

Aspirancy Handbook

A Journey in Carmel: Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites



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Introduction

The Order of Discalced Carmelites, the Seculars together with the Friars and Nuns, forms the nucleus of the great Teresian Carmelite family. The vocation to Carmel is a gift from God, a lived experience in which we all look to the Rule of St. Albert as our fundamental inspiration. Each branch of the Order has its own Constitutions, which interpret the Rule for its members. (OCDS Constitutions, Preface articles 3 and 4)

Aspirancy

Aspirancy is the time to present an overview of what it means to live out and understand the charism and spirit of Carmel as a lay person. This includes an introduction to the Order's charism and traditions, its legislation and its spirituality within the context of the Catholic Church and the local OCDS community. Aspirancy should assist the applicant and community in the discernment of a Carmelite vocation. This period is for those who are beginning to discern a call to a vocation in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. "The purpose of this stage is that the applicant might become more familiar with the community, the style of life and service to the Church proper to the Secular Order of the Teresian Carmel. This period also gives the community the opportunity to make an adequate discernment." (OCDS Constitutions 36a)

Formation

The purpose of formation in the school of Carmel is: "to prepare the person to live the charism and spirituality of Carmel in its following of Christ, and in its service to the mission" (Const. 32). Each person in formation must be evaluated individually to take into consideration the circumstances of his/her life against the demands of the Secular Carmelite vocation.

Good formation depends on good information. At the same time, it must be clear that formation is distinct from information. The primary role of the persons responsible for formation in the Secular Order community is to accompany those in formation to help them put into practice what they learn through the process of formation. The information they are given through reading and classes is meant to be a help to the person's spiritual growth.

The goal of formation thus goes beyond informational learning to gradual personal transformation that leads to evangelical service. It is the role of the formator, the Director of Formation and the local Council to provide help and guidance to the Aspirant in discerning his/her vocation. It is important to make sure the Aspirant understands that acceptance in the Order is a mutual discernment process and that the local Council has the final authority to accept a person and move them on to the next stage of formation. The community also has a responsibility to get to know the candidate in order to aid in the discernment process and to see if the candidate can/will contribute in a positive way to the community life.

Syllabus

The Syllabus for Aspirancy in this handbook is designed to aid the Aspirant to discern the vocation in Carmel. The essential themes of Aspirancy are laid out in 12 sessions, one for each month. However, sessions may be combined to accommodate local needs in order to have ten or 11 sessions instead. It is the responsibility of each Aspirant to read the assigned materials and come prepared for the discussion. The formation books and materials introduced at this

level are not limited to Aspirancy. These foundational resources are an essential part of the overall formation of the candidates and continue to assist them throughout the transformative process in Christ.

Required Reading

Aspirants will need Welcome to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites by Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD, Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition by Paul Marie of the Cross, OCD, and Lectio Divina by Fr. Sam Anthony Morello, OCD. Other materials are provided in the appendices.

Additional Reading

These materials are simply offered for personal enrichment and deeper understanding of the topic. They are not to be considered required and are not intended for group discussion. Councils may choose to use these materials for Community formation or Ongoing Formation of definitively professed members.

The Liturgy of the Hours

It is recommended that the Council has each Aspirant sit next to an experienced member who can help with the Liturgy of the Hours until the Aspirant is able to follow along without assistance.

Persons in formation must use the printed version of the Liturgy of the Hours on a daily basis. It is the norm for all members to use the printed book. The electronic version may be used in unusual circumstances when it is not practical to use the printed book.

Rite of Admission to Formation

As a candidate completes Aspirancy, she/he is interviewed by the Council. The Council decides whether to admit the candidate to the next period of formation. If the decision is made to move forward, the Council will then invite the candidate to participate in the Rite of Admission to Formation and to receive the ceremonial Brown Scapular.

Syllabus for Aspirancy
Preparation for Admission to Formation I

Aspirancy

The purpose of this stage is to help the Aspirant become familiar with the Community, the style of life and service to the Church proper to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. It should ideally enable the Aspirant to grow in awareness of the Carmelite Charism within the surroundings of a supportive Carmelite Community. With humility and love, this period should assist in giving both the Aspirant and the Community the opportunity of beginning to make an adequate discernment of a vocation. This stage of formation is normally one year.

Requirements:

- Participate in the monthly meeting of the community
- Participate in monthly Aspirancy sessions and come prepared for discussion
- Begin a regular time of daily meditative prayer
- Begin to pray the Liturgy of the Hours - Morning and Evening Prayer (and Night Prayer with examen when possible). Persons in formation must use the printed version of the Liturgy of the Hours on a daily basis. It is the norm for all members to use the printed book. The electronic version may occasionally be used in unusual circumstances when it is not practical to use the printed book.
- Participate in daily Mass as far as possible.

The Essential Themes for Aspirancy

12 Sessions with each session focusing on one particular Theme

Session One: Who is called to be a Secular Carmelite?

Required Reading: Welcome to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites (Welcome), Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD; pp. 9-12, *Testing and Discerning a Vocation*

Side note: The chapter called “Testing and Discerning a Vocation to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites” is central to what will be explored in depth during this year. “The vocation of the laity consists in seeking the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will.” (CCC Glossary)

Essential points to discuss:

- Understanding the specific vocation in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites.
- A vocation is not a privilege, but a responsibility. It is a sacred calling from God, in service to Him and to the Church.
- There is an academic aspect to the formation of a Teresian Carmelite. There is an intellectual basis to the spirituality and identity of one who is called to the Order. Reading and study will always be involved. Formation does not end with the Definitive Promise.
- Understanding the commitment to the local OCDS Community and to the Order.
- The commitment of time is described in Welcome, pp 27-37. These practices are not an end in themselves, but a means to grow in holiness.

Session Two: Understanding the vocation to Carmel as a lay person; understanding the terms “laity” and “secular”

Required Reading: *Lumen Gentium*, Chap. IV, The Laity – 31-41 (Appendix A); Constitutions References, footnote 1.

Additional Reading: *Lumen Gentium*, Chap. V, The Universal Call to Holiness in the Church – 39; (Appendix B)

Side Note: Our focus is our own understanding of what a vocation truly IS and how an OCDS Community is not a book study group or prayer group. It shouldn't have a club mentality. Formation in Carmel is not a check list that tracks each book read and each class attended. Rather, it is a way of life that is lived 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to be embraced in our careers, our family life and our relationship with the Church.

Essential points to discuss:

- “The term “laity” is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in holy orders and those who belong to a religious state sanctioned by the Church” (LG 31, CCC 897).
- The universal call to holiness. “All the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of Christian life” (LG 40). “The classes and duties of life are many, but holiness is one” (LG 41).
- “The lay Apostolate is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself” (LG 33).

Session Three: Introduction to the main legislative documents

Required Reading: The Rule of St. Albert. *The New OCDS Legislation and the Vocation to Carmel*, pp. 22-37 of Welcome to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites (Welcome)

Side note: Our focus is on the brief introduction to our three legislative documents. The whole Order follows the Rule of St. Albert. The Secular Order follows the OCDS Constitutions and each province follows its own local Statutes.

- The Rule of St. Albert
- OCDS Constitutions
- Local Statutes – Stressing the importance of community life.

Essential Points to Discuss:

The Rule of St. Albert:

- “After the Holy Land had been reopened to Christians during the time of the Crusades, a number of pilgrims and crusaders settled on Mount Carmel in the latter part of the twelfth century to lead an eremitical life in imitation of the prophet Elijah, who had dwelt there two thousand years before. In the year 1209, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, Albert of Vercelli, composed a rule for them, and in 1226 Pope Honorius III gave official confirmation for the rule. That is the point of origin of the Carmelite Order.” (excerpt from Journey to Carith chapter 1- THE BIRTH OF AN ORDER).

OCDS Constitutions:

- The 2003 Constitutions replaced the 1979 “Rule of Life.”
- Our identity, value and commitment: “The great Teresian Carmelite family is present in the world in many forms. The nucleus of this family is the Order of Discalced Carmelites: the Friars, the Nuns, and the Seculars.” (Preface of the Constitutions.)

Local Statutes

- A brief introduction to the Local Statutes. “Secular Carmelites will strive to live lives of simplicity and gentle austerity, witnessing to the joy of embracing the Gospel in its fullness” (Art. 18).
- Discuss the importance of community life. Every Secular Carmelite will strive to place the good of the community and fraternal charity above self-interest; give the community meeting primacy of place in the ordering of his/her schedule; the desire and ability to attend community meetings are signs of an authentic vocation.

Session Four: The importance of community

Required Reading: OCDS Constitutions: *Fraternal Communion* article 24, a,b,c,d,e

Additional Reading: *Gaudete Et Exsultate*, Apostolic Exhortation of Holy Father Francis, Chapter Four: *In Community* 140-146 (Appendix C).

Essential points to discuss:

- Growth in holiness is a journey within the community, side by side with others.
- Each community is called to create a God-enlightened space in which to experience the hidden presence of the risen Lord.
- We are not just forming individuals, but we are forming communities. It is not about one's ability to pray well or being an expert on Carmelite spirituality.
- A very basic understanding of the structure of our Order: We are not just one isolated community. We are part of the harmonious whole: Being participants in community life and not merely spectators.
 - a. OCD superior general with the General Definitory
 - b. General Delegate to the OCDS
 - c. Provincial Superior (one in each province)
 - d. Provincial Delegate to the OCDS
 - e. OCDS Provincial Council
 - f. Local OCDS Community Council
 - g. Local OCDS Community

(Refer to the Organizational Chart, Appendix D)

Note: The point to understanding the structure is not so much who is “in charge” but how the parts of the Order relate one to the other.

- OCDS Constitutions article 37: “The Secular Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Teresa of Jesus is an association of the faithful **and an integral part of the Discalced Carmelite Order**. It is essentially lay in character, with the welcome participation of diocesan clergy.”

Session Five: Basic understanding and practice of prayer in the tradition of the Discalced Carmelites

Liturgy of the Hours

Required Reading: *Liturgy of the Hours Commentary* (Appendix E)

Additional Reading: *The Divine Office for Dodos: A Step-by-Step Guide to Praying the Liturgy of the Hours* by Madeline Pecora Nugent; *A Companion to the Liturgy of the Hours* by Shirley Darcus Sullivan. *The Everyday Catholic's Guide to the Liturgy of the Hours* by Daria Sockey

Essential points to discuss:

- Learn to pray Morning and Evening Prayer. (share with another member if you do not own your own copy)
- The Liturgy of the Hours (LOH) is the official prayer of the Church. Carmelite Seculars pray Morning and Evening Prayer daily (and Night Prayer when possible).
- Understand the difference between liturgical prayer and devotional prayers.
- We are reciting the prayer that the Church has chosen. We are conforming ourselves to the words of the Holy Spirit in Scripture and prayers. The Liturgy of the Hours draws us out of ourselves and joins us to the Spirit of God.
- We recognize that there are electronic versions of the LOH, however Aspirants are expected to learn and pray daily from the printed book. When proficient with praying the LOH, Carmelites may experience times when using an electronic version is necessary.

Session Six: Other Forms of Prayer in the Teresian Tradition

Required Reading: Lectio Divina, Sam Anthony Morello, OCD. ICS Publications.

Additional Reading: Conversation with Christ, Peter Thomas Rohrbach.

Explanatory Note: There are different forms of prayer that one could follow in our Carmelite tradition. However, these forms are not in any way suggested as a prescribed method or steps. Rather, these forms of prayer create an atmosphere to search for God in silence and solitude. Prayer is to be understood, not so much as an exercise, but as being present to God. This absence of any imposed form of prayer has characterized Carmel from the beginning. The Holy Spirit draws the person into deeper prayer.

Essential points to discuss:

- Understanding and practicing lectio divina with greater emphasis on reading, listening and prayer.
- Interior/mental prayer – set a side certain times for prayer – 10, 15, 20 minutes and eventually increasing to half an hour daily. (Const. art 20).
- Examination of conscience: One can grow more sensitive to one's own spirit - its longings, its powers, its sources - and you will develop an openness to receive the supports of the Holy Spirit.
- Contemplation as understood in the Carmelite Order.

For the Formators: Read chapter 3 of Temptation and Discernment: *The Demons of Prayer*.

Session Seven: Understanding the Carmelite charism of prayer. How do we understand prayer in the tradition of Carmel? What are the characteristics of Carmelite prayer?

Required Reading: Constitutions articles 17 through 24, and Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition by Paul Marie of the Cross, OCD, pgs. 17-22. ICS Publications.

Explanatory Note: The charism of each religious order in the Church is the particular way in which its members are called to follow Christ. Since all charisms follow Christ, the charisms will have many elements in common, but the way in which these elements are emphasized gives each religious family its unique identity. The assigned pages of the book, Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition and the referenced paragraphs in the OCDS Constitutions, provide an excellent overview of our charism of prayer.

Essential points to discuss:

- Prayer is to be understood not so much as an exercise but as being present to God.
- Deep prayer involves no rigorously prescribed method. It has little to do with techniques. In the early stages, some method is generally helpful, such as lectio divina and other types of mental prayer.
- Search for God in silence and solitude – longing for union with God.
- Focus on prayer as relationship with God; spending time with Him who we know loves us. Genuine prayer goes hand in hand with growth in virtue.

Session Eight: Brief history of the Discalced Carmelite charism of prayer

Side note: This session's focus is on the history of our **charism**, as opposed to the history of the Order. Our Constitutions remind us that our identity, values, and commitment date from the biblical tradition of Elijah to our Blessed Mother Mary and the Rule of St. Albert.

Required Reading: Constitutions, articles: 1-8; Constitutions art. 29-31a; Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition, pgs. 13-16 and 34-68

Essential points to discuss:

- "Elijah represents the prophetic tradition of Carmel and in an inspiration to live in the presence of God, seeking Him in solitude and silence with zeal for God's glory."
- The Virgin Mary is present in a special way, most of all as a model of faithfulness in listening to the Lord and in service to Him and to others.
- The hermits of Mount Carmel and the Rule of St. Albert. The Rule of St. Albert is the original expression of the spirituality of Carmel.
- Legacy of Teresa and John - interpreters of the Carmelite Charism. St. Teresa: "The style of life we aim to follow is not that of nuns but of hermits." The origin of the Discalced Carmelites is to be found in St. Teresa of Jesus. St. John of the Cross was the companion of St. Teresa in the formation of the Discalced Carmelite Order.
- Modern contribution to the Carmelite Charism— St. Therese of Child Jesus.
- Other Carmelite saints
- "The great Teresian Carmelite family is present in the world in many forms. The nucleus of the family is the Order of Discalced Carmelites: the friars, the enclosed nuns, and seculars. It is the one Order with the same Charism." (Const. Preface)

Session Nine: Apostolate – Charism of Prayer:

Required Reading: Constitutions art. 25-26; and Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition, pgs. 32-33

- Carmel has never, in fact, separated apostolic activity from prayer life. Carmelite prayer has an apostolic dimension and overflows with missionary fervor.
- Apostolic activity is the fruit of prayer: “The purpose of prayer is the birth of good works.” (St. Teresa, Interior castle).
- The Carmelite apostolate is based on a fervent inner life. St Therese of Lisieux, a cloistered contemplative nun, has been proclaimed the “Patron of all Missionaries” along with the much-traveled St. Francis Xavier. “My goal is to spend my heaven doing good on earth till the end of the world.” “I would want to preach the Gospel on all the five continents simultaneously and even to the most remote isles. I would be a missionary, not for a few years only, but from the beginning of creation until the consummation of the ages” (Story of a Soul, Manuscript B).

