



# *Carmelite Newsletter*

## *Australia, New Zealand & Oceania*

### *Solemnity of St Joseph 2021*



#### **Year of St Joseph – 2020 - 2021**

Our Superior General, Fr. Saverio Cannistrà OCD, and the Prior General of the Ancient Observance have written a letter to the whole Carmelite Family on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church.

*It does us good to think about St. Joseph, to meditate on him as one whom our tradition has recognised as a patron and a model of Carmelite life. It is something we want to do together, as a Carmelite family, O.Carm. and O.C.D., because in our veneration of St. Joseph, and in our constant reference to him, we find one of the most precious aspects of our common heritage and spirituality. This year has the added motivation of a significant anniversary, namely, the proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, by Pope Pius IX, on the 8th of December 1870, 150 years ago.*

Download pdf [https://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/EN\\_St.-Joseph-Patron-Definitivo.pdf](https://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/EN_St.-Joseph-Patron-Definitivo.pdf)



#### **Mass with Bishop Greg Homeming, OCD.**

Online mass continues every Sunday with Bishop Greg Homeming from St Carthage's Cathedral in Lismore. These Masses are recorded by professional staff of the diocese who stream them online to the public each week: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYxOjNyku4JCI08vfeTq-fQ>.

Past masses and the Bishop's 'Lenten Talks' are also online at this site.

*Just as God told Joseph: "Son of David, do not be afraid!" (Mt 1:20), so he seems to tell us: "Do not be afraid!" We need to set aside all anger and disappointment, and to embrace the way things are, even when they do not turn out as we wish. Not with mere resignation but with hope and courage. In this way, we become open to a deeper meaning. Our lives can be miraculously reborn if we find the courage to live them in accordance with the Gospel. It does not matter if everything seems to have gone wrong or some things can no longer be fixed. God can make flowers spring up from stony ground. Even if our heart condemns us, "God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything" (1 Jn 3:20). Pope Francis: **Patris Corde §4***



## Comings and Goings at the Launceston Secular Order Community

Our Launceston group is relatively small in comparison to the more established communities around Australia. Even so we usually have a full attendance at our monthly meetings except during the height of the Covid-19 crisis. Even so we've only really missed coming together for a few months, which was a great blessing for us all. We've certainly kept all our brothers and sisters from interstate in our heartfelt prayers.

In 2020 we even celebrated our annual luncheon together with family and friends to commemorate the feast of the Patroness of our community, Mary, Mother of Divine Grace whose feast day falls on 23rd July. Although we did ensure that we continued with our social distancing and hygiene requirements the day was a great success.

During the whole year we have continued to ensure that our monthly outreach newsletter was distributed electronically to many of our friends of Carmel to various places in Australia who have requested it. This newsletter deals mainly with Carmelite Spirituality and various saints whom we celebrate during that particular month. Liz has continued to undertake this role on our behalf for around 12 months or more with many positive feedbacks regarding the topic she selects that month.

Sadly in 2020 we were unable to have our usual weekend retreat and so we arranged to come together for a half day of recollection around the same time as the weekend retreat was due to be held. We had time to sit in adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament in the Carmelite Monastery chapel in Launceston and concluded with Evening Prayer together before the Blessed Sacrament was reposed.

Setting up the Carmelite Ordo each year has now seen a beautiful collaboration happening with other communities. As you know it is an important tool in guiding us on what we are to celebrate each day when we recite our Morning and Evening Prayers from the Breviary. Monica who belongs to the Melbourne Community has been responsible for setting up the actual Ordo marking all the Carmelite feasts as well as those celebrated by the whole church. Chris from the Sydney Community helps Sandra in the Launceston Community to proof read the Ordo sent to them from Monica before it is then handed over to the Carmelite nuns in Launceston who do the printing and collating of the booklets for distribution.



The Retreat and Conference Centre offers a range of retreats in 2021 including the following in the first months of 2021 as part of the Carmelite Retreat Program. The full list of retreats and services can be seen at: <https://mtcarmel.com.au/carmelite-retreat-program>.

1. 16-18 April 2021 - *Praying with St. Teresa of Jesus* - Fr. Ferdinand de la Cruz, OCD.
2. 1 May 2021 - *Are You the One Who is to Come?* – Dr. Robert Gascoigne.
3. 21-23 May 2021 - *Call to Interior Prayer* – Fr. Paul Maunder, OCD.
4. 5 June 2021 - *When Difficulties in Prayer Arise* - Fr. Ferdinand de La Cruz, OCD.
5. 18-20 June 2021 - *The Light and Hope of Peace* - John Charadia and Artist Tutor Team
6. 25-27 June 2021 - *Lovestruck: Towards the Path* - Sisters Fines, Di, Ninfa & Nory.
7. 3 July 2021 - *Who Am I interiorly* - Barry Morkel.

