



Rays of Carmel

Nov/Dec 2009

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

Feast Day St. John of the Cross: Dec. 14

“Anticipation of the Coming of Christ by St. John of the Cross” by Nicolo Lorenese, 1686

The Virgin, weighed
With the Word of
God,
Comes down the
road:
if only you will
shelter her!

Quatrain written for Christmas
~St. John of the Cross



“If you do not learn to deny yourself, you can make no progress in perfection.”

Special Interest Articles:

- Climbing the Mount in Response to God's Call to Carmel
- Contemplation is...
- Journey to Carmel by Pat Rooney
- Announcements
- Marian Character of Carmelites
- Save the Dates
Apr. 24-25, 2010
Jul. 16, 2010

Contemplation is....

Excerpt from a letter by the Rev. Joseph Chalmers, Prior General of the Carmelite Order (OCarm).

Contemplation is what binds the other elements of the charism together. Like all members of the Carmelite Family, lay Carmelites are called to grow in their relationship with Christ until they become his intimate friends and as such will be a powerful transformative influence on the world. The traditional helps for the development of contemplation are often absent from our world, which is marked by frenetic activity. Therefore lay Carmelites must seek out times when they can lay aside the cares of daily life for a while and allow God to speak to their hearts in silence. Strengthened by this food, they can continue their journey and look at the world with new eyes.

Contemplatives can see the presence of God in unlikely situations; God always precedes us and is present in every situation before we arrive. It is our duty to discover the presence of God in the midst of what is around us and

Contemplatives & Mystics:

"People with a mature relationship with God are contemplatives. Mystics are people with an intimate relationship with God."

"Our principal task in Carmel is to converse with God in all our actions."
~St. Raphael Kalinowski of St. Joseph,

"In tribulation immediately draw near to God with confidence, and you will receive strength, enlightenment, and instruction."

~St. John of the Cross

CLIMBING THE MOUNT IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL TO CARMEL

The Order of Discalced Carmelites, the seculars together with the friars and nuns, forms the nucleus of the great Teresian Carmelite family. The vocation to Carmel is a gift from God, a lived experience in which we all look to the Rule of St. Albert as our fundamental inspiration. Each branch of the Order has its own Constitutions, which interpret the Rule for its members. (OCDS Constitutions, Preface, par. 3 and 4)

St. John of the Cross uses the image of a mountain, and its ascent, as a metaphor for the spiritual life of intimate friendship with God. This image is echoed by the Church in the words "... may the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother and Queen of Carmel, protect us and bring us to your holy Mountain, Christ our Lord." (Mass of the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Opening Prayer) Our life in Carmel is intended to help us in our ascent to this holy Mountain. It is the function of a community's structured formation program to shape our response to God's call to reach the summit. We are formed into community for aid and support on our ascent. The Blessed Trinity itself is a community of persons; no one can climb this Mountain alone.

In the experience of community life we find the movement and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and a most effective way to grow in virtue. The call to "...be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48) helps us to live three key principles of Carmel: to give ourselves entirely to God, to strive for purity of conscience, and to foster an intimate union with God. Through community life, we learn love, gentleness and respect for others, which enables us to bring souls to Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the formation that begins in our Secular Order community comes to fruition in the experience of our whole lives. It is our responsibility to set aside specific times for personal prayer and study each day, and to be of service to one another.

These guidelines present a structure to shape the formation program of our members and aspirants in accordance with the call of our OCDS Constitutions "... to prepare the person to live the charism and spirituality of Carmel in its following of Christ, and in service to its mission." (OCDS Constitutions 32) Let us proceed in prayer, with love, detachment and humility (Cf. Way of Perfection, 4:4).

Journey to Carmel By Pat Rooney

Before I knew there was a Carmel I longed to be there. My journey to Carmel began when I was born into a home and, “in the time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child.”¹ I wanted words that were my words just for talking to God, in a language of prayer that was my own. Of course, I could not describe it that way at the time. Although taught some prayers, I was aware of a being who was calling forth more from me.

The family included my father, my grandmother, who was a semi-invalid, and my uncle. I called my grandmother “Mommy.” The mother who gave birth to me and was married to my father at the time already had five living children. I was content with the family I had. The circumstances of my birth were not kept from me. As I came to realize that I had five brothers and sisters I had never met, that raised the possibility that anyone I met anywhere could be my brother or sister. I thought that made me – well, sort of special.

My father returned from World War II when I was one. My uncle had fought in the South Pacific. One of my earliest memories involved a flare up of Uncle Don’s malaria and a rushed trip to the VA Hospital in Dayton. My grandmother was close to her four sisters; their highest compliment to me was that I talked and acted like a grown-up. But, I wasn’t a grown-up. I was Daddy’s little girl—unabashedly so and without reserve.