Session Ten: Discalced Carmelite understanding of devotion to Mary and of the Scapular

Required reading: Constitutions, art. 29-31a; Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition: Brothers and Sisters of our Lady, pgs. 28-32

Additional Reading: The Scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel: Catechesis and Ritual; *Meditation 169* of Divine Intimacy (Appendix F); St Therese' poem *Why I Love You, O Mary!* (Appendix G)

Essential Points to discuss:

- Throughout the centuries, the Church has turned to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and many forms of piety toward the Mother of God were developed.
- In our Order, Mary is our model of interior prayer and discipleship. “The particular aspect of the Blessed Virgin Mary that must be present in any person called to Carmel is that of an inclination to ‘meditate in the heart.’ This interest in learning to meditate or inclination to meditation is a fundamental characteristic of any OCDS” (Welcome, pg. 11).
- Discuss the scapular as the OCDS habit. Constitutions 36 b): “After the initial period of contact [by this is meant the year of Aspirancy], the council of the community may admit the applicant to a more serious period of formation that usually lasts for two years leading up to the first promises. **At the beginning of this period of formation, the [large ceremonial] scapular is given to the applicant. This is an outward symbol of membership in the Order, and the sign that Mary is both Mother and Model on this journey.**”
- The friars and nuns wear the full-length scapular as part of their religious habit; the Seculars wear the small scapular as their habit. The larger ceremonial scapular is reserved for use at Carmelite functions.

Session Eleven: Ecclesial charism of our vocation – “building up the Church, the well-being of humanity and the needs of the world”

Required Reading: Constitutions art. 25-28 Serving God’s Plan; OCDS Ritual for Admission (Appendix H)

Additional Reading: *Apostolic Exhortation – Gaudete Et Exsultate*, of the Holy Father Francis: On the Call to Holiness in Today’s World. **Your Mission in Christ:** Chapter 1, Para: 19-24 (Appendix I);

Christifideles Laici: His Holiness John Paul II: **The Vocation and the Mission of the lay faithful in the Church and the World** (Appendix J)

Explanatory Note: It is important to understand the term “prayer” in our Carmelite tradition. Prayer itself is a dynamic force and is indeed the source of all fruitfulness. Carmelite prayer life is an all-embracing law of love uniting “Mary and Martha,” the contemplative with the active.

Essential Points to discuss:

- “The spirituality of Carmel will awaken in Secular Carmelites a desire for greater apostolic commitment” (Const. art. 25).
- “They will respond to the invitation of the Church... committing them to human society by means of active participation in the apostolic goal of the Church’s mission” (Const. art. 25).
- “Carmelite Seculars will share a renewed taste for prayer, contemplation, and the liturgical and sacramental life” (Const. art. 26).
- “Thus, they will achieve a union of contemplation and action in history, integrating faith and life, prayer and action, contemplation and Christian commitment” (Const. art 26).
- Community Apostolate
- Personal Apostolate

Session Twelve: OCDS rites and preparation for admission to Formation and the reception of the ceremonial Brown Scapular

Required Reading: OCDS Ritual, ch 1, Rite of Admission to Formation in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites (Appendix H)

Essential Points to Discuss:

- A brief understanding of formation – this is only the beginning of formation; formation is a life-long process.
- Thoughts on discernment: Do I feel called to Carmel? Do I feel at home in Carmel? Am I attracted to prayer? Am I able to attend the monthly meetings and complete the required readings and assignments? Do I enjoy community life?
- Review the Rite of Admission.
- Review the significance of the reception of the scapular: Ritual 24: “Assisted by the director of formation, the celebrant clothes each candidate with the scapular which is the “signum habitis” or token of the habit, of the Carmelite Order, while saying to each: **Receive this scapular. It is the habit of the Order of Carmel. Wear it worthily by imitating Mary in the service of Jesus Christ.**
- The large ceremonial scapular is worn for Carmelite activities or when representing the Order or OCDS Community at a religious event. The small brown scapular (or the scapular medal) is worn for everyday use. The “OCDS” designation is not added to a member’s name until that person makes the First Promise at the end of Formation I.
Note to the Formator: If there are related provincial or community policies in place, share these with the candidates at this time.

Note: The Discalced Carmelite Coat of Arms is in Appendix K. The Aspirants may find it enjoyable to look at this together with the formator.

Closing thoughts: We, as Discalced Carmelite Seculars, are called, as are all Carmelites, to a life of prayer, yet as Seculars we have a special role within the Order. The Divine Indwelling within the soul is central to St. Teresa’s teachings. We are embraced by Christ through prayer and contemplation, aided by the intercessions of Mary and the Carmelite saints, and then we are sent out into the world to share Carmel and God’s love. As God transforms us through prayer into “other Christs”, we allow ourselves to become imitators of Christ in our words, deeds, actions, thoughts, works and love of God and of neighbor. Our Holy Mother St. Teresa teaches that, yes, our Charism is prayer, but if that Charism does not produce fruit in ways that develop the virtues necessary to touch the world around us, the seeds have been wasted.

Special Session: Review and practice of the liturgy of the hours

*“Vocal prayer must be accompanied by reflection.
A prayer in which a person is not aware of to Whom he is speaking,
what he is asking, who it is who is asking and of Whom,
I don't call prayer... no matter how much the lips may move.”*
— St Teresa of Avila

Required Reading: *OCDS Abbreviated General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours (GILH) and Commentary* (Appendix E)

Additional Reading: Entire GILH; CCC 1174 – 1178; [A Companion to the Liturgy of the Hours](#), by Shirley Darcus Sullivan (the LOH from a Carmelite perspective); Acts 10 – God often speaks to us during our regular hours of prayer

Essential Points to Discuss:

- Candidates are expected to use the printed book for the Liturgy of the Hours. Avoid using electronic versions unless compelled by unavoidable circumstances.
- Structure: Briefly go over the elements of the LOH (Abbrev GILH 41-54; 1. *Sanctifying the Day*, pg 14).
- Pacing and harmony: There should be a slight pause at the end of each line and a longer pause after the reading (Abbrev GILH 104). Normally the leader and the cantors set the pace. It is important to resist the impulse to follow one's own tempo. Strive to develop a “communal ear” and harmonize with the tempo of the community. This is arguably the most important and most challenging skill to learn in community recitation of the LOH.
- Gestures and postures: Review when to sit or stand and when to make the Sign of the Cross. In private recitation it is permissible to sit throughout, but one should still make the Sign of the Cross when indicated (Abbrev GILH 263-266).
- Practice together praying the LOH of the day. The formator should pause the liturgy and correct/direct as needed.
- Correct use of the propers and commons. This takes time to learn thoroughly. Candidates are encouraged to review this information every time there is a special liturgical day or season until it becomes second nature (Abbrev GILH 225-241; 4. *Figuring out Seasons, Solemnities, Feasts and Memorials* pg 15-18).
- In preparation for this session, the candidates are to practice finding the correct parts for the following celebrations. Perfection is not expected. They should note where they had difficulties or confusion and discuss them with the formator during the session.
 - A Sunday in Ordinary Time
 - A weekday in Advent
 - St Cecilia, Nov 22 (standard memorial)
 - St Martin of Tours, Nov 11 (memorial with antiphons in the proper)
 - St Matthias, May 14 (feast without all parts in the proper)
 - Visitation, May 31 (feast with all parts in the proper)
 - The Immaculate Conception, Dec 8 (solemnity)

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- Sacred Heart (movable solemnity of Our Lord, found in the proper of the seasons)
- St John the Evangelist Dec 27 (note that it is morning prayer only)
- Evening prayer for Dec 27 (found in the proper of the seasons)

Private meditative reading:

- The day's reading from either Morning or Evening Prayer
- One of the day's psalms that spoke to the heart during Morning Prayer
- Philippians 4:8 – "think upon these things"
- Revelations 4 – the heavenly liturgy of praise

Note to the formator: Praying the Liturgy of the Hours takes many years to master. Encourage patient perseverance. The most important point is to pray the Liturgy of the Hours with attentive love in union with Christ and his Church.

Note to the Council: If desired, it is acceptable to have a member who is proficient in the Liturgy of the Hours assist the regular formator for this session. Further, this session may be used at any stage of formation, as the local Council discerns the need.

It is recommended that the **Director of Formation** assign a mentor who can assist those desiring extra help with the LOH.

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Includes required and additional/optional reading

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Appendix A: Session 2, LUMEN GENTIUM, ch. 4

DOGOMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HOLINESS

POPE PAUL VI

ON NOVEMBER 21, 1964

CHAPTER IV

THE LAITY

30. Having set forth the functions of the hierarchy, the Sacred Council gladly turns its attention to the state of those faithful called the laity. Everything that has been said above concerning the People of God is intended for the laity, religious and clergy alike. But there are certain things which pertain in a special way to the laity, both men and women, by reason of their condition and mission. Due to the special circumstances of our time the foundations of this doctrine must be more thoroughly examined. For their pastors know how much the laity contribute to the welfare of the entire Church. They also know that they were not ordained by Christ to take upon themselves alone the entire salvific mission of the Church toward the world. On the contrary they understand that it is their noble duty to shepherd the faithful and to recognize their ministries and charisms, so that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one mind. For we must all "practice the truth in love, and so grow up in all things in Him who is head, Christ. For from Him the whole body, being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system, according to the functioning in due measure of each single part, derives its increase to the building up of itself in love".(190)

31. The term laity is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the Church. These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world. What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature. It is true that those in holy orders can at times be engaged in secular activities, and even have a secular profession. But they are by reason of their particular vocation especially and professedly ordained to the sacred ministry. Similarly, by their state in life, religious give splendid and striking testimony that the world cannot be transformed and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes. But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity.

Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer.

32. By divine institution Holy Church is ordered and governed with a wonderful diversity. "For just as in one body we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function, so we, the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members one of another".(191) Therefore, the chosen People of God is one: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism"(192); sharing a common dignity as members from their regeneration in Christ, having the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection; possessing in common one salvation, one hope and one undivided charity. There is, therefore, in Christ and in the Church no inequality on the basis of race or nationality, social condition or sex, because "there is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all 'one' in Christ Jesus".(193) If therefore in the Church everyone does not proceed by the same path, nevertheless all are called to sanctity and have received an equal privilege of faith through the justice of God.(194) And if by the will of Christ some are made teachers, pastors and dispensers of mysteries on behalf of others, yet all share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ. For the distinction which the Lord made between sacred ministers and the rest of the People of God bears within it a certain union, since pastors and the other faithful are bound to each other by a mutual need. Pastors of the Church, following the example of the Lord, should minister to one another and to the other faithful. These in their turn should enthusiastically lend their joint assistance to their pastors and teachers. Thus in their diversity all bear witness to the wonderful unity in the Body of Christ. This very diversity of graces, ministries and works gathers the children of God into one, because "all these things are the work of one and the same Spirit".(195) Therefore, from divine choice the laity have Christ for their brothers who though He is the Lord of all, came not to be served but to serve.(196) They also have for their brothers those in the sacred ministry who by teaching, by sanctifying and by ruling with the authority of Christ feed the family of God so that the new commandment of charity may be fulfilled by all. St. Augustine puts this very beautifully when he says: "What I am for you terrifies me; what I am with you consoles me. For you I am a bishop; but with you I am a Christian. The former is a duty; the latter a grace. The former is a danger; the latter, salvation" (1*).

33. The laity are gathered together in the People of God and make up the Body of Christ under one head. Whoever they are they are called upon, as living members, to expend all their energy for the growth of the Church and its continuous sanctification, since this very energy is a gift of the Creator and a blessing of the Redeemer. The lay apostolate, however, is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, especially holy Eucharist, that charity toward God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth (2*). Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself "according to the measure of Christ's bestowal".(197) Besides this apostolate which certainly

pertains to all Christians, the laity can also be called in various ways to a more direct form of cooperation in the apostolate of the Hierarchy (3*). This was the way certain men and women assisted Paul the Apostle in the Gospel, laboring much in the Lord.(198) Further, they have the capacity to assume from the Hierarchy certain ecclesiastical functions, which are to be performed for a spiritual purpose. Upon all the laity, therefore, rests the noble duty of working to extend the divine plan of salvation to all men of each epoch and in every land. Consequently, may every opportunity be given them so that, according to their abilities and the needs of the times, they may zealously participate in the saving work of the Church.

34. The supreme and eternal Priest, Christ Jesus, since he wills to continue his witness and service also through the laity, vivifies them in this Spirit and increasingly urges them on to every good and perfect work. For besides intimately linking them to His life and His mission, He also gives them a sharing in His priestly function of offering spiritual worship for the glory of God and the salvation of men. For this reason the laity, dedicated to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and wonderfully prepared so that ever more abundant fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily occupations, their physical and mental relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life, if patiently borne—all these become "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ".(199) Together with the offering of the Lord's body, they are most fittingly offered in the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus, as those everywhere who adore in holy activity, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.

35. Christ, the great Prophet, who proclaimed the Kingdom of His Father both by the testimony of His life and the power of His words, continually fulfills His prophetic office until the complete manifestation of glory. He does this not only through the hierarchy who teach in His name and with His authority, but also through the laity whom He made His witnesses and to whom He gave understanding of the faith (sensus fidei) and an attractiveness in speech(200) so that the power of the Gospel might shine forth in their daily social and family life. They conduct themselves as children of the promise, and thus strong in faith and in hope they make the most of the present,(201) and with patience await the glory that is to come.(202)

Let them not, then, hide this hope in the depths of their hearts, but even in the program of their secular life let them express it by a continual conversion and by wrestling "against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness.(203) Just as the sacraments of the New Law, by which the life and the apostolate of the faithful are nourished, prefigure a new heaven and a new earth,(204) so too the laity go forth as powerful proclaimers of a faith in things to be hoped for,(205) when they courageously join to their profession of faith a life springing from faith. This evangelization, that is, this announcing of Christ by a living testimony as well as by the spoken word, takes on a specific quality and a special force in that it is carried out in the ordinary surroundings of the world. In connection with the prophetic function is that state of life which is sanctified by a special sacrament obviously of great importance, namely, married and family life. For where Christianity pervades the entire mode of family life, and gradually transforms it, one will find there both the practice and an excellent school of the lay apostolate. In such a home husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children. The Christian family loudly proclaims both the present virtues of the Kingdom of God and the hope

of a blessed life to come. Thus by its example and its witness it accuses the world of sin and enlightens those who seek the truth.

Consequently, even when preoccupied with temporal cares, the laity can and must perform a work of great value for the evangelization of the world. For even if some of them have to fulfill their religious duties on their own, when there are no sacred ministers or in times of persecution; and even if many of them devote all their energies to apostolic work; still it remains for each one of them to cooperate in the external spread and the dynamic growth of the Kingdom of Christ in the world. Therefore, let the laity devotedly strive to acquire a more profound grasp of revealed truth, and let them insistently beg of God the gift of wisdom.