*Joseph accepted Mary unconditionally. He trusted in the angel's words. "The nobility of Joseph's heart is such that what he learned from the law he made dependent on charity. Today, in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident, Joseph appears as the figure of a respectful and sensitive man. Even though he does not understand the bigger picture, he makes a decision to protect Mary's good name, her dignity and her life. In his hesitation about how best to act, God helped him by enlightening his judgment". Pope Francis: **Patris Corde §4***



## NEWS FROM ST ELIJAH COMMUNITY

In February the St Elijah OCDS community at Varroville held elections for our Council for the next three years. We look forward to a blessed and fruitful time ahead under their leadership.



Above, from left to right: Lorraine Murphy (2nd Counsellor); Susan Bucknell (Formator); Trish Newman (President); Irene Badja (1st Counsellor); and Fr. Ferdie de la Cruz OCD (Assistant).

Left: Barbara Stenning (3rd Counsellor).

At our March meeting Fr. Ferdie gave a most elucidating outline and summary of *Patris Corde (With a Father's Heart)*, the Holy Father's Apostolic Letter on St Joseph. Fr. Ferdie's clear account also included his own reflection, and these were both very well received.



## NEW YEAR SOCIAL GATHERING

Over the last couple of years, as many as are able from the Mary Immaculate Community have gathered for an informal social gathering before meetings resume. This year, Covid-19 restrictions limited the number but not the enthusiasm of the 7 members who gathered at the Ashfield Catholic Club for lunch. Pictured are: back row: Filippa Palazzotto and Maimona Marsangca (Mae); front row: Janice Schubach and Marija Maciejewska. Not pictured: Jill Ditton, Lucy Denley and Brett Doyle.





## NEWS FROM ORMISTON CARMEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT





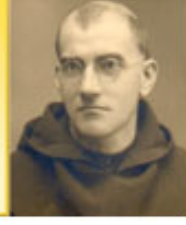
2021 has begun with some welcome rainfall and Sr. Maria Tania and Sr. Helen look very proud of their burgeoning produce. The monastery Church remains closed to the public, but some managed to get one family visit before the season of Lent - the first since the pandemic lockdowns began last March.

## SYDNEY COMMUNITY MOVES TO TEMPORARY NEW VENUE



The Mary Immaculate Community has found a new temporary home for its monthly meetings. The Ashfield parish facilities have become unavailable for at least the next several months. Fr. Sam Lynch of the nearby Lewisham/Summer Hill parish has kindly made available the parish hall at Lewisham, which is on the same train line as Ashfield, and this will minimise travel disruptions. The Lewisham church, dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury (Thomas à Beckett), has recently been beautifully restored. Above is a stained glass window of St Joseph.



<p>Sunday 21st March, 2021 16:00 UK</p> <p><b>St Raphael Kalinowski</b> (1835 - 1907)</p> <p><b>Marcin Fizia, OCD</b> (Cracow, Poland)</p>		<p><b>3 REMAINING TALKS - CARMELITE FRIARS FROM 19<sup>TH</sup> &amp; 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES</b></p>
<p>Sunday 11th April, 2021 16:00 UK</p> <p><b>Bl. Marie-Eugène</b> (1894 - 1967) Dorothea Merchiers, NDV (Venasque, France)</p>		<p>The Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality (CACs) in Oxford, U.K. has been live streaming a new spirituality series - <b>LIGHT for THE WORLD</b> - featuring six exceptional Carmelites: Bl. Francisco Palau, Hermann Cohen, Père Jacques de Jésus, Bl. Titus Brandsma, Bl. Marie-Eugène and St. Raphael Kalinowski, all of whom lived at a time of much political and social strife yet witnessed to the spirit of true Carmelite humanism. This series will explore their courage and Gospel fidelity. Their witness offers hope and is a beacon of light for us as we navigate our own equally challenging times. The lives of these faithful disciples of Christ will inspire you, give you insights that will transform your life and encourage you in your spiritual journey. Each presentation will be live-streamed.</p>
<p>Sunday 25th April, 2021 16:00 UK</p> <p><b>Père Jacques de Jésus</b> (1900 - 1945)</p> <p><b>Heather Ward, OCDS</b> (Derbyshire, UK)</p>		<p>For more information or to register: Visit: <a href="http://oxcacs.org/ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk/">oxcacs.org/ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk/</a></p> <p>You can sign up for selected talks. Ruth Preston has confirmed that all sessions will be recorded and uploaded via Vimeo, which will help with international time zone differences.</p>

**NEWS FROM CARMEL OF THE HOLY TRINITY, NEDLANDS W.A.**

These first months of 2021 have seen us having a number of celebrations. While we do not make a big fuss of regular birthdays, we do mark the new decades as each Sister reaches a new one. Early in January we celebrated Sr. Scholastica's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. We ended up having 2 parties and 2 cakes as when Gelorup Carmel heard of the celebration they sent us more food and another cake!

