



Flos Carmeli

Houston Councillors' Workshop expands knowledge

“Basically, recollection is a spiritual virtue, a habit,” said Father Bonaventure at the recent OCDS Houston Workshop, “and the practice of it asks you to do three things: set aside everything, collect (as in recollect) yourself, and be with God. This makes for a recollected person. You use your awareness to evoke your attentiveness to God.”

Such statements of instruction, lovingly filled with clarity and simplicity, distinguished the recent OCDS Workshop held at the Cenacle Retreat Center in Houston, TX, from April 19-22, 2012. Thirty-two Presidents and Directors of Formation (or substitute Council members) met with the Provincial Council and Father Bonaventure Sauer at the recent OCDS Workshop, to receive direction, instruction and a deeper understanding of how to go about fulfilling the local Council's numerous responsibilities, including addressing difficult challenges. The Workshop also provided the opportunity for local Council members to meet with peers from other communities to

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share ideas and network.

Prior to the Workshop, the Provincial Council sent a questionnaire to each of the participants to learn about their major concerns and challenges at hand that they wished to have addressed by the Workshop. The responses to the questionnaires were rich with detail, showing that thoughtful consideration and substantial reflection was put into answering the questions in the questionnaire, and creating new questions for the Provincial Council to address, making for an information packed gathering.

Unfortunately, Provincial Council President Henrietta Albright wasn't able to attend due to health challenges. However, Henrietta made her mighty contribution by praying for everyone while at home throughout the whole workshop weekend. No wonder everything flowed so well! (In addition to Dorothy Mansen's endless hours spent organizing details and making all of the arrangements for room and board, and Chris Wood's taking care of all of the transportation needs.)

Rigorous Workshop days began with Mass and Morning Prayer followed by Mental Prayer, and the evenings closed with sessions practicing Lectio Divina followed by Night Prayer. Participants reported in their evaluations a profound gratitude for all of the opportunities to pray together.

Dorothy Mansen launched the presentations with her talk, "Operating an Effective Council." Dorothy said that an effective Council begins with prayer and that a Council must learn to work together effectively. She provided useful questions for nominating committees and for voting members prior to elections, as well as questions for self-evaluation of Council members and for the Council. Dorothy stressed the importance of the Council to work together as a team and to practice the virtues of charity, patience and forgiveness with each other, always putting first the welfare and spiritual growth of the community in decisions they may make.

Mary Kay Daniels presented "The Best Kept Secret of Healthy Balanced Communities." She opened by sharing that in community, we are simply creating a safe space in which every person is supported on their journey toward an undivided Carmelite life of loving God, and then from the substance of this great love exchange and communion, love of neighbor. Mary Kay enriched our understanding of "love of neighbor" as "the love that consists in this, that two solitudes protect and border and salute each other," quoting from Rainer Maria Rilke. This sort of love makes the soul feel safe. When we "protect and border and salute" each other's solitude, we break our manipulative habits and allow Christ's Presence to be more present among us, thus creating more space for spiritual love to flourish.

Quoting from Holy Mother's **The Way of Perfection**—"...all must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped," (WP 4.7), Mary Kay suggested how we can live Holy Mother's instruction within our communities. Mary Kay noted that Teresa's monasteries were praying communities with Christ at the

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center of their lives, ecclesial communities shaped by our Carmelite charism of contemplative prayer. She encouraged everyone to keep alive and fresh an ongoing reflection of how well and how fully we are living out the spirit of the evangelical counsel of chastity, which is a spiritual key to maintaining the core of unity within a healthy, balanced community.

“When working within your community,” Mary Kay said, “focus on pulling out the gifts from within community members to work together for the reign of God, and love them deeply, desiring to see them belong entirely to God. This what Holy Mother would do.”

Chris Woods led a discussion on the Ratio Institutionis, reviewing with everyone that the primary responsibility of the local Council is the formation of the entire community, and that governance is secondary and supportive to this purpose. The purpose of formation is “to prepare the person to live the spirituality of Carmel.” Chris provided feedback to many of the questions participants posed through the questionnaire and outlined the essential principles of the Ratio, the essential elements of formation (Ratio 13-15) and the agents of formation (Ratio 16-35).

Dallas Community President Betty Turrichi [in photo at right, shown talking with two councilors from the New Iberia, LA, OCDS] provided a resourceful presentation on Conflict Resolution. She stated that the goal within our communities is to



maintain peace and harmony based upon the two great commandments of loving God, and loving neighbor. She also pointed out Jesus’ instruction in Matt. 5:44 which says, “But I say to you love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you...” Betty noted the many causes of conflict and then presented tools for remedying tense situations and building appropriate skills. She stated that if you “put affection or acceptance upon bad behavior, you will be assured of getting more bad behavior,” a practical observation, that invites us to lovingly confront what needs to be confronted. She concluded with wisdom from St. John of the Cross - “Where there is no love, put love, and you will find love.”

Dorothy Ashley presented on the OCDS Apostolate a.k.a. the “Face of Carmel” in the Church and the World. Dorothy shared that St. Teresa of Jesus was convinced

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that good works were the fruit of growth in virtue and a fulfilling prayer life, and that through an apostolate, a community shows the “Face of Carmel” through apostolic sharing” with others what the community has received by belonging to Carmel. To begin to discern how to choose among options to decide upon a particular apostolate, a community should ask of themselves: how can we make known to the church and the world what we know? The answer is the community’s apostolate.

