



Carmelite Newsletter

Australia, New Zealand & Oceania

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity
4 June 2023

Joyful Ordination to the Priesthood of Adalbert Imperial OCD

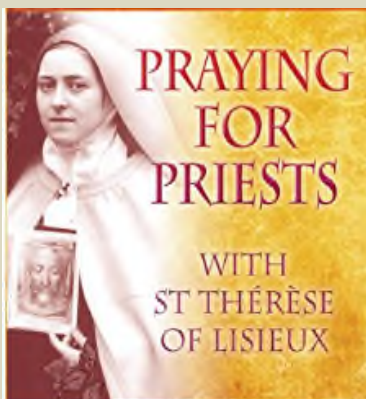


The Carmelites of the Australasia and Oceania received an early Christmas present last year. On 14 December 2022, the Solemnity of St John of the Cross, Br. Adalbert of the Beloved was ordained to the sacred priesthood at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church Varroville by Greg Homeming, OCD, Bishop of Lismore.

Bishop Homeming told the newly ordained priest he was not being ordained for the Carmelites, but for the whole Church. Bishop Homeming was joined by Bishop Mascord of Wollongong, Discalced Carmelite friars, Carmelites friars of the Ancient Observance and clergy from a range of dioceses, including many with whom Fr. Adalbert had studied.

In his message of thanksgiving Fr Imperial said that St John of the Cross lived what he had taught: "He teaches us that where there is no love, put love in, and you will draw out love. And this is the kind of love I want to bear in my life as a man, as a Carmelite and now as a priest."

Fr. Adalbert is assistant priest at Infant Jesus of Prague parish in Morley, WA.



The second experience I had relates to priests. Having never lived close to them, I was not able to understand the principal aim of the Reform of Carmel. To pray for sinners attracted me, but to pray for the souls of priests whom I believed to be as pure as crystal seemed puzzling to me!

I understood my vocation in Italy and that's not going too far in search of such useful knowledge. I lived in the company of many saintly priests for a month [on her pilgrimage to Rome] and I learned that, although their dignity raises them above the angels, they are nevertheless weak and fragile men. If holy priests, whom Jesus in His gospel calls "the salt of the earth," show in their conduct their extreme need for prayers, what is to be said of those who are tepid? Didn't Jesus say too: "If the salt loses its savor, wherewith will it be salted?"

How beautiful is the vocation, O Mother, which has as its aim the preservation of the salt destined for souls! This is Carmel's vocation since the sole purpose of our prayers and sacrifices is to be the apostle of the apostles. We are to pray for them while they are preaching to souls, through their words and especially through their example. I must stop here, for were I to continue I would never come to an end! (The Story of a Soul.)



News from Varroville OCDS Community

At the February meeting of the St Elijah OCDS Community at Varroville we had the joy of having a visit from one of our Special Members, Eileen Tye who first joined us in 1987. She made her Definitive Promise in November 1992, taking the name Eileen of the Transpierced Heart of Jesus and Mary.

On 5 February 2023 her daughter Katrina Harrison brought her for the early part of our meeting. Many of us have very fond memories of Eileen, a fervent follower of our Carmelite Saints. Prior to Covid lockdowns Eileen also attended a small weekly Carmelite gathering in one of our member's homes in Dural.



At the Community meeting Katrina took some photos of our group with the intention of framing one and hanging it in her room at her retirement home as an ongoing reminder of our love and prayers for her. Eileen is seated in her wheelchair in the centre of the photograph, dressed in purple.

This year our Community continues reading and discussing the Study Edition of Story of a Soul as part of ongoing formation, in honour of the numerous anniversaries in the life of St Thérèse at this time.

News from the Carmel in Ormiston, Queensland



When Carmel College was renewing their school Chapel they asked for some artwork representing Our Lady of Mount Carmel based on a statue in our chapel. Sr Marie Tania used a method inspired by the Japanese craft Kimekomi.



Sister Therese of the Child Jesus celebrated her 96th birthday on 22 April, and went home to God on 9 May. May she rest in peace!

O my God, you have surpassed my expectations, and I wish to sing of your mercies. (St Therese of the Child Jesus)



The OCDS Community of St. John of the Cross, Melbourne.



Reminiscing on our two and a half days annual retreat -

Spring, time of renewal and new growth...

In early October 2022, we had our much awaited and long desired retreat. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, we last met for our annual retreat three years ago. Fr. Paul Maunder insightfully directed our silent retreat, and we were very excited to welcome him in our midst after some long, nine years.

On the Sunday of the retreat, Fr Dishan Candappa, Parish Priest of Good Shepherd Parish, Gladstone Park, Melbourne, made his Definitive Promise. It was a joyous occasion, which we were glad to share with his friends.

It brought our retreat a new wave of hope and new growth, in the context of "a united community offering of charity and love in Jesus Christ for whom we live and pray", as remarked by one of our members. For another member,

"The retreat was a grace filled time of silence to go deeper with Our Lord and encounter Him in the deepest centre of my being."

We are all very grateful for the many and various graces the Lord bestowed upon us.



While praying for all our priests, we also hold Fr Dishan in joyful prayer.



We have just received amazing news: our special member Gary, and wife Tahlia, have welcomed their... eleventh child, Cosmas. May the Lord who blessed them with this new gift of life, be pleased to give good health to each of them and keep pouring on them His bounteous blessings. Sincere congratulations!