2 February saw us celebrating both Sr. Marie Chrissie's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday and Sr. Margaret Mary's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of entrance into Carmel. The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord is always a special one for us but this year we were without Mass as we were in the midst of a very strict one week lockdown.

At the end of January Sr. Joanne underwent hip replacement surgery. After some days she was transferred to a rehabilitation unit in a hospital close to us and after about 10 days there was able to return to the monastery. Sister is getting around quite well with a walker but looking forward to the time when she can dispense with it.

At the end of February we celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of our Prioress, Sr. Sesimani, and our very generous Sisters in Gelorup sent us a meal of fish and chips which we all enjoyed. After these festivities we are settling back into our Lenten discipline and beginning to prepare for the great days of Holy Week.

*If the first stage of all true interior healing is to accept our personal history and embrace even the things in life that we did not choose, we must now add another important element: creative courage. This emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties. In the face of difficulty, we can either give up and walk away, or somehow engage with it. At times, difficulties bring out resources we did not even think we had. Pope Francis: **Patris Corde** §5*





### **FAREWELL TO SR. THONG DELAYED BY W.A. LOCKDOWNS**



Sr. Thong, who is from Vietnam, came to spend some time with our three younger Sisters and to do some shared formation with them. During her time with us Sr. Thong also had the opportunity to continue with some English studies as well as experiencing life in another Australian Carmelite Monastery. Sr. Thong was to have returned to her own Community in Gelorup in time to celebrate their titular feast day on 11 February, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. However the unexpected lockdown we had, followed by a further week of restricted travel between Perth and the south-west meant we kept her with us for an extra week. We had a farewell party with a 'graduation' for Sr. Thong from our Monastery. We continue to miss her joyful presence and helping hands but know her own community are very happy to have her back home with them.

### **ONLINE LENTEN RETREATS CONTINUE**

Invite friends to subscribe at: [www.retreat-online.karmel.at](http://www.retreat-online.karmel.at)

Carmelite Online Retreat

JOURNEY FROM DWELLING PLACE TO  
DWELLING PLACE WITH ST. TERESA OF AVILA

[www.retreat-online.karmel.at](http://www.retreat-online.karmel.at)

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### LENT - 'THE WRY SEASON' - Ross Collings OCD

In the March 1992 edition of *Eureka Street*, Ross Collings OCD, wrote a Lenten article entitled "The Wry Season" – the full text of the *Eureka Street* article can be viewed at: <https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/uploads/File/pdf/EurekaStreetClassic/Vol2No2.pdf>

Many will remember Ross fondly. He died tragically in a car accident along with Fr. Albert (Paddy) Keogh OCD in 1998. Ross was something of a poet or at least he had a poetic sensibility. The poems of John of the Cross seemed to be part of his DNA. "The Wry Season" has a poetic quality and is sometimes little elliptical, so I thought I would paraphrase it more prosaically and give some background. The title is ambiguous: the word 'wry' can mean distorted, out of sorts, skewed but it can also mean showing disappointment, mockery or even disgust. Ross begins by stating that Lent is a season of work - the work of repentance. "Turn to me" but lest this convey connotations that are too Pelagian, it is balanced with a prayer for God's initiative: "Turn us to yourself, O Lord." The ellipse becomes a metaphor for the dynamic of repentance. An ellipse describes a periphery determined by two interacting reference points: in this case, God and the penitent: the "divine command and human prayer". Here we might allow ourselves a diversion or amplification, latent in the metaphor: as the two reference points approach each other, the ellipse will come to approximate a circle, itself a symbol of wholeness and perfection.

How does this relate to the works of penance performed during Lent? Prayer, fasting and almsgiving have value because the Lord assures us that even the seemingly insignificant cup of water has value because it comes from the promised stream of living water (Jn 7:38) that ultimately finds its source in Him who is the living water (Jn 4:10). Our attention is then turned to the experience of the Greek diplomat and poet, 1963 Nobel laureate in literature, George Seferis (1900-1971) who wondered about the value of his poems but realised that his works (his poems) had significance beyond themselves. His individual 'works' were subjugated to the larger 'work' to which they were directed, "even if our personal contributions are consumed in it". Well, what does that really mean? To understand it we need to know something of Seferis' life and to engage in some sober conjecture. Seferis opposed the Greek colonels who ruled Greece as a military junta from 1967-1974. When Seferis died in 1971, huge crowds accompanied his coffin through Athens' street, singing Seferis' banned poem 'Denial', which had also been set to music by Mikis Theodorakis. Seferis had become a hero of resistance to the régime. Though his works (poems) had been silenced (banned), they contributed to the great work of resistance, even though he did not live to see the régime's overthrow. Seferis had transcended his poetic ego: "he is, peaceful in the recognition that there is something much greater going ahead, the making of his whole community".