Dorothy Ashley also cleverly presented “The Five-Finger Method” of Promoting the OCDS Vocation which included, counting on each finger, thumb first, a wide outreach (via brochures, fliers, diocesan newspapers, prayer cards, etc.), personal invitation and visitor’s policy, prayer, public witness of the community and personal witness. Each finger represented a different aspect of promoting the OCDS vocation.



Father Bonaventure [being unphotogenic in photo at right, along with participants from Houston, Knoxville, Oklahoma City, and Dallas] tackled the topics of Attendance, Absenteeism, Discernment, Liturgy of the Hours, and Mental Prayer in his talks. He stated that frequently people ask how the friars pray the Liturgy of the Hours, so he described their method, making it very clear that the way in which the friars pray the Hours is just their way, and doesn’t necessarily have to be the blueprint for every community. Father Bonaventure indicated that the goal was to create a sense of unity, to pray together, and to develop a sense of prayerfulness using the two postures, standing and sitting. Father advised that the whole prayer of the “Glory Be” be said by the same side and not split between side 1 and side 2.

Interspersed between Father’s many rich instructional statements was the pearl: “My goal is to live out of my vocation in Jesus Christ, here and now, as a full follower of Jesus Christ within the Catholic Church. It’s all about Jesus....”

The last presentation of the weekend was given by Dorothy Mansen. The title was, *Preparation for the Centenary Celebration of the birth of St. Teresa*. She asked how communities were persevering in their studies and what were their goals for the next 2 ½ years. Monumental was the question of whether or not they could see in their members a deeper imitation of Christ that was so basic to

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the life of St. Teresa.

Dorothy encouraged everyone to renew their fervor and set out on a course led by the Holy Spirit to put in to practice and to spread the teaching of Holy Mother Teresa's writing. She ended by quoting St. Teresa. "*I am Yours and born for You, What do you want of me?*"

Upon request, copies of Dorothy's talk which included questions for discussion have been sent out to all those who attended the Workshop. Dorothy would be happy to email a copy to any group that did not attend if they contact her. 1dot-and2bob@sbcglobal.net

Both evenings, Mary Kay provided instruction for Lectio Divina and facilitated Lectio prayer sessions. She shared from the March 2012 issue of the "Anthony Messenger" a quote from Pope Benedict XVI, who said, "If it (Lectio) is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the church – I am convinced of it – a new spiritual springtime. The ancient tradition of lectio divina should be encouraged through the use of new methods, attentively pondered, adapted to the time."

Mary Kay noted that our Carmelite spirituality is rooted in the ancient tradition of *lectio divina*, a prayerful reading of the Scriptures. The Carmelite Rule of St. Albert states: "Each one of you is to stay in his own cell or nearby, **pondering the Law of the Lord (i.e. sacred Scripture) day and night** and keeping watch at his prayers unless attending to some other duty" (Rule, no. 8). (*Lectio Divina and the Practice of Teresian Prayer* by Sam Anthony Morello, OCD, ICS Publications, Institute of Carmelite Studies, Washington, D.C. 1995) Workshop participants prayed Lectio from John 16 and a quote from Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity's final retreat.

Attendees reported the Workshop to be useful, very informative and expressed appreciation to the Provincial Council. Comments received included: The joy & hope & love of being with my Carmelite family has put a song in my heart; obviously great information for all around, exceeded expectations!, yes it more than met my expectations, glad I came!, excellent, the work of the PC is evident and greatly appreciated, I feel more confident & relaxed in terms of our leadership, very well prepared, very helpful – plan to share with Council, this is exactly what I needed, well past my expectations, well presented in an easy understandable way, ...Plenty more similar comments. Attendees also supplied constructive suggestions and considerations for the next Workshop for the Provincial Council to discuss for the future.

The Provincial Council members remain grateful for everyone's wholehearted participation in the Workshop, for excellent feedback through the evaluations, and especially for each person's prayer that the Workshop would be a success.

To see a photo of attendees, turn to page 6.

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Houston Workshop participants:

Front Row [L to R]: Anita Gouge, Mickey Fitch, Lea Hawkins, Anita DeRouen, Susan Ortega, Jeannine Meaux, Mary Phillips, Dorothy Ashley

Second Row: Betty Turicchi, Arlene Wilder, Katherine Payne, Penny Thibodeaux, Molly Vacha, Diane Gray, Maria Galindo

Third Row: Dorothy Mansen, Sandra Grep , Jeannine Hart, Kerrie Laviolette, Betty Sharp, Laura Lane Bruce, Pat Simon, Anna Peterson, John Stevens, Terry Sa Yun

Back Row: Fr. Bonaventure, Jo Ann Murphy, Cruz Coronado, Camille Durkin, Jackie Cambas, Mary Kay Daniels, Janice Powers , Roy Simon, Chris Wood, Andrew Ringle

