



SECULAR ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES

Peace of Christ Community, Christchurch

Newsletter

Number 298, December 2023

Carmel OCDS Community Meeting

Sunday 3 December 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: Study Edition"

(Community Study: Chapter 6, from p.217)

2:30pm Father's Teaching

Divine Office in Chapel

Leader: Pat C., Reader: Mary

Afternoon Tea

Prep. & Serving: Marian & Maureen

Dishes: Claire & Lyn

(Please bring a Christmas gift for our Carmelite Sisters, a cash donation for the Community of St John, and a small plate to share for our Christmas afternoon tea.)



Note: No Bethany Day in December

Birthdays

Claire Wednesday 3 Jan.

Lyn Sunday 14 Jan.

Tess Tuesday 30 Jan.



NZ OCDS Website: www.carmel.org.nz

December: Dedicated to the Immaculate Conception

Dear brothers and sisters in Carmel,

ADVENT

Advent begins on the first Sunday after 30th November. It heralds Hope, Peace, Joy, Love.

This year those symbols, Hope, Peace, Joy, Love have an even greater poignancy. Our world is riven with despair, anger, pain and hate.

We have much to pray for. For those who have access to the internet, it offers us any amount of choice in readying ourselves for the birth of our Lord and King. Of course, our prayer does not depend on the internet, thank goodness, but our world and its peoples do. I frequently ask myself why did our Lord place me in this time, a time of such pain and agony, loss of faith, violence, the list is never ending, ...?

Am I part of His plan to bring Hope, Peace, Joy, Love to this poor world, if so, Lord, grant me the discernment to understand and fulfil my part.

December – last Community meeting of 2023. As we do, please bring a small, wrapped Christmas gift for our Nuns and a cash donation for Father Michael-Thérèse and his brothers in Community, also a plate for afternoon tea.

May the retreatants experience the loving presence of Our Blessed Lord and our Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, whilst at the well of graces.

We will have an opportunity to wish our Sisters behind the grill, a very blessed and grace-filled Christmas season.

To finish, our Council is in the process of arranging a friar, **Father Adalbert, OCD**, for our 2024 Retreat. More details as they come to hand, in the meantime those who are able, search on the following link for information re Father:

<https://catholicleader.com.au/people/former-brisbane-doctor-fr-adalbert-imperial-called-to-be-a-carmelite/>

May the good Lord bless you abundantly,
Mary O'Boyle,
OCDS
(President,
Peace of
Christ
Community,
Christchurch)

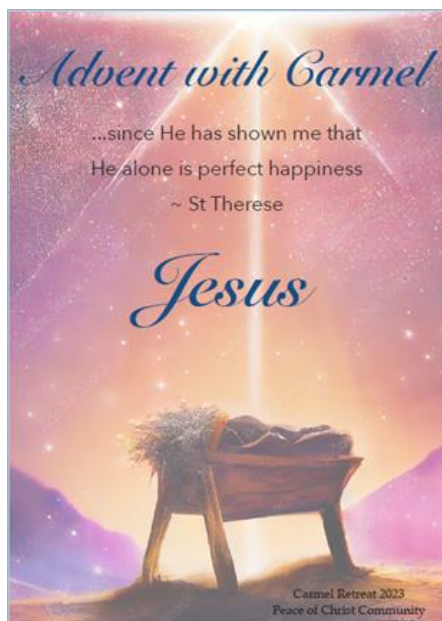


December quote from St John of the Cross:

"The least act of pure love is of more value than all the other works put together."

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR RETREAT

“Advent with Carmel” with Fr Michael-Thérèse, CSJ



Preparation for the retreat

Thérèse speaks to us in silence... ask her to share her ‘secrets’ with you, and they will become a light in your soul.

Begin the retreat with an **examination of conscience...** place yourself before Christ and see which sins have upset your heavenly Father...

Because of the Father’s love, we long for true repentance. Allow Christ to forgive you. This will lead to a true confession, not to shame and blame. Allow God to have mercy on you, and pray to be led into prayer. Think about what is pagan in your life? What prevents you from being a true child of God? How do I grow in faith, hope and love?... Faith is seeing God and I grow this by reading Scripture. I grow hope by acts of obedience to God’s will. (This brings about poverty.) I grow love by being in His presence in the Eucharist, and in doing little acts of love. This heart-to-heart, this face-to-face is what we are made for.

Act of Oblation

Thérèse’s secret to remaining faithful is **love** – that is, the love of God for us and our response to this love. The heart of her spirituality is her **Act of Oblation**. This is the ‘what’ and ‘why’... the ‘how’ is her **“little way”**.

At one point in her life, Thérèse felt an intense presence of God, of Love – like a fire in her soul. This lasted only a moment and then it was back to her habitual dryness. But this experience inspired her to live of this participation with the Holy Spirit (as it will be in heaven), although Thérèse did not want mystical experiences, because she wanted to remain little.

Thérèse’s Act of Oblation was through the grace of the Holy Spirit. It was a gift of speaking words of wisdom, a sacred offering to God, to ‘mercy’ rather than ‘justice’, a constant gift, to be renewed every moment of her life.