But, when all said and done, what do our Lenten penances and sacrifices achieve? A little, perhaps for the hungry? Will we be transformed? Unlikely. Perhaps the best effect is the chastening we receive when confronted with the question: "So what?" Should we be discouraged or disappointed in ourselves? Ross Collings thinks that St Teresa would say: "Who do you think you are anyway?" As with the saints, Ross Collings suggests that we should take even the best of our works with "profound unseriousness". We need not, however, lose heart because the little works of Lent end in Resurrection, that great work of redemption, which is "utterly right, beyond all conceiving". The point is that "Lenten discipline is the expression of hope in new life." On Easter Sunday 1945, amidst political turmoil and unrest, Seferis heard from the taverna: "Christos anesti - Christ is risen." He wrote in his diary that they were "all thirsting for that Resurrection". Ross Collings concludes: "*The work* that is larger than any of us but includes all of us is God's work, grafting our minds, hearts and bodies into Christ's. It keeps alive the hope in a poet's travail, in a drinker's song and in yet another Lent."



## MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



*Enlighten me, Holy Spirit, so that my thoughts may be guided by your wisdom and truth.*

*Enkindle my heart, Holy Spirit, so that I may love with your tenderness and great compassion.*

*Indwell in me, Holy Spirit, so that my life may be a witness to your transforming grace and peace.*

*Amen*

Our hearts yearn for peace in our world often marked by discord. Even knowing what the truth is these days has become a real issue. To whom shall we go for the peace our hearts desire and the truth we long to live by? The Carmelite Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified was a great advocate for asking for light and peace through the Mass offered in honour of the Holy Spirit.

Join us on the first Monday of every month at 7:30pm (UK time) to thank God for the gifts of creation and our continued recreation in Christ made possible by the power and under the guiding light and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit and the Healing Mass will be streamed via our website's live page

<https://www.carmelite.uk.net/live/> and also the YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQ5dx84INY4u04-lsInD0ng/featured>.

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## HEALING MASS



*The first Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm. Mass will be streamed via our Mass streamed daily via our website's live page and also our Facebook Page.*

*Fr. Liam will continue to offer this special Mass, once a month for spiritual, emotional and physical healing of loved ones or yourself. Each Mass will feature a homily focused around healing and a blessing will also be offered.*

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*St. Joseph urged me to have a constant devotion to him. He himself told me to recite three prayers [the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be] and the Memorare once every day. He looked at me with great kindness and gave me to know how much he is supporting this work [of mercy]. He has promised me this special help and protection. I recite the requested prayers every day and feel his special protection.*

(Diary of St. Faustina, 1203)





## CHRISTCHURCH CARMEL COMPLETES REPAIRS 10 YEARS ON.

A decade after our big earthquake, all the repairs to the Christchurch Carmel were finally finished in 2020. While assessing the last area to fix, it was discovered that our bell tower needed restoration work, so had to be craned down, repaired and put back up. We hope it will now withstand any future seismic activity.

At the Christchurch monastery, there are nine fully professed sisters, and two novices who have made their first profession, all aged between 28 to 90.

A full report on the year's activities can be found at the Christchurch's Carmel's newsletter which can be found at:

<https://www.christchurchcarmel.org.nz/files/Christmas-Newsletter-2020a.pdf>

## PRAYING SIMPLY AT HOME -



The Carmelite Friars' Community at Mount Carmel Retreat Centre are happy to offer you some practical guidelines and resources for praying in your homes during a time that is unsettling but also calls for a positive response. We hope they will open up new possibilities for you.

Topics include - [www.mtcarmel.com.au/the-prayer-project](http://www.mtcarmel.com.au/the-prayer-project)

[What is prayer?](#)

[Praying with a Carmelite](#) - Thérèse of Lisieux was a 'master' at conversing with God in a simple way.

[Praying with a Poem](#) - The Breastplate of St Patrick.

[Praying with the Prayers of the Mass](#) - Prayers of Spiritual Communion.