Not present for photo: Susy Stokes, Sylvia Bresowar & Terry Espinosa

Report of the Provincial Delegate

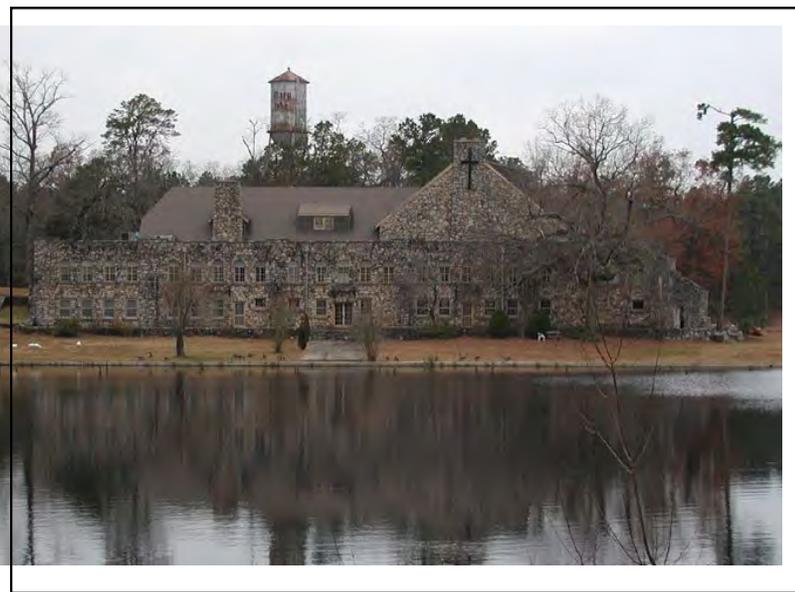
By Fr Bonaventure Sauer, OCD

I am at Marylake, our house near Little Rock, as I write this report. It is the latest stop on a road trip that began for me back in early June. Over these past weeks I've grown tired of living out of a suitcase and am more than ready to get home again and sit enthroned among my things, master of all I survey. In a week's time I should be doing just that. You know, I very much like this job. But the travel, a necessary part of it, can at times get wearisome.

Fr. Sam Anthony, whom many of you know from his years of working closely with the Seculars of the province, is here at Marylake serving as superior. He will be 78 in a couple of weeks. In our province, it seems, one never retires. All in all he is doing well. But he would appreciate your prayers for this house, Marylake Monastery, as well as for himself.

A word about Marylake.

The monastery is about 15 miles due south of Little Rock. While there's been a certain amount of urban sprawl headed this way through the years, it hasn't really overtaken us. The area remains wooded and rural. Marylake is surrounded by 440 acres, mostly forested. There's a 40 acre manmade lake—as you can see in the photo below [taken from road, a state highway, that passes in front of the monastery]—which dates from at least 100 years ago, before any buildings graced



its shore. Later, in the 1920s, a country club was built, with a golf course on the surrounding property. [The building you see in the photo to the left is the original building, the country club, repaired and renovated through the years, but still going strong.] We, for our part, purchased the building and grounds in 1952 and established it as our provincial novitiate. The community stationed here also hosts private retreats from time to time as well as small church groups from nearby parishes. But there aren't really adequate facilities or services for us to allow the monastery as a true retreat house. Mostly

the house acts, as it has through the years, as a formation house and as something of a provincial “desert”—a place dedicated expressly to prayer, silence, and solitude, the contemplative side of our Carmelite vocation.

Besides Fr. Sam Anthony, as superior, Fr. Raphael—whom many of you also know—resides here. Presently he's in Minnesota visiting his brother, though, and, let us hope, escaping from the heat. I saw him in early June at our Provincial Assembly in San Antonio—more on that later—and he is looking quite fit despite his recent health issues. He is, actually, doing remarkably well.

Fr. John Magdalene, whom some of you know, also lives here. He is the friar who suffered serious injuries from an auto accident less than two years ago. He has his setbacks and some continuing problems from his injuries, but all in all he is doing fine. In addition to his pastoral ministry he oversees fundraising initiatives for the house, trying to improve its financial standing. In these

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efforts he is making good progress. Lastly, Br. Bernard a professed brother of the province, resides here, bringing the community to four in all. Br. Bernard helps maintain the grounds and the buildings and manages the kitchen, an invaluable service.

There is another friar staying here at Marylake, at least for the summer. He is Br. Jorge Morales, one of our students, who of course normally resides in San Antonio, our student house, but is passing the summer here at Marylake, lending a welcome hand with the work. **I've asked Br. Jorge to write a little something about himself and his vocation for the *Flos*. He has obliged. You should be able to find his submission in the pages of this issue.**



Update on Fr. Aloysius

As it so happened, Fr. Aloysius spent a few days at Marylake recently. I was there at the time. It was good to see him again. He was passing through, so to speak, on his way from Rome to his new abode in Indonesia—that is, in Jog Jakarta, to be exact, a city in the southeast corner of the island of Java, not to be confused with Jakarta itself, the capitol city, which is located in the northwest corner of the same island. This area of Java is heavily Christian and Catholic, and the house where Fr. Aloysius will be staying, the student house, is in an area of the city with lots of other religious houses and schools nearby. The climate is hot, humid, and rainy, as one would expect. But Fr. Aloysius seems to take to it.

Even with this new assignment and residence, Fr. Aloysius remains a member of our province. His new assignment—to serve as a Regional Delegate for the Secular Order, no longer as its General Delegate—comes to him, like his previous assignment, from the General in Rome. He serves on behalf of Fr. General, in other words, not the local superior or provincial. But he will of course participate in the life of the Indonesian Circumscription. (It is not yet a full-fledged Province.) In particular, he will assist with the formation of the students there in Jog Jakarta where he will be staying.

