



Rays of Carmel

Community of Our Mother of Good Counsel Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites

Jul-Sept 2010

Special Interest Articles:

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- Frequently Asked Questions: Difference Between Meditation and Contemplation



Our Lady, Queen and Beauty
of Mt. Carmel leading us to Jesus!

NEXT MEETING: Our next meeting is on the **2nd Sunday, Sept. 12th, from 1:00 – 4:30 pm** in the **Family Life Center** at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Huber Heights, OH.

Schedule for the day:

11 am – Council Meeting followed by Discernment Interviews

1:00 pm – Formation Classes

2:00 pm – Social Break

2:15 pm - General Meeting/Presentation on St. Teresa of Avila's "Life" by Chris Cotter

3:30-4:30 – Expostion/Adoration/ Meditation/Evening Prayer/Benediction

Faith and reason

<http://louangedesagloire.blogspot.com/search?q=jamart>

"Although we can come to know God through the exercise of our reason, it is above all by faith that we can enter into contact with Him. It is faith alone which reveals to us the mystery of the Trinity of persons in the one divine Nature and discloses to us the mysteries of Christ. It is faith which teaches us that we are the children of God, born of Him by grace, and that we must try to reproduce the divine life within ourselves, if we wish to share in the happiness of God in Heaven.

Hence, the Carmelite ideal asks the soul to keep itself habitually in the presence of God with its gaze fixed upon Him, to live in Him, who is present everywhere, but present especially in Heaven and in the soul. Again, the soul keeps itself united with Christ who lives in it, by making efforts to live as He lived, to remain as He does *in sinu Patris* (in the bosom of the Father). Living according to the Carmelite ideal, the soul judges everything in the light of faith, although it does not neglect to reason on that account. St John of the Cross himself invites us to take counsel from reason in order to fulfill what it dictates to us regarding the way to God. But faith must rise above reason and change reason's natural mode of being to take on a divine form."

-- from *The Spirit and Prayer of Carmel* by Fr François Jamart, OCD

Joy in Suffering: A Guide for Beginners, Part 2

By Phoebe S. Spinrad, OCDS

(Copyrighted and reprinted with permission from *Flos Carmeli*, newsletter of the Worthington, Ohio OCDS Community, May 2010. Part 1 was printed in our May issue.)

Last month, we talked about developing patience in suffering, accepting it for the love of God and bearing it *in* love. The suffering doesn't go away, but with God's grace we begin transforming it into an act of love – a sharing in Christ's love, the love that suffered for us all. This should fill us with gratitude for the privilege of drawing so close to Christ, and ultimately with the joy that our saints speak about. However, as we also saw last month, the gratitude and joy don't necessarily lodge in the emotions, at least not until the intellect and will are fully trained.

So how do we do this training? As with most other kinds of training, we start with repetition, and by sorting out the steps and tackling the easiest steps first. In fact, we might start by examining what we mean by "suffering" in the first place. Last month, we read Fr. Gabriel's broad definition: "everything that is displeasing to our nature." Now let's look at the range of these displeasing things and how to start dealing with them.

Physical and mental pain. Sometimes physical suffering can be easier to deal with than mental suffering, because although the body is in pain, in most cases the mind is still strong enough to determine how to handle the pain. But when our emotions are under attack, when the mind itself is weakened, what do we do then? We'll answer that question shortly.

Degrees of pain. Oddly enough, a moderate amount of suffering may be the easiest kind to deal with. When a physical pain is excruciating, it may take such hold of the faculties that the mind seems incapable of action; or it may attack so suddenly that the mind is taken by surprise and seems to lose the opportunity to take action. Similarly, terrible grief, fear, or some other deep or violent emotion may seem to paralyze the will.

Conversely, a very *low* degree of physical or mental suffering – a rash, a bruise, the sniffles, embarrassment over doing something silly in public, worry about a computer crash or a strange noise in the car engine – may seem too trivial even to call "suffering." But if we think this way, not only will we miss an opportunity to turn the 'displeasing things' into a good, but we may also increase our unease with a feeling of guilt for being upset about such trivialities.