Bishop Greg Homeming OCD visits Benedictine foundation in Tasmania



At the beginning of February, Bishop Greg Homeming OCD visited the new Benedictine priory of Our Lady of Cana and was able to share with the monks of this new community his wisdom and experience of the religious life. Located in the Archdiocese of Hobart, the monks are consecrated to God by the vows of stability, conversion of ways (which encompasses both poverty and chastity) and obedience, and live a life of prayer and work in the Benedictine tradition in

Colebrook, Tasmania. Their hope is to one day be established as a fully autonomous Benedictine monastery to last many generations. The present community was founded in 2017 by Dom Pius Mary Noonan, OSB, a professed American monk of Abbaye St Joseph de Clairval, in Flavigny-Sur-Ozerain, France. This Australian foundation was made at the request of Archbishop Julian Porteous, Archbishop of Hobart.



THE USE OF IMAGES AND LANGUAGE IN *THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE* – PART 2

THE LIMITS OF LANGUAGE AND OF COMMUNICATION

In reflecting on his experience, John finds a voice (*linguam*) that gives us a window (an icon - *εἰκών*) onto another world and specifically onto the world of John's spiritual experience.¹ John gives us more than an account: the poetry draws us into the experience. But we must never forget that whatever the experience, that experience is not God but 'of God'; and the poetic expression of the experience is not the experience itself and the rational explication in the commentaries shifts the way in which the poems, and their symbols and images are appreciated by the reader. The mode goes from bodily (sense) and affective (heart) to rational (mind), from *intellectus/intuitus* to *intellectus/ratio* but always at least at one remove from the experience itself. The change from verse to prose is even more marked if the verses are sung and considered musically or spoken and so received aurally. Moreover, to a very large extent, the power of verses/songs is lost in translation, especially from a Romance language to English, which has a Germanic base.

It is worth noting carefully Allison Peers' evaluation of John's language in *The Living Flame*, the impact of which is lost on non-Spanish speakers and about which few English writers comment:

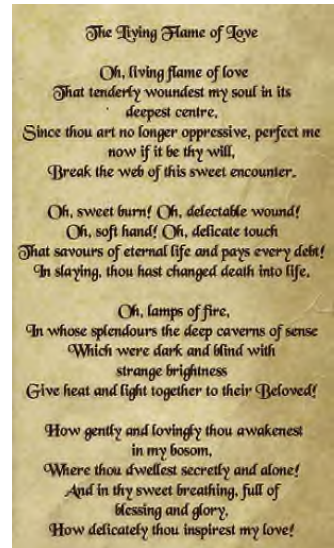
The music of the stanzas throughout is perfect - unmarred by a single harsh sound, inaccurate rhyme or halting phrase. The restrained use of alliteration, the echoing repetition of medial vowels, the melody of the feminine endings, the lavish employment of liquid consonants - all these are constituent elements of the poem's ethereal beauty. And all of them contribute to the perfection of the final line:

¡Cuán delicadamente me enamoras!

where the interlacing of cunningly arranged vowels with the frailest of consonant produces one of the most untranslatable musical phrases in Spanish literature.²

The beauty of the poetry has a quasi-sacramental character in the sense that aurally it enacts what it signifies spiritually. A sacrament is a sensible sign that effects invisible grace. The verses are an overflow of this divine life into the created world of sense and of words, presenting images of those spiritual delights given to favoured souls. For our purposes, the definition of 'sacrament' proposed by the Council of Trent illustrates the relevance for 'The Living Flame': 'a **symbol** of a sacred thing and a visible form of invisible grace'.³ [Emphasis added.] Because the poem deals with intimate communion between God and the soul, it must according to Allison Peers 'of necessity rely largely on symbols' making it John's 'most highly figured poem'.⁴ What is seldom, if ever, said is that John's language (his sung verses) are his the first, immediate and primary image or icon. The beauty of the verses themselves reflects the beauty of the soul and the delicacy of the divine encounter.

We are given a window onto another spiritual realm, onto John's own, unique, personal experience and so we come up against a fundamental aspect of the mystery of the human person, that is, of the *alteri incommunicabilis*. In betrothed love, such as John treats of in *The Spiritual Canticle* and *The Living Flame*, there is a unification of persons - between John as the soul and the Beloved/God - and John seeks to proclaim this, explaining it as divinisation by participation, not in essence: 'Everything can be expressed in this statement: The soul becomes God from God through participation in him and in his attributes ...'⁵ But as between John and the reader of either the poem or his commentary, there remains that unbridgeable gulf so that John's experience remains that of the incommunicable other (*alteri incommunicabilis*).⁶ No matter how sublime his poetry or accomplished his commentary, John's experience cannot be exchanged for ours, be a substitute for ours or even be shared *per se*



¹ *Icons in the Orthodox tradition are not to be taken as art for art's sake, but rather, they are to be used as windows into the spiritual world. They play a significant role in conveying the theology and traditions of orthodoxy, and connect the believer with heaven by achieving a prayerful mindset which would lead into a life of prayer and contemplation.* [Emphasis added.]

Bishop Daniel, 'The Spirituality of Icons'. Symposium in Coptic Studies, Macquarie University, Saturday 29 November 2003. <http://www.orthodoxbooks.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/The%20Spirituality%20of%20Icons%20-%20HG%20Bishop%20Daniel.pdf>, accessed 9 December 2018.

² Allison Peers, *Spirit of Flame*, 74.

³ DZ 1639: *symbolum esse rei sacrae et invisibilis gratiae formam visibilem*, referring to Gratian's *Decretum* and St Augustine's *De civitate* and *Questiones in Heptateuchum*.

⁴ Allison Peers, *Spirit of Flame*, 74.

