



OCD

COMMUNICATIONES





Bernard Sesé dies

Recently, on the 6th of November, there died in Paris Bernard Sesé, the professor of Spanish literature and French poet. A member of the Royal Spanish Academy in France since 1996, he devoted much of his life to the study of Spanish poets and writers which, in 1980, earned him the first prize of the Antonio Machado Foundation for a work on that remarkable Andalusian poet.

He dedicated many of his works to the study

of the poetry and prose of St Teresa of Jesus and, above all, of St John of the Cross. He had several books and articles published in different journals about our saints and is the author of a biography on Madame Acarie. Bernard Sesé also actively participated in several congresses about the mystics of Carmel.

He had reached 91 years of age and was emeritus professor of Spanish Literature at the University of Paris X-Nanterre. May he rest in peace.



BERNARD SESÉ
1929 - 2020

*Je m'égare parmi les mots.
Sourcier, je cherche la parole
Où jaillira le cri de ton silence.
D'un mot à l'autre je ne suis plus le même.*

"La source", Discipline de l'arcane, 2004

*Sylvie SESÉ - LÉGER,
son épouse,
Bertrand et Rita SESÉ,
son fils et sa belle fille,
Lucile et Fabrice SESÉ,
ses petits enfants,*

*Profondément touchés par les marques de sympathie
que vous leur avez témoignées lors du décès de*

Bernard SESÉ

*vous remercient très sincèrement d'avoir pris part à
leur peine.*





Return to *normality*

On December the 3rd, the feast of Saint Francis Xavier, we received exceptionally good news in the General Curia: molecular tests for the detection of coronavirus gave a negative result. Thus, was overcome the COVID-19 contagious situation that lasted in the General House for one month. None of those infected have had, thank God, severe symptoms and are currently in good health.

After this time of contagion and isolation, normalcy in the curia is gradually resuming. On the 5th of December, the first Community Mass was celebrated, in which we remembered especially the sick who still suffer from the pandemic and its consequences, their families and health professionals, as well as those in other areas who help to combat it.



Inauguration of the Chair of Carmelite Studies

CENTER FOR Carmelite Studies
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA



The Dark Night of the Soul: Yesterday and Today
Revisiting John of the Cross's Classic Text and Symbol

Inaugural Lecture
For the Endowed Chair of Carmelite Studies
Rev. Steven Payne, O.C.D.



Monday, December 14, 2020
(Feast of St John of the Cross)
3:30-4:30PM (EST)

To participate:
<https://cua.zoom.us/j/84245640017>

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

School of Theology and Religious Studies

Recently, on December the 14th, as we communicated through our social networks, the inaugural conference of the Chair of Carmelite Studies at the Catholic University of America took place.

The problems generated by the COVID-19 pandemic had significantly delayed the inauguration, which was able to be carried out by means of a video-conferencing program.

The Discalced Carmelite, Fr. Steven Payne, in charge of the Chair in which the two branches of Carmel collaborate, delivered the opening conference, titled: "The Dark Night of the Soul Yesterday and Today. Revisiting the famous text and symbol of St John of the Cross".

May the new Chair produce positive, new fruits.



International Spirituality Summit on St Teresa of Avila in Oxford, UK

On 16th November 2020, around 105 people gathered, via Zoom, to participate in the Spirituality Summit ‘*Teresa of Avila: Teacher and Guide*’ convened by the [Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality \(CACs\), Oxford, UK, \(oxcacs.org\)](http://oxcacs.org) to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Doctorate of Santa Teresa of Jesus. Bishop David Oakley OCDS offered welcoming remarks; Cardinal Anders Arborelius OCD and Sr. Jo Robson OCD gave keynote addresses and an expert panel (comprising: Fr. Matt Blake, Mark Courtney, Annette Goulden, Dr. Susan Muto, Sr. Jo Robson and Prof. Peter Tyler) considered what Teresa might offer us today. What follows gives a flavour of some of the discussions and reflections that unfolded in the context of the Summit.

Ordinariness

At the heart of the Summit was an invitation (extended by Sr. Jo) to experience Teresa’s generosity (and spiritual solidarity) in openly sharing with us her ‘ordinariness’ – namely,

her flaws, struggles and sinfulness. We were encouraged to set aside our established tendencies to regard Teresa’s self-deprecating characterisations of herself (for instance, as ‘base’, ‘low’, ‘wretched’, ‘mean-spirited’) either as false-modesty or else as self-effacing literary devices (deployed as she crafted her writings so as not to provoke the wrath of the Inquisition). Instead, we were invited to recognise how Teresa, through these self-characterisations, is purposefully reaching out to us.

