



Newsletter

Number 289, March 2023

Carmel OCDS Community Meeting

Sunday 5 March 2023

12:00pm Formation Groups

1pm Community Meeting

Welcome & opening prayers

Roll call & apologies

Minutes of previous meeting

Treasurer's report, Correspondence

General business, General discussion

Closing prayers

1:45pm Community Formation

St Thérèse of Lisieux: "Story of a Soul"

(Community Study: See Newsletter, pp.2-3)

2:30pm Father's Teaching

Divine Office in Chapel

Leader: Christine, Reader: Eddie

Afternoon Tea

Prep. & Serving: Elizabeth & Pat C.

Dishes: Karen & Claire



Bethany Day

Tuesday 21 March 2023

(10:30am – 1:00pm)

10:30am Morning Tea

11:00am DVD

11:45am Chapel – Quiet Prayer

12:15pm BYO Lunch

Birthdays



Pat Carroll Saturday 4 March

Margaret Dwyer Friday 24 March

Marian Pavletich Friday 24 March

NZ OCDS Website: www.carmel.org.nz

March: Dedicated to St Joseph

Husband of Mary, Patron of Carmel, Feast Day: 19 March

Dear brothers and sisters in Carmel,

Lent is upon us, a time of seeking Our Lord in prayer, in consoling Him. A time of growing ever closer to Our Lord and Saviour.

We will probably join a Lenten retreat programme as we journey to Calvary and Easter.

Our March Newsletter will carry the Theresian Anniversaries Study guide 2: "The smile of the Virgin", for you to bring to our Community Meeting on Sunday March 5th. Megan will be encouraging us to read, absorb and meditate on this BEFORE our meeting, where the graces received can be shared amongst us.

"Lord grant that I may always allow myself to be guided by You, always follow Your plans, and perfectly accomplish Your Holy Will.

Grant that in all things, great and small,

today and all the days of my life,

I may do whatever You require of me.

Help me respond to the slightest prompting of Your Grace, so that I may be Your trustworthy instrument for Your honour.

May Your Will be done in time and in eternity by me, in me, and through me. Amen."

(St Teresa of Jesus)

In prayer,

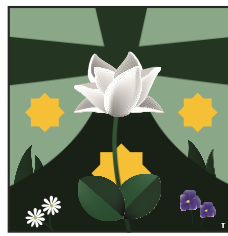
Mary O'Boyle, OCDS

(President, Peace of Christ Community, Christchurch)



March quote from St Teresa of Jesus:

"I have never known anyone who was truly devoted to him [St Joseph] and honoured him by particular services who did not advance greatly in virtue, for he helps in a special way those souls who recommend themselves to him."



READING OF THE WRITINGS OF THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS (2023: MANUSCRIPT A) Study guide 2: The smile of the Virgin (Ms A, 29v-31v)

MANUSCRIPT A, 29v-31v

My greatest consolation when I was sick was to receive a letter from *Pauline*. I read and reread it until I knew it by heart. Once, dear Mother, you sent me an hourglass and one of my dolls dressed as a Carmelite; it was impossible for me to express my joy. Uncle wasn't too happy, and said that instead of making me think of Carmel, it would be better to remove it from my mind. I am quite convinced, on the contrary, that the thought of one day becoming a Carmelite made me live.

I enjoyed working for Pauline. I made her little things out of cardboard and my greatest occupation was to make crowns for the Blessed Virgin out of daisies and forget-me-nots. We were at the time in the beautiful month of May, and nature was adorned with flowers and was bursting out with joy. The "little flower" alone was languishing and seemed forever withered.

However, she had a Sun near her, and this Sun was the *miraculous statue* of the Blessed Virgin that had spoken to Mama twice, and the little flower often, very often, turned her petals toward this blessed Star. One day I saw Papa enter Marie's room where I was in bed. He gave her several pieces of gold with an expression of great sadness and told her to write to Paris and have some Masses said at Our Lady of Victories so that she would cure his poor little girl. Ah! how touched I was to see my dear King's faith and love! [30r°] I would have loved to be able to tell him I was cured; but I had already given him enough false joys, and it wasn't my desires that could work a miracle, and a *miracle* was necessary for my cure.