⁵ *The Living Flame*, 3.8.

⁶ See the discussion of *alteri incommunicabilis* and betrothed love in Karol Wojtyła/St John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H T Willetts, (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993), 95-100.



because in sharing it (transferring it), it becomes the experience of another subjective 'I', and so is conditioned differently. To put it another way, John's experience is incommunicable because it cannot be both shared (common) and unique (one/singular). The existential horizons of the mystic poet/commentator and his reader cannot be fused to become the same experience. We might empathetically engage with John's experience, that is, we might 'understand it' provided that we 'are not wanting in mystical theology', as he suggested to Ana de Jesús and by this he meant similar existential experience.⁷ If this means of understanding is not available, we are forced back to gain insight by analogies and this underpins all the symbols, images, metaphors, extended metaphors, metonymy, comparisons and allegory that John uses in his literary works as well as the iconic aspect of his poetic, lyrical language. This is why the symbol *flame* and associated images (as well as other images) are unavoidable in both the poem/song and the commentary.

John was keenly aware that since the Fall, our hearing of God's Word has been defective, our rationality dulled to the divine language, and that our words, unlike God's Word (Logos), are not the realities they signify but only point to them. All language including the language of religious experience inhabits a dappled world, a '*chiaroscuro* of [God's] presence and absence ... Whether in nature or scripture, these signs must be interpreted'.⁸ Specifically with regard to his commentary on 'The Living Flame', John acknowledges the limitations: 'everything I say is as far from the reality as is a painting from the living object represented'.⁹

Primacy of Images and Symbols after the Fall

John uses symbols, images and a range of rhetorical devices to evoke the experiences of eternal realities overflowing into the world of human experiences, of sense and of words. To fill up the gap between words and what they signify; to try to present more than mere stammerings, John uses objects from the real world, conjuring symbols, metaphors and images to move beyond words to what words as signifiers cannot do. He also uses rhetorical figures, which were integral to classical and Renaissance poetics, to mimic or imitate the response of spirit (mind), sense (body) and emotion (heart) to divine union. It is not surprising that John writes in his commentary on 'The Living Flame' that conventional prose is insufficient to explain the 'sublime and strange gifts to souls [whom God] decides to favor' with spiritual union.¹⁰ In the commentary, *The Living Flame*, the boundaries between prose and poetry break down. The prose of *The Living Flame* becomes akin to poetic discourse, embodying - as does the poetry - what Tyler calls the two 'mystical strategies': *unknowing/deconstruction* (what is beyond language, symbol or image) and *embodiment/affect* (what engages the human spirit, senses and emotions).¹¹

Because the commentaries are precisely that, commentaries on the verses, we can say that the *mysterium quaerens linguam* (finding a voice) is logically, temporally and intentionally anterior to the *mysterium quaerens intellectum*. It follows that the evocations of symbols and images have a priority over rational explanation and are at one less remove from the mystical experience itself, having undergone one less 'translation'. Nonetheless, once the commentaries are read, the verses are 'understood' in a different way, just as reading the verses is different from experiencing the verses aurally when spoken or musically when sung.

THE IMAGES OF 'THE LIVING FLAME', ITS DOCTRINE AND STRUCTURE

When considering the configuration, structure and literary quality of *The Living Flame*, central to which are symbols and images, we notice first that the poem is very short, only 4 stanzas. The word 'flame' (*llama*) occurs only once as the first image or metaphor, yet it not only gives the poem its name but dominates the rest of the poem because each of the subsequent images is read in its light and they are all subordinate to it. The commentary, as we will see, reinforces this dominance but develops this image into an extended metaphor.

There are many images within the poem, collected principally around nouns: *wound, deepest centre, veil, cautery, killing/death, fire, deep caverns, warmth, light, heart, breathing*. They all allude to, echo or are grounded in John's overall doctrine of the spiritual life. The relatedness to *flame* is obvious for words such as *cautery, fire, warmth* and *light* but all of them are in some way related to *flame* because each piles a further metaphor on top the previous ones, enriching the layers of meaning of *flame*, which occurred first. In the commentary, flame/fire are expanded and developed into a dynamic metaphor that forms the luminous and metaphoric core of the work: the operation of the flame/fire on the log to explain the action of God on the soul as it advances in these highest states of union. Nowhere in the poem does John mention a log or wood, but it is crucial to his explanation of God's action on the soul. He mentions it first in paragraph 3 of the Prologue when speaking of that love that is 'yet ... deeper in quality ... and become[s] more ardent':

⁷ *The Spiritual Canticle*, Prologue, 3.

⁸ Kevin Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology and Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 4.

⁹ *The Living Flame*, Prologue 1.

¹⁰ *The Living Flame of Love*, Prologue, 2.

¹¹ Peter Tyler, *The Return to the Mystical: Ludwig Wittgenstein, Teresa of Avila and the Christian Mystical Tradition* (London/New York: Continuum, 2011), 35-36.



We have an example of this in the activity of fire: Although the fire has penetrated the woods, transformed it, and united it with itself, yet as this fire grows hotter and continues to burn so the wood becomes much more incandescent and inflamed, even to the point of flaring up and shooting out flame from itself.

