



OCDS Provincial Newsletter

California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph – June 2020

Persevering in Prayer

“All these [the eleven Disciples] devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.” (Acts 1:14)

Keeping in Touch

In our May 2020 issue, we asked for submissions on how we are keeping in touch with each other and maintaining our vocation during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Here are some comments from our members, as well as a poem that may delight and inspire us.

The OCDS Sacred Heart community of Santa Fe, NM has made it a point to stay in touch by all means possible. We have created a text thread where we share prayer requests, The Carmelite word of the day and community updates on a daily basis. We also believe it is important to stay up to date with our monthly meetings, prayer and formation classes. To facilitate these meetings we come together monthly via video conference and assign different weeks during the month to catch up on homework and formation class discussions. It's important to stay in touch and technology has made this possible.

Arasely Rios, OCDS
Santa Fe, New Mexico

We pray the Rosary at 3:00 p.m. every day for the Corona virus intentions. Since our scheduled monthly meetings were temporarily cancelled, our President requested this recitation of the Rosary, for us to be together in prayer, for deliverance from these dark days of this pandemic. Three of us take this time to pray via phone, apart but together. May the Lord hear and answer us through our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Lydia Suasi, OCDS
Shoreline, Washington

“...What helps is that the soul embrace the good Jesus our Lord with determination, for since in Him everything is found...” (Way of Perfection, Chapter 9, no. 5)

The Path of Prayer

A Sonnet by Mary Lou Cummings, OCDS
Park County, Wyoming

Bare feet walking along the mossy slate
Cool steps become hastened without effort
The path gently upward through Silent Gate
Leaves lightly rustle in trees of lush sort

The clouds above are dancing without haste
Movement constant as if a lullaby
For those who seek solitude become chaste
From what the world would gift to satisfy

Warmth of the Sun embraces a cold heart
Enflames the dry timber found deep to fire
Light pulls forth from darkness to set apart
Little by little the tender desire

Constant the current of the river flow
Waving to all along the rocks and shore
Who knows what spring is found in earth below
The dry chapped land which closes every pore

A distant castle reaches sight through tears
The day becomes as one through many years

In the following article, Provincial Councilor Margaret Shore makes an interesting correlation between the seasons of the liturgical year and the spiritual growth that occurs in the mansions in The Interior Castle.

The Liturgical Year and Carmelite Spirituality

By Margaret Shore, OCDS
Lodi, California

Several times a month, I visit Our Lady of Sacramento Cistercian Monastery in Walnut Grove CA, about 35 miles from my home in Lodi. It is a Vietnamese community of Monks who are very warm and welcoming. On the property, they have life size Stations of the Cross, the grounds are well kept and spacious. What attracts me most is the silent presence of God which is inviting me to be there. I like to remember Jesus's Passion and death by making the Stations, especially on Fridays. At the entrance to the Monastery, the scene of the Pieta welcomes visitors. When I arrive I, usually walk up to the Pieta to greet Jesus and Our Lady. About two years ago in May, as I was walking up to the Pieta, this nursery rhyme came to me, "Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?" I thought, where did that come from? I hadn't thought of that nursery rhyme since the grandkids were little and they are 27 years old now.

I thought, hum, must be something here for me, so I began to reflect – I said, yes, Mary, you are quite contrary, being the Mother of God, Mother of the Church; your garden is the Church and in the Church is Carmel, which means garden. This is really Carmelite, I thought. I was touched by this, being in the garden of this Monastery.

Unbeknownst to me at that time, on that Monday after Pentecost, Pope Francis had declared a new memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Mother of the Church, which is very appropriate for celebrating the day after the Feast of Pentecost which is the birth of the Church. The new Memorial celebrates the mystery of our salvation and the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of the Redeemer Jesus.

So I began to reflect on the Church, Carmel and the Liturgical Year which I would like to share with you.

I'd first like to look at the Church year, to highlight the Seasons of Advent, Lent, Eastertide and Ordinary Time. I consider these Seasons the Church's spiritual direction of the faithful. I look at this as formation, experiencing and learning how to live the life of Christ within the Kingdom of God, especially in our lives in Carmel. I think the church is very wise in how the Spirit has given us a way of living the life of Jesus which is our transformation to union with God.

First we have Advent: Jesus is born as a human being, as one of us in the Incarnation. We wait, preparing our hearts to receive Him at Christmas – at Christmas he comes into areas of our heart as the Father's gracious Gift of Love. As the church year recycles every year, we receive Jesus in new and deeper ways as we grow in His life. From God, in our Baptism, we receive our vocation to Carmel and rejoice in the gift of community God has called us to. Most Carmelites I know believe Mary has brought them to Carmel. We can say with Mary in the Canticle, "My Soul proclaims the Greatness of the Lord, for He has looked with favor on his lowly servant."