### ST TERESA & ST JOSEPH

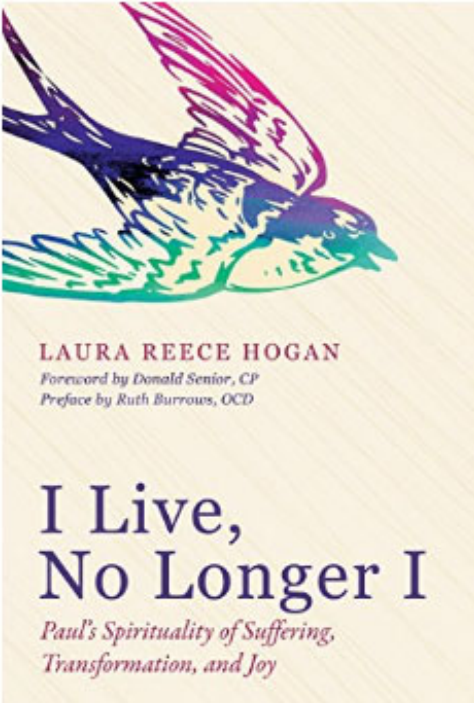
I took for my patron and lord the glorious St. Joseph, and recommended myself earnestly to him. I saw clearly that both out of this my present trouble, and out of others of greater importance, relating to my honour and the loss of my soul, this my father and lord delivered me, and rendered me greater services than I knew how to ask for. (St. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, chapter 6)

### REDEMPTORIS CUSTOS – ST JOHN PAUL II

8. St. Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood. It is precisely in this way that, as the Church's Liturgy teaches, he "cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation" and is truly a "minister of salvation." His fatherhood is expressed concretely "in his having made his life a service, a sacrifice to the mystery of the Incarnation and to the redemptive mission connected with it; in having used the legal authority which was his over the Holy Family in order to make a total gift of self, of his life and work; in having turned his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of self, an oblation of his heart and all his abilities into love placed at the service of the Messiah growing up in his house."



## READING SUGGESTIONS



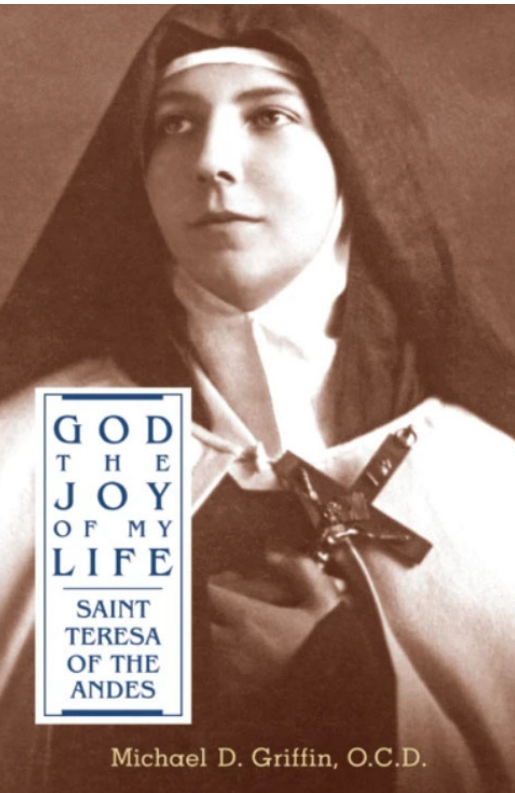
Chris Firmstone OCDS recommends this exposition of the profound implications of Paul's teaching on suffering :“I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me”. (Gal. 2: 19-20)

Laura Reece Hogan is an American Lay Carmelite, a convert to Catholicism, wife, mother of three children, lawyer, published poet, with a Masters in Theology.

She explores the significance of the process in which we as baptised disciples of Jesus Christ can imitate our Master by undergoing the purification process of de-centering our lives, moving away from self-love, meeting Christ in prayer and in community, and being one with Christ as a climax to this transformation.

She draws on Carmelite Saints and significant people including Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, De Caussade, John of the Cross, Teresa of Calcutta, Teresa of Avila, and Therese of Lisieux. The work is beautifully written and both theologically orthodox and practical. It is also very readable.

## CARMELITE REPRINT



A Biography of Saint Teresa of Jesus of the Andes

Michael D. Griffin, O.C.D.

Teresa of Jesus of the Andes was the first Chilean saint when she was canonized in 1993 by Pope St. John Paul II. In 1919, she entered the Disalced Carmelites of Santiago at age eighteen and died only eleven months later. An inspiration to young people, she lived a vibrant social life amidst school, sports, music, and friends, all the while being completely devoted to her faith.

This volume, first published in 1989, contains both a biography written by Father Michael Griffin, O.C.D., and his translation of the saint's personal diary. Father Griffin's biography captures the whole of St. Teresa's life, including her spiritual development up until her early death as a young nun. Her personal diary shows a young woman striving after holiness and a deep relationship with God. Also included are a full chronology of her life and the two homilies of Pope St. John Paul II given at her beatification and canonization.

This book is a reprint of the 1993 edition by Teresian Charism Press.

ICS code: ICS-GJMLFormat: paperback  
Pages: 360 - ISBN: 978-1-939272-55-3



## FROM MISSIONARY DOCTOR TO DOCTOR OF SOULS: SR. THÉRÈSE-MARIE

<https://hobart.catholic.org.au/2021/01/29/sr-therese-marie-en-solemn-profession-carmelite/>

Published: 29 January 2021.