Here the soul becomes enveloped in the Holy Spirit (symbolised as flame) who has transformed her. The soul's 'form' becomes 'divine' because her form is now *flame*. Despite this development, the fire/log metaphor is not new. John had already used it in *The Ascent* 1.11.6; & 2.8.2; and in *The Dark Night* 2.10.1-9; & 2.11.1. In *The Living Flame*, after Prologue 3, John returns to it in 1.3-4, 19-25 & 33.¹² John recapitulates the negative effects of the flame/fire on the log in prior stages of the spiritual journey, which he dealt with in *The Dark Night* 2.10.1. The fire first 'assaults' the wood, wounds it, dries it, strips away its ugliness and disposes it to be penetrated and transformed.¹³ In *The Living Flame*, the flame's action has transformed the wood and the Holy Spirit produces in the soul acts of love that are vastly meritorious.¹⁴ The soul lives in a state of habitual divine union ('ever immersed in fire') and moved by the Holy Spirit its loving acts flame up from the wood and sore to heaven, raising the soul to 'eternal life ... to the activity of God in God'.¹⁵

There are other structural features of the poem that are also central to its doctrine and to its poetic effect on the senses (body), the intellect (spirit) and the emotions (heart). The first three of the four stanzas begin with an exclamation or apostrophe: '¡Oh' in Spanish. In the second stanza there are four apostrophes:

Kavanaugh	Allison Peers	Campbell
O sweet cautery, O delightful wound! O gentle hand! O delicate touch ...	O burn that searest never! O wound of deepest delight! O gentle hand! O touch of love supernal ...	Oh cautery most tender! Oh gash that is my guerdon! Oh gentle hand! Oh touch so softly thrilling!

Allison Peers calls 'The Living Flame' '[e]ssentially ... an apostrophe to the Holy Spirit invoked under the image of a flame which penetrates the depths of the soul'.¹⁶ According to Allison Peers, in the second stanza, John 'apostrophizes each element of the Divine love-wounding',¹⁷ which is itself a metaphor for the God's going in quest of the soul. Fire is, of course, the quintessential symbol of the Holy Spirit, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost in tongues of fire. 'Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them the ability.' (Acts 2:3-4). The connection between the Holy Spirit and finding voice is clearer in the Latin and Greek text because *tongue* and *language* are cognates.¹⁸ Here is another reason why, inflamed by the Holy Spirit, John pours forth inspired 'Songs of the soul in the intimate communication of loving union with God'.¹⁹ Throughout the commentary, John makes constant biblical references to fire in the context of purification, union and transformation. What is novel in *The Living Flame* is the associated image of 'flame' being used to explain the ardent intensity of the soul's union/transformation, the soul being taken into the inner life of God and coming to resemble the Holy Spirit, who is symbolised as flame.

We have noted that in the verses of 'The Living Flame' John does not restrict himself to images or language associated only with fire or flame. This is also the case in the commentary, where he uses a vast array of images and sensual evocations. For example, he invokes the sense of smell: 'it seems to the soul that all the balsams and fragrant spices and flowers of the world are commingled, stirred, and shaken so as to yield their sweet odor'.²⁰ He goes on to use a Copernican metaphor of movement but, as with his other images and metaphors, 'the comparison is most inadequate'²¹ or does not tell the whole story. John goes further and introduces contrary images, metaphors and symbols. In *The Ascent* 2.8.2, fire excludes the other elements: air, water and earth. Yet in *The Living Flame* he likens the lamps of fire to water: 'the soul at this time is flooded with divine waters, abounding in them like a plentiful fount overflowing on all sides'.²² He explains the inconsistency because the fire

¹² Mark O'Keefe, *Love Awakened by Love*, (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 2014), 142.

¹³ *The Living Flame*, 1.19.

¹⁴ *The Living Flame*, 1.3.

¹⁵ *The Living Flame*, 1.4.

¹⁶ Allison Peers, *Spirit of Flame*, 75.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ 3. *Et apparuerunt illis dispertitae linguae (γλώσσαι) tamquam ignis, seditque supra singulos eorum*; 4. *et repleti sunt omnes Spiritu Sancto et coeperunt loqui aliis linguis (γλώσσαις), prout Spiritus dabat eloqui illis.*

¹⁹ St John of the Cross, Preamble to 'The Living Flame of Love'. *Collected Works*, 52.

²⁰ *The Living Flame*, 4.4.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *The Living Flame*, 3.8.



is 'so gentle' and 'immense' that it is 'like the waters of life that satisfy the thirst of the spirit' and refers specifically to Acts 2:3. There is no resolution, only paradox. 'Although it is fire, it is also water.'²³ Clearly here we have reached the limits of rationally coherent metaphor and so the limits of human language. Should we be surprised? Hardly: because here even the Holy Spirit faltered and being 'unable to express the fullness of his meaning' in human words He had recourse to 'strange figures and likenesses'.²⁴ The language again mirrors the divine way of deploying symbols and images in sacred scripture. The commentary's prose becomes so laden with images, symbols, metaphors and other figures of speech that its language becomes akin to the poetry. If we recall that the poetry is always to be preferred as the more immediate, direct image of the mystical experience it is not surprising that at the extremes of spiritual experiences, the prose becomes more poetic as John strives to explain the ineffable.

CONCLUSION

Above all, St John of the Cross is a mystic poet of symbols, images and metaphors, who penned verses of unsurpassed lyric beauty. His place amongst the first rank of Spanish poets is widely if not universally acknowledged. In *The Living Flame* he sings of the Holy Spirit, symbolised/personified in the *flame*, whose action on the soul John proclaims. This is the doctrinal core of the poem and the commentary. John masterfully compresses this doctrine into four short stanzas, which he later explains in the commentary.²⁵ The poem and commentary deploy a diverse range of images and symbols, not just the central symbol *flame* (Holy Spirit) in complex, shifting and sometimes contradictory and anomalous ways. The image of the fire/log - not present in the stanzas but present in earlier commentaries - is re-worked in *The Living Flame*. The fire/log metaphor is extended using the flame symbol, by which the Holy Spirit flares up within the soul. The first and most immediate 'image' is always the poetic language itself, the beauty of which reflects the beauty of the soul united to God. John's luminous verses reflect the soul's incandescence. In the poem and the commentary John heaps up other symbols and images to tell us that what he is describing envelopes the whole of creation.

