



Newsletter

Number 301, April 2024

Carmel OCDS Community Meeting

Sunday 7 April 2024

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 Renewal of Promise in Chapel

Divine Office in Chapel

Leader: Eddie, Reader: Pat C.

Afternoon Tea

(Please bring a plate.)

Prep. & Serving: Maureen & Therese

Dishes: Megan & Mary



Bethany Day

Tuesday 16 April 2024

(10:30am – 1:00pm)

10:30am Morning Tea

11:00am DVD

11:45am Chapel – Quiet Prayer

12:15pm BYO Lunch

Birthdays

Mary Wednesday 3 April

Noeline Friday 12 April



NZ OCDS Website: www.carmel.org.nz

April: Dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament

RENEWAL

Dear Seculars,

As this is written, Easter is coming, please God we will feel renewed in our love and service of Him who died that we might live.



Each year at our first Community meeting following Easter, those of us who have made our Promise to our Secular Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Teresa of Jesus come together to renew that Promise.

The journey is long, St Teresa describes it as an Interior Castle, striving to enter each room, seeking the Centre where He, who knows and loves us, abides.

Father Aloysius Deeney, OCD tells us *"The Secular Carmelite is moved to commit themselves to the Order. This commitment in the form of the Promises is an ecclesial event and an event of the Order in addition to being an event in the life of the person who makes the Promises"*.

Megan has kindly prepared the following to assist us and to ponder on, in preparation for Sunday 7th April:

As we prepare to renew our Promise at our April meeting, please have your Promise card with you as we meet in the Chapel. If you don't have the card, the Promise is on page 4 of this newsletter.

Am sharing some quotable quotes from **Fr Deeney, OCD** for our reflection...

"It is not any devotion to Our Lady that identifies a personal call to the Secular Order. Mary is our model of prayer and meditation. This interest in learning to meditate or inclination to meditate is a fundamental characteristic of any Secular Carmelite. It is perhaps the most basic."

"Being a Carmelite is not a privilege. Being a Carmelite is a responsibility! Responsibility does not mean burden – it means the ability to respond to God who calls us and to respond to the world that needs to know God."

"There are a lot of other people who are part of the Carmelite family who are not part of the Order. There are a lot of people who know a lot of things about Carmelite spirituality and really are experts but are not members of the Order. WHAT MAKES YOU A MEMBER OF THE SECULAR ORDER IS THAT YOU HAVE MADE THE PROMISE."

[Megan, Formator to our OCDS Peace of Christ Community]

Blessings,

Mary O'Boyle, OCDS

(President, Peace of Christ Community, Christchurch)

April quote from Bl. Mary of the Incarnation (Barbe Acarie):

"I desire to receive You (in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar) so that, having eaten my fill of this spiritual food, I may embrace You joyfully within my soul, love You with all my heart and never be parted from You."



READING OF THE WRITINGS OF THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS (2024: MANUSCRIPTS B&C) Text 3: Nothing but confidence (LC 170 and LT 197)

Suggestion for the Community meeting:

1. Read the text together.
2. One of those present, having prepared a contribution in advance, discusses the text using the commentary (and other aids, if necessary).
3. Community dialogue on the text.
It would be helpful to have made individual readings and reflections on Thérèse's text before the community meeting.

Preliminary remark: these two texts are letters exchanged between Marie of the Sacred Heart and Thérèse. They represent the high point of Manuscript B, which is why we are choosing to present them now, rather than during the third year of the series.

Letter to Thérèse 170 and Letter from Thérèse 197

From Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart to Thérèse (LC 170)

17th (?) September 1896

Jesus

Dear little Sister, I have read your pages burning with love for Jesus. Your little godmother is very happy to possess this treasure and very grateful to her dear little girl who has revealed the secrets of her soul in this way. Oh! What should I say about these lines marked with the seal of love. – Simply one word concerning myself. Like the young man in the Gospel, a certain feeling of sadness came over me, in view of your extraordinary desires for martyrdom. That is the proof of your love; yes, you possess love, but I myself! No, never will you make me believe that I can attain this desired goal, for I dread all that you love.

This is a proof that I do not love Jesus as you do. Ah! You say you are doing nothing, that you are a poor weak little bird, but your desires, how do you reckon them? The good God looks upon them as works.

I cannot speak to you any longer. I began this note this morning, and I have not had a minute to finish it. It is five o'clock. I would like you to tell your little godmother, in writing, if she can love Jesus as you do. But only briefly, for what I have is sufficient for my joy and my sorrow. For my joy, when I see to what a degree you are loved and privileged; for my sorrow, when I have a foreboding of the desire that Jesus has to pluck His little flower! Oh! I wanted to cry when I read these lines that are not from earth

but an echo from the Heart of God... Do you want me to tell you? Well, you are possessed by God, but what is called... absolutely possessed, just as the wicked are by the devil.