Thérèse had **“immense desires”**:

**“I desire to Love you and make you Loved,
to work for the glory of the Holy Church...
to accomplish your will perfectly... to be Holy...”**

St Catherine of Siena said that **desire** is the greatest thing we have on this earth. And St Augustine said that someone who **desires** to love, already loves. Desire goes beyond feeling, it is a longing... Desire grows your hope. Thérèse desires what God wants for her. And God wants for her, and for us, to be a saint. How do we get a bigger cup?... by desire. The bigger the saint, the bigger the desires!

Thérèse’s desire to love overcomes the cross. The victory of love is the glory of Christ and of the Holy Church. And this gives joy. It is not the desire for perfection, but the desire to love.

**“I want to work for your Love alone...
...I want but you, my Beloved!”**

Thérèse offers herself as a **“victim of holocaust”**. – She offers her whole self, like Mary at the foot of the cross, a **martyr** of love.

Wisdom of the cross

The wisdom of the cross is trusting and following the lamb. It is resting on the heart of Jesus. It is surrendering to Jesus, surrounded by the mantle of Mary. It is like St John, resting his head on the heart of Jesus, accepting that Jesus is in control, by surrender and friendship. This diminishes our fear... *“Here I am, Lord. I give you everything I am because it was yours in the first place.”*

So many of us are too wounded and fragile to build the house of virtue. Thérèse is a saint for our times. She shows us that God loves us in our fragility, and she encourages us to be enveloped by his mercy. She gives us a new way to Him, the **“little way”**, the way of the Prodigal Son... Answer the call to His mercy, abandon yourself into His arms, like a little child, offer your incapacities and failures to Him, because we have nothing else to offer. The work of virtue is to make us more simple. The **“little way”** is to abandon our failures to Him. It is the way of the Prodigal Son. He sees himself as nothing, deserving nothing, coming back to the Father, laying his life before Him. It is the way into heaven, the way of hope and trust, abandoning ourselves to the divine mercy of the Father. *Spontaneously surrender yourself to Him throughout the day (e.g., every time you receive a text!):*

**“Jesus does not ask for great deeds,
only surrender and recognition.”**

Meditation is thinking about God, **adoration** is surrendering yourself to Him, and **contemplation** is gazing at Him with love.

Fraternal charity

Jesus chose to save us by the cross, by suffering, in obedience to the Father, by concrete love. In this way, Jesus showed us the best way to make love concrete, by laying our life down for our neighbour. But let Jesus, **within you**, love your neighbour. This requires courage and vulnerability, and speaking from the heart. Fraternal love comes from the overflowing love of God, allowing **“the waves of infinite tenderness”** to overflow into your soul. Like Thérèse, let us continuously gaze at Jesus with love and let us desire to be love **“in the heart of the Church.”** ❤️



Prayers for December

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, all our priests, religious and seminarians, and the welfare of our diocese
- Our Provincial, Fr Jim Noonan, OCD, our General, Fr Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD and all our Carmelite 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:

- All the people of the Middle East and the Ukraine, suffering from the terrors of war
- Our dear Carmelite Sisters, especially Sr Teresa of Jesus, Sr Elizabeth and Sr Dorothea. Also, our Sisters in continued Formation
- 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 Dorothea, Stephanie, Rosaline and Peb
- John Paul II Centre for Life and prayers for life
- Those who have died recently, especially Fr John Landy, OCD and the consolation of his family and Community
- Those who have asked for, or need our prayers, especially Fr Arsène, Fr Deeney, OCD, Terry Jordan (treatment for cancer), and Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa, our Apostolic Nuncio, who has had a severe stroke

Our Holy Father's Intentions for December:

- We pray that people living with **disabilities** may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

OUR MISSIONS PROJECT

Fr Jérôme has just contacted us to say that they would like to make plans to build another school on the peripheries of Goma, where there are many displaced children because of the on-going terrorist fighting. Many atrocities are being committed and children have no opportunity to attend a school. We have agreed to support this wonderful venture and have just sent through \$2,000. Here is his reply to us:

"All the best. My greetings to the Carmelite Community. Thanks to all of you, we can now care for these children. May the Good Lord repay you and grant your hearts desires." Fr Jérôme Paluku

Our December Carmelite Saints

11 Mon. St Maria Maravillas of Jesus (virgin)

14 Thu. **St John of the Cross**
(priest, doctor, our Father)

16 Sat. Bl. Mary of the Angels (virgin)

O King of Gentleness



By St John of the Cross (1542-1591)
Doctor of the Church

O blessed Jesus,
give me stillness of soul in You.
Let Your mighty calmness reign in me.
Rule me, O King of Gentleness,
King of Peace.

Our January Carmelite Saints

3 Wed. St Kuriakos Elias Chavara (priest)

8 Mon. St Peter Thomas (bishop)

9 Tue. St Andrew Corsini (bishop)

27 Sat. St Henry de Osso y Cervello (priest)

LEADERSHIP, AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY Every Member's Business

In 1 Corinthians 4:2, St Paul points out that the first quality of a good leader must be trustworthiness.

The most important of all the aspects of trustworthiness for a Catholic Leader, is that their faith must be 100% in line with the Magisterium of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, so that these teachings can be trusted.

An authentic Leader must be also morally correct, so that their life validates what they teach, and it is not a case of do as I say, but not as I do.

Leadership involves tremendous personal sacrifice, which can only be survived by a radical faith and trust, not only in believing, but in knowing with all your heart that you will get through the impossible by God's help. Faith works miracles. Jesus promised that and He does not lie.

[OCDS Formation booklet, Eng. Canadian OCDS Secretariat]

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

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