36. Christ, becoming obedient even unto death and because of this exalted by the Father,(206) entered into the glory of His kingdom. To Him all things are made subject until He subjects Himself and all created things to the Father that God may be all in all.(207) Now Christ has communicated this royal power to His disciples that they might be constituted in royal freedom and that by true penance and a holy life they might conquer the reign of sin in themselves.(208) Further, He has shared this power so that serving Christ in their fellow men they might by humility and patience lead their brethren to that King for whom to serve is to reign. But the Lord wishes to spread His kingdom also by means of the laity, namely, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace (4*). In this kingdom creation itself will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God.(209) Clearly then a great promise and a great trust is committed to the disciples: "All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's".(210)

The faithful, therefore, must learn the deepest meaning and the value of all creation, as well as its role in the harmonious praise of God. They must assist each other to live holier lives even in their daily occupations. In this way the world may be permeated by the spirit of Christ and it may more effectively fulfill its purpose in justice, charity and peace. The laity have the principal role in the overall fulfillment of this duty. Therefore, by their competence in secular training and by their activity, elevated from within by the grace of Christ, let them vigorously contribute their effort, so that created goods may be perfected by human labor, technical skill and civic culture for the benefit of all men according to the design of the Creator and the light of His Word. May the goods of this world be more equitably distributed among all men, and may they in their own way be conducive to universal progress in human and Christian freedom. In this manner, through the members of the Church, will Christ progressively illumine the whole of human society with His saving light.

Moreover, let the laity also by their combined efforts remedy the customs and conditions of the world, if they are an inducement to sin, so that they all may be conformed to the norms of justice and may favor the practice of virtue rather than hinder it. By so doing they will imbue culture and human activity with genuine moral values; they will better prepare the field of the world for the seed of the Word of God; and at the same time they will open wider the doors of the Church by which the message of peace may enter the world. Because of the very economy of salvation, the faithful should learn how to distinguish carefully between those rights and duties which are theirs as members of the Church, and those which they have as members of human society. Let them strive to reconcile the two, remembering that in every temporal affair

they must be guided by a Christian conscience, since even in secular business there is no human activity which can be withdrawn from God's dominion. In our own time, however, it is most urgent that this distinction and also this harmony should shine forth more clearly than ever in the lives of the faithful, so that the mission of the Church may correspond more fully to the special conditions of the world today. For it must be admitted that the temporal sphere is governed by its own principles, since it is rightly concerned with the interests of this world. But that ominous doctrine which attempts to build a society with no regard whatever for religion, and which attacks and destroys the religious liberty of its citizens, is rightly to be rejected (5*).

37. The laity have the right, as do all Christians, to receive in abundance from their spiritual shepherds the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the assistance of the word of God and of the sacraments (6*). They should openly reveal to them their needs and desires with that freedom and confidence which is fitting for children of God and brothers in Christ. They are, by reason of the knowledge, competence or outstanding ability which they may enjoy, permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinion on those things which concern the good of the Church (7*). When occasions arise, let this be done through the organs erected by the Church for this purpose. Let it always be done in truth, in courage and in prudence, with reverence and charity toward those who by reason of their sacred office represent the person of Christ. The laity should, as all Christians, promptly accept in Christian obedience decisions of their spiritual shepherds, since they are representatives of Christ as well as teachers and rulers in the Church. Let them follow the example of Christ, who by His obedience even unto death, opened to all men the blessed way of the liberty of the children of God. Nor should they omit to pray for those placed over them, for they keep watch as having to render an account of their souls, so that they may do this with joy and not with grief.(211)

Let the spiritual shepherds recognize and promote the dignity as well as the responsibility of the laity in the Church. Let them willingly employ their prudent advice. Let them confidently assign duties to them in the service of the Church, allowing them freedom and room for action. Further, let them encourage lay people so that they may undertake tasks on their own initiative. Attentively in Christ, let them consider with fatherly love the projects, suggestions and desires proposed by the laity.(8*) However, let the shepherds respectfully acknowledge that just freedom which belongs to everyone in this earthly city. A great many wonderful things are to be hoped for from this familiar dialogue between the laity and their spiritual leaders: in the laity a strengthened sense of personal responsibility; a renewed enthusiasm; a more ready application of their talents to the projects of their spiritual leaders. The latter, on the other hand, aided by the experience of the laity, can more clearly and more incisively come to decisions regarding both spiritual and temporal matters. In this way, the whole Church, strengthened by each one of its members, may more effectively fulfill its mission for the life of the world.

38. Each individual layman must stand before the world as a witness to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus and a symbol of the living God. All the laity as a community and each one according to his ability must nourish the world with spiritual fruits.(212) They must diffuse in the world that spirit which animates the poor, the meek, the peace makers—whom the Lord in the Gospel proclaimed as blessed.(213) In a word, "Christians must be to the world what the soul is to the body."(9*)

Footnotes

190 Eph. 4:15-16.

191 1 Rom. 12:4-5

192 Cf. Eph. 4:5.

193 Gal. 3:28; cf. Col. 3.11.

194 Cf. 2 Pt. 1:1.

195 1 Cor. 12:11.

196 Cf. Mt. 20:28.

197 Eph. 4:7.

198 Cf. Phil. 4:3; Rom. 16:3ff.

199 Pt. 2:5.

200 Cf. Acts 2:17-18; Rev. 19:10.

201 Cf. Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5.

202 Cf. Rom. 8:25.

203 Eph. 6:12

204 Cf. Rev. 21:1.

205 Cf. Heb. 11:1

206 Cf. Phil. 2:8-9.

207 Cf 1 Cor. 15:27

208 Cf. Rom. 6:12.

209 Cf Rom. 8:21.

210 1 Cor. 3:23.

211 Cf. Heb. 13:17.

212 Cf. Gal. 5:12.

213 Cf Mt. 5:3-9.

Appendix B: Session 2, LUMEN GENTIUM, ch. 5

DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HOLINESS

POPE PAUL VI

ON NOVEMBER 21, 1964

CHAPTER V

THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS IN THE CHURCH

39. The Church, whose mystery is being set forth by this Sacred Synod, is believed to be indefectibly holy. Indeed Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is praised as "uniquely holy," (1*) loved the Church as His bride, delivering Himself up for her. He did this that He might sanctify her.(214) He united her to Himself as His own body and brought it to perfection by the gift of the Holy Spirit for God's glory. Therefore in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification".(215) However, this holiness of the Church is unceasingly manifested, and must be manifested, in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful; it is expressed in many ways in individuals, who in their walk of life, tend toward the perfection of charity, thus causing the edification of others; in a very special way this (holiness) appears in the practice of the counsels, customarily called "evangelical." This practice of the counsels, under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit, undertaken by many Christians, either privately or in a Church-approved condition or state of life, gives and must give in the world an outstanding witness and example of this same holiness.

40. The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and every one of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consummator of this holiness of life: "Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect".(216)(2*) Indeed He sent the Holy Spirit upon all men that He might move them inwardly to love God with their whole heart and their whole soul, with all their mind and all their strength(217) and that they might love each other as Christ loves them.(218) The followers of Christ are called by God, not because of their works, but according to His own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, because in the baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature. In this way they are really made holy. Then too, by God's gift, they must hold on to and complete in their lives this holiness they have received. They are warned by the Apostle to live "as becomes saints", (219) and to put on "as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience", (220) and to possess the fruit of the Spirit in holiness.(221) Since truly we all offend in many things (222) we all need God's mercies continually and we all must daily pray: "Forgive us our debts"(223)(3*)

Thus, it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity;(4*) by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society. In order that the

faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor. In this way, the holiness of the People of God will grow into an abundant harvest of good, as is admirably shown by the life of so many saints in Church history.

41. The classes and duties of life are many, but holiness is one—that sanctity which is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father and worship God the Father in spirit and in truth. These people follow the poor Christ, the humble and cross-bearing Christ in order to be worthy of being sharers in His glory. Every person must walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of living faith, which arouses hope and works through charity.

In the first place, the shepherds of Christ's flock must holily and eagerly, humbly and courageously carry out their ministry, in imitation of the eternal high Priest, the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls. They ought to fulfill this duty in such a way that it will be the principal means also of their own sanctification. Those chosen for the fullness of the priesthood are granted the ability of exercising the perfect duty of pastoral charity by the grace of the sacrament of Orders. This perfect duty of pastoral charity (5*) is exercised in every form of episcopal care and service, prayer, sacrifice and preaching. By this same sacramental grace, they are given the courage necessary to lay down their lives for their sheep, and the ability of promoting greater holiness in the Church by their daily example, having become a pattern for their flock.(224)

Priests, who resemble bishops to a certain degree in their participation of the sacrament of Orders, form the spiritual crown of the bishops.(6*) They participate in the grace of their office and they should grow daily in their love of God and their neighbor by the exercise of their office through Christ, the eternal and unique Mediator. They should preserve the bond of priestly communion, and they should abound in every spiritual good and thus present to all men a living witness to God.(7*) All this they should do in emulation of those priests who often, down through the course of the centuries, left an outstanding example of the holiness of humble and hidden service. Their praise lives on in the Church of God. By their very office of praying and offering sacrifice for their own people and the entire people of God, they should rise to greater holiness. Keeping in mind what they are doing and imitating what they are handling,(8*) these priests, in their apostolic labors, rather than being ensnared by perils and hardships, should rather rise to greater holiness through these perils and hardships. They should ever nourish and strengthen their action from an abundance of contemplation, doing all this for the comfort of the entire Church of God. All priests, and especially those who are called "diocesan priests," due to the special title of their ordination, should keep continually before their minds the fact that their faithful loyalty toward and their generous cooperation with their bishop is of the greatest value in their growth in holiness.

Ministers of lesser rank are also sharers in the mission and grace of the Supreme Priest. In the first place among these ministers are deacons, who, in as much as they are dispensers of Christ's mysteries and servants of the Church,(9*) should keep themselves free from every vice

and stand before men as personifications of goodness and friends of God.(225) Clerics, who are called by the Lord and are set aside as His portion in order to prepare themselves for the various ministerial offices under the watchful eye of spiritual shepherds, are bound to bring their hearts and minds into accord with this special election (which is theirs). They will accomplish this by their constancy in prayer, by their burning love, and by their unremitting recollection of whatever is true, just and of good repute. They will accomplish all this for the glory and honor of God. Besides these already named, there are also laymen, chosen of God and called by the bishop. These laymen spend themselves completely in apostolic labors, working the Lord's field with much success.(10*).

Furthermore, married couples and Christian parents should follow their own proper path (to holiness) by faithful love. They should sustain one another in grace throughout the entire length of their lives. They should embue their offspring, lovingly welcomed as God's gift, with Christian doctrine and the evangelical virtues. In this manner, they offer all men the example of unwearying and generous love; in this way they build up the brotherhood of charity; in so doing, they stand as the witnesses and cooperators in the fruitfulness of Holy Mother Church; by such lives, they are a sign and a participation in that very love, with which Christ loved His Bride and for which He delivered Himself up for her.(11*) A like example, but one given in a different way, is that offered by widows and single people, who are able to make great contributions toward holiness and apostolic endeavor in the Church. Finally, those who engage in labor—and frequently it is of a heavy nature—should better themselves by their human labors. They should be of aid to their fellow citizens. They should raise all of society, and even creation itself, to a better mode of existence. Indeed, they should imitate by their lively charity, in their joyous hope and by their voluntary sharing of each others' burdens, the very Christ who plied His hands with carpenter's tools and Who in union with His Father, is continually working for the salvation of all men. In this, then, their daily work they should climb to the heights of holiness and apostolic activity.

May all those who are weighed down with poverty, infirmity and sickness, as well as those who must bear various hardships or who suffer persecution for justice sake—may they all know they are united with the suffering Christ in a special way for the salvation of the world. The Lord called them blessed in His Gospel and they are those whom "the God of all graces, who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself, after we have suffered a little while, perfect, strengthen and establish".(226)

Finally all Christ's faithful, whatever be the conditions, duties and circumstances of their lives—and indeed through all these, will daily increase in holiness, if they receive all things with faith from the hand of their heavenly Father and if they cooperate with the divine will. In this temporal service, they will manifest to all men the love with which God loved the world.

42. "God is love, and he who abides in love, abides in God and God in Him".(227) But, God pours out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, Who has been given to us;(228) thus the first and most necessary gift is love, by which we love God above all things and our neighbor because of God. Indeed, in order that love, as good seed may grow and bring forth fruit in the soul, each one of the faithful must willingly hear the Word of God and accept His Will, and must complete what God has begun by their own actions with the help of God's grace.

These actions consist in the use of the sacraments and in a special way the Eucharist, frequent participation in the sacred action of the Liturgy, application of oneself to prayer, self-abnegation, lively fraternal service and the constant exercise of all the virtues. For charity, as the bond of perfection and the fullness of the law,(229) rules over all the means of attaining holiness and gives life to these same means.(12*) It is charity which guides us to our final end. It is the love of God and the love of one's neighbor which points out the true disciple of Christ.

Since Jesus, the Son of God, manifested His charity by laying down His life for us, so too no one has greater love than he who lays down his life for Christ and His brothers.(230) From the earliest times, then, some Christians have been called upon—and some will always be called upon—to give the supreme testimony of this love to all men, but especially to persecutors. The Church, then, considers martyrdom as an exceptional gift and as the fullest proof of love. By martyrdom a disciple is transformed into an image of his Master by freely accepting death for the salvation of the world—as well as his conformity to Christ in the shedding of his blood. Though few are presented such an opportunity, nevertheless all must be prepared to confess Christ before men. They must be prepared to make this profession of faith even in the midst of persecutions, which will never be lacking to the Church, in following the way of the cross.

Likewise, the holiness of the Church is fostered in a special way by the observance of the counsels proposed in the Gospel by Our Lord to His disciples.(13*) An eminent position among these is held by virginity or the celibate state.(231) This is a precious gift of divine grace given by the Father to certain souls,(232) whereby they may devote themselves to God alone the more easily, due to an undivided heart. (14*) This perfect continency, out of desire for the kingdom of heaven, has always been held in particular honor in the Church. The reason for this was and is that perfect continency for the love of God is an incentive to charity, and is certainly a particular source of spiritual fecundity in the world.

The Church continually keeps before it the warning of the Apostle which moved the faithful to charity, exhorting them to experience personally what Christ Jesus had known within Himself. This was the same Christ Jesus, who "emptied Himself, taking the nature of a slave . . . becoming obedient to death",(233) and because of us "being rich, he became poor".(234) Because the disciples must always offer an imitation of and a testimony to the charity and humility of Christ, Mother Church rejoices at finding within her bosom men and women who very closely follow their Saviour who debased Himself to our comprehension. There are some who, in their freedom as sons of God, renounce their own wills and take upon themselves the state of poverty. Still further, some become subject of their own accord to another man, in the matter of perfection for love of God. This is beyond the measure of the commandments, but is done in order to become more fully like the obedient Christ.(15*)

Therefore, all the faithful of Christ are invited to strive for the holiness and perfection of their own proper state. Indeed they have an obligation to so strive. Let all then have care that they guide aright their own deepest sentiments of soul. Let neither the use of the things of this world nor attachment to riches, which is against the spirit of evangelical poverty, hinder them in their quest for perfect love. Let them heed the admonition of the Apostle to those who use this world; let them not come to terms with this world; for this world, as we see it, is passing away.(235)(16*)

Footnotes

214 Cf Eph. 5:25-26.

215 I Thess. 4.3; cf. Eph.1:4.

216 Mt. 5:48.

217 Cf. Mk. 12:30.

218 Cf. Jn. 13.34; 15:12.

219 Eph. 5:3.

220 Col . 3:12.

221 Cf. Gal. 5:22; Rom. 6:22.

222 Cf. Jas. 3:2.

223 1 Mt. 6:12.

224 Cf. 1 Pt. 5:3.

225 Cf. 1 Tim. 3:8-10 and 12-1

226 1 Pt. 5:10.

227 1 Jn. 4:16.

228 Cf. Rom. 5:5.

229 Cf. Col. 3:14; Rom. 13:10.

230 Cf. 1 Jn. 3:16; Jn. 15:13.

231 Cf 1 Cor. 7:32-34.

232 Cf Mt. 19:11; 1 Cor.7:7.

233 Phil. 2:7-8.

234 2 Cor. 8:9.