Next we have Lent: Jesus, as Savior, suffers and dies, reconciling us to God. He reveals the Father's love for us by total surrender to the will of the Father. We walk through Lent and the Triduum with Him with contrition, gratitude, thanksgiving and open hearts to receive all the graces Jesus earned for us. As we grow in Carmel, we begin to see what needs to be purged in our life to make room for Jesus; we become friends of Jesus, getting to know Him, and conversation is our way of relationship. We see our sin, shortcomings, imperfections and we struggle to acknowledge and surrender to these obstacles to our growth. Our prayer may seem dry with no presence of God; we lean on our faith and trust in His love for us. This could be likened to the first three

mansions of the Interior Castle and the purgative way. We can say with Mary in the Canticle, “He has mercy on those who fear him, he has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit.”

Next we have the Easter Season: Jesus has risen! Jesus appears to us, especially breaking open the scriptures and reveals Himself as alive, just as He said He would. In this Season we also have the Ascension, 40 days after Easter, when Jesus goes back to His Father to prepare a place for us and tells us someday he will come back to take us with him so we can be with him forever. This is our hope. In Carmel, St. Teresa tells us that her model of community life is based on the certainty of faith that the Risen Jesus is in the midst of the community and that it lives under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This can be where we begin to experience new life, we begin to see people, places and things in a new light, the light of the love of God. This could be likened to mansions four and five of the Interior Castle when we really want to turn within. Our prayer begins to change in our desire to just be with God, turning to Him in loving knowledge as St. John of the Cross teaches in “The Spiritual Canticle,” seeking Him hidden within. We can say with Mary in the Canticle, “He has come to the help of his servant, he remembered his promise of mercy, to his children forever.”

Next we have Pentecost: Jesus had to leave us in order to send the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit came the birth of the Church, conversion, formation, apostolate, evangelism – all the power to live the life of Jesus through the gifts and fruits that the Holy Spirit brings. In Carmel, as we struggle through the other mansions, we come to six and seven, we experience union with God, we know we have gifts and we are willing to use them. We come to the realization that we are for others – everything we have received is for others, not for ourselves, just as Jesus lived. However, we receive so much more than we give and this makes us want to give more – our whole selves. We have reached John’s Living Flame of Love. We have taken up our seat in the house of Teresa and can say with her, “I am a daughter of the Church.” We can say with Mary in the Canticle, “The Almighty has done great things for me and holy is His name.”

Then we begin with Ordinary Time: In this time, we live our ordinary, everyday life in which we really do the growing. We take what we have experienced in the other Seasons and relying on the gifts of faith, hope and love to be with us as we struggle to bear the fruits of the Spirit working in us. The Holy Spirit is sent for this time, because it is only through His workings in us that we can continue to deeper transformation and union with God. We must learn to live in the ordinary with extraordinary grace and learn that everything is grace. This means for us as Carmelites, we must live in peace and joy. We can say with Mary in the Canticle, “In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”


In conclusion, we must stay within, in our garden, in communion with the love and work of God, this must be our work in the Church and in Carmel. Our prayer is what connects us, this is our lifeline, and as Carmelites, our life falls apart if we are not praying. The Liturgy of the Hours is the gift of being able to pray with Jesus in the same words He said – every emotion, struggle and pain is mentioned in them. Make the words and heartfelt yearnings your own. We have been given much, let us Praise our God!

These seasons recycle every year! Every year we begin again and again, all our lives. In the Church, Jesus has given all of us a process of transformation within the body of Christ. Let us become aware of how it can bring us to the Kingdom of God in Eternal Life.

Mary, Mary, Mother of the Church, how does your garden grow? Please pray for us, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Give us a greater love for your Son and His Church.

In the Event of Serious Illness or Death

Below is an example of an “In the Event of Serious Illness or Death” wallet card. (Other designs may be used as well.) After the card is completed, cut out the two parts as one piece and fold it vertically down the center. Laminated or not, it will fit into a standard wallet slot.

 <p>I am a Roman Catholic. Please call a priest.</p> <p>See additional instructions on reverse side.</p>	<p>In the Event of Serious Illness or Death</p> <p>I, _____, am a Discalced Carmelite Secular. Please contact the following member of the Order: Name: _____ Phone: _____</p> <p>Members of my community will be notified to offer prayers for me.</p>
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