A miracle was necessary and it was our Lady of Victories who worked it. One Sunday during the Novena of Masses, Marie went into the garden, leaving me with Léonie who was reading near the window. After a few moments I began calling in a low tone: "Mama, Mama." Léonie, accustomed to hearing me always calling out like this, didn't pay any attention. This lasted a long time, and then I called her much louder. Marie finally returned. I saw her enter, but I cannot say I recognized her and continued to call her in a louder tone: "Mama." *I was suffering very much* from this forced and inexplicable struggle and Marie was suffering perhaps even more than I. After some futile attempts to show me she was by my side, Marie knelt down near my bed with Léonie and Céline. Turning to the Blessed Virgin and praying with the fervor of a mother begging for the life of her child, *Marie* obtained what she wanted.

Finding no help on earth, poor little Thérèse had also turned toward the Mother of heaven, and prayed with all her heart that she take pity on her. All of a sudden the Blessed Virgin

appeared *beautiful* to me, so *beautiful* that never had I seen anything so attractive; her face was suffused with an ineffable benevolence and tenderness, but what penetrated to the very depths of my soul was the "*ravishing smile of the Blessed Virgin*". At that instant, all my pain disappeared, and two large tears glistened on my eyelashes, and flowed down my cheeks silently, but they were tears of unmixed joy. Ah! I thought, the Blessed Virgin smiled at me, how happy I am, [30v°] but never will I tell anyone for my *happiness would then disappear*. Without any effort I lowered my eyes, and I saw Marie who was looking down at me lovingly; she seemed moved and appeared to surmise the favor the Blessed Virgin had given me. Ah! it was really to her, to her touching prayers that I owed the grace of the Queen of heaven's *smile*. Seeing my gaze fixed on the Blessed Virgin, she cried out: "Thérèse is cured!" Yes, the little flower was going to be born again to life, and the luminous *Ray* that had warmed her again was not to stop its favors; the *Ray* did not act all at once, but sweetly and gently it raised the little flower and strengthened her in such a way that five years later she was expanding on the fertile mountain of Carmel.

As I said, Marie had guessed that the Blessed Virgin had given me some hidden grace. When I was alone with her and she asked me what I had seen, I was unable to resist her very tender and pressing questions; astonished at seeing my secret discovered without my having revealed it, I confided it entirely to my dear Marie. Alas! just as I had felt, my happiness was going to disappear and change into bitterness. The memory of the ineffable grace I had received was a real *spiritual trial* for me for the next four years, and I was not to find my happiness again until I was kneeling at the feet of Our Lady of Victories. At this time, my happiness was restored to me *in all its fullness*. I shall talk later on about this second grace of the Blessed Virgin. At present I shall explain, my dear Mother, how my joy was changed into sadness.

Marie, after having heard the simple and sincere recital of "my grace", asked me for permission to tell it at Carmel, and I could not say no. On my first visit to this dear Carmel, I was filled with joy when seeing my *Pauline* with the habit of the Blessed Virgin. [31r°] It was a sweet moment for both of us. There were so many things to say that I couldn't say anything at all, my heart was too full. Good Mother Marie de Gonzague was there also, giving me a thousand signs of affection; I saw the other Sisters, and in their presence I was questioned about the grace I had received. They asked me if the Blessed Virgin was carrying the Child Jesus, or if there was much light, etc. All these questions troubled me and caused me much pain, and I was able to say only one thing: "The Blessed Virgin had appeared *very beautiful*, and I had

seen her *smile* at me.” It was her *countenance alone* that had struck me, and seeing that the Carmelites had imagined something else entirely (my spiritual trials beginning already with regard to my sickness), I thought I *had lied*. Without any doubt, if I had kept my secret I would also have kept my happiness, but the Blessed Virgin permitted this torment for my soul’s good, as perhaps without it I would have had some thought of vanity, whereas *humiliation* becoming my lot, I was unable to look upon myself without a feeling of *profound horror*. Ah! what I suffered I shall not be able to say except in heaven!

While speaking about the visit to the Carmelites, I am reminded of the first visit which took place shortly after *Pauline’s* entrance. I forgot to speak about it, but there is a detail that should not be omitted. The morning of the day I was to visit, I was thinking things over in my *bed* (for it was there I made my profound meditations, and, contrary to the bride in the Canticles, I always found my Beloved there), I wondered what name I would be given in Carmel. I knew there was a Sister Thérèse of Jesus; however, my beautiful name of Thérèse could not be taken away from me. All of a sudden, I thought [31v°] of *Little Jesus* whom I loved so much, and I said: “Oh! how happy I would be if they called me Thérèse of the Child Jesus!” I *said nothing* during the visit about the *dream* I had while wide awake. But to good *Mother Marie de Gonzague*, who was asking the Sisters what name I should be given, came the idea of calling me by the name I had *dreamed* about. My joy was great and this happy meeting of minds seemed to be a singular favor from my beloved Child Jesus.