First things first. The point is to engage the will and turn it toward God. And before attempting any act of the will, we ask for grace. The request doesn't have to be elaborate; we may simply say the obvious: "I ask for grace." Next, we make the offering: "Please accept this headache," or "I join my grief to yours," or something equally brief. (Author's note: During a really intense attack of pain, I've sometimes been reduced to a mental shout of "Here! Take this! Use it!" Not very elegant, or even polite, but at least it engages the will.)

Stockpiling the requests. We begin our training with a conscious effort to say a brief prayer of offering whenever something goes wrong. The point is to use the words to focus ourselves on God, just as we do when we say "My Lord and my God" at the elevation of the Host at Mass. The simple phrase reminds us of where we are and what's important. Gradually, we build a stockpile of brief prayers and also a habit of responding to setbacks with an offering. Then, when a severe or sudden pain comes, or when we're exhausted from long periods of suffering, we won't have to worry about engaging the intellect that's already in trouble; we'll be responding almost automatically from the will. And once the will is set in motion with the simple requests – "I ask for grace. I offer this." – we may discover that the more elaborate prayers follow and the mind finds itself refreshed. From there, our confidence begins to build.

**Growing in Holiness...
Serving the Church #14**

By: Elizabeth Pantas, OCDS

"During mental prayer..remain before God like a poor, mute paralytic at the door of a rich man." ~ Bro. Lawrence of the Resurrection, OCD (17th century)

The following poem suggests a *vision* of the *attitudes* we need to take to our one-on-one time ("**mental prayer**" time) with God.

Beggar Girl

My whole ambition is
to be a little beggar child
sitting at my Father's gate.
When He appears
I shake my little beggar's cup
and hold it high so
He can see its emptiness.
Sometimes He gives me
crusts of old, stale bread,
or, to my great surprise,
the choicest morsels of His table.
To me, it all tastes just the same-
whatever comes from my Father's hand
tastes like whispered blessings
that spread their fragrance
and their warmth
throughout my being.
When He fails to come
my little cup stays empty.
Sadly, I set it down to find,
oh mystery,
that it is filled and overflowing
with nothing but love.
Beggar girl, eat your fill,
for you are loved!
~ Betsy Vandermeer, OCDS

The first attitude depicted in this poem is that we are little children before God. We are dependant on Him and surrendered: we wait, trusting, "at Our Father's gate". When He appears to us interiorly, we become excited and "shake our little beggar's cup" to show Him our emptiness, littleness, *and openness* which we know draws down His love and mercy. Second, we are happy with whatever He gives us: consolations, "choicest morsels", trials, darkness, *whatever He wants*. We know that whatever He gives us is *good* for us. Third, when He seems not to be there at all, like children who can't find their father or mother, we are sad, until we realize "oh mystery" that he or she was there all along, watching over us and loving us! God is there loving each one

Asceticism is....

"Asceticism is the effort to cleanse the soul of everything that can hinder the action of God in it."

"Asceticism is the effort put forth by the soul, under the action of grace, to overcome the unruly tendencies of human nature, to cleanse the soul of everything that can hinder the action of God in it, and to strive for union with God. Carmelite asceticism is definitely oriented towards contemplation. This is logical, since contemplation is the objective of Carmelite life. Carmelite asceticism has yet another characteristic: its center is love. There is nothing astonishing in this: love is the principal element of Carmelite spirituality; it is not merely its final goal, it is already there at its beginning and it is upon love that the soul relies all during its journey. Carmelite prayer is oriented towards contemplation, and while it does not undervalue reasoning, it 'consists much more in loving than in thinking.'

The efforts which the Carmelite will make to conquer his passions, his evil tendencies, and his defects, will therefore consist rather in acts of love for God than in a direct struggle against these unruly inclinations. At least this is the way recommended by St John of the Cross. He does not underestimate the efficacy of a direct struggle consisting in reflections on the ugliness and the malice of sin and the consequences it entails; or in acts of the virtue opposed to the defect of the temptation to be overcome. Instead, the manner of behavior recommended by him is to turn away from the temptation and to turn towards God and cling to Him by love. He considers this method easier, more fruitful, more perfect. In fact, not only does it free the soul from the attraction and attachment of created things, it raises the soul up to God and makes it grow in love."