My grandmother died shortly after my 6th birthday. For the past six months I had been living with a family whose father worked with mine. That family included four children. It was my first experience living in a family where I was not the only child. Sometimes it felt like trying to jump onto a whirling merry-go-round, but not finding anything to grab onto.

The year I spent with that family brought with it the confidence that I could survive homesickness, grief, and the abrupt transition to a houseful of strangers. I still have contact with that family. The memories of that time also have a darker side tinged with fear and anxiety. Those memories have given me the gift of compassion and charity for those threatened by abuse, abandonment and rejection far more than what I ever experienced.

The confidence and gratitude borne of those years can be easily sabotaged when I dwell too long on specific events; the first time I called the mother of the home, “Mommy,” her children responded by saying “she’s not your Mommy. She’s our Mommy;” my clumsy attempts to hold my spoon “the grownup way” at a wiener roast resulted in my banishment beyond the campfire until I learned how to hold my spoon like the other children did. I decided I didn’t really want to be around the campfire anyway. Hands are good! Why use a spoon? Actually I was a little more pathetic than that.

Was there a most gracious advocate whose eyes of Mercy were turned toward me? Then and in later years of trial and testing I’ve experienced deliverance from peril in unexpected ways, sometimes with just the grace needed to carry that day’s cross. Other times that mantle of grace has protected me from evil. The words I pray to Our Lady and Our Father have become more and more my own.

While living with that family, I spent Saturdays with my Father and the woman who was to become his wife and my mother. The progression of courtship to marriage was carefully stage-managed. One day, she was still “Miss Betty,” and the next day she was officially, “Mommy.”

My father joined the Episcopal Church, which my about-to-be-mother attended, after they had decided to marry. At that time, divorced persons could not be married in the Episcopal Church unless they petitioned the Bishop and had a personal interview. The two of them drove to Cincinnati in a “driving rain storm.” This trip was to become a part of our “family story,” although I never heard my father speak of it. Supposedly, the Bishop asked my father if he were “marrying” this woman “just so your child will have a mother?” According to the “story,” my father was not too happy.

I joined my parents—father and stepmother—when I was half-way through first grade. I changed schools to join them. Their first years together were happy. I was soon joined by a brother and sister. One of my best memories was gathering with them in front of the TV on a Tuesday night to watch Live Is Worth Living with Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. It was the World Series of Spirituality and the home team always won. I remember Archbishop Sheen would sweep onto the set and many times started with some kind of joke in the form of a challenging question. For a time, the running joke was about a statue of the Blessed Mother which moved around the set. The audience laughed. Everyone at home laughed. That the Blessed Mother could move didn’t seem that strange to me. On the other hand, why would she need to move? She was just—there. I guess you had to be an adult to understand the joke.

Meanwhile, the families of my classmates would watch comedian Milton Berle. Except for the few Catholics in town, we were probably the only family who chose Sheen over Berle. There were probably a few people in town who wondered about this strange organization—Alcoholics Anonymous—that my father reportedly was a part of. Though largely self-educated, he would quote liberally from the Harvard classics and other literature, just for the love of words.

After he died, I treasured the comments he left behind in the margins of those books. One of his favorites to recite was from The Hound of Heaven by the mystic poet Francis Thompson. The words were to prove prophetic for me: “. . . I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;/I fled Him, down the arches of the years; I fled him, down the labyrinthine ways/of my own mind; and in the midst of tears I hid from him, and under running laughter. . . .”

I was baptized when I was 7 and received my own copy of the Book of Common Prayer, which includes Sunday Mass readings and Morning and Evening Prayer. Three weeks out of the month the service was Morning Prayer. We had Holy Communion on only one Sunday a month. I learned to love four-part Anglican chant and Ralph Vaughan-Williams, but without worship centered on the Eucharist and the Body of Christ, it came to seem like worship of beauty for beauty’s sake. My confirmation class was a trial for me as well as those who were trying to teach me.

The most flourishing congregations in our little village, with the exception of the Episcopal Church, were Protestant. They covered the range from main-line Protestant to Evangelical and Pentecostal. I found it difficult to join wholeheartedly with my neighbors and classmates and make their language of piety my own. The Episcopalians’ leanings were toward good taste, decorum and a fine display of music. Passion for the crucified Jesus seemed muted. And what of Our Lady? Anglican poet T.S. Eliot best describes her as: “the frozen, disconsolate, chimera.”

I reacted with pharisaical pride and simply lapsed into silence. In other words, if I didn’t mean what I said right down to the very bottom of my tippy-tippy toes with absolute certainty, I wouldn’t say anything at all. It was a stance, or perhaps I should say lack of one, that was to extend well into my adulthood.