*For this awakening is a movement of the Word in the substance of the soul, containing such grandeur, dominion, glory and intimate sweetness that it seems to the soul that all the balsams and fragrant spices and flowers of the world are commingled, stirred, and shaken so as to yield their sweet odor, and all the kingdoms and dominions of the world and all the power and virtues of heaven are moved.*²⁶

By using images and symbols with contrary associations and allowing them to dwell in the verses and commentary as contradictions, anomalies or paradoxes, John frustrates our logical expectations. In doing so, he tells us that what he is describing breaks the bounds of human language and transcends our everyday ways of perception. The way the images and symbols are used in *The Living Flame* brings the two registers of language, poetic and prose, closer together and the rational language of philosophy and theology (*ratio*), though still crucially important, yields somewhat in this commentary to the symbols and images of understanding as *intellectus/intuitus*, where finding a tongue (*linguam*) will give voice to the mystical experience understood via mystical theology, that is, understood empathetically by experience.

Interview with Anders Cardinal Arborelius, OCD, Archbishop of Stockholm



<https://carmelitequotes.blog/2022/02/07/arborelius-friendship/>

Each one of us is invited to a personal friendship with Jesus. Teresa of Avila speaks about prayer as friendship. We can always remain with our friend Jesus and find our joy in Him because He rejoices in us. To be together with Him is to pray. When He taught us to say, "Our Father," He invited us to take part in His own prayer, adoring His Father Who is also our Father. Thanks to the gift of Baptism, this prayer of Jesus is always echoing inside us, because we are temples of God. The Trinity is hidden deep inside us. Prayer is there. We simply have to join the Son Who adores His Father.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *The Spiritual Cantic, Prologue, 1.*

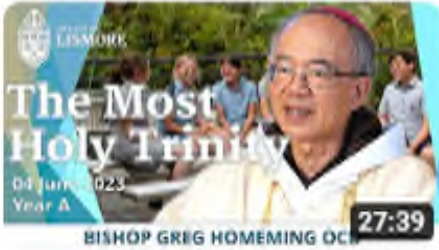
²⁵ See Appendix for a summary of the doctrine in the four stanzas of 'The Living Flame of Love'.

²⁶ *The Living Flame, 4:4.*



Sunday Mass with Greg Homeming OCD, Bishop of Lismore

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYxOjNyku4JCI08vfeTq-fQ>



“Many tried to discredit her.” - Fr. Marco Chiesa OCD,



The canonization process has been ongoing for Sister Lucia - the oldest and longest living of the children who witnessed the Marian apparitions of Fatima in 1917.

Fr. Marco Chiesa OCD, the postulator for Sister Lucia's cause for canonization, says the process is currently at the examination of the *Positio*, the volume that collects all documentation and testimonies to prove the virtues of the potential saint. This process has highlighted the many challenges that the late Carmelite nun faced.

Fr. Marco Chiesa OCD Postulator: *On May 13, 1917 she said yes to Mary who appears to her so she makes herself completely available to the Mother of God. Her whole life is a renewal of this yes in the face of every difficulty, as there are so many people who try to discredit her or the message of Fatima, so many difficulties she has to face out of obedience.*

Fr. Chiesa says the canonization process has been complex due to collecting factual documents on Sister Lucia's 97 years of life and navigating her close relationships with the Vatican and Pope John Paul II during the reveal of the third secret of Fatima.



Fr. Marco: *When it came to the disclosure of the famous third secret or the third part of the secret of Fatima, lo and behold, the Pope wrote a message accompanying and interpreting this message before publication because he wanted to know Lucia's opinion. I think it is correct to say there was mutual trust, let's say a dialogue of trust.*

Although Sister Lucia was often in the public eye, humility and simplicity are known to have been some of her most admirable qualities.

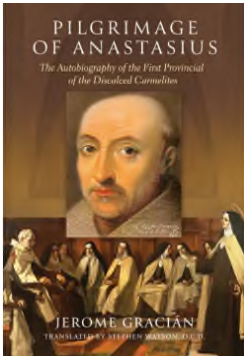
Fr. Marco: *A person like Lucia was always in the spotlight—even though she was in the monastery, waves of letters were coming in of requests for her. Someone so important all over the world, known all over the world, maintains that humility, that simplicity of recognizing that Christ is important.*

Fr. Chiesa believes Sister Lucia will be canonized a saint as her message of perseverance continues to spread throughout the Church and the world.





In the December 2022 newsletter we drew attention to Fr John McGowan's book on Fr Jerome Gracian, *Sister Teresa & Father Jerome*, available at: <https://carmelite.org.uk/products/saint-teresa-father-jerome>. A further book has been published recently, a translation by Stephen Watson OCD of Jerome Gracian's Autobiography, ***Pilgrimage of Anastasius: The Autobiography of the First Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites*** - available at: <https://www.icspublications.org/products/pilgrimage-of-anastasius-the-autobiography-of-the-first-provincial-of-the-discalced-carmelites>



Jerome Gracián of the Mother of God (1545–1614) was the first provincial of the Discalced friars and a close collaborator of Saint Teresa of Ávila, the order's foundress. He brought stability and growth to St. Teresa's movement when it was still in its infancy, particularly among the friars. Praising Gracián in the *Book of Her Foundations*, Teresa writes: "Had I very much desired to ask His Majesty for a person to organize all things pertaining to the order in these initial stages, I would not have succeeded in asking for all that He gave me in Father Gracián. Our Lady has chosen him to help her order."