-- *The Spirit and Prayer of Carmel*
by Fr François Jamart, OCD

"There is one ONLY THING to do her below: to love Jesus, to win souls for Him so that He may be loved. Let us seize with jealous care every least opportunity of self-sacrifice. Let us refuse Him nothing. He does so want our love!"

~St. Therese, VI Letter to Her Sister, Celine

Joy in Detachment – Part 2

By Mary Tracy, OCDS

(Copyrighted and reprinted with permission from *Flos Carmeli*, newsletter of the Worthington, Ohio OCDS Community, May 2010. Part 1 was printed in our May issue.)

In looking toward the Church to learn more about holy detachment, we first acknowledge Mary, Queen of all Saints of the Church, as our primary example of detachment. In her *fiat*, in Mary's humble self-donation to Love, in her attentive love for the Sacred Humanity of the Beloved Son of the Father, Mary gave her *whole* person to the *All* of the Divine Trinity. Giving one's whole self to God, and giving nothing of one's self to what is not God is detachment. Mary's life is a life lived through, with and in the Word Made Flesh. She is attached only to the Eternal Son of the Father.

What is it for our souls to live attached only to Jesus Christ, the Saving Sacrament of the Blessed Trinity? It is detachment from all that is not God. And this is the holy life of the Catholic Church in the world. At the last supper, in Christ's prayer to His Father for his disciples, we hear Him call upon us to live in the world attached only to Him: "(T)hese things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy filled in themselves....I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from evil. They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. Sanctify them in truth" (John 17:13, 15-17).

To live a holy detachment from the things of this world we need the self-knowledge to recognize the truth of our Catholic Faith that God made us in His image and, like Mary, our created souls long *only* to be filled with the Divine Indwelling – to be "full of grace." St. Thomas Aquinas teaches us "a man's soul must first, with Christ, become dead to this world, and then, afterwards, be buried with him in the hiding place of divine contemplation" (*De humanitate Christi*, cap. 42, qtd. in *Meditations for Lent from St. Thomas Aquinas*, 1937; Roman Catholic Books). St. Augustine proclaimed this truth of detachment being fitting for our created souls when he wrote in his *Confessions*: "Thou hast made us for Thyself and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in Thee" (I.1). Our pure rest in Christ is found in His holy rest in us, and such is the joy of detachment.

(cont.)

This positive understanding of detachment is sketched out for us in the simple story of *The Kingdom of the Golden City: An Allegory for Children* by Mother Mary Loyola (1921; Biblio Resource Publications, 2007). In this tale, the king faithfully comes to visit the little girl he calls Dilecta, but too often he finds her preoccupied, having no room in her hut for him to rest and no place for him to place his presents. In the reality of our lives, our Divine King comes to us; His grace and presence comes to us especially in the sacraments of His Church, and, most generously, in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. In the Holy Eucharist, Christ gives to us a deeper incorporation into His Way of perfection through our receiving Him into the "hut" of our bodies and souls.

The story of Dilecta's growth in her desire to detach from everything that is not God illustrates our own holy desires to be attached only to Christ for His sake, and for the sake of our heavenly destiny and that of the whole world. This "allegory for children" also helps us appreciate that the "Eucharist is 'the source and summit of the Christian life'" (*Lumen gentium*, qtd. in *Catechism* 1324). And that all apostolates, (all personal growth in holiness through the practice of detachment, etc.) are "bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it." For the Holy Eucharist is "Christ himself, our Pasch" (*Presbyterorum ordinis* qtd. in *Catechism* 1324). Our particular Eucharistic life in the Church and our particular Carmelite life in the Church is the same life.

As Secular Carmelites of the Catholic Church, we turn explicitly to St. Teresa of Jesus, St. John of the Cross, and the lives of the Carmelite saints for spiritual direction in our growth in a joy in detachment that we can offer to God for others.

Next month: We turn to our Holy Founders and other Carmelite saints so that their words may help us to become true children of Mary, Carmelites who long to live the happy beatitude of our Mother, and rest solely in God.