Introduction to the text:

Let us repeat what we already said in the first work sheet about the “miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin”: it is the “Virgin of the Smile” which is now above the tomb of the Saint. The Martin-Guérin spouses had a particular devotion to this image, which plays an essential role in Thérèse’s life, curing her of her serious childhood nervous disease (Ms A, 29v-31r) and accompanying her in her agony in the infirmary (from July 8, 1897). In January 1895, it was in the antechamber of Thérèse’s cell.

This statue had been offered to the young Louis Martin by a very pious old woman from Alençon who was confident that she had found in him a person worthy of receiving such a gift. As a bachelor, Louis placed her in his gazebo, where he used to retire to read and pray. After their marriage, the statue became the center of family prayer. During Mary’s month she was surrounded by flowers. Often, Zélie Martin, Louis’s wife, turned to the Blessed Virgin, and confessed that she had received “favors that only I know”. In *Les Buissonnets* (name of the Martins’ house in Lisieux after Zélie’s death), the statue continued to occupy a prominent place.

Thérèse also prayed to Our Lady under the title of our Lady of Victories: a devotion and sanctuary much loved by the Martins. A novena of Masses was celebrated in Paris for the healing of Thérèse as a child. On her journey to Rome, Thérèse visited this church on November 4, 1887, with her

father and Céline, and received a calming grace (Ms A, 30v; 56v-57r).

“Marie obtained what she wanted” (Ms A, 30r): this is how Marie of the Sacred Heart (her sister Marie) recalled this scene: “The most terrible crisis was the one that counted in her Life. I thought she was going to succumb. Seeing her exhausted in this painful struggle, I wanted to give her a drink, but she screamed in terror, “They want to poison me.” It was then that I threw myself with my sisters at the feet of the Blessed Virgin. Three times I repeated the same prayer. The third time, I saw Thérèse staring fixedly at the statue of the Blessed Virgin...” (Declaration in the ordinary Process).

“The Ray did not act all at once, but sweetly and gently it raised the little flower and strengthened her...” (Ms A, 30v): Thérèse’s sisters have confirmed that this serious nervous disease left no after-effects, apart from two small alerts, reported by Léonie.

“My happiness was going to disappear and change into bitterness” (Ms A, 30v): a strong word in Thérèse, who uses it thirty-two times in the Manuscripts and letters. It evokes as in transparency the bitterness of Christ’s chalice.

“Humiliation becoming my lot” (Ms A, 31r): Thérèse’s particularly strong expression shows that humiliation here is experienced without compensation, perhaps more harshly than at other times in her life, and at a tender age, ten years.

For the community dialogue:

1. *What does the text say?*
2. *What does the text say to us today?*
3. *What does the text say to me / us?*

The purpose of doing things in this manner is to allow Thérèse to speak to us, to question us, to encourage us, and to welcome her to shed light upon and confirm our personal and community journey. The questions proposed are therefore only indicative and can possibly accompany personal meditation and community sharing.

Questions:

1. This episode of the grace of Our Lady’s smile, Thérèse lived through in a context of separation and difficulty in mourning for her mother and for the one who now represented her, Pauline, who had just entered Carmel. What meaning does Thérèse give to her illness? How does she encourage us to bear our suffering? How to present Thérèse so that she can help people in the suffering they are going through?
2. Thérèse frequently established links between Carmel, the Virgin Mary and Pauline representing her mother. What is the profound spirit of our relationship with the Virgin Mary in our Carmelite vocation? What does it mean for us to have entered a Marian Order?
3. We can also read and meditate on her poem 54, written a few months before “entering life”. Let us especially read the stanzas dedicated to suffering (of Mary and Thérèse with Mary). Let us observe the evolution between the text of Manuscript A above and the poetry of May 1897.

Prayers for March

Thank-you, Lord, for all the blessings you give us each day.