The region over which he will have responsibility as Regional Delegate is, if you ask me, pretty large. It includes Indonesia, of course, but also Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. Oh, and let us not forget India. He told me that he expects to spend about half (or more) of his time traveling here and there about this area. Otherwise, he'll be at home in Jog Jakarta.

As Fr. Aloysius completed his work as General Secretary/Delegate, stepping down from this position and into new one, our Fr. General Savario Canistrà wrote him a very thoughtful letter of thanks and appreciation for his service these past 14 years. You can find a copy of this letter, translated into English, elsewhere in this issue of the *Flos*.

The work that Fr. Aloysius oversaw and the vision and direction he provided have not only

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secured the place of the Secular Order in the Discalced Carmelite Order as a whole, but also, by doing so, helped renew and enrich our religious family—nuns and friars included. We do owe him great thanks. (I joked with Fr. Aloysius, asking if the Order had given him a watch for his retirement.) If any of you would like to send him your own words of thanks at this time, wishing him “God speed” in his new assignment, please send them to me in the form of an email. I will then forward them on to him.

Our Provincial Assembly

Each year, during the first full week of June, we hold our Annual Provincial Assembly. All the friars of the province come together in San Antonio, beginning Monday evening. Friday morning the Assembly concludes, then, and most return home for their weekend duties. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday are the days for our meetings, therefore. But it’s is not all business. We use the occasion to socialize, of course. And most years we schedule a special celebration of some kind during the week. This year, for example, on Tuesday, June 5, in the evening, there was a special mass in the Basilica to honor our Jubilarians. Fr. Sam Anthony Morello, Fr. Henry Bordeaux, and Fr. Christopher Timoney celebrated fifty years of priesthood. Fr. John Magdalene Suenram marked twenty-five years. Members of the San Antonio OCDS chapter were there, of course, and a handful of Seculars drove down from Austin for the occasion.

As for the more formal, business-like sessions of the Assembly, on Tuesday we listened to and discussed various reports and updates about this or that. The superior of each house, for example, shared with the province about initiatives or projects underway in that community. Each also gave a financial report. The same was done for the province as a whole, including a detailed report from the director of our central business office. The provincial, for his part, exhorted the friars with a short pep talk, challenging us to greater human and spiritual maturity in our vocation. His reflections in turn sparked some open and at times heartfelt and personal discussion. As for the OCDS, I (as delegate) gave a brief report, speaking on the success of last summer’s congress in Lafayette, on plans for the next congress to be hosted by our province in 2014, and on the progress made by the OCDS Provincial Council in hiring a central administrator. On a different topic, I spoke about the ongoing efforts—of which I am a part, representing our province—to reinvigorate the *Carmelite Institute*. These are moving forward with good promise.

[Regarding the *Carmelite Institute*, let me once again encourage you to keep tabs on its official website www.carmelstream.com The site is definitely a work-in-progress. But in time it should become perhaps the primary means by which the *Institute* reaches out to serve the family of Carmel throughout the US with diversity in what it is able to offer.]

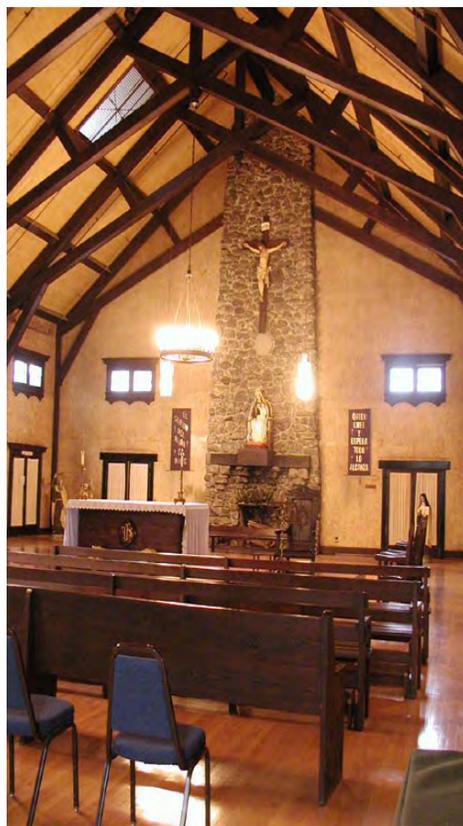
Over the next two days, Wednesday and Thursday, we had a couple guest presenters, or experts, join us for discussion of two important concerns. First, on Wednesday an attorney explained for us in detail laws and legal technicalities regarding wills, a living will, power of attorney, and medical power of attorney. From time to time such matters do come up in our ministry. But mostly they are pertinent for ourselves. We friars in the province are like family to each other. Yet the state doesn’t recognize that fact. Thus, when it comes to medical care and what happens to our personal effects after death, this relationship needs to be spelled out through legal documents. We used this opportunity for each of us to make sure we have these things in order.

