, clearly and decisively proposes a more dynamic and open way, namely the following of Christ. "Following" indicates attention, adhesion, open accord, creativity, diversification. Only in Chapter 13 do we find an emphasis on imitation, but the context there is itinerant preaching, and thus there is the question of a typically mendicant element assumed in the transfer to Europe.

In the Rule, then, we find a Christology which esteems discipleship and revolves around a "life in Christ," prayerful listening to the Word, celebration of the Mystery, a vision of meditation as a way of imprinting Christ into one's life (e.g., Chapters 14, 16, 18 and Epilogue), and the awaiting of his return. The same way-of-life (*propositum*) as a dedication to the Lord in the Holy Land, which might have been characterized by a self-giving that is concretized in particular historical or geographical frames of reference, is now transformed into an open journey to be undertaken in any place or time

2. Fraternity as the Acting Subject

The network of interpersonal relationships is so strong in the Rule, and further developed and explicated in the modifications of the popes, that we can speak of a kind of "creation of brotherhood"—or in the terminology of the sociologist Max Weber, a *Verbrüderung*. It is, in fact, an internal law of fraternity and of personalized community which is stronger than the needs of individuals, though these latter are respected and acknowledged.

The Rule will not allow the individual "brother" to live according to any personal needs which would have an absolute value. Solitude (Chapters 3, 5, 7), personal meditation (Chapters 7, 14, 17), silence (Chapter 16), having one's own separate cell (Chapters 3, 5, 6), all have meaning *only in terms* of a journey by brothers-in-community. The one who dwells apart (Chapter 7) is a "brother." He receives a personal space according to the *collective judgment* of the community. To keep to this place, without falling into a frenzied desire to change it, is a sign of fidelity in the common project. This is the true meaning of Chapter 5 which forbids the changing or exchanging of cells.

The true "brother" is not one who uses solitude to escape his brethren. Indeed, he cannot understand his solitude except in terms of *multiple relationships* with them. He isolates himself not ultimately for the purpose of being himself, but rather in the depths of his being to be a person-in-relationship. Stripped of all egoism, blockages and superficiality he becomes both "brother" and "disciple" without either ambiguity or hypocritical formalism. He is thus a person capable of *total communion*. In the Rule, the cell is the school of communion and fraternity, and not just a place of personal encounter with God.

Thus we have to conclude that the subject involved in the Rule is not an isolated person, but the assembly (*collegium*) of brothers, namely fraternity, in the sense of a group of brothers living together in a stable way and in close interpersonal relationships. The officially given new name is "brother." Albert always uses it: after the formal greeting to the hermits-in-community, he employs it for the prior (Chapter 17) and for the others (Chapters 2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 18). The whole language used shows that it is not a matter of a generic title, but rather a project of fraternity and of *koinonia*, which is, therefore, reflected in the vocabulary used. The word "brother" is not used in isolation, but in relation to the other members, and hence in relation to the group. It indicates, then, the relational character of their way of life. Signs, structures, elements of structure, roles, values, models and symbols are all manifestations of an intense and authentic project of fraternity. This whole socio-cultural world and its symbolic outreach must be rooted and expressed in faith as well as in prayer, in poverty as well as in work, in asceticism as well as in service, and in respect for tradition as well as in openness to what is new.

If fraternity is to reach its full intensity, there are spiritual needs common to all which must engage the depths of the *whole person*. The *body* is concerned through abstinence, work, physical permanence, the movement towards the oratory—all of which have connotations of community and fraternity. The *psyche* is also involved through the values of detachment, silence, disponibility to change, the judgment of coherence and of feelings. The *anima* is engaged through the values of communion, total and proven fidelity, faith, service, following, eschatological expectation, love and humility.

Both by its institutions and language the Rule warns against amorphous and deadening uniformity (Chapters 9, 11, 12, 13), which would then lead to an hypocrisy that feeds individual egoism. Rather does it seek loyal conduct ("a way of life according to which you shall afterwards live"—*conversationis formulam quam tenere in posterum*, Epilogue). This loyal conduct between brothers penetrates everything, making them grow together in *justice*, which is fidelity to the command of love of God and of neighbor (as Chapter 14 indicates).

The conclusion of the Rule alludes to a generous "giving more," undoubtedly echoing the phrase of the good Samaritan when he provided hospitality for the wounded man (cf. Lk 10:35). For us there is a suggestion that the Rule is not all. It is always incomplete and short (*breviter* of the Epilogue) in the face of lived experiences. It is also insufficient for all future needs. But this "more" should not be a disincarnate or narcissistic "more," but rather should be in the line of service, welcome, and attention to others and to history. It is impossible to go to God without loving the brethren and welcoming them with attentive generosity. This interpretation coheres with the internal movement of the Rule which we have already shown.

3. The Spirituality of Communion

We can give another example. The spirituality proposed by the Rule is, at its most profound level, a spirituality of communion (*koinonia*) according to the Jerusalem model (Chapters 7-11), integrated with Pauline (Chapters 14-16) and with Gospel intimations (Chapters 13, 17, 18, Epilogue).

Communion is *interior (ad intra)* with Christ the Lord (Prologue, Chapters 10, 18), under the guidance of his Word (Chapters 7, 14, 17, 18), of his paschal mystery (Chapters 10, 14), and of his Spirit (the greeting and

Chapter 14). It is in dialogue (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 11), in fidelity to obligations assumed (Chapters 1, 5, 9, 11), in mutual forgiveness (Chapter 11), in sharing (Chapters 9, 11, 15), in spiritual warfare (Chapters 14, 15), in participating in the common law of work to earn one's bread (Chapter 15), in the avoidance of every kind of self-appropriation (Chapter 5, 9), in service (Chapters 6, 9, 17), and in obedience to the word of the Gospel (Chapters 17–18).