From being a missionary doctor who helped the poor and vulnerable, to becoming a missionary doctor of souls, Sr Thérèse-Marie of the Eucharist followed God's desire to consecrate herself entirely to Him. At a Mass in Launceston on December 14 last year she made her solemn vows as a Carmelite, embracing a hidden life of prayer and sacrifice.

Sr Thérèse-Marie was born in Vietnam. However, the Do family travelled as refugees to Australia and resettled in Adelaide. The fifth of ten children, she says she first learnt of Carmelites when she read St Therese of Lisieux's *Story of a Soul* at a very young age. "I come from a deeply Catholic family where our faith has always been the most important gift in our lives," Sr Thérèse-Marie én, now 41, said. "Our life centred around our faith as we attended daily Mass and prayed the family rosary together."



*"My dear parents helped us to understand that a religious vocation was a special grace from God," Sr Thérèse-Marie said. "My family came to Australia as refugees when I was just one year old. We were fortunate to be given a second chance at life in this beautiful country, and we never forget our humble roots."* Aware of how blessed she had been in her life, Sr Thérèse-Marie says she didn't know how to repay God's goodness to her: so she gave her 'all' – her life – to God.

She studied Medicine and, after graduating, worked for a few years before joining the Missionaries of Charity (founded by Mother Teresa) in Melbourne. She says she was privileged to serve the poorest of the poor in Australia, in Rome – where she made her profession of vows as a sister of the Missionaries of Charity – in the Philippines and in South Africa. *"As a Missionaries of Charity sister, God allowed me to realise my dream of becoming a missionary doctor."* However, God had further plans for her vocation.

*"[In active religious life] I was privileged to see and experience the tremendous material as well as spiritual poverty of the people both in rich and third world countries. In the face of so much suffering, one experiences one's own poverty – there is a need to withdraw into silence and solitude to be alone with God," Sr Thérèse-Marie said. "Although I loved being an active missionary very much, in silence before our Eucharistic Lord, the truth of God's desire to consecrate me to belong solely to Him helped me to realise His dream for me – to be His contemplative missionary doctor of souls," she said.*

*"The Lord led me to a vocation within a vocation... to embrace His suffering members in a life of prayer and sacrifice in Carmel."* In 2013, after six years of active religious life, Sr Thérèse-Marie left the Missionaries of Charity. She says that leaving the Missionaries of Charity was very difficult, but in 2014 when she stepped inside the enclosure of the Launceston Carmelite Monastery she knew in the depth of her heart that she had come home.

Alongside her religious names of Thérèse-Marie (for St Therese of Lisieux and Our Lady) is 'én' – meaning swallow in Vietnamese. *"This swallow has flown far and wide but now she has finally*





*found her true nest in Carmel where she will fold her wings and nestle with her Lord, praying for the salvation of souls.”*

She said that she had “overwhelming gratitude” when she made her solemn profession at the Launceston Carmel on the feast day of St John of the Cross. Presiding at the Mass was Archbishop Julian, as well as Emeritus Bishop Greg O’Kelly SJ of Port Pirie who had been Sr Thérèse-Marie’s headmaster at school, as well as 10 concelebrating priests. Almost her whole family, including some close friends, from the mainland were able to be present as Tasmania’s borders had opened just in time. “It was almost miraculous, a touch of God’s tender love for me!” Sr Thérèse-Marie said. Her solemn profession was a day of grace for the whole of her community, says Prioress Mother Teresa Benedicta.

“... It is a gift of new life grafted into the existing community, and a sign of hope for the future – that another young woman who could have had a successful life and career using her many talents in the world has chosen to give those gifts back to God for Him to use as He wills at the service of the Church in Tasmania,” Mother Teresa Benedicta said. “It is a great and much-needed witness to the peace and joy that a person experiences when they give their life totally to Christ, a peace and joy that one has to experience to understand its full depth and intensity.”

That joy is something Sr Thérèse-Marie noted when reflecting on making her solemn profession. Quoting Song of Songs, she said: “Now I can say with joy and gratitude in my heart: ‘My Beloved is mind and I am His’ ... forever.”

## **CARMELITES FIND NEW HOME FOR PRAYER AND CONTEMPLATION**

[https://issuu.com/diomn/docs/aurora\\_december\\_2020](https://issuu.com/diomn/docs/aurora_december_2020)

Teresian Carmelite nuns Sister Jennifer and Sister Jocelyn exchange appreciation for the beauty that surrounds them as they walk through the garden of their new home in Toronto, New South Wales, writes Lizzie Snedden in *Aurora*. Their brown robes complete with scapular blow gently in the wind, but it is their kind eyes that capture attention.