After certain intrigues resulted in Gracián's expulsion from the order, he appealed to Rome and was eventually exonerated. After hearing Gracián's account of his dramatic experiences, the pope exclaimed he was "a saint." Although the *Pilgrimage of Anastasius* is largely Gracián's *apologia pro vita sua*, a defence of his conduct on behalf of the Discalced Carmelites, it also serves as a first-hand chronicle of the beginning of the Discalced Carmelite Order and sheds light on St. Teresa's vision and charism. Gracián was simultaneously St. Teresa's most ardent disciple and the superior to whom she made an extraordinary vow of obedience. He confirms the special love that St. Teresa had for him, and he loved her no less in return.

Gracián fills his memoirs with captivating anecdotes involving influential historical figures and harrowing adventures. Notably, he relates the thrilling account of his capture at sea by slavers and his nearly two-year captivity in Tunisia. Above all, *Pilgrimage of Anastasius* offers readers a demonstration of Gracián's character, purity, and innocence. Observing how he maintained his faith amid his many trials, it is clear why St. Teresa loved him and had such confidence in him to carry out her vision for a religious renewal.



Below is a homily from our former superior general, Saverio Cannistrá, OCD, from 2014, the fourth centenary of the death of Fr Jerome Gracian. <http://carmelite-seculars-sydney.com/fourth-centenary-of-the-death-of-fr-jerome-gracian/> Jerome Gracian was St Teresa's great friend and first Provincial of the Discalced friars. Nonetheless he was later expelled from the Order and only rehabilitated in recent years.



Fr. Jerome Gracian – Brussels, 21 September 2014



Homily by Father Saverio Cannistrá, O.C.D. Superior General

The Word of God for this Sunday, which we have just heard and which coincides with the fourth centenary of the death of Fr. Jerome Gracián, invites us to humbly acknowledge our inability to comprehend the logic of God and puts us on our guard against the temptation of substituting our limited views and hurried judgments for His inscrutable thoughts and designs. I believe that this purification of vision and of mind can help us as we remember the person of Fr. Gracián, the understanding and evaluation of whom has aroused such heated discussion, such passionate support in the face of so much relentless criticism. Above and beyond what can be ascertained by historical criticism, I want to approach Fr. Gracián with a "loving attention", which seeks to recognize in the journey of a brother the signs of God's passing, the footprints of Him, whom he pledged to follow by living in accordance with the Rule of Carmel.

Undoubtedly, the story of Fr. Gracián is not an ordinary or common story. To start with, it is not usual for a religious (even if he is already a priest), to be entrusted with the mission of Apostolic Visitor of a Province just a few months after first profession. Without having wanted it, and much less sought it out, he had to assume serious responsibilities and enter into a battle where strong forces were arrayed against each other: the Spanish monarch, the Holy See and the general government of the Order. It is not possible to emerge unharmed from this type of battle and Gracián, in fact, received the first blows. Besides, this will characterize all the rest of



his life: finding himself at the centre of very complicated situations, fighting with all his might for that which, in good conscience, he considered both just and necessary, and in all of this he experienced neither success nor consolation, but rather, contradiction, humiliation and failure. The words of St. Paul that we heard in the second reading would certainly have comforted Gracián in his most difficult times: “Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death”.

In this regard, I like to recall that “Paul” is the codename Teresa uses to designate Gracián in her letters, probably because she drew an analogy between his missionary and apostolic zeal and that of the apostle to the gentiles. But perhaps, there is a deeper analogy, which relates to the acceptance of one’s weakness, to the thorn in the flesh, because “my grace is sufficient for you” and therefore, “when I am weak, then I am strong”.

It is precisely with the words of Paul, taken from Romans (5:3-4): “*Gloriamur in tribulationibus nostris*” (“We rejoice in our sufferings”), that Gracián begins his autobiographical account, the *Peregrinación de Anastasio*, written with the calm and serenity of a man who is now over sixty years of age. He is aware that all he has suffered had a reason and has borne fruit. It is the fruit that is born from the tree of the cross. From the cross he has learned especially love and mercy. As he writes in a particularly moving passage of the *Peregrinación* (Dialogue Eight), he had “a foretaste of hell”, but precisely because of this, and following his conscience, he learned much more about melancholy than he would have from lectures in philosophy, theology and spirituality. For this reason too, he was able to understand the difficulties of many of his confrères and sisters, precisely as it says in the letter to the Hebrews (4:15): “For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are”. But – he humbly adds – it could not be said of him that he was “without sinning”, because “I have committed innumerable offenses against God”.

A sensitive man without any protective armour, living in times of iron plate protection: to a certain extent, this is the story of Fr. Gracián. Fr. Ambrose Mariano criticized him saying that “he was made of butter”; but we can understand this expression in a very positive way: he was made of flesh and blood, and was sensitive and vulnerable. I would suppose that this may have been the trait of his personality that most attracted Holy Mother Teresa: his “llaneza”, capacity for empathy, and his docility in allowing himself be formed by the one who had received the founding charism. The relationship of Gracián with Teresa, and more generally with his sisters, the nuns, is of an impressively new kind, in that it is founded on a genuine reciprocity. No wonder he was misunderstood, arousing scandal and condemnation. After their meeting at Beas in 1575, a good three weeks spend in deep conversation, Teresa and Gracián took a decision “to be always of one mind about everything”. It is a covenanted agreement, and at the same level as the Church will establish after the Second Vatican Council, i.e., the association and no longer the submission of the nuns to the friars of the same Order.