Communion is also *exterior (ad extra)*. There is communion with the whole great ascetical and prayer tradition of the ecclesial community (Chapters 8, 9, 12, 13, 16), with people on the road through itinerant preaching (Chapter 13). There is communion in the acceptance with grateful hearts either of table hospitality or of something to be shared (Chapter 13) such as daily food (Chapter 4), or the gift of a place (*locum*, Chapter 2). Besides all this, there is communion with people like the apostle Paul, with the proclamation of the Word and the testimony of work so as not to contaminate the Gospel (Chapter 15), and there is a communion with the wisdom of the ages (Prologue, Chapters 12, 13, 16).³⁰

Emblematic and symbolically evocative is the role of the prior who takes his place at the entrance (Chapter 6). He preserves the fidelity necessary for such a withdrawal from the world. But he is also there to receive and to help. Furthermore, he motivates the whole group to face reality (represented by those who come by). Reality, too, is a path to communion: to solidarity, to being neighbors, as suggested by the text of Luke's Gospel (Lk 10:25-37), which is allusively evoked twice in the chapter on spiritual arms, and in the Epilogue. The exegetical meaning of this passage has to take account of the context of the journey *from* (and implicitly towards) Jerusalem, and which bears therefore a vital resonance for

Carmelites, originally pilgrims to the Holy City. This journey and this aim are now transfigured in a way of life which takes the form of a journey of the heart (*itinerarium corilis*) to the "lasting city which is to come" (cf. Heb 13:14). Those who in Chapter 6 are said to come are not just occasional strangers; there are also generous hosts and companions on the journey (Chapter 13). All this demands fraternal attention on the part of those who serve the Lord as brothers and who believe that in him alone is salvation (Chapter 14).³¹

A spirituality of communion must then be a spirituality of welcome, of dialogue, of solidarity, of service, of universality, of encounter with all the dispersed children of God (cf. Jn 11:52).

Where a Christian cannot any more be a Christian with other Christians, he must be a man with other men.. .Fraternity towards those outside must frequently be manifested through a tolerance which can be defined as a respect for the "otherness of the other," and for the secret which God shares with him.³²

In the context of communion one can understand why there is a complete absence in the Rule of a penal code (*codex poenarum*), that is, an indication of penalties to be inflicted on the brethren. All punitive judgment is left to the Lord on the Last Day (Chapters 14, 16, 18, Epilogue): the brothers are to correct one another with love (Chapter 11); they are to respect the diversity present amongst themselves (Chapters 9, 12, 13); they are to accept one another despite minorities and majorities (Chapters 1, 3)—without any rigid zeal about detailed prescriptions (Chapters 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16) and without absolutizing either law (Chapter 12—"necessity has no law"—*necessitas non habet legem*), or unanimity or uniformity (Chapters 1, 3, 8, 9, 12, 13).

The times in which the Carmelites were born are known as the "Age of the Crusades," that is, the years of waging wars to reconquer the Holy Land. Worldly enterprises in those times took place under the guise of religious pretexts; cruel massacres were justified by what they called service (*servitium*) of the Lord of the Land, Jesus the Savior.³³ Against this background we find the Carmelites—at least as described and demanded by the Rule—having, as their way of life, to live out their fidelity to Christ the Lord with a *disarmed mind*, with a love of peace, with respect for the fragility of each one, and with endurance together of the burden of fidelity (*fidelitas*) and communion. Their warfare is against the deceits of the Evil One, whose temptations would lead them into confusion, into division, and into interior and exterior disquiet (Chapters 5, 14-16).

In other words, they chose a form of life based on respectful cohabitation, on dialogue and trust, on forgiveness and pluralism, on acceptance and co-responsibility, and on service and fraternal correction in love. We can, therefore, certainly speak of a *culture of peace and non-violence*. It is a lesson, and an important role, for our times. A prophetic call is laid upon us, which we must recapture and actualize. From this point of view we see that the original "Carmelites" felt themselves to be church in a way that was innovative: having elements of *opposition* to the views of their time, so that they were in part a *counter-culture*.

But there is more. The "Carmelites" vehemently opposed the conciliar canons of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and of the Second Council of Lyons³⁴ (1274), which attempted to impose a standard typology on all new groups. Eventually they obtained an acknowledgement of their specific autonomy and of their original Rule. Here we see that for them belonging to the ecclesial communion

also included respect for their own charismatic individuality; juridical approbation could not be sought at the price of a loss of identity. The ecclesial form (*forma ecclesiae*) which they embodied did not follow the ecclesiastical categories that were emerging, namely centralization and control, clericalization, and confusion between spiritual and temporal powers; integralism and sacralized institutions, along with stifling rigidity. It was not, therefore, by chance, but by a *deliberate counter-cultural choice* that the Carmelites preserved their identity. Other religious groups at the time felt an urgency to do likewise.

They wished for, and believed in, a church of communion: a church that would be poor and free in fidelity; a church which listened, prayed and received; a church which celebrated and purified itself; a church which loved, suffered, and served; a church which awaited the Lord who was coming, but which ran to encounter the new world already knocking at its door; a church which retained the wisdom of generations of spiritual teachers, but at the same time knew how to inculturate itself within new contexts according to its own specific character, which would guide it in distinguishing between the essentials and what was merely contingent.