Lastly, on Thursday a representative from *Praesidium* joined us. *Praesidium* is an organization, based in Dallas, that helps religious institutions maintain official accreditation in the whole area of what is called “safe environment.” Many of you know what I mean. It has to do with institutional practices and policies designed specifically to protect children and “vulnerable adults”—the other category of concern—from the possibility of sexual abuse. In addition to this primary concern, the broader and more

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amorphous issue of sexual misconduct in general, and of how we as an institute officially address the potential problem, has now become part of the self-review and accreditation process *Praesidium* oversees. The representative from *Praesidium*, therefore, led us in a discussion of this larger issue as well. This coming fall the province will undergo a formal review by *Praesidium* of how well we are doing. This will be in order to renew our accreditation. This meeting with their representative also served to help prepare us for this upcoming visitation.

Our Provincial Assemblies are not always so business-like and organizational in the topics we address. But such topics are necessary, as I'm sure you understand. In certain respects, given our small size, we are something of a mom-and-pop operation. But as a religious institute these organizational matters do come into play. And we try as best we can to address them adequately and responsibly.



The photo above is of the large chapel at Marylake. Originally it served as a dance floor for the country club.

On the mantel above the fireplace is a statue of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, to the right a statue of Holy Mother, and to the left St. Elijah.

There is a smaller chapel for regular use by the community. This large chapel is there for special occasions—like Christmas Eve Mass and the Easter Vigil, which draw a nice crowd, or our annual provincial retreat, held at Marylake each year on the third full week of October. Most of the friars of the province, myself included, made their first profession in this chapel.

Summer 2012

A vocation story

By Bro. Jorge L. Morales-Nazario, OCD

I come from a very religious household. Our family went to mass together every Sunday. The children went to catechism, then eventually moved on to the youth group. Meanwhile, our mother was catechism director, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. We as a family also helped with decorations, Passion plays. Yes, it can be said that we were very involved. Over all, what I enjoyed most was Altar Serving.

There was no Altar Server program in the parish at the time. It wasn't even on my agenda. One day the priest needed help during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. After that I served every time we had Exposition. Then, by age 9, I served at Mass for the first time. It was during one of those first masses I served that a great desire to become a priest grew within me. But it was not until I turned 12 years old that I officially told my parish priest of this desire. But, due to my young age, the only thing that I could do at the time was to put it in the back of my head and continue on.

In 2001, I began to work for a major movie rental store-chain, which, for us in Puerto Rico (where I grew up), was very prestigious. Many people say that thoughts such as, "I can't do this for the rest of my life," are a *moment of clarity*. "I can't 'check-in' or 'check-out' movies at a store forever." This moment of clarity was my natural response to what I saw down the road of my life, and, by noticing this upcoming intersection, a decision was required from me: to simply continue on down the road, or to turn towards a new goal. But I was happy with this job, all of my fellow employees felt like extended family to me. We took our jobs and our positions very seriously and respectfully. But I felt like I had to do something new.

Moving from Puerto Rico never crossed my mind. Yet the U.S. military sounded very appealing since I wanted to do something remarkable with my life while getting some structure and discipline and a way of life imposed on it. It wasn't until I was waving goodbye to my mother through the window of a G.I. bus that my heart touched reality—I'm on the road to fly away from home and become a sailor in the U.S. Navy.

During my enlistment thoughts of the priesthood flashed through my mind along with the question "What if?" "What if God is really calling me?" After nearly 3 years of military experience, I began to look for the answer to these questions by talking to diocesan priests, participating in a vocations retreat, and visiting religious communities. Since my last military station was San Antonio, Texas, I had my first contact with the Discalced Carmelite Friars at the National Shrine of the Little Flower—which I had chosen as my parish—and with the Discalced Carmelite Nuns at the Carmel of the Infant Jesus of Prague and Our Lady of Guadalupe, also in San Antonio.

During a one week *live-in* experience with the Carmelite Friars I saw their way of life, how they were just and charitable towards each other and others. It touched my heart, reviving the desire for a way of life that I had wanted for myself.

There was something new for me introduced by the friars. They spoke very clearly about the spiritual life, what it is about and how to live it. But, there were never any strict rules and regulations or little technicalities offered and insisted upon. There was just the desire to encounter God personally within ourselves. I felt drawn. A true moment of clarity came. This is for me.

Fr General thanks Fr Aloysius

Roma, 10 giugno 2012



CASA GENERALIZIA CARMELITANI SCALZI
CORSO D'ITALIA, 38
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Dear Father Aloysius Deeney,

In April 1997, leaving the Office of Provincial of Oklahoma, you came to Rome called by the late Father Camilo Maccise to take up the post of General Delegate for the Secular Order. Little more than a month ago you left that position in the hands of Father Alzinir Debastiani.

During all these years the relationship between friars and laity in the Teresian Carmel developed enormously. At the same time the Secular Order has made considerable strides that have allowed the Secular Carmelites to be recognized even more as an integral part of the Order that, in communion with their religious brothers and sisters, live and radiate the charisma of Santa Teresa in today's world.

There is no doubt that Father Camillo knew how to see in you the religious capable of understanding the desires that were pulsating in the hearts of our Secular members, and as one who could guide the update of the secular order that it might become a strong and dynamic reality in places where it was present.

Since International Congress of OCDS, Mexico celebrated in 2000, there have been many advances, and all very positive within the Secular Order: our Seculars now have exemplary Constitutions; there is a Ratio, which is a real help in formation; in the various jurisdictions, stimulated by the impetus coming from the Center of the Order, the Seculars organize meetings, promoted by national and Provincial Councils, to share their vocation and formation, and are drafting Statutes and specific Ratios of formation, which are of great use.