235 Cf 1. Cor. 7:31ff.

Appendix C: Session 4, GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE, ch. 4 – In Community

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

MARCH 19, 2018

Chapter Four 140-146

IN COMMUNITY

140. When we live apart from others, it is very difficult to fight against concupiscence, the snares and temptations of the devil and the selfishness of the world. Bombarded as we are by so many enticements, we can grow too isolated, lose our sense of reality and inner clarity, and easily succumb.

141. Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others. We see this in some holy communities. From time to time, the Church has canonized entire communities that lived the Gospel heroically or offered to God the lives of all their members. We can think, for example, of the seven holy founders of the Order of the Servants of Mary, the seven blessed sisters of the first monastery of the Visitation in Madrid, the Japanese martyrs Saint Paul Miki and companions, the Korean martyrs Saint Andrew Taegon and companions, or the South American martyrs Saint Roque González, Saint Alonso Rodríguez and companions. We should also remember the more recent witness borne by the Trappists of Tibhirine, Algeria, who prepared as a community for martyrdom. In many holy marriages too, each spouse becomes a means used by Christ for the sanctification of the other. Living or working alongside others is surely a path of spiritual growth. Saint John of the Cross told one of his followers: “You are living with others in order to be fashioned and tried”.^[104]

142. Each community is called to create a “God-enlightened space in which to experience the hidden presence of the risen Lord”.^[105] Sharing the word and celebrating the Eucharist together fosters fraternity and makes us a holy and missionary community. It also gives rise to authentic and shared mystical experiences. Such was the case with Saints Benedict and Scholastica. We can also think of the sublime spiritual experience shared by Saint Augustine and his mother, Saint Monica. “As the day now approached on which she was to depart this life, a day known to you but not to us, it came about, as I believe by your secret arrangement, that she and I stood alone leaning in a window that looked onto a garden... We opened wide our hearts to drink in the streams of your fountain, the source of life that is in you... And as we spoke of that wisdom and strained after it, we touched it in some measure by the impetus of our hearts... eternal life might be like that one moment of knowledge which we now sighed after”.^[106]

143. Such experiences, however, are neither the most frequent nor the most important. The common life, whether in the family, the parish, the religious community or any other, is made up of small everyday things. This was true of the holy community formed by Jesus, Mary and Joseph, which reflected in an exemplary way the beauty of the Trinitarian communion. It was also true of the life that Jesus shared with his disciples and with ordinary people.

144. Let us not forget that Jesus asked his disciples to pay attention to details.

The little detail that wine was running out at a party.

The little detail that one sheep was missing.

The little detail of noticing the widow who offered her two small coins.

The little detail of having spare oil for the lamps, should the bridegroom delay.

The little detail of asking the disciples how many loaves of bread they had.

The little detail of having a fire burning and a fish cooking as he waited for the disciples at daybreak.

145. A community that cherishes the little details of love,[107] whose members care for one another and create an open and evangelizing environment, is a place where the risen Lord is present, sanctifying it in accordance with the Father's plan. There are times when, by a gift of the Lord's love, we are granted, amid these little details, consoling experiences of God. "One winter night I was carrying out my little duty as usual... Suddenly, I heard off in the distance the harmonious sound of a musical instrument. I then pictured a well-lighted drawing room, brilliantly gilded, filled with elegantly dressed young ladies conversing together and conferring upon each other all sorts of compliments and other worldly remarks. Then my glance fell upon the poor invalid whom I was supporting. Instead of the beautiful strains of music I heard only her occasional complaints... I cannot express in words what happened in my soul; what I know is that the Lord illumined it with rays of truth which so surpassed the dark brilliance of earthly feasts that I could not believe my happiness".[108]

146. Contrary to the growing consumerist individualism that tends to isolate us in a quest for well-being apart from others, our path to holiness can only make us identify all the more with Jesus' prayer "that all may be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you" (Jn 17:21).

Footnotes

[104] Precautions, 15.

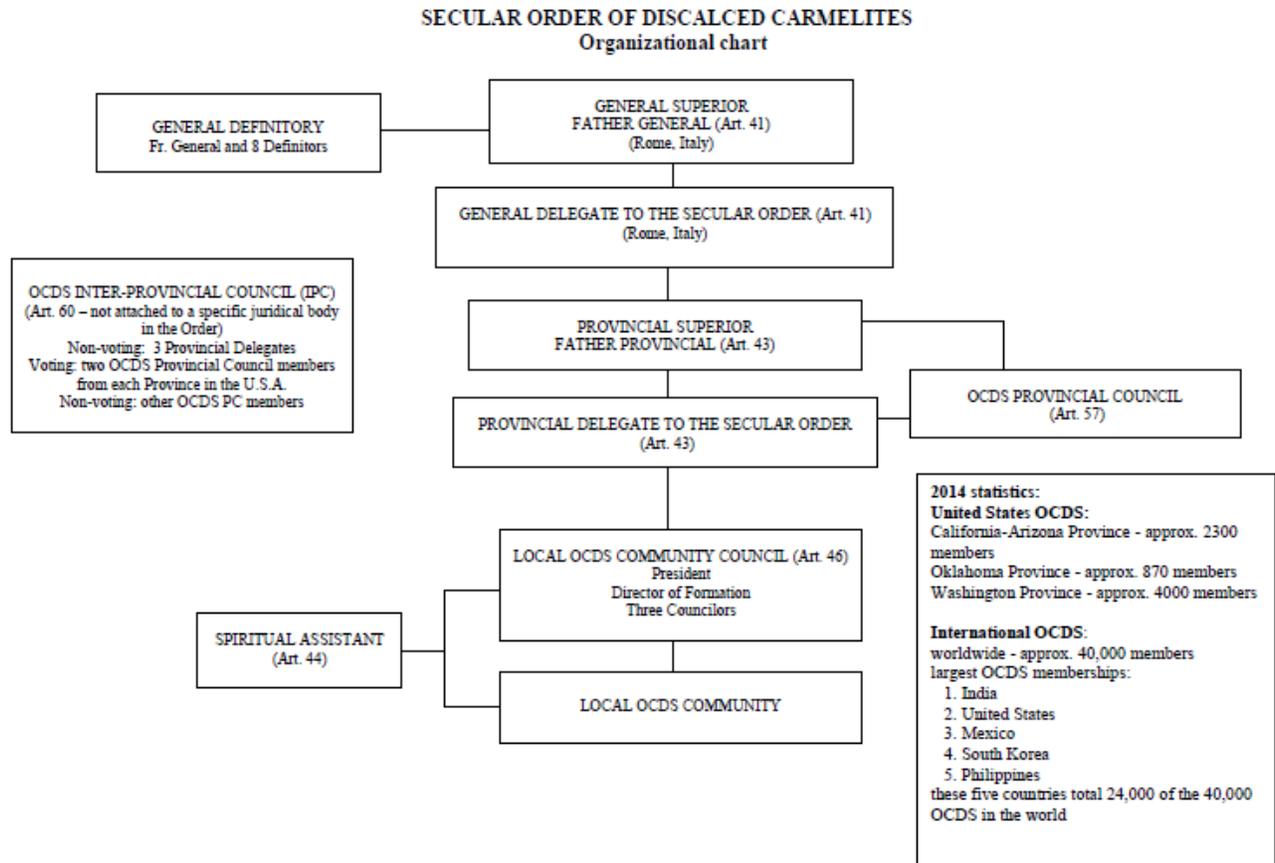
[105] JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (25 March 1996), 42: AAS 88 (1996), 416.

[106] Confessiones, IX, 10, 23-25: PL 32, 773-775.

[107] I think especially of the three key words "please", "thank you" and "sorry". "The right words, spoken at the right time, daily protect and nurture love": Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (19 March 2016), 133: AAS 108 (2016), 363.

[108] THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS, Manuscript C, 29 v-30r

Appendix D: Session 4, Organizational Chart



Appendix E: Session 5, Liturgy of the Hours Commentary

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Part One

The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours (extracts)

Commentary is in parentheses and italics. (*like this*)

Page numbers generally refer to Catholic Book Publisher's Christian Prayer.

Redactions are indicated by "..."

Some passages are highlighted in bold print to draw extra attention.

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- II. Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer
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Endnotes (*See the official GILH for the end notes. They are omitted here for the sake of brevity.*)

Part Two

Further notes and comments

1. Sanctifying the Day
2. Alleluia
3. Shorthand and Assumptions
4. Figuring out Seasons, Solemnities, Feasts and Memorials
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Part One

extracts from the GILH

CHAPTER II SANCTIFICATION OF THE DAY: THE DIFFERENT LITURGICAL HOURS

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE WHOLE OFFICE (*“Whole office” means the whole day’s liturgy of the hours.*)

34. The whole office begins as a rule with an invitatory. This consists in the verse, Lord, open my lips. And my mouth will proclaim your praise, and Ps 95. . . .

. . . .

It is preferable to recite the invitatory psalm responsorially as it is set out in the text, that is, with the antiphon recited at the beginning, then repeated, and repeated again after each strophe. (*The same as the responsorial psalm at Mass.*)

35. The invitatory is placed at the beginning of the whole sequence of the day's prayer, that is, it precedes either morning prayer or the office of readings, whichever of these liturgical rites begins the day. The invitatory psalm with its antiphon may be omitted, however, when the invitatory is the prelude to morning prayer.

. . . .

II. MORNING PRAYER AND EVENING PRAYER

. . . .

38. As is clear from many of the elements that make it up, morning prayer is intended and arranged to sanctify the morning. St. Basil the Great gives an excellent description of this character in these words: "It is said in the morning in order that the first stirrings of our mind and will may be consecrated to God and that we may take nothing in hand until we have been gladdened by the thought of God, as it is written: 'I was mindful of God and was glad' (Ps 77:4 [Jerome's translation from Hebrew]), or set our bodies to any task before we do what has been said: 'I will pray to you, Lord, you will hear my voice in the morning; I will stand before you in the morning and gaze on you' (Ps 5:4-5)." Celebrated as it is as the light of a new day is dawning, this hour also recalls the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the true light enlightening all people (see Jn 1:9) and "the sun of justice" (Mal 4:2), "rising from on high" (Lk 1:78). Hence, we can well understand the advice of St. Cyprian: "There should be prayer in the morning so that the resurrection of the Lord may thus be celebrated."

39. When evening approaches and the day is already far spent, evening prayer is celebrated in order that "we may give thanks for what has been given us, or what we have done well, during the day." We also recall the redemption through the prayer we send up "like incense in the Lord's sight," and in which "the raising up of our hands" becomes "an evening sacrifice." . . .

. . .

41. Morning prayer and evening prayer begin with the introductory verse, God come to my assistance. Lord, make haste to help me. There follows the Glory to the Father, with As it was in the beginning and Alleluia (omitted in Lent). **This introduction is omitted at morning prayer when the invitatory immediately precedes it.**

42. Then an appropriate hymn is sung immediately. The purpose of the hymn is to set the tone for the hour or the feast and, especially in celebrations with a congregation, to form a simple and pleasant introduction to prayer.

(The Hymn section starts on page 1502.

Weekdays in Ordinary Time, the suggested hymn number is given before the psalmody; other appropriate hymns are listed on 1503-1504.

Seasons, see 1502-1503.

Solemnities and feasts of the Lord, see 1504.

Saints' days, see pages 1505-1506.)

43. After the hymn the psalmody follows. . . .

44. After the psalmody there is either a short reading or a longer one. . . . *(Use the reading given in Christian Prayer or the 4-volume LOH, whichever edition the Reader has.)*

48. After the reading or homily a period of silence may be observed.

49. As a response to the word of God, a responsorial, chant or short responsory is provided; this may be omitted. *(Carmelites don't normally omit it.)*

50. Next is the solemn recitation of the gospel canticle with its antiphon, that is, the Canticle of Zechariah at morning prayer and the Canticle of Mary at evening prayer...

51. After the canticle, at morning prayer come the petitions for the consecration of the day and its work to God and at evening prayer, the intercessions (see nos. 179-193).

52. After the petitions or intercessions the Lord's Prayer is said by all.

53. Immediately after the Lord's Prayer there follows the concluding prayer, which for weekdays in Ordinary Time is found in the psalter and for other days in the proper. *(More about the proper below.)*

54. Then, if a priest or deacon is presiding, he dismisses the congregation with the greeting, The Lord be with you, and the blessing as at Mass. He adds the invitation, Go in peace. R. Thanks be to God. In the absence of a priest or deacon the celebration concludes with May the Lord bless us, etc.

III. OFFICE OF READINGS . . .

IV. DAYTIME HOURS . . .

(These are not required for Carmelite Seculars. Those who are interested may refer to the General Instructions.)

VI. NIGHT PRAYER

(Carmelite Seculars are to pray night prayer if possible. If night prayer is not possible, we are encouraged to at least make an examination of conscience. The night prayer section begins on page 1034.)

84. Night prayer is the last prayer of the day, said before retiring, even if that is after midnight. . . .

86. It is a laudable practice to have next an examination of conscience; . . .

92. Finally, one of the antiphons in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary is said. *(One of the prayers on page 1056-1057.)* In the Easter season this is always to be the Regina Caeli. In addition to the antiphons given in The Liturgy of the Hours, others may be approved by the conferences of bishops.

CHAPTER III DIFFERENT ELEMENTS IN THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

I. PSALMS AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH CHRISTIAN PRAYER

. . .

104. To sing the psalms with understanding, then, is to meditate on them verse by verse, with the heart always ready to respond in the way the Holy Spirit desires. The one who inspired the psalmist will also be present to those who in faith and love are ready to receive his grace. *(Pause at the end of each line, to allow time for this meditation. Pausing also helps everyone pray together at the same pace.)*

. . .

106. In praying the psalms we should open our hearts to the different attitudes they express, varying with the literary genre to which each belongs (psalms of grief, trust, gratitude, etc.) and to which biblical scholars rightly attach great importance.

107. Staying close to the meaning of the words, the person who prays the psalms looks for the significance of the text for the human life of the believer. . . .

108. Those who pray the psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours do so not so much in their own name as in the name of the entire Body of Christ. This consideration does away with the problem of a possible discrepancy between personal feelings and the sentiments a psalm is expressing: for example, when a person feels sad and the psalm is one of joy or when a person feels happy and the psalm is one of mourning. Such a problem is readily solved in private prayer, which allows for the choice of a psalm suited to personal feelings. **The divine office, however, is not private; the cycle of psalms is public, in the name of the Church, even for those who may be reciting an hour alone.** Those who pray the psalms in the name of the Church nevertheless can always find a reason for joy or sadness, for the saying of the Apostle applies in this case also: "Rejoice with the joyful and weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15). .

. . .

109. Those who pray the psalms in the name of the Church should be aware of their full sense (*sensus plenus*), especially their Messianic sense, which was the reason for the Church's introduction of the psalter into its prayer. . . .

Following this line of thought, the Fathers of the Church saw the whole psalter as a prophecy of Christ and the Church and explained it in this sense; for the same reason the psalms have been chosen for use in the liturgy. . . .

On the great feasts especially, the choice of psalms is often based on their Christological meaning and antiphons taken from these psalms are frequently used to throw light on this meaning.

II. ANTIPHONS AND OTHER AIDS TO PRAYING THE PSALMS

. . .