I would like to be possessed, too, by the good Jesus. However, I love you so much that I rejoice when seeing you are more privileged than I am.

A little word for your little godmother.

To Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart (LT 197)

J.M.J.T.

Jesus

17th September 1896

My dearest Sister, I am not embarrassed to reply to you... How can you ask me if you can love the Good God as much as I love Him?...

If you had understood the story of my little bird, you would not have posed that question. My desires for martyrdom are nothing; they are not what give me the unlimited confidence that I feel in my heart. It is spiritual riches, to tell the truth, that make one unjust, when one rests in them with complacency and when one believes they are something great... These desires are a consolation that Jesus grants at times to weak souls like mine (and these souls are numerous), but when He does not give this consolation, it is a grace of privilege. Recall those words of Father: *'The martyrs suffered with joy, and the King of Martyrs suffered with sadness.'* Yes, Jesus said: *'Father, let this chalice pass away from me.'* Dear Sister, how can you say after this that my desires are the sign of my love?... Ah, I really feel that it is not this at all that pleases God in my little soul; what pleases Him is that He sees me loving my littleness and my poverty, the blind hope that I have in His mercy... That is my only treasure, dear GODMOTHER, why would this treasure not be yours?...

Are you not ready to suffer all that God will desire? I really know that you are; so if you want to feel joy, to have an attraction for suffering, it is your consolation that you are seeking, since when we love a thing the pain disappears. I assure you, if we were to go to martyrdom together in the dispositions we are in now, you would have great merit, and I would have none at all, unless Jesus was pleased to change my dispositions.

Oh, my dear Sister, I beg you, understand your little girl, understand that to love Jesus, to be His victim of love, the weaker one is, without desires or virtues, the more suited one is for the workings of this consuming and transforming Love... The desire alone to be a victim suffices, but we must consent to remain always poor and without strength, and this is the difficulty, for: *'The truly poor in spirit, where do we find him? You must look for him from afar,'* said the psalmist... He does not say that you must look for him among great souls, but *'from afar'*, that is to say in lowliness, in nothingness... Ah! Let us remain then very far from all that sparkles, let us love our littleness, let us love to feel nothing, then we shall be poor in spirit, and Jesus will come to look for us, and however far we may be, He will transform us into flames of love... Oh! How I would like to be able to make you understand what I feel!... It is confidence and nothing but confidence that must lead us to Love... Does not fear lead to Justice?... Since we see the way, let us run together. Yes, I feel it, Jesus wills to give us the same graces, He wills to give us His heaven gratuitously.

Oh, my dear little Sister, if you don't understand me, it is because you are too great a soul... or rather, it is because I am explaining myself poorly, for I am sure that God would not give you the desire to be POSSESSED by Him, by His merciful Love, if He were not reserving this favour for you... or rather He has already given it to you, since you have given yourself to Him, since you desire to be consumed by Him, and since God never gives desires that He cannot realise.

Nine o'clock is ringing, and I am obliged to leave you. Ah, how I would like to tell you things, but Jesus is going to make you feel all that I cannot write...

I love you with all the tenderness of my GRATEFUL little childlike heart.

Thérèse of the Child Jesus
rel. carm. ind.

Introduction to the text:

'It is confidence and nothing but confidence that must lead us to Love' (LT 197): for Thérèse, confidence is a vital faith in the love which is absolute, infinite, eternal; the Merciful Love of God that accepts all human weakness. Jesus Christ demonstrated it in lowering Himself to human littleness, in lowering Himself to her, Thérèse. Because Thérèse knows she is a little soul infinitely loved by God.

'I have not had a minute to finish it, it is five o'clock' (LC 170): the time of evening prayer, which would be immediately followed by a meal (supper, during a time of fasting, at 6 o'clock). Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart wants Thérèse to find this note before the end of her free time – the recreation period from 6.45pm to 7.40pm (from which Thérèse was dispensed, being on retreat), and the evening silence. She would therefore be able to

reply in writing, as Marie had asked, before finishing her retreat on the morning of Friday, 18th September 1896.

'Remember the word of the Father' (LT 197): this refers to Father Pichon, the citation coming from a conference on the 7th day (13th October 1887) of a retreat preached at the Carmel of Lisieux, when Thérèse had written out this passage on a piece of paper in 1889.