Particularly important was your work in Asia, where your constant presence was able to solidify and animate a Secular Order that sometimes suffered because of its dispersion. You have reminded all that being a Secular Discalced Carmelite is to belong fully to the family founded by Santa Teresa, and this is not a mere privilege, but involves a great responsibility and a profound demand of life.

With feeling and closeness, shown to our Seculars, with works and words, you reminded them that they were not a simple "third order" but companions of the nuns and friars in service to the Church following the example of Teresa of Jesus, John of the Cross, and of many other witnesses of Carmel, you've done a commendable job and you left in all of us a profound touch of fraternity which we all recognize.

Now, Aloysius, you're going to go to Indonesia where you will work for the Secular Order, collaborating with the new General Delegate in the lands of Asia. May the Lord, the Blessed Virgin and our Mother Mary, and Santa Teresa reward you for everything you have done for our Order, may they be close to you in your new presence and work in that extensive part of the world.

Fr. Saverio Cannistrà, *Preposito Generale*

The Teresian Carmelite school of spirituality

By Fr Sam Anthony Morello, OCD

The following reflections were originally given as a conference to the students of Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, LA, on April 27, 2008.

I thank Fr. Joseph Palermo [Spiritual Director of Notre Dame Seminary] for this opportunity to speak to you during your Sunday Exposition. My talk is entitled: *Introductory Reflections on the Teresian-Carmelite School of Spirituality*. You've found copies of an outline of the talk at the door.

Let me begin with the names "Carmel" and "Carmelites." KARMEL comes from the Hebrew—pronounced *kahr'-muhl*, with the accent on the first syllable—which means "orchard" or "garden." Mount Carmel is not just a fertile mountain; it is a forested garden-like mountain range roughly 15 miles long, in northwest Israel, rising about 2000 ft., and having only one interruption, the Megiddo Pass. The ridge extends west from the northern Samaritan hills to the Mediterranean Sea, and north to the Mt. Carmel headland at the Harbor of Haifa, where you can see a promontory projecting out almost over the port. At its base—this promontory itself popularly called Mt. Carmel—is built the modern city of Haifa. At the top of this steep, natural formation is a lighthouse, along with our Carmelite monastery, shrine, and hospice, called *Stella Maris*, or "Star of the Sea."

The prophets Elijah and Elisha are of course associated with Carmel. From the *First and Second Books of Kings* it is easy to conclude that these two Ninth Century prophets spent periods of time along the mountain range of Carmel. Moreover, Carmel's terrain served well the "School of Prophets"—or "guild prophets," as our Bible translates the expression (for example, in 2 Kgs. 2:3)—to which Elijah and Elisha belonged.

Medieval Carmelite mythology definitely stretched its imagination in claiming Elijah as the Order's historical founder, calling him "Father and Leader of Carmelites." They then considered Elisha, Elijah's successor, the second head of this School of Prophets. It was from these two epic giants, and their "Prophetic School," that Carmelites thus claimed to have sprung. Though this notion was a grievous exaggeration, it reflected the spiritual Elijan tradition that gave the prayer of the medieval Carmel its deep sense of solitude, treasured to this day.

Carmelite prayer struggles to obtain a *desert* heart—one seeking only God's Word and Kingdom, and predisposing the self for God's "gentle breeze" of divine contemplation, so as to know the living God more directly and serve to bolster fidelity to him among the People of God. The hermits who came to the Middle East with the late 12th Century French Crusaders, along with their successors, who in time migrated back to Europe, intuited for themselves a prophetic-contemplative vocation, in imitation of Elijah, that conditioned them to witness to their prayerful experience of the living God, and then call back to God those who needed realignment—just as had done the ancient Christian hermits of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria before them. And it was these Medieval Latin hermits of Carmel who, once having returned to Western Europe, eventually evolved into a band of mendicant friars and initiated the Carmelite School of Spirituality.

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Now let me interject a word on “Schools of Spirituality” in general. We need to appreciate that any School of Christian Spirituality sits under the great umbrella of the Gospel and its Custodian, the Catholic Church. From the Church we learn all the basics of the Christian Religion and its Spirituality: the authentic sources of revelation, the supernatural goals of faith, all the prudent means and methods to be employed in attaining those goals, and the laws and rhythms of spiritual development. So, whenever a School of Spirituality is proposed, look for what is basically baptismal in character—which is to say, how it spells out a detailed discipleship of Jesus Christ!

In the primitive *Rule of Carmel* by Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, dated roughly around 1210, the goal of the spiritual life is seen as a life "lived in allegiance to Jesus Christ . . . pure in heart, stout in conscience . . . and unswerving in the service of the Master." Note that early in the Carmelite mind, though, we see flanking Jesus Christ, who must always be kept at the center, two great founding figures or presences—that of Elijah to one side and the Virgin Mary to the other. Elijah was their spiritual founder, as I spoke about earlier. But Mary also appears as their patroness and companion.