111. In the psalter of The Liturgy of the Hours a caption is given for each psalm to explain its meaning and its import for the personal life of the believer. These captions are intended only as an aid to prayer. (*The caption is the phrase in red ink after the antiphon. The captions are not said aloud.*)

A quotation from the New Testament or the Fathers of the Church is added to foster prayer in the light of Christ's new revelation; it is an invitation to pray the psalms in their Christological meaning.

112. Psalm-prayers for each psalm are given in the supplement to The Liturgy of the Hours as an aid to understanding them in a predominantly Christian way. An ancient tradition provides a model for their use: after the psalm a period of silence is observed, then the prayer gives a resume and resolution of the thoughts and aspirations of those praying the psalms.

(*Psalm prayers are included in the four-week cycle of Christian Prayer and the four-volume LOH.*)

. . .

114. . . . in accordance with no. 125. When the office of Ordinary Time is recited, not sung, the quotations printed with the psalms may be used in place of these antiphons.

(*The quotations are in italics; they are after the caption in red ink.*)

115. When a psalm may be divided because of its length into several sections within one and the same hour, an antiphon is given for each section. This is to provide variety, especially when the hour is sung, and also to help toward a better understanding of the riches of the psalm. Still, it is permissible to say or sing the complete psalm without interruption, using only the first antiphon.

. . .

120. During the Easter season Alleluia is added to all antiphons, unless it would clash with the meaning of a particular antiphon.

. . .

IV. PLAN FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PSALMS IN THE OFFICE

. . .

133. The four-week cycle of the psalter is coordinated with the liturgical year in such a way that on the **First Sunday of Advent, the First Sunday in Ordinary Time, the First Sunday of Lent, and Easter Sunday** the cycle is always begun again with Week I (others being omitted when necessary).

After Pentecost, when the psalter cycle follows the series of weeks in Ordinary Time, it begins with the week indicated in the proper of seasons at the beginning of the appropriate week in Ordinary Time.

(The day after Pentecost is Ordinary Time. The Church picks up where she left off before Lent. This could be week seven, eight or nine in Ordinary Time. Check the Catholic calendar. Week seven will correspond to week III of the psalter, as shown at the top of page 611. Week eight will correspond to week IV of the psalter, and so on.)

...

VI. READINGS FROM SACRED SCRIPTURE

...

C. SHORT READINGS

...

157. Accordingly, four weekly series of short readings have been composed for Ordinary Time. They are incorporated into the psalter in such a way that the reading changes during the four weeks. There are also weekly series for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, In addition there are proper short readings for solemnities, feasts, and some memorials, as well as a one-week series for night prayer.

...

IX RESPONSORIES

...

171. The responsories and the portions to be repeated even in private recitation . . . retain their value. The customary reprise of the whole responsory may be omitted when the office is not being sung, unless the sense requires this repetition. *(This paragraph refers to the office of readings.)*

172. In a similar but simpler way, the responsory at morning prayer, evening prayer, and night prayer (see nos. 49 and 89), and the verse at daytime prayer, are linked to the short reading as a kind of acclamation, enabling God's word to enter more deeply into the mind and heart of the one listening or reading.

X. HYMNS AND OTHER NONBIBLICAL SONGS

173. . . . the hymns bring out the proper theme of individual hours or feasts and incline and draw the spirit to a devout celebration. The beauty of their language often adds to this power. Furthermore, in the office hymns are the main poetic element created by the Church.

174. A hymn follows the traditional rule of ending with a doxology, usually addressed to the same divine person as the hymn itself.

175. In the office for Ordinary Time, to ensure variety, a twofold cycle of hymns is given for each hour, for use in alternate weeks.

...

XI. INTERCESSIONS, LORD'S PRAYER, AND CONCLUDING PRAYER

A. THE PRAYERS OR INTERCESSIONS AT MORNING PRAYER AND EVENING PRAYER

...

183. . . . different intercessory formularies are given for each day of the four-week psalter in Ordinary Time and for the special seasons of the liturgical year, as well as for certain feasts.

. . .

186. In the intercessions at evening prayer the last intention is always for the dead.

187. Since the Liturgy of the Hours is above all the prayer of the whole Church for the whole Church, indeed for the salvation of the whole world, universal intentions should take precedence over all others, namely, for: the Church and its ministers; secular authorities; the poor, the sick, and the sorrowful; the needs of the whole world, that is, peace and other intentions of this kind.

188. It is permissible, however, to include particular intentions at both morning prayer and evening prayer.

. . .

C. CONCLUDING PRAYER

197. The concluding prayer at the end marks the completion of an entire hour. In a celebration in public and with a congregation, it belongs by tradition to a priest or deacon to say this prayer.

. . .

199. The concluding prayer at morning prayer and evening prayer is taken from the proper on Sundays, on the weekdays of the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, and on solemnities, feasts, and memorials. On weekdays in Ordinary Time the prayer is the one given in the four-week psalter to express the character of these two hours.

. . .

XII. SACRED SILENCE

201. It is a general principle that care should be taken in liturgical services to see that "at the proper times all observe a reverent silence." An opportunity for silence should therefore be provided in the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours.

202. In order to receive in our hearts the full sound of the voice of the Holy Spirit and to unite our personal prayer more closely with the word of God and the public voice of the Church, it is permissible, as occasion offers and prudence suggests, to have an interval of silence. It may come either after the repetition of the antiphon at the end of the psalm, in the traditional way, especially if the psalm-prayer is to be said after the pause (see no. 112), or after the short or longer readings, either before or after the responsory.

Care must be taken to avoid the kind of silence that would disturb the structure of the office or annoy and weary those taking part.

203. In individual recitation there is even greater freedom to pause in meditation on some text that moves the spirit; the office does not on this account lose its public character.

CHAPTER IV VARIOUS CELEBRATIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

I. MYSTERIES OF THE LORD

A. SUNDAY

204. The office of Sunday begins with evening prayer I (*Saturday evening*), which is taken entirely from the four-week psalter, except those parts that are marked as proper. (*In Ordinary Time, that would be the antiphon for the gospel canticle and the closing prayer.*)

205. **When a feast of the Lord is celebrated on Sunday, it has a proper evening prayer I.** (*This refers to the vigil on Saturday evening. For an example, see Feb. 2, the Presentation of Our Lord, in the proper of the saints, page 1077.*)

. . .

B. EASTER TRIDUUM

. . .

209. Those who take part in the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper or the celebration of the Lord's passion on Good Friday do not say evening prayer on either day.

. . .

211. Night prayer for Holy Saturday is said only by those who are not present at the Easter Vigil.

. . .

D. CHRISTMAS SEASON

215. . . . Night prayer is not said by those present at this vigil. (*Mass on Christmas Eve*)

. . .

II. THE SAINTS

218. The celebrations of the saints are arranged so that they do not take precedence over those feast days and special seasons that commemorate the mysteries of salvation. . . .

219. Celebrations in honor of the saints are either solemnities, feasts, or memorials.

220. Memorials are either obligatory memorials or, when not so classified, optional memorials. . . .

(*For an example, look at pages 1074 and 1075 of Christian Prayer. Angela Merici has an optional memorial. It can be observed or ignored. Thomas Aquinas has a memorial. It must be observed unless it conflicts with Sunday.*)

1. ARRANGEMENT OF THE OFFICE FOR SOLEMNITIES

(*Solemnities that fall on Sunday in Ordinary Time are observed in place of the Sunday office. During Advent, Christmas season, Lent, and Easter season, they are moved to the next available Monday. This also applies to the Carmelite solemnities of O.L. of Mt Carmel, St. Teresa of Avila, St John of the Cross, and the Province's patron saint.*)

225. **Solemnities** have an evening prayer I on the preceding day.

226. At **evening prayer I and II**, the hymn, the antiphons, the short reading with its responsory, and the concluding prayer are proper. **Where anything proper is missing, it is supplied from the common.**

(“Proper” means from the proper of the saints, pages 1060 to 1353, or the proper of the seasons, pages 41 to 683. The commons begin on page 1355.)

. . .

227. At **morning prayer**, the hymn, the antiphons, the short reading with its responsory, and the concluding prayer are proper. Where anything proper is missing, it is supplied from the common. **The psalms are to be taken from the Sunday of Week I** of the four-week psalter; the intercessions are either proper or from the common.

. . .

230. At night prayer, everything is said as on Sundays, after evening prayer I and II respectively.

(The night before the solemnity use night prayer from page 1034. The night of the solemnity use night prayer from page 1037.)

2. ARRANGEMENT OF THE OFFICE FOR FEASTS

231. Feasts have no evening prayer I, except those feasts of the Lord that fall on a Sunday. At the office of readings, at morning prayer, and at evening prayer, all is done as on solemnities.

. . .

233. Night prayer is said as on ordinary days. *(For example, if a feast falls on a Wednesday, use night prayer for Wednesday.)*

3. ARRANGEMENT OF THE OFFICE FOR MEMORIALS

(Memorials are where most people have the most difficulty determining which pages to use. It takes quite some time to get the hang of it.)

234. In the arrangement of the office there is no difference between obligatory and optional memorials, except in the case of optional memorials falling during privileged seasons. *(In privileged seasons memorials are ignored or become commemorations. See #237-239 below.)*

A. MEMORIALS DURING ORDINARY TIME

235. . . . at morning prayer, and at evening prayer:

a. **the psalms and their antiphons are taken from the current week and day** *(in the four-week psalter)*, **unless there are proper antiphons or proper psalms, which is indicated as the case occurs;**

*(In other words, if they are not in the proper of the saints, **do not** take them from the common. The antiphons given in the common are for feasts, not for memorials.)*

b. the antiphon at the invitatory, the hymn, the short reading, the antiphons at the Canticles of Zechariah and of Mary, and the intercessions must be those of the saint **if these are given in the proper**; otherwise, they are taken **either** from the common or from the current week and day;

c. the concluding prayer from the office of the saint is to be said;

. . .

236. At daytime prayer and night prayer, all is from the weekday and nothing is from the office of the saint.

B. MEMORIALS DURING PRIVILEGED SEASONS

237. On Sundays, solemnities, and feasts, on Ash Wednesday, during Holy Week, and during the octave of Easter, memorials that happen to fall on these days are disregarded.

238. On the weekdays from 17 to 24 December, during the octave of Christmas, and on the weekdays of Lent, no obligatory memorials are celebrated, even in particular calendars. When any happen to fall during Lent in a given year, they are treated as optional memorials.

239. During privileged seasons, if it is desired to celebrate the office of a saint on a day assigned to his or her memorial:

. . .

b. at morning prayer and evening prayer, **the ending of the concluding prayer may be omitted and the saint's antiphon (from the proper or common) and prayer may be added.**

C. MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY ON SATURDAY

240. On Saturdays in Ordinary Time, when optional memorials are permitted (*If there is not another memorial, feast or solemnity*), an optional memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be celebrated in the same way as other memorials, with its own proper reading. (*see page 1383*)

III. CALENDAR AND OPTION TO CHOOSE AN OFFICE OR PART OF AN OFFICE

A. CALENDAR TO BE FOLLOWED

241. The office in choir and in common is to be celebrated according to the proper calendar of the diocese, **of the religious family**, or of the individual churches. . . .

(The Carmelites have their own proper, which has the Carmelite saints, memorials, feasts, and solemnities. These differ from the general calendar. For example, St Therese the Little Flower is a memorial for the Church in general, but a feast for the Order of Carmelites Discalced.)

. . .

CHAPTER V RITES FOR CELEBRATION IN COMMON

I. OFFICES TO BE CARRIED OUT

253. In the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, as in all other liturgical services, "each one, minister or layperson, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to that office by the nature of the rite and the principles of liturgy."

. . .

258. In the absence of a priest or deacon, the one who presides at the office is only one among equals and does not enter the sanctuary or greet and bless the people.

259. Those who act as readers, standing in a convenient place, read either the long readings or the short readings.

260. A cantor or cantors should intone the antiphons, psalms, and other chants. With regard to the psalmody, the directions of nos. 121-125 should be followed.

. . .

263. All taking part stand during:

- a. the introduction to the office and the introductory verses of each hour;
- b. the hymn;
- c. the gospel canticle;
- d. the intercessions, the Lord's Prayer, and the concluding prayer.

264. All sit to listen to the readings, except the gospel.

265. The assembly either sits or stands, depending on custom, while the psalms and other canticles (with their antiphons) are being said. (*Our custom is to sit for the psalmody.*)

266. All make the sign of the cross, from forehead to breast and from left shoulder to right, at:

- a. the beginning of the hours, when God, come to my assistance is being said;
- b. the beginning of the gospel, the Canticles of Zechariah, of Mary, and of Simeon.

The sign of the cross is made on the mouth at the beginning of the invitatory, at Lord, open my lips. . . .

Part two

Further notes and comments

This section is to explain some points that may be obscure for the beginner. Much of what is explained in the GILH section is repeated and expanded. Page numbers refer to the one-volume Christian Prayer.

Please keep in mind that the office is prayed, not merely read. Entering into the liturgy unites us to Christ and His Church and leads us to the Father. It is more important to pray the office reverently, prayerfully, with the heart set on God, than to say it perfectly correctly. Attention to the One we are praying to is key.

1. SANCTIFYING THE DAY

From the Code of Canon Law: "Can. 1175 In carrying out the Liturgy of the Hours, the true time for each hour is to be observed **insofar as possible.**"

While we don't want to become negligent or careless, please do not become anxious about exact times when charity or duty calls you to be elsewhere. It is important to remember that the Church in her wisdom allows for individual needs and circumstances.

In general:

Morning prayer is said before starting the business of the day. The actual time will vary according to the individual's needs and situation.

Evening prayer is said when the day's labors are through. Again, this is according to the individual's needs and situation.

Night prayer is the last prayer of the day, said before retiring, even if that is after midnight. Carmelites are to pray night prayer if possible. If night prayer is not possible, we ought to at least do an examination of conscience, thank God for the blessings of the day, and ask His protection

Other hours:

Daytime prayer (for those who feel drawn to it) is said at about 9am (midmorning), noon (midday), and 3pm (midafternoon).

The office of readings can be prayed at anytime during the 24-hour day. If the office of readings is prayed earlier than morning prayer, the Invitatory is prayed as part of the office of readings, instead of with morning prayer.

2. ALLELUIA!

The Alleluia is omitted during Lent.

An Alleluia in parentheses means it is added during the Easter Season, but not at other times.

3. SHORTHAND AND ASSUMPTIONS

Please note that some prayers in Christian Prayer are given in a sort of shorthand.

For example, at the beginning of the invitatory in the four-week psalter it says:

“Lord, open my lips.”

That’s shorthand for:

“Lord, open my lips and my mouth will proclaim your praise.”

At the beginning of evening prayer it says:

“God, come to my assistance. Glory to the Father. As it was in the beginning. Alleluia.”

That’s shorthand for:

“God, come to my assistance. Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen. Alleluia.”

They are assuming the person praying knows the entire prayer and are just giving a brief reminder to say it in that place.

Where it says “conclusion as in the Ordinary”, it means the dismissal found on pages 693-694 of the Ordinary. If there is a priest or deacon present, he gives the blessing and dismissal.

If there is no priest or deacon, simply close with “May the Lord bless us (etc)” while making the sign of the Cross.

In the four-week psalter, where it says “Canticle of Zechariah” and “Canticle of Mary,” they give the antiphon and assume the person praying knows to say the canticle in that place.

They say in a few places that the Glory to the Father is said at the end of all psalms and canticles “unless otherwise indicated” and assume it will be remembered.

Mostly, they assume you are learning the Liturgy of the Hours with the help of someone who has experience and can guide you. Learning to navigate on your own is challenging to say the least. Be sure to jot down notes of any difficulties or questions and bring them up with your formator or liturgy coordinator.