Such tongue-tied piety was my own *special* brand of agnosticism. And, I had long ago decided I was special. Today, I pray daily for humility and I am growing into the knowledge given to us by our Holy Mother Teresa: “Humility does not disturb or disquiet or agitate, however great it may be. It comes with peace, delight and calm.” (The Way of Perfection). I am privileged to draw closer to Mt. Carmel with my fellow Carmelite pilgrims. There under the protection of Our Lady, we will taste to the full that holy recollection, spiritual silence, detachment and poverty of spirit described by St. John of the Cross.

(cont. next page)

I left home upon graduation from high school. I was married briefly and years later received an annulment. While postponing college, I gravitated toward journalism, held a series of jobs with various publications and developed a portfolio of my work. I joined the public relations office at the University of Dayton and graduated with an undergraduate degree in English and philosophy. In a few years I moved onto the Ohio State University and became a professional student who eked out a living with an assistantship. To finish the degree would mean I would have to decide what I wanted to be when I grew up. My goal was to keep getting my assistantship renewed so I could stay.

My concentration tended toward rhetoric with interpersonal and critical cultural studies, fields of inquiry based on quantitative research techniques developed in Europe. In the U.S., communication studies tend more toward the quantitative. That which can be talked about must be measurable and repeatable with validity and reliability.

During that time, I became a Roman Catholic. No longer was being Almost Catholic good enough. I decided I wanted to be a Catholic Sister when I grew up, although I was in my middle years. In my teen years I had thought about being nun in one of the contemplative orders in the Episcopal Church. Fresh from the fervor of a newly-made decision, I sought formation with the Congregation of Divine Providence, a community of women religious whose American province is centered in Melbourne, Ky. I was with the sisters for 2 ½ years. Apparently that was not the direction the Lord wanted me to follow. Nevertheless, in years to come I would miss the spiritual companionship I had come to enjoy with a congregation of people whose lives are consecrated to our Lord Jesus and the work of the Church.

I moved back to my home county in Ohio. My sister had just died and left a 13-year-old daughter. My brother was the single, custodial parent of a son, 5, and a daughter, 7. My father had died four years earlier. My stepmother, who was living in Michigan, was to die four years later. My parents had divorced after 25 years of marriage.

I joined a parish in Urbana. The invitation to Carmel came from our dear brother, Chris Cotter, who is also a member of my parish. I received my initial formation with our community in Cincinnati. I was drawn to the "one body, one mind and one spirit" of Carmel and continued in formation when the new community—Our Mother of Good Counsel—which was established in Dayton. Yet, I still held back in my too-comfortable isolation in fear and distrust. Truly, it would take a miracle to overcome a lifetime's resistance to God's grace. Gracious God that He is, He would indeed supply that miracle.

The means of that grace are the relics of Louis and Zelig Martin. It was on the last night of this year's novena to St. Therese. Our community's president, Frances Harry and I knelt and shared a spiritual communion with these holy parents of St. Therese whose relics Frances brought to St. Peter's for our veneration. Therese's love at the heart of the church claimed me for her own. I am still me. I pray those who know me will be patient, as God has been and continues to be.

Along the way I have discovered that detachment from the past does not mean rejection of it. My coda is reflected in the words of novelist James Agee in his novel *A Death in the Family*. The narrator is an adult recalling his childhood in the prologue: *Knoxville: Summer, 1915*. . . . May God bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble; and in their taking away. . . .and those receive me, who quietly treat me, as one familiar and well-beloved in that home; but will not, oh, will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever tell me who I am."

For that special knowledge I turn to God alone. St. Benedicta of the Cross asks that I accept the "whole Christ in faith-filled surrender." Her life stands as a witness: the mystery of the cross is at the center of the whole Christ. For my salvation I look and listen for my Lord Jesus, with the guidance of The Holy Spirit, in the daily events of prayer, work and at my life's end. Under the protection of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, I pray to be drawn ever nearer into the presence of the One who in the words of St. Augustine is: "more intimate to us than we are to ourselves." That is why I am a Carmelite.

¹ *A Death in the Family*. Agee, James: Bantam Books: 1969. (The novel has been produced in a variety of dramatic media. The prologue, "Knoxville: Summer, 1915" provides words to music for a work for voice and orchestra written by Samuel Barber. The quotes I have used at the beginning and end of this reflection are taken from the prologue.

Marian Character of Carmelites

<http://www.carmelitesisters.com/spirituality/spirit-of-carmel/our-lady-of-mount-carmel/>

Carmel is totally Marian in three aspects: Its history, life and spirituality.

History: The Carmelites' relationship with Mary goes back to the very beginning of their history. The hermits were called "Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel". The Order was founded for the service and glory of Mary. The first chapel built by the hermits was named after her.