The tendency of the Rule to relativize almost everything is to be interpreted as the project of a fraternity which did not espouse harshness or excessive enthusiasm, but rather knew liberation at the heart of its fidelity (cf. Gal 5:13) through a living encounter with the living God. He is present and operating in the community of "brothers" through the Word and the Mystery, through the Spirit and the material structures as well as ecclesiastical institutions, through commended experiences ("way of life"—*propositum*) and events as yet unknown. Everything must express the centrality of

the Lord: the place, activity, rites and rhythms of life, values and aims, models, projects and expectations. Everything must be brought under the Lordship of his law (Chapters 7, 14) and given over to his faithful service (Prologue).

4. The Vocation of Carmel to Prayer

In addition to following Christ and being in communion, we can give a third example of how one can develop the new interpretation in a classical area of our spirituality. The whole Rule proposes in a logical fashion a journey to maturity, as we have already seen in the outline. But there are also expressions which recall more directly this perspective, such as to meditate (*meditare*), from a pure heart (*de corde puro*), to please God (*placere Deo*), in obedience to Jesus Christ (*in obsequio Jesu Christi*), to live devoutly in Christ (*pie vivere in Christo*), the reward of eternal life (*æternæ vitæ mercedem*), everything is to be done in the word of the Lord (*quæcumque ... in verbo Domini fiant*).

Centuries of tradition have delineated the make-up of Carmelites in terms of Chapter 7—prayer and solitude. This chapter defines us as men and women of spirituality, of the interior life, and of prayer. It is frequently said today that our communities are "praying fraternities." How can we square this datum of tradition with an interpretation of the Rule which places its center in Chapter 10, and orients the whole project including therefore Chapter 7) to this tenth chapter?

We would have to say that the emphasis given by tradition to Chapter 7, understood as an injunction to solitude, meditation and prayer, is excellent. But it does not correspond exactly to the literal meaning of the text, much less to the meaning this chapter has in the dynamic symbolism of the whole Rule. Chapter 7 remains fundamental,

but it is because of the Word which must be so absolutized that it fills solitude and the whole of time ("meditating day and night"—*die ac nocte meditantes*), and is transformed into a thirst and a craving ("vigilant"—*vigilantes* in the strong sense of the word). The power of the Word is at its greatest in the Eucharist which is the foundation of all truth proclaimed and communicated, and which gives a sharing in the vitality of the Risen One. The way-of-life is regulated and modelled precisely on eucharistic sacramentality, rather than on solitude and meditative prayer.

Unfortunately, tradition concretized (in solitude/isolation, and in prayer, in a generic sense) an injunction which has its power **not** in solitude itself, but more precisely in meditation on the Word and in what follow this meditation: prayer, fraternal communion, celebration of the Mystery, and other activities which result. There was a concentration especially on being alone and on a vague or weak notion of prayer. Meditation on the Word did not enjoy the primacy which belongs to it, but was rather on the same level as other modes of prayer, including devotions. The result has been an emphasis more on the prayer of solitaries than of the members in fraternity; and on an individualistic spirituality rather than on ecclesial communion.

The prayer to which the Carmelite is to be dedicated is described in the Rule as a "watching in prayer" (*vigilantes in orationibus*, Chapter 7), that is, an existential response to the Word which has been meditated and assimilated. To pray is, then, to pass into the secrets of the heart of God revealed by the Word; it is to stretch towards the One who dwells in the Word in various modes of response (prayer and activity), but it is not limited by it; it is to stretch towards the One who draws us. To watch (*vigilare*) becomes an attentive regard of the whole of our

being and of our whole soul towards God through solitary prayer and the prayer of the Psalter, through fraternity of goods and of hearts, through work and silence, through fasting and service, and through discernment and observances. All these are taken up and completed in the celebration of the daily Passover that synthesizes the aims and historic fruitfulness of the Word, and that is the leaven of unity and the proclamation of the reality which is to come.

In the community of the primitive church we find prayer as a fundamental and frequently noted element (Acts 1:14,24; 2:42; 4:24-30; 6:6; 8:15; 9:40; 10:2; 13:3; 21:5). This prayer is born from a listening together to the Word, it is gathered up in the celebration of worship, and it is consolidated and crowned in the life described as "having one heart and one mind" (Acts 4:32). Such should be the prayer of Carmelites. It must be an experience of church, and therefore be a building (*oikodome*—Eph. 4:16; Col 2:19) of the *koinonia* between the brethren which is perfected and animated by prayer. Prayer has also to be a living watchfulness on the part of people who await their God, desire to see his face, and feel him in their midst as guide and as Lord.

When we speak of Carmelites as "called to prayer," we have to make sure that this phrase is not taken as a call to an individualistic experience, to a set of secret and self-centered acts set apart in rigid places and times. Nor is it some kind of assent to God through solitary or unique paths. This would lead to a form of spiritual narcissism and to a prayer that is all too close to psychological introspection. I should prefer to speak of a call to make the church alive, to make it vibrant as the Body of Christ.

According to the Rule, prayer for Carmelites is not just a dedication to do something, to think in a

certain way, at a certain time. These may form the components of prayer, but they remain valuable only as secondary elements which depend on cultures and persons. Prayer depends on making the forms of the church one's own. It must lead to allowing oneself to be called forth and loved, judged and saved by the Lord of this community. One responds to his activity with the Word and life, with actions and solitude, with struggle and deliberation, with praise and supplication, with silence and memory, and with invocation and vigilant awaiting. It follows, therefore, (that the Carmelite itinerary to maturity is authentic only when it respects the principles of ecclesiality, and is conformed to the needs of an authentic ecclesial experience.