4. FIGURING OUT SEASONS, SOLEMNITIES, FEASTS AND MEMORIALS

It is helpful to use a Catholic calendar. If there is any confusion about what day the Church is celebrating, the correct day will be on the calendar. If there is any difficulty in finding where to go for a particular celebration, there is an alphabetical index on pages 2078-2079.

The following reiterates and expands on some of what was included from chapter IV of the GILH, in Part One above.

The proper of the seasons, which is the front section of Christian Prayer, starts on page 41. As the name indicates, it has the proper parts for the seasons of the liturgical year.

This is also where we find most of the feasts and solemnities of our Lord (Christmas, Easter, the Ascension, Sacred Heart, Christ the King, etc).

Advent, Christmas Season, Lent, Easter Season

The invitatory antiphon during these seasons will come from the ordinary, pages 686 and 687. Appropriate hymns are listed on pages 1502 – 1503.

Each day in these seasons will have its own special reading, responsory, gospel canticle antiphon, intercessions, and closing prayer. They are in the proper of the seasons.

Here's an example:

Monday of the first week of Advent:

The invitatory antiphon will come from the ordinary, page 686.

The hymn will be an Advent hymn; choices are listed on page 1502.

The psalms and antiphons come from Monday of Week I of the psalter, page 718.

Then the reading and everything else will come from the proper of the seasons, page 47.

The Proper of the Saints starts on page 1060.

This is where the solemnities, feasts, and memorials of Mary and the saints, and some feasts of Our Lord are found.

Anything given in the proper of the saints for the saint's day is used: antiphons, psalms, readings, intercessions, closing prayers.

There are different levels of importance for saints' days. The importance of the day is given under the name of the saint: **solemnity** (highest), **feast** (second) or **memorial** (third). If it doesn't say what it is, then it's an optional memorial. Last is a memorial observed as a **commemoration**.

Every religious order has its own proper, published separately, unique to them. As Carmelites, we are to follow the Carmelite calendar, in addition to the general calendar. (GILH # 241)

What this means in practical terms.

Solemnity. (GILH # 225-230)

Solemnities of the Lord that fall on Sunday are observed in place of the Sunday Liturgy.

Solemnities of the saints that fall on a Sunday during Ordinary time are observed in place of the Sunday Liturgy.

*Solemnities of the saints that fall on a Sunday **outside** of Ordinary time are **not** observed in place of the Sunday Liturgy. They are moved to the next available Monday.*

Solemnities will have their own antiphons (often their own psalms too), readings and everything. Follow the directions given for the day in the proper of the seasons or the proper of the saints.

Feast. (GILH # 231-233)

The *popular* meaning of “feast day” is any celebration, from solemnities down to optional memorials. **Here we are using the *liturgical* meaning, in which “feast” specifies a rank of importance.**

Feasts of Our Lord that fall on Sunday take the place the Sunday Liturgy, including the vigil on Saturday evening.

Feasts of saints that fall on Sunday, Ash Wednesday, the Easter Triduum, and the Octave of Easter are not observed.

First use everything that is given in the proper for that day. Anything not given in the proper is taken from the common. The proper for the day will say which common to use and what page. In the morning use the psalms from Sunday Week I. In the evening use the psalms from the common if they are not in the proper itself.

Two examples:

February 22 Chair of Peter has all its own antiphons, reading and everything. The morning psalms are from Sunday Week I page 707, with the antiphons from the proper of the saints pages 1095 and 1096. The evening psalms are taken from the common of apostles with antiphons from the proper of the saints page 1097.

October 28 Sts. Simon and Jude’s feast does *not* have its own antiphons, etc. It only has its own closing prayer.

For this feast we go to the common of apostles page 1392 to find the antiphons, psalms, readings and everything else.

In the morning we say the antiphons in the common of apostles with the psalms from Sunday Week I page 707.

In the evening we say the psalms and antiphons in the common of apostles.

3. The next level is a memorial. (GILH # 234-236)

Memorials of saints are lowest in precedence; they are not observed on Sundays. Other liturgical days will take precedence over memorials, such as the Easter Triduum or the Sacred Heart.

First look at what is given in the saint’s day. Memorials have at least a closing prayer. Most have gospel antiphons too. Use whatever is given in the proper of the saints for the day.

The psalms and antiphons are usually going to come from the current weekday of the psalter.

For memorials, the only time the psalms and antiphons don’t come from the weekday is if their antiphons are right there in the proper for the saint’s day itself.

For an example of this, look at St. Martin of Tours on page 1314. For St. Martin’s day the proper of the saints says to use the psalms from Sunday Week I page 707; for the evening it says to use the psalms from the common of pastors page 1430.

Unless it says specifically in the proper of the saint’s day itself, to use something else, the psalms for memorials always come from the current weekday of the psalter.

Where it says in the commons to use the psalms from Sunday Week I page 707, that refers only to feasts and solemnities, not to memorials.

After the psalms there are usually some options for the rest. Anything given in the proper on the saint's day is used. If not given in the saint's day, the rest can be taken either from the current weekday or from the common. Sometimes there is even a choice of commons.

Some memorials in the general calendar are observed as feasts or solemnities in the Carmelite calendar. For example, Our Lady of Mount Carmel is an optional memorial in the general calendar, but is a solemnity for the Carmelite Order. We would go to the Carmelite Proper for the liturgy for that day, not to the proper of the saints in Christian Prayer.

4. Optional memorials

These are, as they say, optional. To observe an optional memorial, use the same guidelines as for a regular memorial.

5. Commemorations and "Lent: Commemoration" (GILH # 237-239)

Here's what is meant –

From the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours (GILH):

Memorials During Privileged Seasons

237. On Sundays, solemnities, and feasts, on Ash Wednesday, during Holy Week, and during the octave of Easter, memorials that happen to fall on these days are disregarded.

238. On the weekdays from 17 to 24 December, during the octave of Christmas, and on the weekdays of Lent, no obligatory memorials are celebrated, even in particular calendars. When any happen to fall during Lent in a given year, they are treated as optional memorials.

239. During privileged seasons, if it is desired to celebrate the office of a saint on a day assigned to his or her memorial:

a. in the office of readings, after the patristic reading (with its responsory) from the proper of seasons, a proper reading about the saint (with its responsory) may follow, with the concluding prayer of the saint;

b. at morning prayer and evening prayer, the ending of the concluding prayer may be omitted and the saint's antiphon (from the proper or common) and prayer may be added. (This is the actual "how to" for commemorations.)

5. GLOSSARY

Antiphon. Short sentence sung or recited before and/or after a psalm or canticle. In the Invitatory, the antiphon is also said between the strophes of a psalm.

Canticle. Scriptural song of praise in the style of a psalm. Generally prayed the same way a psalm is prayed.

Cantor. Person who leads the psalms. Carmelites commonly use two cantors, one for each side of the choir.

Common. Prayers that are used for a category of celebration (e.g. the apostles), as distinct from prayers that are "proper" or specific to a particular holy day or saint. The commons begin on page 1355.

Gospel Canticle. A canticle taken from the gospel for a specific hour. The Canticle of Zechariah for the morning, the Magnificat for the evening, and the Canticle of Simeon for night prayer.

Hour. Part of the Liturgy of the Hours pertaining to a time of day (e.g. morning prayer is one hour, night prayer is another hour).

Hymn. Sacred song ending with a doxology.

Intone. Pray or chant the first few words. Everyone else joins in.

Office. The Liturgy of the Hours for an entire day.

Proper. Specific for the day. The proper of the seasons and the proper of the saints are the two sections of Christian Prayer that give the prayers that are “proper” (specific) to the day being celebrated.

Psalmody. The psalms and canticles used in a particular hour, with their antiphons.

Responsory. In the context of the LOH, it is a prayerful response to a reading.

Strophe. Paragraph of a psalm or canticle.

Appendix F: Session 10, Divine Intimacy #169 Mary Our Guide and Model

PRESENCE OF GOD – *Under your protection I take refuge, O Mary; be the guide and model of my interior life.*

MEDITATION

1. Month of May, month of Mary! The heart of every Christian turns spontaneously toward his heavenly Mother, with a desire to live in closer intimacy with her and to strengthen the sweet ties which bind him to her. It is a great comfort on our spiritual way, which is often fatiguing and bristling with difficulties, to meet the gentle presence of a mother. One is so at ease near one's mother. With her, everything becomes easier; the weary, discouraged heart, disturbed by storms, finds new hope and strength, and continues the journey with fresh courage.

"If the winds of temptation arise," sings St. Bernard, "if you run into the reefs of trials, look to the star, call upon Mary. In danger, sorrow, or perplexity, think of Mary, call upon Mary." There are times when the hard road of the "nothing" frightens us, miserable as we are; and then, more than ever, we need her help, the help of our Mother. The Blessed Virgin Mary has, before us, trodden the straight and narrow path which leads to sanctity; before us she has carried the cross, before us she has known the ascents of the spirit through suffering. Sometimes, perhaps, we do not dare to look at Jesus the God-Man, who because of His divinity seems too far above us; but near Him is Mary, His Mother and our Mother, a privileged creature surely, yet a creature like ourselves, and therefore a model more accessible for our weakness.

Mary comes to meet us during this month, to take us by the hand, to initiate us into the secret of her interior life, which must become the model and norm of our own.

2. St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, referring to certain discourses on the Blessed Virgin, said, "She is spoken of as unapproachable, whereas she should be represented as imitable" (NV). Mary is inaccessible, it is true, in the sublime privileges which flow from her divine maternity, and it is right to consider these prerogatives in order to admire and contemplate them, to praise our Mother's greatness and hence always to love her more and more; but, at the same time, we must consider Mary in the concrete picture of her earthly life. It is a simple, humble picture, which never leaves the framework of the ordinary life common to all mothers; under this aspect, Mary is truly imitable. Our program for the month of May, then, will be to contemplate the grandeurs of Mary, that we may be stimulated to imitate her virtues.

We shall consider Mary especially as the ideal and the model of our interior life. No one has understood, as she did, the depth of meaning in the words of Jesus: "But one thing is necessary" (Lk 10,42), and no one has lived by these words better than she. From the very first moment of her life, Mary was entirely God's and lived only for Him. Consider the years spent in the Temple in silence and prayer, the months passed at Nazareth in recollection, and in adoration of the eternal Word incarnate within her, the thirty years lived in sweet intimacy with Jesus, her Son and her God; then the sharing of His apostolic life, the union with Him in His Passion, and finally, her last years with St. John, during which, by her prayers, she was the support of the infant Church. Although the scenes in which she moved changed in appearance, although the external circumstances varied, her life remained unchanged in its substance, in her interior search for the "one thing necessary," and in her adherence to God alone.

The succession of events and her exterior activity did not hinder her from persevering in that attitude of continual prayer in which St. Luke presents her to us: “Mary kept all these words [the divine mysteries], pondering them in her heart” (2:19).

If, in imitation of Mary, our heart is firmly anchored in God, nothing can distract us from our interior occupation: to seek and love the Lord and live in intimacy with Him.

COLLOQUY

“O my soul, do you fear to approach God? He has given you Jesus as Mediator. Is there anything that such a Son could not obtain from His Father? The Father who loves Him will answer Him, because of the love He bears Him. But do you yet hesitate to approach Him? He made Himself your brother, your companion, and in everything, sin excepted, He willed to undergo all the humiliations of human nature, just to compassionate your miseries. Mary has given you this brother. But His divine Majesty still awes you, perhaps; for, although He is man, He does not cease to be God. Do you want an advocate with Him? Have recourse to Mary. Mary is a pure creature, pure not only because she is free from sin, but also because of her unique human nature. I am sure, O Mary, that your prayers will be heard because of the respect you deserve; your Son will certainly hear you because you are His Mother, and the Father will hear His Son. This is why my confidence is unshakable; this is the reason for all my hope! O Blessed Virgin, the Angel declared that ‘you have found grace before God.’ You will always find grace, and I need only grace; I ask for nothing else” (cf. St. Bernard).

“Draw me after you O Virgin Mary, that I may run in the odor of your ointments. Draw me, for I am held back by the weight of my sins and the malice of your enemies, Since no one comes to your Son unless he is drawn by the Father, I dare to say that no one, so to speak, comes to Him if you do not draw him by your prayers. You teach true wisdom, you beg grace for sinners, you are their advocate, you promise glory to those who honor you, because you are the treasury of grace. You have found grace with God, O most sweet Virgin, you who have been preserved from original sin, filled with the Holy Spirit, and have conceived the Son of God. You have been given all these graces, O most humble Mary, not only for yourself, but also for us, so that you may be able to help us in all our necessities” (cf. Ven. R. Jourdain).

NV = Novissima Verba. The Last Confidences of St Therese of the Child Jesus. May – September 1897, 1957. Out of print. Please refer to St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Her Last Conversations, ICS.

**Appendix G: Session 10,
Poetry of Thérèse of Lisieux, PN 54: Why I Love You, O Mary!**

(May 1897)

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“There is still one thing I have to do before I die,” Thérèse, who was already very sick, confided to her sister Céline: “I have always dreamed of saying in a song to the Blessed Virgin everything I think about her” (PA, p. 268). During May 1897 she was already beginning to sense that her writings, including her poetry, would probably become known. And she regarded her “thoughts” on Mary as an integral part of the “very important work” she was preparing (HLC, p. 126). Perhaps they are even its crowning achievement.

So the request that Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart made for her to write on the Blessed Virgin Mary anticipated a very deep personal desire on Thérèse’s part. Sister Genevieve was right in observing that Thérèse wrote this swan song “by herself, in every sense of the word.”^[1]

For Thérèse, *thoughts* [pensée) are not the same as *ideas* [idée].^[2] Thoughts open up and blossom in her heart, she said poetically a few weeks later (GCII, p. 1160). In fact, Thérèse’s thoughts are immersed in her prayer and very quickly become prayer (SS, pp. 74-75). And it is first of all as a prayer that we should understand this long poem. It is a sort of liturgical hymn of 200 Alexandrines [in the French], written during the month of May 1897.

Now more than ever, Thérèse can only “be nourished on truth” (HLC, p. 134). She has to “see things as they really are” (HLC, p. 105). As for the Virgin Mary, all that interests her is “her real life, not her imagined life” (HLC, p. 161). Instinctively, she turns to the Gospels as her only source of inspiration from then on: “The Gospels are enough for me” (HLC, p. 44 and GCII, pp. 1093-1094). She herself tells us about her “method”: “The Gospels teach me... and my heart reveals to me ...” (st. 15).

She goes to the Gospels to find facts and events: “what Mary did and taught,” we would dare say, transposing Acts 1:1. Thérèse attentively “sees... looks... hears... listens to” what the Evangelists tell. (All the verbs are in the present tense, for *she is really there*). Consequently she omits the “glorious mysteries”: Jesus himself is waiting to sing about them in Heaven (cf. st. 24).

And her *heart* makes her “understand” (a very Theresian verb) by a kind of connaturality the hidden meanings of those deeds, their implication for her own present life and soon even for her eternal life. Her understanding has been refined in a thousand ways during these last few months, but especially in two areas: through the mystery of suffering—and tested by it in trial—and through all the demands of charity, in which she has received special lights. All this was wrapped in silence.