Ordinarily, the two nuns spend the better part of their day in silence and only leave their home for necessities. Visitors to their new abode are infrequent, and their connection to the outside world comes mostly through watching ABC news in the evening. While many of us struggled with physical isolation brought on by lockdown measures introduced during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, for these two women it was a key component of a life they each sought at seven years of age.

It was then that Sr Jennifer first learnt about the Teresian Carmelites. Her maternal grandmother, who was not Catholic, asked her to borrow a book about St Therese of Lisieux from the Sisters of St Joseph at St Joseph’s School Toronto. “I knew then I wanted to be a Teresian Carmelite, and when I finished school at age 18, I joined the Order,” says Sr Jennifer. Sr Jocelyn’s journey to becoming part of the cloistered, contemplative order was not quite so straightforward. “When I was seven, I first learnt about monks, and thought that’s what I wanted to be in life,” she says. Although Sr Jocelyn attended an Anglican school in Sydney, her family was not religious. Despite this, over the years her fascination with religious life intensified and at age 23, after completing a degree in science at the University of Sydney and while a medical student at the University of NSW, she became a Catholic.

Over the next two decades, Sr Jocelyn travelled abroad on many occasions for work and to observe and take part in Carmelite culture. Then, at age 47, after years of waiting for “the call” to join the order, she received a letter from Sr Jennifer informing her of the death of a mutual friend. While the two had never met, it was this letter that reaffirmed Sr Jocelyn’s reflection, and she began the process of becoming a Carmelite. It took six-and-a-half years and throughout this time



Sr Jocelyn continued to ponder whether it was the right decision, “but they kept allowing me to progress, so I thought if the Carmelites think I am suitable, I must be”. It was a significant change for Sr Jocelyn, who had spent more than 20 years working as a palliative care doctor. That was 20 years ago. Now they live together in a community of six Carmelites, with another Sister taking up residence in a nursing home located nearby. Sr Jocelyn describes their move to the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle during the pandemic as being “absolutely providential”.

Before moving, the group lived on the outskirts of south-west Sydney in a monastery that included more than 100 rooms and a chapel and was set on a 4.5-hectare block. Once brimming with a large community of nuns, as their numbers began to dwindle and the needs of the remaining cohort grew with their age, it became impractical for the Sisters to remain in the former monastery. “It was tiring,” says Sr Jennifer, describing their life in Varroville. “The upkeep of the house and its sheer size exhausted us and took away from our contemplative life. “Then, earlier this year, we went to a Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) event and the organisers asked what our top priority was,” she says. “Finding a new home was at the top of our list.” Member congregations of CRA offered four options, one of which is their new home in Toronto that is owned by the Sisters of Mercy, who had otherwise been preparing it for sale.

As with any move, the Carmelites’ relocation has been a catalyst for change, including to their daily routines. However, their charism remains the same, and they continue to devote themselves to the spread of Christ’s kingdom. “Although we no longer have a chapel where people can come and pray with us, we continue to pray for others. Our prayers are informed by what we see on the news, the emails and letters we receive, and hopefully, phone calls too when our lines are back up and working,” says Sr Jennifer. “Our life is simple, but it has a lot of depth,” says Sr Jennifer.

**This is an abridged form of an article by Lizzie Snedden, published in *Aurora* magazine.**

**Read the full article: <https://catholicoutlook.org/silence-is-golden/>**

#### ST TERESA & ST JOSEPH

I cannot call to mind that I have ever asked him [St Joseph] at any time for anything which he has not granted; and I am filled with amazement when I consider the great favours which God hath given me through this blessed Saint; the dangers from which he hath delivered me, both of body and of soul.

To other Saints, our Lord seems to have given grace to succour men in some special necessity; but to this glorious Saint, I know by experience, to help us in all [our necessities]: and our Lord would have us understand that as He was Himself subject to him upon earth—for St. Joseph having the title of father, and being His guardian, could command Him—so now in heaven He performs all his petitions. [...]

Would that I could persuade all men to be devout to this glorious Saint; for I know by long experience what blessings he can obtain for us from God. I have never known anyone who was really devoted to him, and who honoured him by particular services, who did not visibly grow more and more in virtue; for he helps in a special way those souls who commend themselves to him. [...]

But I ask, for the love of God, that he who does not believe me will make the trial for himself—when he will see by experience the great good that results from commending oneself to this glorious patriarch, and being devout to him.

Those who give themselves to prayer should in a special manner have always a devotion to St. Joseph; for I know not how any man can think of the Queen of the angels, during the time that she suffered so much with the Infant Jesus, without giving thanks to St. Joseph for the services he rendered them then. He who cannot find anyone to teach him how to pray, let him take this glorious Saint for his master, and he will not wander out of the way.”

(St. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, chapter 6)



## 'BEING DISCALCED CARMELITES TODAY'

### Charismatic Declaration of the Teresian Carmel

Presentation by <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpBo3fjwIzE>

Fr. Daniel Chowning OCD, Fourth Definitor of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites, presents the Charismatic Declaration.