Again, the ascetical and penitential life, so highly valued in the Carmelite tradition, must not be lived as an individualistic asceticism, but as an ecclesial journey. It is suffering "fidelity," the pain of an integrity which seeks "to live devoutly in Christ" (cf. 2 Tim 3:12), in the context of a church which knows that human frailty obscures its face, but which seeks in the Lord alone (Chapter 14) liberation and splendor (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 48).

To be capable of being "vigilant in prayer" (Chapter 7) as the praying church, we have, at the same time, to be the church of reconciliation and service, the church of discipleship and witness to the Word, and the church of the broken bread and of the consolation of the Spirit. Only in this way is prayer authentic.

The place "to be constructed in the middle of the cells" in the Rule is architectonically in the center both of the space and of the text itself (Chapter 10). The oratory has a power to evoke values and meaning which go beyond every other element, and it has the power to draw them all to itself as

to a summit and a measuring gauge. The oratory, indeed, orients everything in its own direction: all is pointed towards what is celebrated there, and what is expressed in a daily coming together (*convenire*) is a summons to come out from solitude, and from the danger of self-sufficiency in the separate, personal cells (Chapter 7), in order to encounter the "brethren" in the place where the Lord lives in his Mystery. There they are called upon to listen (*ad audienda*, Chapter 10) and to foster communion towards a total unity.

We could use an idea which we find in the oldest extant text of Carmelite spirituality, *The Fiery Arrow* (*Ignea sagitta*) from 1270 by Nicolas the Frenchman. He refers to the text in I Peter 2:4-5, and states that we are called to be as living stones dressed by grace to build up "the glorious edifice of the celestial city, Jerusalem."³⁵ Applying this idea to the Carmelite project we can say that our journey of the heart (for Teresa, *The Way of Perfection*, for John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*) reaches its perfection when the adhesion to Christ the living stone (the "following" of the Prologue), and the growth of the seed of the Word of God transforms us ("day and night meditating on the law of the Lord," Chapter 7; Chapter 14—"Let the Word of God abound in your mouth and hearts"). Thus we become as living stones for the building of the house of the Lord (cf. 1 Pt 1:23; 2:4 f).

III. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

We return to the general title, "What is the heart of the Rule?" The response is clear: it is the daily celebration of the Eucharist in the topographical "center" of the dwellings. All the other elements converge on this experience, and on the place where it is accomplished. Such celebration constitutes the summit and source, the fullness and the model for the whole project.

We have also shown how this new interpretation can be developed as a commentary. Our way of doing a commentary is based on historical, theological, structural and intentional criteria which are carefully and scientifically evaluated. Yet this way of interpreting slips into the text in a natural way, almost as the implicit demand of the Rule's meaning, and as a development of the most valid aims of the Rule. In recent years we have demonstrated a large number of other applications, as well as shown how it is able to comment on the text.³⁶

We thus venture to think that in this way the possibility has been shown of remaining faithful to the full text, of finding value for each single part, and at the same time of avoiding fragmentation or reductionism. But it has been equally shown that it is possible to derive new, vital proposals for our time which are in harmony with the ecclesial and cultural needs of today. The Roman document *Mutuæ relationes* (1978) states that the charismatic experience of the founder is "transmitted to disciples because they live it, preserve it, deepen it, and continually develop it in harmony with the Body of Christ, which is in perpetual growth" (n. 11). This, in fact, is what we have tried to do.

The values of a "fidelity-in-becoming" seem to be clearly absent in the traditional forms of commentary, even in almost all the most recent ones. One reason is that they set out with preconceived interpretations which are external to the text, on the basis of which they twist the text to conclusions which it does not support. An example would be the eremitical or Marian readings of the text, or ones that would insist on the spirituality of the Desert Fathers. Another reason is that not knowing how to find a global movement in the whole text, they reduce it to bits that are juxtaposed without any justification, and finally

they impose on the text quite meager moralistic meanings. Again, the reason may be that the power of symbolic and intentional language is forgotten, even though it was quite dominant at the time of the Rule's composition. Finally, the reason may be the failure to distinguish adequately between the Rule as a process in the formation of a text, and the Rule as a project, an open way of life. This last omission has borne fruit in useless and improbable projects at being faithful to the "Primitive Rule," and unfortunately also in quite un-Christian intolerance between the Carmelite families.

The final moment of the process of the formation of the text (1247) is also the beginning of the history of interpretations of the "way of life" through commentaries both written and lived. Other generations have shared in this history of

exegesis—generations different from ours in their problems, mentality and aspirations. We, too, are called upon to give our contribution, not as external spectators, but as active protagonists especially by the way we live. There will, therefore, never be an end to investigations of the Rule. It is only through a plurality of perspectives and competences, of spiritual sensibility and committed journeying, that the Rule will keep its inspirational role and enable us to bring from the family treasure "things new and things old" (cf. Mt 13:52).