Thérèse’s personal experience helps her to discover in Mary’s life the same law that governed the life of Jesus, her Son: “*It was necessary* for her to suffer so as to enter into her glory” (cf. Lk 24:26). Jesus “wished” it so for his Mother, for mysteriously “it is a blessing to suffer on earth” (16, 5). And Mary was not satisfied with submitting to her “mortal and suffering” condition, like

ours (cf. 2, 8). If Thérèse does not say so explicitly, her whole poem implies that Mary *freely chose* her condition, out of solidarity with us. Through her whole life, she had already affirmed, and incomparably better than Thérèse would say one day “My God, *I choose all* that you will... I’m not afraid to suffer for you” (SS, p. 27). Or again, “I prefer what He wills. It’s what He does that I love” (HLC, p. 51). Mary preferred her hidden, poor, and suffering life to any other. At Nazareth, she “wanted nothing more” (st. 17, 2) than “to live by faith just like us” (cf. HLC, p. 161), without anything out of the ordinary. “She liked” to walk “the same ordinary way” that “little ones” also walk (st. 17). When Jesus seemed to neglect her for “the family” of his disciples, she “did not become sad.” She even “rejoiced” (st. 21). She lives all that for us: “to draw me to you,” Thérèse boldly declares (st. 2).

Yes, “the Blessed Virgin knew what it was to suffer” (HLC, p. 158). She is the maternal replica of the Suffering Servant (cf. Is 53:3, quoted in GCI, p. 631 and RP 2, 3).

And Mary knew the secret of “suffering while loving” (16, 4), for her “immense tenderness” is also the response to “Jesus’ immense love for us.” This love is not so much a question of quantity but of quality. Mary “loves us as Jesus loves us.” That is the second basic law of the poem. Thérèse states this with all the more authority because she is still being influenced by a recent illumination: “This year...God has given me the grace to understand what charity is...to love one’s neighbor as He, Jesus, loves him..,” (SS, pp. 219, 220).

This very bright light not only renewed her relationships with others. It enabled her to “penetrate into the mysterious depths of charity” (SS, p. 233) that animated Mary’s whole life, “the secrets of her maternal heart” (22, 6). Those “abysses of love” (18, 4) led her, “like Jesus,” to give everything and to give herself” (22, 3). Thus we see the Mother sharing her “treasures” of grace with her children: “her virtues, her love” (5, 1). She also shares with “sinners” her privilege par excellence as the *Mother* of Jesus (sts. 20-21). What is more, she “accepts” losing Him for us, “being separated from Him.” And yet what a martyrdom she had already known during those three days in Jerusalem when the Child was separated from her (st. 13)! Mary “wants...to remain our support” (st. 22) right up to the time we meet Him in Heaven. She emptied herself totally for love; she could not go farther. So we can also say about Mary, “For our sake she made herself poor though she was rich, so that we might become rich by her poverty” (2 Cor 8:9). That is why Thérèse, moved by this, protests:

How can we not love you O my dearest Mother,
On seeing so much love and so much humility? (21, 7-8)

Mary’s humble love is wrapped in silence and invites us to silence. This is also a main axis of the poem. For Mary, love is safer than knowledge. She is not afraid of what she does not understand. Whether in her attitude toward Joseph after the Annunciation (st. 8), in her comportment at Bethlehem (sts. 9-10), in her docile acceptance of her Son’s mysterious words in the Temple (14-15) or “on the hill” (20-21), in every situation Mary acquiesces in silence. In her faith, so often put to the test, she can fathom and understand everything (according to Thérèse). And the end of her earthly life is immersed in “deep silence” (st. 24). This is a silence that speaks more eloquently than words. Only *the Word* will reveal its “secrets” to us (*ibid.*).

With her eyes fixed on Mary, Thérèse made silence the great bulwark of her whole contemplative life. Silence was her strength more than ever “in the night of faith.” One of the most moving aspects of this poem is the almost total absence of allusion to the physical and moral trials she herself was going through (cf. HLC, May 1897, pp. 40-53). Stanza 16 is the only evidence we have, and it is more intense and personal because of its flat style.

Would Thérèse have seen such depths in her Mother’s heart if she herself had not been “her child” to such a striking degree? She was so much like Mary that she has been called “a ravishing miniature of the Most Holy Virgin.”^[3] She was ravishing and sorrowful, for it was with “anguish of heart” (16, 2) that she ended by “giving everything and giving herself” (st. 22) for her brothers...poor sinners” (SS, p. 213).

Mary and Thérèse are of the same people and of the same blood. They are “Mother” and “child,” Thérèse’s assurance about this was extremely important not only for her everyday life, but also for the heavenly relationships that are soon to begin for her. The chisel of trial had cut away “everything that could be a natural satisfaction in her desire for heaven” (SS, p. 214), But it did not succeed in shaking her conviction that she was “soon going to Heaven” (st, 25, 2). The anticipation of the marvels of paradise, as Arminjon had once described them to her,^[4] no longer “thrilled her heart” (GCII, p. 1142 and DE, p. 721). Her whole attention from then on was focused on people: those she was going to meet (the Holy Family, the angels, all the blessed), and also those she would hurry back to help and to save, right up to the end of the world (HLC, p. 102).

What would her encounter—so close at hand—with Mary be like? Thérèse had no use for the exaggerations of certain spiritual writers. It was unacceptable for her to imagine Mary as a being whose “glorious and powerful splendor appear with so much more brilliance than that of all the angels and saints that it is like the sun, which, by its presence, eclipses all the stars of heaven, as if they were hiding themselves in shame, not daring to appear before such beauty that surpasses theirs beyond all comparison” (text quoted in DE, p. 575). Letting such people “hide in shame,” Thérèse knew where she stood. She had suffered with Mary, as Mary had suffered for her (25, 6 and 2, 4). Such love had “banished all her fears” (18, 5). At last she was going to see once more “the ravishing smile of the Blessed Virgin” (SS, p. 66), who is more “Mother than Queen” (HLC, p.161).

Thérèse put “her whole heart” into writing this last poem (CSG, p. 90).^[5] It is the favorite of most of her readers and disciples. Certainly, this long “historical” work, at times too predictable and a little affected, is quite a different poetic *genre* than “An Unpetalled Rose” (PN 51) or “To the Sacred Heart” (PN 23). [In French] the Alexandrines are regular, steady, and almost always divided into two equal hemistiches. This well expresses the apparent “objectivity” with which the author wanted to confine herself. However, a certain restrained emotion does run through the poem, which has some great moments (sts. 8, 16, 22...). It is enriched with some beautiful images (3, 7-8; 7, 5-6...). Concise expressions come forth (10,4; 15,4— which is like Thérèse’s Credo—and the famous 22, 3). A wonderful stanza concludes the poem.

“Little Thérèse” signed this poem with a faltering hand a short time before her death: What a humble, moving end to her entire poetic work!

(Melody: "Pourquoi m'avoir livré l'autre jour, ô ma mere")

J.M.J.T.

May 1897

Why I Love You, O Mary!

- 1 Oh I would like to sing, *Mary, why I love you,*
Why your sweet name thrills my heart,
And why the thought of your supreme greatness
Could not bring fear to my soul.
If I gazed on you in your sublime glory,
Surpassing the splendor of all the blessed,
I could not believe that I am your child.
O Mary, before you I would lower my eyes!...
- 2 If a child is to cherish his mother,
She has to cry with him and share his sorrows.
O my dearest Mother, on this foreign shore
How many tears you shed to draw me to you!..
In pondering *your life in the holy Gospels,*
I dare look at you and come near you.
It's not difficult for me to believe I'm your child,
For I see you human and suffering like me....
- 3 When an angel from Heaven bids you be *the Mother*
Of the God who is to reign for all eternity,
I see you prefer, O Mary, what a mystery!
The ineffable treasure of virginity.
O Immaculate Virgin, I understand how your soul
is dearer to the Lord than His heavenly dwelling
I understand how your soul, Humble and Sweet Valley
Can contain Jesus, the Ocean of Love!..
- 4 Oh! I love you, Mary, saying you are the servant
Of the God whom you charm by your humility.
This hidden virtue makes you all-powerful.
It attracts *the Holy Trinity* into your heart.
Then *the Spirit of Love* covering you with his shadow,
The Son equal to the Father became incarnate in you,
There will be a great many of his sinner brothers,
Since he will be called: Jesus, your first-born!...
- 5 O beloved Mother, despite littleness,
Like you I possess the All-Powerful within me.
But I don't tremble in seeing my weakness:
The treasures of a mother belong to her child,

And I am your child, O my dearest Mother.
Aren't your virtues and love mine too?
So when the white Host comes into my heart,
Jesus, your Sweet Lamb, thinks he is resting in you!

- 6 You make me feel that it's not impossible
To follow in your footsteps, O Queen of the elect.
You made visible the narrow road to Heaven
While always practicing the humblest virtues.
Near you, Mary, I like to stay little.
I see the vanity of greatness here below.
At the home of Saint Elizabeth, receiving your visit,
I learn how to practice ardent charity.
- 7 There, Sweet Queen of angels, I listen, delighted,
To the sacred canticle springing forth from your heart
You teach me to sing divine praises,
To glory in Jesus my Savior.
Your words of love are mystical roses
Destined to perfume the centuries to come.
In you the Almighty has done great things.
I want to ponder them to bless him for them.
- 8 When good Saint Joseph did not know of the miracle
That you wanted to hide in your humility,
You let him cry close by the *Tabernacle*
Veiling the Savior's divine beauty!...
Oh Mary! how I love your eloquent silence!
For me it is a sweet, melodious concert
That speaks to me of the greatness and power
Of a soul which looks only to Heaven for help
- 9 Later in Bethlehem, O Joseph and Mary!
I see you rejected by all the villagers.
No one wants to take in poor foreigners.
There's room for the great ones....
There's room for the great ones, and it's in a stable
That the Queen of Heaven must give birth to a God.
O my dearest Mother, how lovable I find you,
How great I find you in such a poor place!...
- 10 When I see the Eternal God wrapped in swaddling clothes,
When I hear the poor cry of the Divine Word,
O my dearest Mother, I no longer envy the angels,
For their Powerful Lord is my dearest Brother!...
How I love you, Mary, you who made
This Divine Flower blossom on our shores!...

How I love you listening to the shepherds and wise men
And keeping it all in your heart with care!...

- 11 I love you mingling with the other women
Walking toward the holy temple.
I love you presenting the Savior of our souls
To the blessed Old Man who pressed Him to his heart.
At first I smile as I listen to his canticle,
But soon his tone makes me shed tears.
Plunging a prophetic glance into the future,
Simeon presents you with a sword of sorrows.
- 12 O Queen of martyrs, till the evening of your life
That sorrowful sword *will pierce your heart.*
Already you must leave your native land
To flee a king's jealous fury.
Jesus sleeps in peace under the folds of your veil.
Joseph comes begging you to leave at once,
And at once your obedience is revealed.
You leave without delay or reasoning.
- 13 O Mary, it seems to me that in the land of Egypt
Your heart remains joyful in poverty,
For is not Jesus the fairest Homeland,
What does exile matter to you? You hold Heaven...
But in Jerusalem a bitter sadness
Comes to flood your heart like a vast ocean.
For three days, Jesus hides from your tenderness.
That is indeed exile in all its harshness!...
- 14 At last you find him and you are overcome with joy,
You say to the fair Child captivating the doctors:
"O my Son, why have you done this?
Your father and I have been searching for you in tears."
And the Child God replies (O what a deep mystery!)
To his dearest Mother holding out her arms to him:
"Why were you searching for me? I must be about
My Father's business. Didn't you know?"
- 15 The Gospel tells me that, growing in wisdom,
Jesus remains subject to Joseph and Mary,
And my heart reveals to me with what tenderness
He always obeys his dear parents.
Now I understand the mystery of the temple,
The hidden words of my Lovable King.
Mother, your sweet Child wants you to be the example
Of the soul searching for Him in the night of faith.

- 16 Since the King of Heaven wanted his Mother
To be plunged into the night, in anguish of heart,
Mary, is it thus a blessing to suffer on earth?
Yes, to suffer while loving is the purest happiness!...
All that He has given me, Jesus can take back.
Tell him not to bother with me....
He can indeed hide from me, I'm willing to wait for him
Till the day without sunset when my faith will fade away....
- 17 Mother full of grace, I know that in Nazareth
You live in poverty, wanting nothing more.
No rapture, miracle, or ecstasy
Embellish your life, O Queen of the Elect!.....
The number of little ones on earth is truly great.
They can raise their eyes to you without trembling.
It's by *the ordinary way*, incomparable Mother,
That you like to walk to guide them to Heaven.
- 18 While waiting for Heaven, O my dear Mother,
I want to live with you, to follow you each day.
Mother, contemplating you, I joyfully immerse myself,
Discovering in your heart *abysses of love*.
Your motherly gaze banishes all my fears.
It teaches me *to cry*, it teaches me *to rejoice*.
Instead of scorning pure and simple joys,
You want to share in them, you deign to bless them.
- 19 At Cana, seeing the married couple's anxiety
Which they cannot hide, for they have run out of wine,
In your concern you tell the Savior,
Hoping for the help of his divine power.
Jesus seems at first to reject your prayer:
"Woman, what does this matter," he answers, "to you and to me?"
But in the depths of his heart, He calls you his Mother,
And he works his first miracle for you....
- 20 One day when sinners are listening to the doctrine
Of Him who would like to welcome them in Heaven,
Mary, I find you with them on the hill.
Someone says to Jesus that you wish to see him.
Then, before the whole multitude, your Divine Son
Shows us the immensity of his love for us.
He says: "Who is my brother and my sister and my Mother,
If not the one who does my will?"
- 21 O Immaculate Virgin, most tender of Mothers,
In listening to Jesus, you are not saddened.

But you rejoice that He makes us understand
How our souls become *his family* here below.
Yes, you rejoice that He gives us his life,
The infinite treasures of his divinity!...
How can we not Love you, O my dear Mother,
On seeing so much love and so much humility?

- 22 You love us, Mary, as Jesus loves us,
And for us you accept being separated from Him.
To love is to give everything. It's to give oneself.
You wanted to prove this by remaining our support.
The Savior knew your immense tenderness.
He knew the secrets of your maternal heart.
Refuge of sinners, He leaves us to you
When He leaves the Cross to wait for us in Heaven.
- 23 Mary, at the top of Calvary standing beside the Cross
To me you seem like a priest at the altar,
Offering your beloved Jesus, the sweet Emmanuel,
To appease the Father's justice...
A prophet said, O afflicted Mother,
"There is no sorrow like your sorrow!"
O Queen of Martyrs, while remaining in exile
You lavish on us all the blood of your heart!
- 24 Saint John's home becomes your only refuge.
Zebedee's son is to replace Jesus....
That is the last detail the Gospel gives.
It tells me nothing more of the Queen of Heaven.
But, O my dear Mother, doesn't its profound silence
Reveal that *The Eternal Word Himself*
Wants to sing the secrets of your life
To charm your children all the Elect of Heaven?
- 25 Soon I'll hear that sweet harmony.
Soon I'll go to beautiful Heaven to see you.
You who came *to smile at me* in the morning of my life,
Come smile at me again... Mother.... Its evening now!...
I no longer fear the splendor of your supreme glory.
With you I've suffered, and now I want
To sing on your lap, Mary, why I love you,
And to go on saying that I am your child!.....

Footnotes

[1] Sr. Genevieve. Note on a loose sheet of paper; cf. CSG, p. 122.

[2] Thérèse uses the word “idea” [idée] 23 times in her writings, frequently with the meaning of “project, plan.” She uses the word “thought” [pensée] 143 times.

[3] Abbé Hodierno, confessor to the Carmel of Lisieux just after the death of Thérèse. Quoted from a letter to Mother Marie de Gonzague, 1899.