"We remind all the Chapters that an important theme on which they are called to reflect is the [Charismatic Declaration](#) : [Being Discalced Carmelites Today](#) that the Order is preparing for approval at the next General Chapter. We await the evaluation and contributions of the Provincial Chapters so that the current draft can be progressively enriched, and the final text be the fruit of the joint reflection of all."

### III. Teresian anthropology

#### 11. The Carmelite Way of Being Human and Christian

Being a Discalced Carmelite is a concrete way of living the human condition and Christian identity. The Teresian charism contains an anthropology, a particular vision of what it means to be human which, seen from a specific angle, is not different from that proposed by the Gospel. We are convinced that the Teresian vision of the human person shows its particular relevance in face of humanity's search for meaning and happiness.

#### 12. A Changing World

Humanity is now witnessing a profound change, indeed, a continuous acceleration of change, which is, among other things, a consequence of the great scientific and technological development (the digital revolution, robotics, biotechnology, nanotechnology, information technology), and the domination of the economy with its logic on society. We find ourselves in a globalized world, which has as its characteristic constant change, a world that has been defined as fluid, and even gaseous, where everything is volatile, temporary, and ephemeral.

#### 13. Human Dignity Not Fully Recognized

Great progress has been made in accepting the value and dignity of the human person. However, theoretical admission and juridical recognition of the equality of all men and women do not correspond in reality to a life worthy of all, and injustices, wars, poverty, and discrimination remain, or even increase. Although the awareness of belonging to a single human family has grown, social and economic differences, lack of solidarity, and exploitation persist.





#### **14. Current Trends in Humanity**

Especially in economically more developed societies, there is strong individualism that makes the right progress of individual freedom coexist with the risk of closing in on oneself and reducing social relationships, solidarity, and fraternity with others. The leap in the quality of digital technology contributes significantly to this. From being a means of communication, it has become, especially for the young people, an environment of life and virtual relationships. The search for happiness, which is a desire inscribed in the heart of every human being, is often expressed in a consumerist and selfish way, and is often centered on material well-being, the cult of the body, and focus on one's image. A lot of resources are spent on physical health care with the will to defeat diseases and pain. Transhumanism, which is becoming more and more widespread, claims to transform the human condition by the development of technologies capable of improving human physical, psychological, and intellectual abilities, even with the hope of being able to extend life beyond its biological limits in the future.

#### **15. True Human Dignity**

In this context, the anthropological proposal of Teresa of Jesus is enlightening, starting from her personal experience of the extraordinary dignity of the human person: "I don't find anything comparable to the magnificent beauty of a soul and its marvelous capacity"(1M 1:1). Human dignity depends neither on physical beauty, nor social prestige based on wealth, power, or aristocratic origin; all this forms part of the "negra honra" [literally 'black honour'], one of the idols of her time to whom Teresa refuses to pay homage. The incomparable magnificence of the human person derives from the fact that we were created by God and chosen by him as his dwelling place.

#### **16. Inhabited Interiority**

Teresa of Jesus' intuition, which is the basis of the Teresian charism, is that the response to the deepest desires and needs of the human heart is found within us, in the "interior castle" of the soul, in our interiority wherein dwells our Trinitarian God. From this perspective, there is a great agreement with the Apostle Paul, who proclaims: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Cor 3:16).

#### **17. Looking Outwards**

Unfortunately, it is possible, and even usual, to spend our life outside of ourselves in the exterior, in appearance and superficiality (terms that characterize well the culture of our time): "For there are many souls who are in the outer courtyard (...) and do not care at all about entering the castle, nor do they know what lies within that most precious place, nor who is within, or even how many rooms it has." (1M 1:5).

#### **18. Entering into Yourself**

We must return to ourselves to discover the riches that dwell within us, first of all, the Guest who lives there, the otherness from which we come and to where we are going. To return to oneself means to learn to listen to the inner dialogue that takes place within us, the fundamental relationship on which our being is based. It is by looking at ourselves in him that it becomes possible to enter without fear into ourselves and face the darkness, the wounds, and conflicts that are part of our identity. "To think that we must enter into heaven and not into ourselves, knowing each other and considering our misery and what we owe to God, from whom we implore mercy, is madness"(2M 11).

#### **19. Living and Witnessing to the New Man**

We Disalced Carmelites have the responsibility and the obligation to show humanity this treasure that we have been given and received. However, in order to be able to do so it is necessary for us to be the first to have a profound experience of our interiority and union with God, which transforms us into the image of Christ, the new man (cf. 2 Cor 3:18). An authentic experience of the God present in us impels us to recognize the presence of his Spirit in the situations of the world and calls us out of ourselves to recognize the signs of God in history.