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*"Put on holiness
as your breastplate,
and it will enable*

*you to
love
the
Lord*



*your God with all your Heart
and Soul and Strength,
and your neighbor as yourself."*

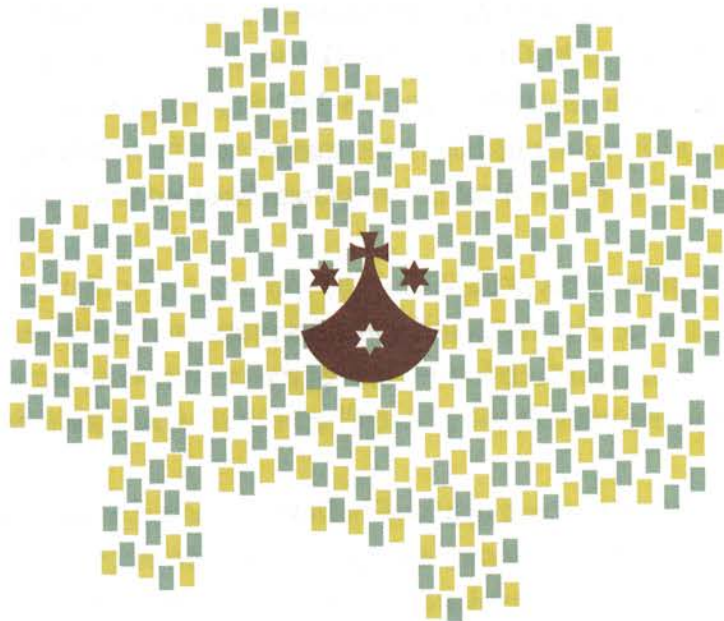
Notes

- 1 See Joachim Smet, "A list of Commentaries on the Carmelite Rule," in *The Sword*, 11(1947), 297-302. See, also: A Martino, "Il commento alla Regola nel Carmelo antico," in *Eph. Carm.*, 2 (1948), 99-122; Victor of Jesus Mary, "La exposición canónico-moral de la Reggla carmelitana segun los commentadores Descalzos," in *Eph. Carm.*, 2 (1948), 123-203; Egidio Palumbo, *Lecture della Regola del Carmelo*, Thesis ad Licentiam, Claretianum, Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, Roma, 1983.
- 2 The numbering used throughout is that found in the Vatican registers which begin with the Prologue, then proceed to Chapters 1-18, and then concludes with the Epilogue. This notion is central to the symbol employed throughout this article.
- 3 E. Palumbo, "Lecture della Regola lungo i secoli," in *La Regola del Carmelo oggi*, (Bruno Secondin (ed.), Roma: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1983), p. 165.
- 4 The results have been presented in the following works: B. Secondin, *La Regola del Carmelo: Per una nuova interpretazione*, (Roma: Edizioni Institutum Carmelitanum, 1982; Spanish ed.: Madrid: Libreria carmelitana, 1983); *La Regola del Carmelo oggi*, (B. Secondin, ed., (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1983); *Un proyecto de vita: La regla del Carmelo hoy*, B. Secondin et. ali, eds. (Madrid: Ed. Paulinas, 1985); B. Secondin, ed., *Profeti de fraternita, Per una nuova visione della spiritualita carmelitana*, (Bologna: Ed. Dehoniane, 1985, in particular pp. 67-101). Also forming a part of the work accomplished in these years: Michael Brundell, "Vivere in Christo:" *Biblical Spirituality in the Rule of Saint Albert of Jerusalem*, (Thesis ad Licentiam, Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, Roma 1982); V. Mosca, *Profilo storico di Alberto patriarca di Gerusalemme*, (Thesis ad Licentiam, Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, Roma 1983).
- 5 Cf. D. Rees et al., *Consider Your Call, A Theology of Monastic Life Today*, (London: 1978; esp. pp. 43-56). Some other interesting ideas are found in the article "Regola/Regole," in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, vol. 7 (Roma: Ed. Paoline, 1984, 1410 - 1617); cf. also A. De Vogüé, "Sub regula vel abbate: Étude sur la signification théologique des règles monastiques anciennes," in *Coll. Cist.* 37(1971), 209-241.
- 6 For example, the studies of Elias Friedman, O.C.D., *The Latin Hermits of Mount Carmel, A Study in Carmelite Origins*, (Rome: Institutum Historicum Teresianum, 1979); C. Cicconetti, *La Regola del Carmelo: Origine, natura, significato*, (Roma: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1973; English tr. *The Rule of Carmel*, Darien: 1984); Ambrosius a S. TERESIA, "Untersuchungen über Verfasser, Abfassungszeit, Quellen und Bestätigung der Karmeliter-Regel", in *Eph. Carm.* 2 (1948), 17-48.
- 7 This is one of the characteristics of the Dutch commentary. *Carmelite Rule*, (Introduction, translation into Dutch and annotations by O. Steggink, J. Tigcheler, K. Waijman; trans. into English by Th. Vrakking in collaboration with J. Smet; Almelo, 1979).
- 8 Soeur Eliane, O.C.D., "La Règle du Carmel et la tradition monastique orientale," in *Carmel* 8 (1974), 354-372; Soeur Eliane (Orthodox), "La Règle du Carmel. Points communs et differences avec le monachisme orthodoxe", in *Carmel* 14 (1980), 221-231.
- 9 Ludovico Saggi, "Mitigazione del 1432 della Regola carmelitana. Tempo e persone," in *Carmelus* 5 (1958), 3-29.