At one of Carmel's many mountain gorges, called the Wadi-es-Siah, a chapel was built by the primitive Carmelites, which they named Santa Maria. The hermits thereby came to be known as the "Brothers of St. Mary of Carmel," the first Order named for the Mother of God. They honored her as Mother, as Royal Lady of the Place, and as Sister in the Spirit! Mary and Elijah strengthened the hermit's allegiance to Jesus Christ. The faith of their Sister Mary, her prayer life and social virtues, fortified their perseverance, while Elijah and his prophetic experience inspired them to be zealous witnesses of the living God and servants of Covenant fidelity among the people.

Once you have detected the basic vocation of a given School of Spirituality, analyze its social and ecclesial aspects—what we call its witness or mission, the sources of its zeal, its works of mercy, its specific charisms and ministries, and so forth. The ordained ministries and the vowed religious life can never be divorced from their fundamental grounding in discipleship. Thus, what a particular school emphasizes in discipleship is usually transferred into the ecclesial realm as charism and service. Everything done by a Christian is ultimately rooted in baptism. So, we need to keep in mind always that the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount necessarily serve as the basis for the moral and spiritual life of any Christian School of Spirituality.

Now, what a particular School of Spirituality does is emphasize certain means towards the two inseparable goals of personal holiness and universal salvation. Carmel's Spirit, set forth in the early *Rule*—together with daily Eucharist, which was very rare for hermits at the time, although it is called for in the *Rule* as well—primarily emphasized the practice of silence, recollection, and private prayer as a broad opening to evangelizing grace and transforming contemplation. Consequently, on the ecclesial level, Carmel weighs in heavily in favor of teaching others the ways of prayer. Its basic hermit soul emerges in the arena of the apostolate of spirituality.

Building on the original Carmelite School of Spirituality, then, the *Teresian-Carmelite School* grew out of the charisms of Sts. Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross, who lived at the time of the Counter Reformation in 16th Century Spain. This School cultivated a kind of phenomenology of meditative and contemplative prayer, especially for use in spiritual direction. It helped persons (1) *understand* their experience of supernatural faith as a foundation for prayer, (2) *fathom* ever more deeply the progressive stages of light and darkness through which their prayer un-

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folds as a spiritual journey of ascent to God, and (3) *integrate* their prayerful discipleship with ecclesial life and mission.

Let me interject here another note on Schools of Spirituality in general. Every School continues to develop as long as it lasts. To paraphrase Peter Thomas Rohrbach, author of a fine history of Carmel in English entitled *Journey to Carith*—any School of Spirituality is a chain of complementary biographies through which the gospel has been historically filtered, all for the enrichment of a particular tradition within the church and, through it, the good of the church as a whole. Like theological and philosophical ideas, Schools of Spirituality continue to develop. Carmel, for example, is amazed at the staggering influence on our own tradition that St. Therese of the Child Jesus and St. Edith Stein have exerted. And in other Orders and Schools of Spirituality development has dramatically continued since the closing of the Second Vatican Council, with their ensuing general chapters of renewal and intense, ongoing reflection

We now return to the Teresian-Carmelite School of Spirituality. To know something real about the Teresian School is to be encouraged in practical ways to pray simply and affectively (from the heart) over the substantial sources of spirituality—namely, scripture, liturgy, the teaching of the magisterium (like the documents of Vatican II and the Catechism), and the great time-tested spiritual classics. Here prayer and education obviously go hand in hand. The educated mind, under grace, balances heart and viscera (the gut).

Carmel especially educates us to employ the theological virtues while at prayer because they are the mainsprings of direct intimacy with God. It is faith, hope, and charity that feed prayer and propel us towards conformity of the will to God's. And we clearly learn from Carmel the legitimacy of an explicit desire for contemplation as a shortcut to the development of a mature faith and trust that lead to a true self-donation. This desire predisposes us to receive an infused "loving gaze" that then focuses the spiritual appetite on God as our Supreme Good and Transforming Agent, the Source of all ecclesial good, and the hope of universal humanity.

Now let us enter the Interior Castle of St. Teresa, Doctor of the Church. Consider some attractive teachings of St. Teresa of Jesus, the 16th Century Castilian-Spanish founder of the Discalced Carmelites. We depend here on two of her major works, *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*. Presupposing our graced and often clumsy efforts at the acquisition of the moral virtues, Teresa leads us into the soul's Mansions, where God resides as Indwelling Trinity, and where the Mediating Christ awaits us as Friend, Teacher, and Guide. For Teresa, Jesus Christ is always the Way, the Truth, and the Life, always and everywhere. By holding on to the coattails of Jesus Christ, one sails into the Kingdom of God.

Well known is the fact that Teresa greatly advocated "mental prayer." Whether we pray with prefabricated formulas (vocal prayer) or spontaneously, we need to be intentionally present to what we are saying. Moreover, we need to be attentive to our own neediness, and mindful of the dignity of the One we address. Teresa shows how this can be done either with formulas, or by simple intuition, or through mere desire.

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Her prayer is more affective than anything else, for as she puts it: "The important thing is not to think much but to love much" (*Way of Perfection* 25:3 [p.131f in the ICS edition]). As a matter of fact, the very reason for thinking is "to stir oneself to love" (*Interior Castle*, 4th Mansions n.7 [p.319 in the ICS edition]). In her spiritual autobiography [*The Book of Her Life*, Ch. 8] the saint describes mental prayer as a matter of friendship, as "an intimate sharing between friends; it means often taking time to be alone with the One we know loves us" [p. 67 in the ICS edition]. Here Teresa reflects John the Beloved Disciple, profoundly conscious that prayer and the whole Christian life is a response to the One "who has loved us first!"