But there is another aspect of the personality of Gracián that found a deep resonance in the heart of Teresa: his missionary spirit. For Gracián, as for Teresa, contemplation cannot be relegated to a material place (the cell, the cloister) or rigidly confined to one lifestyle. One can live a very regular and cloistered life and not be a contemplative (Teresa understood this very well and has written clearly about it), but one can live in the midst of labours and pastoral concerns without losing sight of a friendly relationship with Jesus. As Teresa wrote in one of her letters to the same Gracián, “one must not think that a person who is suffering is not praying. He is offering up his sufferings to God, and many a time he is praying much more truly than one who goes away by himself and meditates his head off, and, if he has squeezed out a few tears, thinks that that is prayer” (letter of 23 Oct. 1576).

As is noted, the initiative of spreading the Order to others countries, including the Congo and the West Indies, is due to Fr. Gracián. This decision did not go without criticism by those who held that “all Carmelite perfection consists in remaining in the cell and never missing choir even if the world itself is on fire”. But Gracián thought differently: “God has not led me by this path, but by that of saving souls”. And he adds by way of explaining this inclination, that he had caught it from Mother Teresa, “whose spirit was one of zeal for the conversion of the whole world” (*Peregrinación*, Dialogue Three).

It is like this: a new spirit, that of Teresa, has taken hold of this intelligent, cultured and sensitive man, but above all a man who is searching, and has lived to the full the problems and opportunities of his time. These were harsh times, “*tiempos recios*”, as Teresa expressed it, but they were also times of great riches which changed for ever the face of the world and of the Church. I don’t know if one day we will venerate Fr. Gracián as a saint; that depends on many things. But I do know one thing: that we can learn greatly from his example and that we need to thank the Lord for having given him to us. His is not the example of a perfect man, or of a winner. It is the example of a man who, without ever running away, has fought every battle, and has lost nearly all of them, but who in the end has won the only contest that matters for a Christian and a religious, that of “living in accordance with the Gospel” that he preached.





Particular charisms of the Teresian Carmel

Many and varied are the ways in which our saintly forefathers laid down how everyone, whatever his station or the kind of religious observance he has chosen, should live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ - how, pure in heart and stout in conscience, he must be unswerving in the service of the Master. Carmelite Rule [2].

In addition to the First (friars), Second (nuns) and Third (seculars) branches of the Disalced Carmelite Order, there are other expressions of the Teresian Carmel lived in various other canonically erected communities of sisters, in secular institutes or in new ecclesial movements. Each newsletter now features one of these, showing the richness and dynamism of the Teresian Carmelite charism as the Holy Spirit calls forth new forms, drawing from the inspired vision of our Holy Mother, St Teresa of Jesus. This newsletter presents an overview of the Carmelite Missionary sisters. The Carmelite Missionaries have a house in Varroville and help at the Carmelite Retreat Centre and also have house in Lismore, where Greg Homeming OCD is the bishop

The Mary Immaculate OCDS community (Sydney) helps support the Carmelite Missionaries apostolate in the Philippines. Below is a message received by the Sydney community from Sr. Norma Suede, CM.



Praise be Jesus , Mary and Joseph !

The Fr. Francisco Palau Foundation is supporting 20 scholars at present and some of them are college students. Our hearts are filled with gratitude for your generosity to our scholarship program. The amount that you share was used for the tuition Fee of our scholars.

This school year 2023 , the Foundation is accepting additional 5 new applicants and 4 of them are college students. They come from poor families from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. They are deserving students and we thank you once again for being our collaborators to this mission. May God continue to shower the necessary graces that you need and your loved ones. Rest assured of our constant prayers and your companions OCDS in Sydney Australia. God bless po!. In Missionary Carmel, Sr. Norma Suede, CM

Our spirituality is rooted in the Teresian Carmel, lived in the style of the Teresian Carmelites. **Francisco Palau**. It focuses on the experience of the ecclesial mystery as a **mystery of communion: God and neighbours**. This is concretised in the call to fraternal communion, the contemplative attitude in friendly contact with God and listening to his Word, the missionary spirit, which makes us go out to those who need us most.

Being prophets and visible signs of communion also means moving forward in the **shared mission**.

The aim of the project is to promote a sense of community, valuing complementarity and strengthening the communitarian sense of life and mission.

Making the Eucharist the centre of life (MRel 3, 1-12; 4, 22-24. 28; 11,4), as the ultimate realisation of union with God and our brothers and sisters, urges us to make it a living expression in fraternity and in sharing with the poor, thus anticipating the universal banquet of the Kingdom.

Presence of Mary as the perfect figure and type of the Church, a model of dedication to the will of God and of free and generous dedication to others.





Our Founder - Blessed Francisco Palau y Quer

Born on 29 December 1811 in Aytona (Lérida), Spain. He studied philosophy and theology at the Seminary of Lérida. He professed as a Discalced Carmelite on 15 November 1833.

Due to political events in Spain, he was exiled to France from 1840 to 1851. In 1843, he led an intense solitary life in the vicinity of the sanctuary of Notre Dame de Livron. He returned to Spain in April 1851; he was incardinated in the diocese of Barcelona; he founded the "School of Virtue" in November of the same year. When the "School" was suppressed, he was confined to Ibiza on 9 April 1854, where he lived deeply the mystery of the Church.