- 10 P. Garrido, *El hogar espiritual de Santa Teresa*, (Institutum Carmelitanum, Roma, 1983); L. Saggi, "Santa Teresa de Jesus y la 'Regula primitiva,'" in *Un proyecto de vida*, pp. 133-147; L. Saggi, *Le origini dei carmelitani scalzi: 1567 - 1593, storia e storiografia*, (Institutum Carmelitanum, Roma 1986); T. Alvarez, "Nuestra 'Regla del Carmen' en el pensamiento de Santa Teresa," in *Un proyecto de vida*, pp. 148-163.
- 11 The following were generous but incomplete attempts: Kilian Healy, "The Carmelite Rule after Vatican II", in *Analecta O. Carm.*, 29 (1981); 31-52. Stephano Possanzini, *La Regola dei Carmelitani: Storia e Spiritualità*, (Florence, 1979). Carlos Mesters, "Fundamentação bíblica de espiritualidade carmelitana," in *Carmelus*, 26 (1978), 77-100. V. Wilderink, "Compromisso carmelitano na Igreja de America latina," in *ibid.*, 12-49. Also lacking this sense of vital inspiration is the work of J. Jantsch and C. Butterweck, *Die Regel des Karmel: Geschichte und Gegenwart einer Lebensnorm*, (Afchaffenburg: Kaffke, 1986).
- 12 A synthetic presentation of these stages is to be found in D. Lombardo, "Gli strati del testo e loro significato," in *La Regola del Carmelo oggi*, pp. 151-156.
- 13 Cf. *Il carisma della vita religiosa, dono dello Spirito alla Chiesa per il mondo*, (Milan: Ed. Ancora, 1981). *Carisma e istituzione: Lo Spirito interroga i religiosi*, (Rome: Ed. Rogate, 1983). F. Ciardi, *I fondatori uomini dello Spirito: Per una teologia del carisma di fondatore*. (Rome: Città Nuova, 1982). B. Levesque, "L'ordre religieux comme project rêvé: utopie et/ou secte?" *ArchScSocRel* 41(1976), 77-108.
- 14 Cf. F. Alberoni, *Movement and Institution*. (New York, 1984). L. Moulin, "Pour une sociologie des ordres religieux," in *Social Compass*, 10 (1963), 145-170; L. Cada, *Shaping the Coming Age of Religious Life*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1979).
- 15 See, for example, the inexact statement about the various "Rules" (Albertine, Innocentian, Eugenian) by T. Alvarez, "Nuestra 'Regla del Carmen' en el pensamiento de Santa Teresa" in *Un proyecto de vida*; pp. 148-63, especially pp. 154 ff. A different vision is found in L. Saggi, *Le origini dei Carmelitani scalzi*, p. 10-33. Also of interest is O. Steggink, *Arraigo e innovación*. (Madrid, 1976).
- 16 A color reproduction of the text, preserved in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Reg. Vat. 21, ff. 465^v-466^r is to be found after page xxi. A complete history of the bull is found in Carlo Cicconetti, *The Rule of Carmel*, chapter 7.
- 17 This is to be found in Philip Ribot's anthology (dated about 1379), *Decem libri de institutione et peculiaribus gestis religiosorum carmelitarum*, in the *Epistola Cyrilli*, ch. 3. We have published the "Albertine redaction" presented there, taking the text from the most authoritative manuscript, MS 779, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, ff. 57v-59r, in *La Regola del Carmelo: Per una nuova interpretazione*, pp. 91-97.
- 18 This is a chapter of history which one hopes has now been transcended. For the actual situation Cf. "Le mitigazioni oggi," in *La Regola del Carmelo oggi*, pp. 272-279.
- 19 Among the many titles that exist we mention the following: Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*. (Evanston, 1974). Also his book *The Rule of Metaphor*, (Toronto, 1977). I. Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms*, (London, 1974). C.A. Bernard, *Teologia simbolica*, (Rome, 1981). G. Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*. Ernst Cassirer, *Symbol, Myth and Culture: Essays and Lectures of Ernst Cassirer, 1935-1945*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979). Umberto Eco, *Trattato di semiotica generale*, (2nd ed., Milan: Bompiani, 1984). E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, (New York, 1959). B. Ortigues, *Le discours et le symbole*. (Paris: Aubier, 1962). J. Trabant,