We pray for:

- Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, Archbishop Paul, SM, Bishop Michael, and all our priests, religious and seminarians
- Our Provincial, Fr John Grennan, OCD, our General, Fr Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD and all our Carmel family, especially our Carmelite Sisters. Also, vocations to Carmel and to our own Peace of Christ Community **(Please offer a decade of the rosary daily for this, as requested by Bishop Greg Homeming, OCD.)**

Special Intentions:

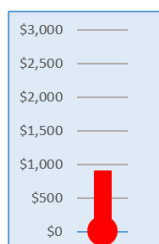
- Our Ukrainian Carmelite nuns, friars & seculars, and all the people of Ukraine, suffering from the terrors of war
- Our Carmelite nuns in Aleppo, and all those suffering from the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey
- All those affected by the floods in New Zealand
- Our dear Carmelite Sisters and the 90th Anniversary of the founding of their Monastery on Tuesday 21st Feb.
- Fr Jérôme, OCD and our Goma mission
- Fr Michael-Thérèse, Fr Antoine and CSJ
- Fr Philip, CSJ and the University Chaplaincy Team
- Our Special Members, especially Margaret, Dorothea, Stephanie, Rosaline & Peb
- John Paul II Centre for Life and prayers for life
- Those who have died recently and the consolation of their families
- Those who have asked for, or need our prayers, especially Fr Arsène, Fr Deeney, OCD, Mary (for a health procedure), and Peb's daughter, Louise Martin (dying of cancer)

Our Holy Father's Intentions for March:

- We pray for those who have **suffered harm** from members of the Church; may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering.

OUR MISSIONS PROJECT

To help Fr Jérôme, OCD in assisting the displaced children in Goma, due to terrorism

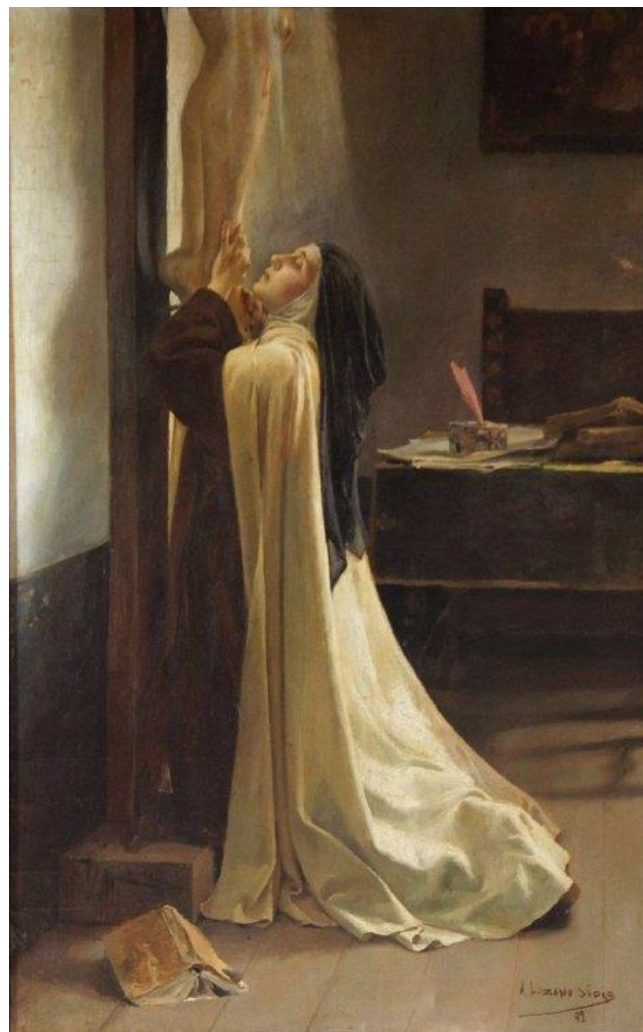


New Total



Displaced people and children living in makeshift shelters

Lent



"Fix your eyes on the Crucified..." (St Teresa of Jesus)

NATIONAL STATUTES

PART IV – Serving God's Plan

Section Seven – Apostolate and Mission

*"In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I shall be Love."
(St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face)*

15. Contemplative prayer, for St Teresa, is at the heart of the Church and is essentially apostolic. Secular Carmelites aim to live the Gospel in a spirit of prophetic hope at the heart of the Church and of society.

16. Each of us is entrusted with a unique task which cannot be done by another. "The apostolate exercised by the individual which flows abundantly from a truly Christian life is the origin and condition of the whole lay apostolate."

The Seal of Carmel: "Zelo zelatus sum pro Domino Deo exercituum"

"With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of hosts"