In the Balearic Islands he founds the congregations of the Brothers and the Carmelite Sisters. In January-March 1872 he writes and publishes the Rules and Constitutions of the Tertiary Order of Discalced Carmelites, which are printed in Barcelona. He died in Tarragona on 20 March 1872.

Celebrating 1st Centenary of St Thérèse's Beatification



On Saturday, the 29th of April 2023, the St John of the Cross OCDS Community, Melbourne, gathered in the parish of the Good Shepherd Church in Gladstone Park, Victoria, to celebrate the first centenary of the beatification of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Our very own Fr Dishan Candappa, OCDS, celebrated St Thérèse's votive Mass for the Community and its guests in his parish, with her first class relic was present on the altar.



Votive Mass for the Centenary of the Beatification of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus. - The Good Shepherd Church

After the celebration of the Mass, we gathered in the parish hall and enjoyed a beautiful feast of food and fellowship together. We had two display tables with Carmelite resources: one dedicated to the occasion, and the other with various Carmelite pamphlets. It was a most joyful and blessed occasion. May we always strive to follow St Thérèse's Little Way as we delve deeper into the richness of her life in Christ. "In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I shall be Love."



My vocation, at last I have found it; my vocation is love.



The Brisbane OCDS community recently held their annual retreat at St Teresa's Retreat Centre, located adjacent to Carmelite nuns' Monastery of the Holy Spirit, Ormiston. The theme was St Therese "Offering to Merciful Love". Fr Aloysius Rego OCD led the retreat. The take home message was *Love alone is the answer; Love is our purpose*. There she realised her vocation was to love.

Our enquirer, Sandra Stork, was also received into formation during the retreat. It was a very grace filled time for all.

THE SECULAR ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES REBORN IN ISRAEL

About two years ago, a group of lay people from different cultures wondered about the possibility of founding a community of Secular Carmel at Stella Maris, on Mount Carmel, and began to organize themselves and inquire about the procedure to be followed for its foundation.

After a period of discernment, the admission ceremony of the candidates took place on January the 28th, in our Stella Maris church. They received the Bible, the Constitutions of Secular Carmel and received the scapular as a sign of the protection of the Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel and their formal entry into the period of formation. Over the next two years, they will study the spirituality and mission of the laity in Carmel and the Church.

Let us ask the Holy Spirit to guide these people whom He has called and to help them persevere so that they may find in the OCDS what their hearts so desire, namely, union with God and service to the Church.





Marguerite (Guite) Chevignard, sister of St Elizabeth of the Trinity



The Mary Immaculate OCDS Community, Sydney, held their annual day of reflection on Sunday, 7 May 2023. Marcelle Droulers OCDS had given a presentation the day before at the Carmelite Retreat Centre at Varroville entitled: *Elizabeth of the Trinity & her sister Marguerite*, dealing with the significance of a friendly relationship in the family journeying together towards holiness. Marcelle looked into the spiritual journey of St. Elizabeth and her sister

Marguerite (Guite) as they ascend the heights of their relationship with the Holy Triune God. Marcelle led the community in the day of reflection based on the previous day's retreat conferences.



St Elizabeth of the Trinity lived only a short life, dying at the age of 26. Her sister, Guite, lived a long life (1883–1954) through the Great Depression and two world wars. She was born a couple of years after her older more famous sister. Cherishing the correspondence she had received from her Carmelite sister, and making that spirituality her own, she lived as a contemplative soul in the world. There were two sisters with one heart and a single, shared ideal: to be the praise of the Blessed Trinity. Guite grew in love for her husband and her nine children to such an extent that those around her said, after her death that she was more holy than her Carmelite sister. She embraced silence, docility and self-effacement to the point of heroism. When news travelled around Dijon that

Elizabeth would be beatified, the family and many friends thought, "Elizabeth surely, but her sister Marguerite even more." She shone but she didn't feel her own shining of light. May we, too, pray for this transfiguration, the grace, that only the indwelling of the Holy Trinity can give. Guite's story shows us that the grace of this transformation is available to laypeople!

Carmelite Retreats at Varroville



- 1 July "Remain in Me, pray in Me" (St. Elizabeth of the Trinity) - Matthew Delasey, OCDS.
- 21 - 23 July The Dark Night of the Soul - Fr. Ferdinand de la Cruz, OCD.
- 5 August Pope Francis' Encyclical: *Fratelli Tutti* - Dr. Robert Gascoigne.
- 25 - 27 August How do I pray? - Sr. Susan Ninfa Timbal, CM.
- 2 September The Holy Spirit and Prayer – Barbara Stenning, OCDS.
- 10 - 17 September Guided Retreat: A Week with St. Therese of Lisieux (weeklong) – Fr. Aloysius Rego, OCDS.
- 15 - 17 September Icon Painting Retreat - Anna Prifti.
- 7 October On Friendship in the light of St. Therese & St. Teresa – Lorraine Murphy, OCDS.
- 13 - 15 October A Saint for the Weak and Sinful - Bishop Greg Homeming, OCD.
- 4 November Finding joy in suffering - St. Elizabeth of the Trinity - Elizabeth Flynn and Fr. Gerard Moran, OCD.
- 2 December Could you be "Messiah"? - Fr. Ransom Rapirap, OCD.

Bookings at: bookings@mtcarmel.com.au - 0435 857 690