- Elementi di semiotica*. (Napoli: Liguori, 1980). V. and E. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).
- 20 *L'eremitismo in Occidente nei secoli XI e XII*, (Atti della 2ª Settimana internazionale di studio, Mendola, 1961, Milan: Università Cattolica del S. Cuore, 1965). *Istituzioni monastiche e istituzioni canonicali in Occidente (1123-1215)*, (Atti della 7ª Settimana internazionale di Studio, Mendola, 28 August-3 September, 1977, Milan, 1980). Jacobus de Vitriaco [Jacques de Vitry], *Historia orientalis*, in J. Bongars (ed.), *Gesta Dei per Francos*, (Hanover, 1611). G. Fedlato, *Perché le crociate: Saggio interpretativo*, (Bologna: Ed. Patron, 1980). H. Grundmann, *Movimenti religiosi nel medioevo*, (Bologna: Ed. Il Mulino, 1975). M. Cohn, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200*, (Church History Outlines 5; London: SPCK, 1972). R. Pernoud, *Les hommes de la croisade*, (Paris: Fayard-Tallandier, 1982). J. Prawler, *Histoire du royaume latin de Jerusalem*, (2 vols., Paris: CNRS, 1975). A. Vaucher, *La spiritualità du moyen âge occidental*, (Paris, 1975).
- 21 The chapter divisions first appear officially in the edition of the Constitutions of the prior general Giovanni Battista Caffardi (1586), but they had already been used by John Soreth (+1471) a century before in his commentary on the Rule, *Expositio paraenetica*.
- 22 Cf. M.L. Gatti Ferrer (ed.), "*La dimora di Dio con gli uomini*" (*Apoc 21:3*); *Immagini della Gerusalemme celeste dal III al XIV secolo*. (Milan: Ed. Vita e Pensiero, 1983, with a complete bibliography on pp. 256-283). G. Olsen, "The Idea of the *Ecclesia Primitiva* of Twelfth-Century Canonists," in *Traditio* 25 (1969), 61-86. G. Leff, "The Apostolic Ideal in Later Medieval Ecclesiology," in *JoThSt* 18 (1967), 58-82. J.M. Howe, *Greek Influence on the Eleventh-Century Western Revival of Hermitism*, (Ph.D. dissertation, Los Angeles: University of California, 1979). M.H. Vicaire, *L'imitazione degli Apostoli: Monaci, canonici, mendicanti, IV - XIII secoli*, (Rome: Ed. Coletti, 1964). G. Miccoli, "Ecclesiae primitivae forma," in *Chiesa Gregoriana*. (Firenze: Ed. Nuova Italia, 1966; pp. 255-299). P.C. Bori, *Chiesa primitiva: L'immagine della comunità delle origini - Atti 2:42-47; 4:32-37 - nella storia della Chiesa antica*, (Brescia: Ed. Paideia, 1974). E. Peretto, *Movimenti spirituali laicali del Medioevo. Tra ortodossia ed eresia*. (Roma: Ed. Studium, 1985).
- 23 Cf. Vicaire, *L'imitazione degli apostoli*, pp. 51-57.
- 24 One should note the presence of phrases and concepts proper to the monastic tradition of the Fathers (e.g., Chs. 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, Epilogue), and of the new types of legislation, such as the permission to eat meat at the table of one's host (Chapter 13), which come from the Constitutions of the Dominicans (1241).
- 25 Cf. the reviews of *La Regola del Carmelo oggi* by Gh. Flipo in *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 80 (1985), pp. 177-181; and by M. Conti in *Antonianum* 60 (1985), 531-534.
- 26 Cf. the edition of Adrian Staring, "Nicholai prioris generalis ordinis Carmelitarum *Ignea sagitta*, in *Carmelus* 9 (1962), 237-307; c. 1,22s; c. V, 70-77.
- 27 Cf. L. Saggi (ed.), "Constitutiones capituli Londinensis anni 1281," in *Anal.O.Carm.* 15 (1950), 203-245; the reference is to the *rubrica secunda*, p. 208, "*ex praecepto sanctorum patrum iubemur habere cor unum et animam unam in Domino.*"
- 28 Cf. B. Secondin, "Tentare fraternità: Il progetto evangelico del Carmelo," in *Profeti di fraternità*, pp. 67-101, esp. pp. 73-74, 87-89.

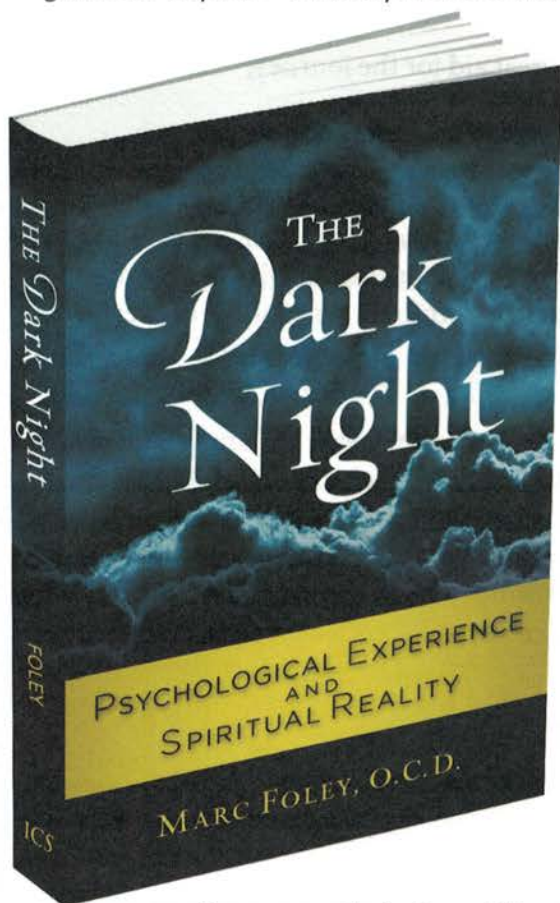
- 29 Cf. the works already cited: *Profeti di fraternità*, esp. pp. 7-14, 84-101; *La regola del Carmelo: Per una nuova interpretazione*, esp. pp. 28-42, 76-86; *La regola del Carmelo oggi*; *Un proyecto de vida: La regla del Carmelo hoy* (a revised and expanded version of the preceding book). There are also some new developments in the series *Documentos carmelitas* (Ed. Libreria carmelitana, Ayala 35, Madrid); *Herencia y nueva profecía*, n. 4, 1983; *Costruirse en comunidad*, n. 5, 1984; *Caminos de vida*, n. 7, 1986.
- 30 Cicconetti's *La regola del Carmelo [The Rule of Carmel]* has shown the many links, both juridical and spiritual, with the monastic tradition. Cf. note 24 *supra*.
- 31 The work by David Blanchard, O. Carm., *Models in the Muddle: Carmelite Origins as a Hermeneutic Problem*, (Washington Theological Union, 1983), offers interesting suggestions for further development with the help of more ample documentation.
- 32 J. Ratzinger, "Fraternité," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, V:1165.
- 33 G. Fedalto, *Perché crociate: Saggio interpretativo*. (Bologna: Ed. Patron, 1980). M Erbstösser, *The Crusades*, (Newton Abbot: David & Charles Brunel House, 1978).
- 34 For a recent synthesis with bibliography see the- articles in the *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, "Lateranense IV," V:474-95, and "Lione II," V:574-678.
- 35 *Ignea sagitta*, 1:22-23.
- 36 Cf. the works cited above in ftn. 28.