Life: John Baconthorpe, a Carmelite theologian, wrote a commentary on how Mary lived the Rule of St. Albert. How? Her total allegiance to her Son Jesus, her pondering of the Scriptures and making the Word of God to be the foundation of her actions, her silence and love of recollection, her purity of heart, her openness to God's Will and her charity. The Carmelites relate to Mary as Mother, Sister, Patroness and Queen, Most Pure Virgin and Model of discipleship. These are not just devotional themes, but the unfolding of a relationship down through the centuries. She is their Mother because she truly cares for her children as a mother does. They find recourse to her in times of need as a powerful intercessor before God. Because the early Carmelites were known as "Brothers of Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel" then Mary, as sister, has been in the collective consciousness of the Carmelites from the very beginning. Patroness and Queen developed as part of the historical origins of the hermits. As part of the feudal mentality, taking someone for patron creates a contractual relationship of service and protection. Since the early hermits dedicated their lives and service to her, they are certainly assured of her patronage. Since Mary's life is a reflection of a perfect following of Jesus, she is our model of discipleship. The early Christians accepted this and the early hermits of Mount Carmel made this their pattern of life. The Second Vatican Council confirmed this in their chapter on Mary in the document "Lumen Gentium."

Spirituality: Mary gave birth to Jesus in a physical way. Carmelites are called to give birth to Jesus in a spiritual way. Jesus is to be made flesh in our actions, our words, in our trials and in our joys. Hence, in imitation of the Mother of God, our spirituality is incarnational, allowing Jesus to be formed in us, and by our lives and actions be made flesh once again to touch the lives of others. Read more on Mary and Carmel by clicking:

<http://www.ocarm.org/carmspir/csdeng06.htm>

November/December Birthdays:



Dec. 17—Dave Wooten

Dec. 20—Catherine Murphy

Dec. 28—Thomas Zink

Dec. 29—Francesca Franchina

*Let your desire be to see God;
your fear that you may lose Him;
your sorrow that you are not having fruition of Him;
your joy that He can bring you to Himself.
Thus you will live in great peace.*

~ St. Teresa of Avila, Doctor of the Church

Your Council Members:

Spiritual Assistant: Fr. John MacQuarrie
Church Ph (937) 698-4520

Asst to Fr. MacQuarrie: Deacon Baldwin
Home Ph (937) 667-5675

President: Frances Harry
Home Ph (937) 236-9313

Director of Formation: Jeanne Paula
Home Ph (937) 428-9817

Asst. Dir. of Formation/Council Rep: Mark Olson
Home Ph (937) 427-0554

Council Rep: Chris Cotter
Home Ph (937) 653-8086

Council Rep: Mark Danis (937) 767-1343

Secretary: Mike Donovan

Treasurer: Lynn Bete

Hospitality: Pat Rooney

Our Web Site: www.daytoncarmelites.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

--Important! Save the Dates!

--Next meeting: **Jan. 10, 2010** (2nd Sunday)

--OCDS All Day Retreat on Apr. 24-25th at Transfiguration Center for Spiritual Renewal in Ludlow Falls, OH www.transfigurationcenter.com with Fr. Pat Farrell, OCD from Holy Hill.

--Next community presentation is on the OCDS Constitution. Bring a copy to our meeting. Led by Mark Olson. We will start Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity in Feb with Mark Danis leading.

--Feast Day Mass on July 16, 2010 in the planning stages

Carmelite Book Recommendation:

“Welcome to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites” by Fr. P. Aloysius Deeney, OCD; ICS Publications

This book is a collection of Fr. Aloysius Deeney’s conferences presented to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCDS) members worldwide. His most practical and insightful talks are primarily directed to the members of the OCDS and others who are interested in the tradition of Discalced Carmelites. The author is notable for his enormous understanding and knowledge about the Secular branch of the Order. As such, OCDS members are the true beneficiaries of this book. This is a “must read” book for all of those who are interested in the lay branch of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. The spirituality of the Discalced Carmelites invites continual study. Any person who wants to be a Discalced Carmelite must be a person with an interest in learning and assimilating the spirit of the teachers of Carmel. This is the beginning of an attitude that is open to learning and practice. A Carmelite who does not have the interest in studying or deepening the root of his/her identity through prayer and study soon loses his/her identity.

Council Meeting Summary for Oct-Dec 09

- Feedback on the Day of Recollection Nov. 15th with Fr. John Grennon
- Retreat Dates set for Apr. 23-25, 2010 with Fr. Pat Farrell, OCD coming
- Facilitators approved for 2010
- Reading Plan for the next 5 years set in preparation for the 5th Centenary of St. Teresa of Avila
- 2009-2010: Book of Her Life
- 2010-2011: Way of Perfection
- 2011-2012: Foundations
- 2012-2013: Interior Castle
- 2013-2014: Spiritual Relations, oems and Letters
- Updating checklist for interviews, revising excel spreadsheet and requirements for Letter of Intent
- Discussed status of 2 members who have moved
- Discussed and approved tithing

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.