From a book by Francisco De Osuna, St. Teresa learned a meditation method called the "Prayer of Recollection." She advocates this prayer-orientation with enthusiasm in her *Way of Perfection*. Therein she teaches us to *localize* God. Indeed, one reason we respond to Eucharistic Exposition so well is that it helps us localize Christ so easily. Inspired by the Last Supper Discourse and Augustine's thought of eventually finding God within, Teresa invites us to turn inward and place Christ in the bosom of the Blessed Trinity that itself dwells within us (*Way of Perfection* 28:2 and 4, [p.140f in the ICS edition]).

Since for Teresa prayer is a matter of friendship, she found her joy in the company of Jesus Christ. She explains that when we pray, we are alone, and so we need Christ as a "Friend" (*Way of Perfection* 26:1 [p.133 in the ICS edition]). Furthermore, since we do not know how to pray, we need Christ as a Teacher (*ibid*). And because we are challenged to virtue, we need Christ as a Guide and Exemplar of all virtue, especially humility (*Interior Castle*, 7th Mansions 4:8-9 [p.446f in the ICS edition]), which is the foundation of spirituality. Humility, Teresa famously says, is simply "walking in the truth." Dwelling on Christ's own humility, then, we gently make an interior examen (as Ignatius also taught) and gain self-knowledge. And with self-knowledge we grow in charity, for we are less defensive before the truth and the demands of love. As a matter of fact, for Teresa humility in oneself is the flip side of genuine charity towards others.

Until Teresa discovered the "Prayer of Recollection," she confesses that she did not find much satisfaction or staying power at prayer. Furthermore, she found that this type of prayer, the Prayer of Recollection, opened her up to greater intimacy with God because it is so affective and simple in nature. And lastly, it proved to be the best predisposition for the reception of contemplation or, simply put, passive prayer. In at least three separate works, her list of contemplative phenomena in the practice of prayer begins with what is today called the Passive Prayer of Recollection. And do not doubt that Teresa positively encouraged the explicit, personal desire for contemplation. We do not speak of a desire for special experience. With holy indifference, our motive in desiring contemplation is that contemplation is a shortcut to the maturity of the theological virtues in us (*Way of Perfection* 28:7 [p.143 in the ICS edition]; *Interior Castle*, 5th Mansions 3:4 [p.350 in the ICS edition]). This is Teresa's explicit thought. The theological virtues, after all, directly address us to, and find their rest in, the *transcendent* God as their proper object. And the same is true of contemplative prayer.

Despite the natural distractions we are all prone to, Teresa was convinced that anyone who disciplined himself or herself for even six months in order to learn this prayer of recollection will acquire the habit of a simplified mental prayer, sustained by the Word of God. Speaking from her own personal experience, and from her experience of directing her sisters in the cloister, Teresa saw that within a short time of cultivating this focus "the bees [of contemplation] enter into prayer and make honey without any effort on our own."

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Here she is speaking of the very first type of contemplation known to her. It is an infused sense of God's presence that creates an ideal condition for the person to exercise his or her faculties in meditation of a very simple and affective sort. And then in time, this infused sense of God's presence sometimes opens up and becomes an inner *quietud*—a stillness of the soul—in which the will is taken hold of by God and fed as only God can feed the spiritual appetite. The will tastes God, its ultimate Good and rest, and begins to move away from satisfactions that are not God, seeking more and more an interior affective solitude.

This reminds me of St. John of the Cross's concept of solitude: "Solitude is the soul's desire for God alone, and the absence of desire for what is not God." (For John of the Cross, prayer is basically the desire for God!) This is truly the heart alone in the desert with Christ—the affect intent on leaving behind, in spite of ourselves, all inordinate attachments to persons, places, and things. Here is the beginning of an authentic charity in an emerging freedom of spirit—the love of God for God's sake, the love of neighbor for God's sake, and the love of neighbor and things *in* God, to the betterment of everybody and everything.

In conclusion, my patient friends, the Lord of Recollection "knocks at the door." "If you open to him, he will come in[to your house], sit down at table, and have supper with you." Amen.

Note address change on forms

Study Groups and Communities should be aware that the address on the forms that are on the former OKLA OCDS website are outdated. If you are still using those forms you need to update them so that you send all forms to the current OCDS Central Office at 9515 E. 99th St., Tulsa OK 74133 where all records are being kept. Correct forms can be found on the new OCDS website: <http://www.thereocds.org/>

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Parting Words

Flos Carmeli provides information for the Secular members of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in the Oklahoma Province, which has jurisdiction over O.C.D.S. members living in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas. For subscription information contact Martha Hanley, editor, at tnmhanley@yahoo.com.

I understood clearly that what I did for my part was little, but God wants no more than our determination so that He may do everything Himself. May He be forever Blessed and praised, amen.

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Pilgrimage from Houston to Carmelite Spain

A pilgrimage to Carmelite Spain, departing from Houston, will be offered from Oct. 22 to Oct. 30, 2012. Cost is \$2,990 pre-paid plus tips. Spiritual director will be Deacon Steve Griesmyer. For more information, contact Margarita Dufilho at 832-693-8717.