[4] Especially chapter 7 of Abbé Arminjon’s *End of the Present World and the Mysteries of the Future Life*.

[5] Thérèse asked for Mother Agnes’s help with this poem. The rough draft is very enlightening as to how they worked together.

**Appendix H: Sessions 11 and 12,
OCDS Ritual Chapter 1: Rite of Admission to Formation**

11. The Rite of Admission, which precedes the formation period, is held during a Liturgy of the Word.
12. The rite is to be carried out in a simple manner during a meeting of the Community, either at the monthly meeting or on a feast day of the Order.
13. The local Assistant of the Community, or another authorized priest, is to preside at the celebration. He wears a white stole.
14. Copies of the Gospel and of the OCDS Constitutions, as well as the Scapulars with which the candidates are to be clothed, are to be placed in a convenient location.
15. See the Appendix for the choice of readings.
16. The ceremony begins with the singing of a suitable hymn.

Introductory Rites

17. The celebrant makes the Sign of the Cross and greets those taking part in the rite.
18. He then addresses them in these or similar words:

The Lord has called you to live an evangelical life in the world as brothers and sisters. He brings us together today to receive those who have expressed their desire to begin formation in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. This stage of formation, with God's help, will lead to an evangelical commitment. Let us ask the Lord always to give them the grace of the Holy Spirit so that they may persevere in their purpose. May he also enable us to support them along the way.

19. Following this brief admonition, the priest says:

Let us pray.

Holy and merciful Father, you call us to holiness in Christ in order that our life may be a spiritual oblation. Look with favor on these your children. They desire to live in the world and to walk in the light of the Gospel in the spirit of the Teresian Carmel and under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Grant that they may come to know your will and to follow your inspirations with filial and generous love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: ***Amen.***

Liturgy of the Word

20. The liturgy of the Word takes place in the ordinary way, as in the celebration of the Eucharist and of the Sacraments. Two or three readings with a responsorial psalm and a Gospel acclamation may be chosen. (See the Appendix for choices of texts).

Homily

21. After the Gospel is read, the celebrant gives a brief homily.

Rite of Admission

The celebrant or the president of the Community says:

Let N.N.... who desire to be admitted to the Community come forward.

The Candidates come forward, accompanied by the master [director] of formation.

22. One of the candidates in the name of all, or all the candidates together, expresses their wish to join the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites.

The celebrant accepts their petition in the following dialogue or in other similar words:

Brothers and sisters, what do you ask of this Community of the Secular Order of Carmel?

The candidates say:

We ask to be admitted to the period of formation in this Community of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites.

Or:

Trusting in the mercy of God and in the fraternal help of all of you, we ask to be admitted to the period of formation in the Community [Fraternity] of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. We wish to live our baptismal consecration according to the ideal of life of the Teresian Carmel, and to collaborate in fulfilling the mission of Carmel in the Church.

The celebrant accepts the petition in the following, or similar, words:

The Church and the Order of Carmel accept and confirm your petition. May the Lord grant you to persevere in your purpose, so that, when the time comes, you may make your promise for the glory of God and the good of the whole Church.

All: ***Amen.***

Complimentary Rites

23. The celebrant gives each candidate a copy of the Gospels and of the Constitutions of the Secular Order, saying to each as he does:

Brother (or Sister), The Constitutions of the Secular Carmel are this: To live in allegiance to Our Lord Jesus Christ, following the doctrine and example of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross. May the Word of Christ dwell abundantly in your hearts. In all that you do, whether in words or in works, do it in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

24. Assisted by the master [director] of formation, the celebrant clothes each candidate with the scapular which is the “signum habitis” or token of the habit, of the Carmelite Order, while saying to each:

Receive this scapular. It is the habit of the Order of Carmel. Wear it worthily by imitating Mary in the service of Jesus Christ.

25. To show that the candidates have been welcomed into the Fraternity [Community], the brothers and sisters give them a sign of peace.

The candidates return to their places.

Prayer of the Faithful and Lord's Prayer

26. The prayer of the faithful or intercessions and the Lord's Prayer follow. (See the Appendix for typical intercessions).

27. The celebrant concludes by praying:

We beseech you, Lord, that the powerful intercession of the Holy Virgin Mary, Mother and Queen of Carmel, may assist us always; so that, guided by her example and protection, we may reach the summit of the Mount of Perfection, which is Christ Our Lord. He lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

All: ***Amen.***

Dismissal

28. The celebrant blesses and dismisses the assembly in the usual way or with a formula taken from an approved liturgical text.

29. The celebration may end with the singing of a final hymn in honor of Our Lady, such as the Flos Carmeli or Salve Regina.

**Appendix I: Session 11,
GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE, 19-24 – Your Mission in Christ**

**APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS:
ON THE CALL TO HOLINESS IN TODAY’S WORLD**

March 19, 2018

19. A Christian cannot think of his or her mission on earth without seeing it as a path of holiness, for “this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thess 4:3). Each saint is a mission, planned by the Father to reflect and embody, at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel.

20. That mission has its fullest meaning in Christ, and can only be understood through him. At its core, holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life. It consists in uniting ourselves to the Lord’s death and resurrection in a unique and personal way, constantly dying and rising anew with him. But it can also entail reproducing in our own lives various aspects of Jesus’ earthly life: his hidden life, his life in community, his closeness to the outcast, his poverty and other ways in which he showed his self-sacrificing love. The contemplation of these mysteries, as Saint Ignatius of Loyola pointed out, leads us to incarnate them in our choices and attitudes.[18] Because “everything in Jesus’ life was a sign of his mystery”,[19] “Christ’s whole life is a revelation of the Father”,[20] “Christ’s whole life is a mystery of redemption”,[21] “Christ’s whole life is a mystery of recapitulation”.[22] “Christ enables us to live in him all that he himself lived, and he lives it in us”.[23]

21. The Father’s plan is Christ, and ourselves in him. In the end, it is Christ who loves in us, for “holiness is nothing other than charity lived to the full”.[24] As a result, “the measure of our holiness stems from the stature that Christ achieves in us, to the extent that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we model our whole life on his”.[25] Every saint is a message which the Holy Spirit takes from the riches of Jesus Christ and gives to his people.

22. To recognize the word that the Lord wishes to speak to us through one of his saints, we do not need to get caught up in details, for there we might also encounter mistakes and failures. Not everything a saint says is completely faithful to the Gospel; not everything he or she does is authentic or perfect. What we need to contemplate is the totality of their life, their entire journey of growth in holiness, the reflection of Jesus Christ that emerges when we grasp their overall meaning as a person.[26]

23. This is a powerful summons to all of us. You too need to see the entirety of your life as a mission. Try to do so by listening to God in prayer and recognizing the signs that he gives you. Always ask the Spirit what Jesus expects from you at every moment of your life and in every decision you must make, so as to discern its place in the mission you have received. Allow the Spirit to forge in you the personal mystery that can reflect Jesus Christ in today’s world.

24. May you come to realize what that word is, the message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world by your life. Let yourself be transformed. Let yourself be renewed by the Spirit, so that this can happen, lest you fail in your precious mission. The Lord will bring it to fulfillment

despite your mistakes and missteps, provided that you do not abandon the path of love but remain ever open to his supernatural grace, which purifies and enlightens.

Footnotes

[18] Spiritual Exercises, 102-312.

[19] Catechism of the Catholic Church, 515.

[20] Ibid., 516.

[21] Ibid., 517.

[22] Ibid., 518.

[23] Ibid., 521.

[24] BENEDICT XVI, Catechesis, General Audience of 13 April 2011: Insegnamenti VII (2011), 451.

[25] Ibid., 450.

[26] Cf. HANS URS VON BALTHASAR, "Theology and Holiness", in *Communio* 14/4 (1987), 341-350.

**Appendix J: Session 11,
CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI, 17 – Life of Holiness in the World**

THE VOCATION AND THE MISSION OF THE LAY FAITHFUL IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD

HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

December 30, 1988

17. The vocation of the lay faithful to holiness implies that life according to the Spirit expresses itself in a particular way in their involvement in temporal affairs and in their participation in earthly activities. Once again the apostle admonishes us: "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col 3:17). Applying the apostle's words to the lay faithful, the Council categorically affirms: "Neither Family concerns nor other secular affairs should be excluded from their religious program of life"[45].

Likewise the Synod Fathers have said: "The unity of life of the lay faithful is of the greatest importance: indeed they must be sanctified in everyday professional and social life. Therefore, to respond to their vocation, the lay faithful must see their daily activities as an occasion to join themselves to God, fulfill his will, serve other people and lead them to communion with God in Christ"[46].

The vocation to holiness must be recognized and lived by the lay faithful, first of all as an undeniable and demanding obligation and as a shining example of the infinite love of the Father that has regenerated them in his own life of holiness. Such a vocation, then, ought to be called an essential and inseparable element of the new life of Baptism, and therefore an element which determines their dignity. At the same time the vocation to holiness is intimately connected to mission and to the responsibility entrusted to the lay faithful in the Church and in the world. In fact, that same holiness which is derived simply from their participation in the Church's holiness, represents their first and fundamental contribution to the building of the Church herself, who is the "Communion of Saints". The eyes of faith behold a wonderful scene: that of a countless number of lay people, both women and men, busy at work in their daily life and activity, oftentimes far from view and quite unclaimed by the world, unknown to the world's great personages but nonetheless looked upon in love by the Father, untiring laborers who work in the Lord's vineyard.

Confident and steadfast through the power of God's grace, these are the humble yet great Builders of the Kingdom of God in history. Holiness, then, must be called a fundamental presupposition and an irreplaceable condition for everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation within the Church. The Church's holiness is the hidden source and the infallible measure of the works of the apostolate and of the missionary effort. Only in the measure that the Church, Christ's Spouse, is loved by him and she, in turn loves him, does she become a mother fruitful in the Spirit.

Again, we take up the image from the gospel: the fruitfulness and the growth of the branches depends on their remaining united to the vine. "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless

it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:4-5). It is appropriate to recall here the solemn proclamation of beatification and canonization of lay men and women which took place during the month of the Synod. The entire People of God, and the lay faithful in particular, can find at this moment new models of holiness and new witnesses of heroic virtue lived in the ordinary everyday circumstances of human existence. The Synod Fathers have said: "Particular Churches especially should be attentive to recognizing among their members the younger men and women of those Churches who have given witness to holiness in such conditions (everyday secular conditions and the conjugal state) and who can be an example for others, so that, if the case calls for it, they (the Churches) might propose them to be beatified and canonized"[47].

At the end of these reflections intended to define the lay faithful's position in the Church, the celebrated admonition of Saint Leo the Great comes to mind: "Acknowledge, O Christian, your dignity!"[48]. Saint Maximus, Bishop of Turin, in addressing those who had received the holy anointing of Baptism, repeats the same sentiments: "Ponder the honor that has made you sharers in this mystery!"[49]. All the baptized are invited to hear once again the words of Saint Augustine: "Let us rejoice and give thanks: we have not only become Christians, but Christ himself... Stand in awe and rejoice: We have become Christ"[50].

The dignity as a Christian, the source of equality for all members of the Church, guarantees and fosters the spirit of communion and fellowship, and, at the same time, becomes the hidden dynamic force in the lay faithful's apostolate and mission. It is a dignity, however, which brings demands, the dignity of laborers called by the Lord to work in his vineyard: "Upon all the lay faithful, then, rests the exalted duty of working to assure that each day the divine plan of salvation is further extended to every person, of every era, in every part of the earth"[51].

Footnotes

[45] Apostolicam Actuositatem, 4.

[46] Propositio 5.

[47] Propositio 8.

[48] St. Leo the Great, Sermo XXI, 3: S. Ch. 22a, 72.

[49] St. Maximus, Trac. III de Baptismo: PL 57, 779.

[50] St. Augustine, In Ioann. Evang. Tract., 21, 8: CCL 36, 216.

[51] Lumen Gentium, 33.

Appendix K: Session 12, Our Coat of Arms

Courtesy of the Washington Province

<https://ocdfriarsvocation.org/about-us/our-coat-of-arms/>

Why have a coat of arms?

Just as nations, organizations, and individuals have their coats of arms, seal, or crest which are expressive of important facts in their history, or characteristics typical of them, so the order of Discalced Carmelites has its own crest, significant of its rich spirit and antiquity. Each part stands as a reminder of elements that make the Discalced Carmelite Order one of the most ancient, best established and ever beloved orders of the Roman Catholic Church.



Parts of our coat of arms:

- The Seal of Mt. Carmel
- The Motto
- The Flaming Sword
- The Crown of Gold
- The Halo of Stars

The Seal of Mount Carmel



In the center of the seal is Mount Carmel, cradle of the order, its tip reaching to the sky. It refers to Mount Carmel, the Carmelite's place of origin in Haifa, Israel. In the 9th Century BC the prophet Elijah lived and had a profound experience of God there. In that same place in the early 12th Century some hermits, inspired by the memory of Elijah, gathered there, with a desire "to live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ" (Carmelite Rule). The cross on the summit of the mountain was added in the 16th Century as a distinctive mark of the Discalced Carmelites. On the seal there are also three, six pointed stars which represent the three great epochs in the history of Carmel; the first, or prophetic era, represented by the star inside the mountain, dates from the time of the prophet Elijah to the time of St. John the Baptist; the second, or Greek epoch, when the order spread throughout the east and west, from the time of St. John to the time of Berthold, the first Latin General; and the third, from Berthold to the end of time. Another meaning of the stars is that they stand as a remembrance to the members of the Carmelite order. The star inside the mountain represents the Carmelites who are still on their way to the summit of Mount Carmel (heaven), the other two stars in the sky represent all the Carmelites who have gone before us and have reached the goal of their life's vocation; union with God in love in the eternal joy of heaven.

The Motto



The banner surrounding the seal carries the Order's motto. Taken from the mouth of the prophet Elijah it cries out with his prophetic spirit and absolute dedication to the one, true, God; "Zelo zelatus sum Domino Deo exercituum" "With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of Hosts." – 1 Kings 19:10

Flaming Sword



Above the seal and through the banner is an arm and hand which holds a flaming sword. This too is a symbol of Elijah, his fiery spirit and his passion for the one, true and absolute God whose word “burned like a torch” (Eccl. 48:1). For Carmelites Elijah is the solitary prophet who nurtured his thirst for the one and only God and lived forever in His presence. Elijah is the biblical inspiration of the Carmelite life and, like him, Carmelites seek both to continually carry, in their minds and hearts, “the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God” (Carmelite Rule) and to live constantly with a loving, contemplative awareness of His presence.

The Crown of Gold



The Crown of Gold represents the Kingdom of God. He is the Sovereign Lord of Carmel. Carmelites indeed endeavor to serve God faithfully with “a pure heart and a steadfast conscience” (Carmelite Rule). They see their vocation as a calling to unswerving allegiance to their Lord and King, Jesus Christ. In their service to this King they take their inspiration from the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose patronage they enjoy, and Sts. Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross, the great reformers of Carmel.

Halo of Stars



The halo of twelve stars above the crown represents the prerogative of every Carmelite's laud, the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom St. John saw in an apocalyptic vision as: "a woman clothed with the sun... on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Revelation 12:1). In the coat of arms of the Discalced Carmelites these stars also signify the twelve points of the rule, which are: obedience, chastity, poverty, reconciliation, mental prayer, divine office, chapter, abstinence from meat, manual labor, silence, humility, and supererogation (name given in Roman Catholic Spiritual Theology to works or good deeds performed by saints over and above what is required for their own salvation, and the merit of which is held to be transferable to others in need of indulgence).

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