The Dark Night: Psychological Experience and Spiritual Reality

by Fr. Marc Foley, O.C.D.

Isn't just an excellent commentary on *The Dark Night* by St. John of the Cross, it's a practical spiritual guide for anyone—even if you never intend to read the work upon which it expounds.



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This book offers some of the best descriptions I've read about stages of prayer and progress in the spiritual life, offering straightforward examples that allow the reader to view his or her life in a clearer way. In fact, Foley's explanations of the imperfections of beginners are so vivid, I felt like the Samaritan woman who said, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done."

So often we misinterpret what is happening in our spiritual lives. What appears to be a setback is actually progress, and what we view as holiness is only a selfish search for pleasure.

"These beginners use an emotional yardstick for judging the spiritual worth of what they do to such an extent that 'if they do not procure any sensible feeling and satisfaction, they think they have accomplished nothing. As a result they judge poorly . . . and think that they have done nothing,'" writes Foley.

In a similar vein, Foley points out that, "All of our explicitly religious activities are not necessarily spiritual, for we can perform them 'because of the satisfaction attached to [them]'. . . Sometimes what seems like a spiritual conversion amounts to little more than a lateral shift from the 'goods of earth' to the 'goods of heaven.'"

As I reflected on these words and my own life, it quickly became apparent how many projects on which I've worked were for my own gratification, and not out of love for others nor a call from God. Foley made me realize how much time I've spent working on "spiritual projects" when God was calling me to spend more time in prayer or serving my family.

I particularly appreciate the book's use of stories from literature and the author's personal life. Whether it's examples from Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* or others, Foley's use of stories makes the book a quick and enjoyable read.

I wish this book had been around when I was younger, as it would have helped me avoid many misconceptions about my own spiritual life. Not that I would have understood all aspects of the book, but Foley provides an excellent framework to guide our progress toward union with our Creator. Some of the concepts are immediately useful while others, I suspect, will unfold in my life over time. I especially recommend *The Dark Night: Psychological Experience and Spiritual Reality* to beginners and those discerning a call to Carmel.

While the book is engaging, it is also challenging. Foley writes, “Just as self-knowledge is painful, so too is change. And the change native to the dark night is excruciatingly painful because it involves modifying or eradicating deeply ingrained habits that have taken root within us over a lifetime.”

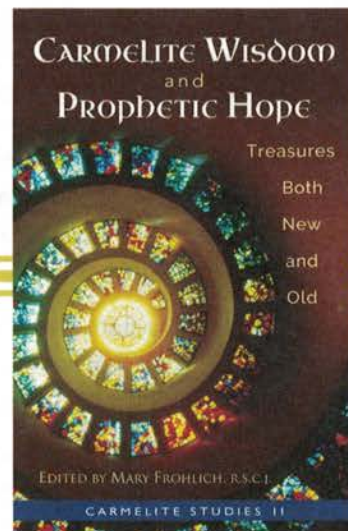
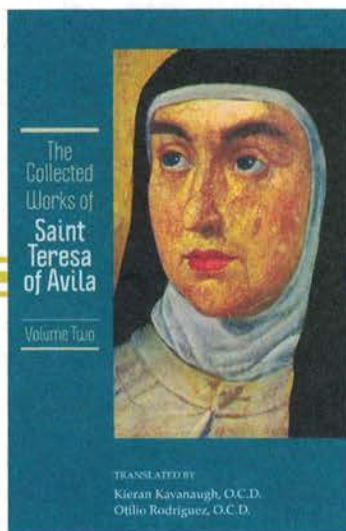
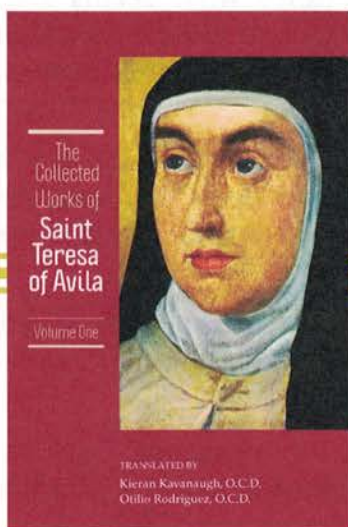
Nevertheless, as Secular Carmelites, the dark night is the road to which we’ve been called and the road we’ve chosen.

The Dark Night: Psychological Experience and Spiritual Reality is a great aid for the journey, and a book I will read more than once.

One last thought: *The Dark Night: Psychological Experience and Spiritual Reality* is a good companion to Foley’s earlier book, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel: Reflections*, which explains St. John of the Cross’s work of the same name, using similar techniques and examples. Reading the books back to back would help reinforce some of the concepts, and at just more than 200 pages each, is easily accomplished.

Reviewed by Tim Bete, O.C.D.S.
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The Raw Stillness of Heaven (2017) and
Wanderings of an Ordinary Pilgrim (2019).

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