Quote on Adversity:

"As to the aridity you are suffering from, it seems to me our Lord is treating you like someone He considers strong: He wants to test you and see if you love Him as much at times of aridity as when He sends you consolations. I think this is a very great favor for God to show you." ~ St. Teresa of Jesus

Evening Prayer for Sept. 12th, 2010:**24th Sunday of Ordinary Time/Week IV**

Hymn: "Love Divine All Loves Excelling"

#40 in one volume of Christian Prayer;

p. 1101 in Vol. IV of set

Evening Prayer II (One Vol) p. 931

Evening Prayer II (Vol. IV, set) p. 1101

Aug-Sept Birthdays—Happy Blessed Birthday!

Aug. 31 – Jaqueline Rust

Sept. 9 – Colleen Sollinger

Sept. 13 – Teresa Trygstad

Sept. 18 – Lisa LaRosa

Sept. 29 – Jo Ann Daniels

**Your Council Members:**Spiritual Assistant: Fr. John MacQuarrie
Church Ph (937) 698-4520Asst to Fr. MacQuarrie: Deacon Baldwin
Home Ph (937) 667-5675President: Frances Harry
Home Ph (937) 236-9313Director of Formation: Jeanne Paula
Home Ph (937) 428-9817Asst. Dir. of Formation/Council Rep: Mark Olson
Home Ph (937) 427-0554Council Rep: Chris Cotter
Home Ph (937) 653-8086

Council Rep: Mark Danis

Home Ph (937) 767-1343

Secretary: Mike Donovan

Treasurer: Lynn Bete

Hospitality: Pat Rooney

Our Web Site: www.daytoncarmelites.org**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**--Next meeting: **Oct 10th** (2nd Sunday) at 1 pm--Novena to St. Therese will start Sept 22-30 from 7-8 pm
at St. Peter's; please join us if you can--Feast Day Mass for St. Therese on **Oct 1, 2010** at St.
Peter's at 8:30 am--OCDS Day of Recollection: **Nov 14th**Place: Transfiguration Parish & Transfiguration Center
for Spiritual Renewal in Ludlow Falls, OHwww.transfigurationcenter.com with Fr. John
MacQuarrie speaking on the Psalms.--Next community retreat is **Apr. 2-3, 2011** with Fr.
Daniel Chowning, OCD at Transfiguration Center for
Spiritual Renewal in Ludlow Falls, OH. **SAVE the date!***Carmelite Book Recommendation:***“Armchair Mystic: Easing Into Contemplative Prayer” by Mark E. Thibodeaux, S. J., St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2001.**

This is a very accessible book on the practicalities and mysteries of prayer. It blends theory and practice, taking the reader through the first steps of contemplative prayer. The author begins with the necessary details of time and place to pray, then presents the maturation of the prayer life in four stages. Step-by-step exercises throughout the book provide concrete examples of how to use the concepts discussed. This book will prove invaluable to individuals and small groups who are new to contemplative prayer.

Mark E. Thibodeaux, S.J., is a spiritual director, retreat director, high school teacher and a Jesuit priest. He holds a Master of Divinity from Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Council Meeting Summary for August 2010

- Council determined those eligible to advance in formation
- Refined Letter of Intent required
- Discussed Discernment Interview Process
- Set up schedule for interviews w/Council and S.A.
- Fr. MacQuarrie to give us presentations on the psalms for our Day of Recollection, Nov. 14th
- Suggestions made for Presenter on “Way of Perfection” to start in Feb 2011
- Discussion on new brochure occurred via email and a new one designed, approved and ordered
- Council to meet at 11 am on Sept 12th/noon interviews
- Retreat dates & facilities set for Apr 2-3, 2011

Our Mother of Good Counsel**OCDS Dayton Community Attendance Policy**

Everyone is expected to attend all meetings, retreats and days of recollection.

Aspirants and members are responsible for contacting the President or their Formation Facilitator, as soon as possible, when s/he is unable to attend a monthly meeting, retreat or day of recollection.

Excused absences for individual meetings, retreats and days of recollection will be granted for illness, transportation, unavoidable family obligations, or an extraordinary circumstance.

If there are more than three absences in a calendar year, the Council will review the situation on a case-by-case basis.