'Understand that to love Jesus, to be His victim of Love' (LT 197): after Thérèse and Céline, Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart was the third to make her offering to Merciful Love during the summer of 1895. During a conversation with Thérèse, the latter told her *'that she understood me very well, but that to offer oneself as a victim to God's Love was not at all the same thing as to offer oneself to justice, and that I would not suffer more, that it was to be able to love God better, on behalf of those who didn't want to love Him.'*

'God never gives desires that He cannot realise.' (LT 197): at the beginning of Thérèse's Scripture notebook, Céline had written out this thought of Saint John of the Cross: *'The more God wants to give us, the more He increases our desires... God so much approves the hope of a soul that is constantly turned towards Him, that never lowers its eyes elsewhere, that one can say with certainty and truth, that soul will obtain as much as it hopes for...'*

For the community dialogue:

1. *What is the text saying?* Understanding the content and initial meaning of Thérèse's text.
2. *What does the text say to us today?* Discern the present-day relevance (social, ecclesial, spiritual...) of the text.
3. *What does the text say to me / us?* Consider the personal and community relevance of the text.

The purpose of this process is to allow Thérèse to speak to us herself, to question and encourage us, and to open us up to her clarifying and confirming our own personal and community path. The questions suggested are only indicative, and could perhaps be used in individual meditation and community sharing.

Questions:

1. Notice how much the theme of the letter uses structural elements of the little way. Which ones? Is there one that seems to be missing here?
2. To what spiritual conversion does this letter invite us? To what extent should this be seen in perspective? What should we love in ourselves? On what are we invited to depend above all?
3. *'We have to consent to remain poor and without strength, and here is the difficulty.'* What does this mean concretely for us?

Prayers for April

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
- 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
- **Bishop Michael has asked us to pray a daily 'Hail Mary' for vocations and for our seminarians**
- Matthew Clark, from our Diocese, joining the seminary
- Those who have died recently and the consolation of their families and communities, especially Fr Aloysius Deeney, OCD
- Those who have asked for, or need our prayers, especially Br Charles, CSJ making his Final Vows on Saturday 6th April

Our Holy Father's Intentions for April:

- Let us pray that the dignity and worth of **women** be recognized in every culture, and for an end to the discrimination they face in various parts of the world.

OUR MISSIONS PROJECT

Excerpt from "Echo from Africa & Other Continents"
(Nov.- Dec. 2023, p.7)

"Also in Goma and in North Kivu... every baptised person, family, school, hospital or parish organisation and ecclesial movement, every community of consecrated persons, and every priest is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world and to say yes to justice based on truth, to forgiveness and reconciliation, and to lasting peace for us, for our children and their children."

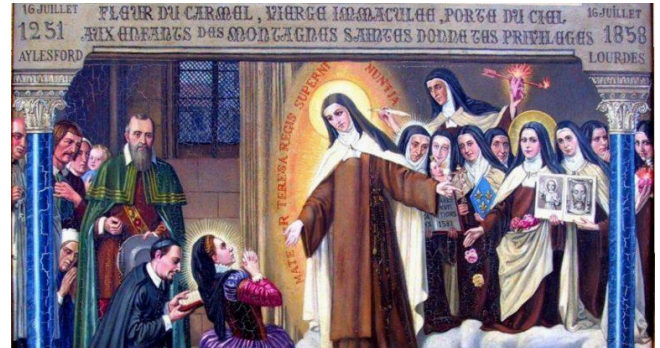
(Cardinal Tagle, papal envoy)

Our April Carmelite Saints

17 Wed. Bl. Baptist Spagnoli (priest)

18 Thu. Bl. Mary of the Incarnation
(Barbe Acarie) (nun)

23 Tue. Bl. Teresa Mary Manetti of the Cross (virgin)



St Teresa of Jesus appearing to Madame Acarie

A SPIRITUAL AUDIT IN OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE (Margaret Dwyer)

...It is good to think about the year past, and if we are going forward or backwards – for we never stand still! Change the things that need to be changed – improve on the good things.

- **Are we acquiring the Spirit of the Order?**
- **Are we growing in the understanding of the life of Carmel?**
- **Are we giving priority to our duties of Carmel and our commitment to it?...**



Devotional Renewal of the Promise

I,,
desiring to follow
the Crucified and Risen Christ
in the Secular Order of Carmel,
renew my profession,
and I promise to tend
toward evangelical perfection
in the spirit of the evangelical counsels
of chastity, poverty and obedience,
and of the Beatitudes,
according to the Constitutions of the
Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites.
I confidently entrust my promise
to the Virgin Mary,
Mother and Queen of Carmel.



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

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