Sr. Jo suggested that Teresa wants us to understand the commonalities and connections between Teresa’s lived experiences and our own. For, it is by understanding that Teresa starts with the same frailties as us, we can be assured (though we may be ‘a mess’) that we can proceed with courage, and in humility - trusting that God will bring about our deepest desire for Union, which is our common destiny. We were also encouraged to recognise that our ordinary, everyday lives are potent crucibles of transformation. Teresa asks us to engage with, what Sr. Jo characterised as: ‘the radical ordinariness of it all’ – the struggles in prayer, the challenges encountered in relationships

and the experiences of living in community. Indeed, Sr. Jo reminded us, true mystical union ‘looks’ unremarkable - lying beyond locutions and ecstasies and entailing a quiet unshakeable awareness of Christ’s continual presence, which powerfully shapes service in the world.

Right Here, Right Now

Cardinal Anders’ contribution also highlighted the importance of attentiveness to the seemingly mundane. He encouraged us to participate in the ‘sacrament of the present moment’ – opening up to God, and His glorious eternity, in the everyday and the here and now. He cautioned us regarding the perils of living outside our current reality (daydreaming and wishing for things to be other/different) and squandering the possibilities inherent in the preciousness of the present moment. Wistful ‘If onlys...’ do not serve us, Cardinal Anders noted, rather they detract us from: meeting God in his creation; encountering Him in each other and from finding the ‘traces’ of God that surround us. Thus in the midst of our complex lives the call is to simplicity - the repeated turning of our eyes to God such that a loving

attentiveness to God becomes the atmosphere of our lives. Even a small uplifting of our heart is pleasing to God and we must make a chapel of our heart, right here and right now.

Wisdom For Today

Through the panel discussion, participants in the Summit were invited to consider Teresa both as a Doctor of the Church and a physician of the soul. Through the reflections that unfolded we considered anew her genius – which is to teach from her own lived-experience, grounded in her formative knowledge of the human condition.

It became clear that this is why Teresa still speaks so powerfully to us today. Teresa understands the afflictions of the soul (and offers apposite guidance), challenging us to enter into the fullness of our own lives and humanity through prayer and in relationship. It is in the midst of such radical ordinariness we find that our souls are extraordinary palaces, in which dwells the divinity of God. Renewed in Teresa’s presence, through the Summit, we must go and find Him.



Online Activities



Our brothers and sisters around the world (nuns, friars, and Secular Order members) are contributing in many ways to bring comfort and hope to people suffering from the pandemic provoked by the coronavirus.

Among these contributions, it is worth emphasizing the community or individual work on the internet carried out by many members of our Order, by using these means to share liturgical spaces, formation and prayer, dialogue and encounter, reading of the works of our saints, etc.

There are many initiatives now present on the net carrying the stamp of the Teresian Carmel, from India to Spain, from Britain to Burundi, from the United States to Argentina or Australia. As far as possible, on the social

networks of the Curia General, we try to share the initiatives that we find or from which we receive news.

The centres under the General Government are also becoming present on the net. Thus, CITEs - the University of Mysticism - is promoting a large number of activities of a formative, liturgical or spiritual nature, which can be accessed by consulting its website (www.mistica.es) or through its YouTube channel (Universidad de la Mística). For its part, the Teresianum offered online the XVIII Symposium on Mysticism and, from December 13, you can consult on its YouTube channel the conferences from the monthly retreats (Teresianum Pontifical Theological Faculty – Rome).

We encourage you to get to know these initiatives and make them known to others.



Fr General at the Teresianum

As has been customary in recent years, December the 14th, feast of St. John of the Cross, was a special day for the three communities of the Teresianum: Br. Mari Domingo Savio of Korea, Br. John of the conversion of St Paul from Vietnam, Br. Justin Maria of Jesus Crucified from the Philippines, Br. Jean Pierre of Divine Mercy of Madagascar, Br. Leo of St. John of the Cross and Br. Jigneshkumar of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus from India, all members of the International College of St. John of the Cross in Rome, made their solemn profession into the hands of Fr. General, Saverio Cannistrà. By using the precautionary mean demanded by COVOD-19, members of the International College, the Missionary Seminary and the permanent Community of the Teresianum in Rome were able to take part in the celebration.





ocd

ordocarmelitarumdiscalceatorum

**General House, Discalced Carmelites,
Corso D'Italia 38, 00198 Rome,
Italy**

www.discalcedcarmelite.com