NEXT MONTH'S MEETING DATE

Our next meeting is on the **2nd Sunday, Oct. 10th, from 1:00 – 4:30 pm** in the **Family Life Center** at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Huber Heights, OH.

Remember to keep in your prayers all those discerning advancement in Carmel and all those people who are assisting them in this discernment. May the Holy Spirit enlighten and guide us in all ways. To Jesus through Mary!

Community Reading Plan for the next 5 years set in preparation for the 5th Centenary of St. Teresa of Avila's Birth

- 2009-2010: Book of Her Life
- 2010-2011: Way of Perfection
- 2011-2012: Foundations
- 2012-2013: Interior Castle
- 2013-2014: Spiritual Relations, Poems

Recommended Websites:
Dayton OCDS Community website:
www.daytoncarmelites.org

Website by our Carmelite Friars to help prepare for the V Centenary of the Birth of St. Teresa of Avila:
www.iwasbornforyou.com

Our Washington Province Website:
www.ocdswashprov.org

Carmelite Quiz #1

1. It is well-known that Pope John Paul II was a Carmelite Tertiary. In fact, he wrote his thesis on the writings of which Carmelite saint?
2. Who said, "That we should not weary of doing little things for the love of God who looks not at the grandeur of these actions but rather at the love with which they are performed."
3. In what year was St. Therese of the Child Jesus canonized?
4. How old was St. John of the Cross when he died?
5. Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity was a master of which musical instrument?

Frequently Asked Questions

<http://respiritualdirection.com/blog/tags/contemplative-prayer>

Q. Father John, how is contemplation different than meditation?

A. Contemplative prayer consists of a more passive (and more sublime) experience of God. If Christian meditation is the soul's inspired quest to discover God (our work of seeking God), contemplation is God's lifting of the soul into himself (God's work of embrace), so that it effortlessly basks in the divine light. The key distinction here is that contemplation, in the strict sense, is purely the work of God. Meditation, though aided by God and predicated upon the grace and work of Christ, is the result of our seeking him. That basic distinction is often blurred, causing confusion, because both contemplative and meditative prayer have multiple forms. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to clarify further.

In general, meditative prayer can be mostly discursive or mostly affective. A discursive meditation follows a more logical development, analyzing a truth of the faith or a scripture passage in order to discover an insight or deepen one's Christian understanding. That discovery or deepening leads the soul out of analysis and reflection and into conversation with God – acts of thanksgiving, praise, contrition, or petition. An affective meditation puts less emphasis on analysis or reflection, and more emphasis on the conversation, the acts of thanksgiving and praise that flow from the soul's spiritual (not necessarily emotional) affections. Sometimes a mere glance at a biblical phrase can stir up a strong affection in the soul, and that is enough for the soul to enter into conversation with God; this is a (mostly) affective meditation. Other times, a long period of reflection, of analytical searching, finally yields an affection that leads to conversation; this is a mostly discursive meditation.

In certain seasons of the spiritual life, and often as the soul increases in spiritual maturity, meditation naturally becomes more affective. When a soul finds itself regularly and easily entering into contact with God, with hardly any discursive effort, this is often called the "prayer of quiet" or the "prayer of simplicity." The soul finds itself easily gazing silently at the grandeur of God. Because so little effort is required in this kind of almost exclusively affective meditation, it is often called contemplative prayer. This is a common and valid use of the term. But it can cause confusion, because in a strict sense, and in the writings of mystics and theologians, contemplative prayer ("infused contemplation" is the technical term) goes even beyond this adoring gaze. We can gaze at the ocean and experience a deep sense of wonder, but it is another thing altogether to be submerged in the water. Infused contemplation is when God submerges us in himself; we no longer gaze at God from without, but experience an ineffable union with him. Think of the piece of iron that is thrust into the fire and takes on the qualities of the fire.

And so, the most active type of mental prayer (as opposed to vocal prayer) is discursive meditation, which dovetails with affective meditation, which in turn culminates in the prayer of quiet, in which the soul enters effortlessly into extended acts of thanksgiving, praise, contrition, or petition. This is so effortless that it is akin to and often called contemplation. Infused contemplation, however, actually goes to a new level, lifting the soul out of itself and into the divine.

Yours in Christ, Father John Bartunek, LC