



Carmelite Newsletter

Australia, New Zealand & Oceania

9 August 2024

St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross [St Edith Stein]

On Thursday 18 April 2024, the Postulator of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, Fr. Marco Chiesa, who is responsible to shepherding through the causes of the Order's candidates for beatification and canonisation, presented to the Holy Father,



Pope Francis, the petition seeking a declaration that St Edith Stein be proclaimed a Doctor of the Church. In the photo below, the Fr Marco presents the petition to the Holy Father. On the left, holding the piece of paper, is our Superior General, Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle, and on the right is the First Definitor, Fr. Agustí Borrell, from Catalonia, Spain. A saint is declared a Doctor of the Church if his or her life and writings are considered especially significant and whose teachings is considered to be both true and enduring. If she is declared a Doctor of the Church, she will be the fourth Carmelite Doctor (St Teresa of Jesus, St John of the Cross & St Thérèse of the Child Jesus) and the 5th woman Doctor (St Teresa, St Catherine of Siena, St Thérèse and St Hildegard of Bingen).

The photo on the right is of a statue of St Edith Stein in St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, commissioned by Cardinal Pell for the reredos in the Lady chapel that features numerous women saints. The number on the concentration camp uniform is the number given to her on the Nazi inventory. She probably never worn this uniform as she was murdered in the gas chamber shortly after her arrival in Auschwitz, along with her sister, Rosa, and other Dutch Catholic Jews, arrested in reprisal for the Dutch Catholic bishops opposition to the Nazi occupation and its racial ideology.

See [Doctor of Resilient Hope](#) - *The last days of Edith Stein* which quotes Fr John Sullivan OCD who said that the chain of events leading to Edith Stein's death began with a "courageous letter in defence of Dutch Jews written by the bishops of the Netherlands, then under Nazi occupation. The letter was read out in all churches on 26 July 1942. Sullivan noted that the Discalced Carmelite order was "betting on the pertinence of her message and appeal. Since spring 2022 an international commission is working on documentation for the order's request of the Vatican to start a process to declare her a Doctor of the Church. If that were to occur, I feel she could usefully be called Doctor of Resilient Hope." Edith Stein was one among a total of 60,330 people transported from Westerbork in Holland to Auschwitz. Others included the influential young spiritual writer Etty Hillesum and the young diarist Anne Frank.



The spiritual experience of Edith Stein is an eloquent example of this extraordinary interior renewal. A young woman in search of the truth has become a saint and martyr through the silent workings of divine grace: Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, who from heaven repeats to us all today the words that marked her life: 'Far be it from me to glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.' [Gal 6:14]

Because she was Jewish, Edith Stein was taken with her sister Rosa and many other Catholic Jews from the Netherlands to the concentration camp in Auschwitz, where she died with them in the gas chambers.

Today we remember them all with deep respect. A few days before her deportation, the woman religious had dismissed the question about a possible rescue: 'Do not do it! Why should I be spared? Is it not right that I should gain no advantage from my baptism? If I cannot share the lot of my brothers and sisters, my life, in a certain sense, is destroyed.'

From now on, as we celebrate the memory of this new saint from year to year, we must also remember the Shoah, that cruel plan to exterminate a people - a plan to which millions of our Jewish brothers and sisters fell victim. May the Lord let his face shine upon them and grant them peace.

From the homily St John-Paul II at the canonisation of St Edith Stein on 11 October 1998.



News from Wellington, New Zealand OCDS Community

Mary Heffernan, OCDS reports that a grace-filled Day of Recollection was held in silence by the Wellington, New Zealand, St Joseph's Community Secular Disalced Carmelites on Sunday, 3 March 2024, within the lovely tranquil setting of Pa Maria Spirituality Centre. During a joyful celebration of Mass, Glenise Chisholm (far right) made her Definitive Promise, which was received by the community's Spiritual Assistant, Fr Neil Vaney, SM (standing next to Glenise). A final blessing to take away in summary of the day was the prayer below, which we thought worthy of sharing.



A Blessing of Solitude

May you recognise in your life the presence, power and light of your soul.

May you realise that you are never alone, that your soul in its brightness and belonging connects you intimately with the rhythm of the universe.

May you have respect for your own individuality and difference.

May you realise that the shape of your soul is unique that you have a special destiny here.

That behind the façade of your life there is something beautiful good and eternal happening.

May you learn to see yourself with the same delight, pride and expectation with which God sees you in every moment.

Fr John Landy OCD suffered a stroke at the priory of the Mount Carmel Retreat Centre, Varroville, and died peacefully after being anointed that afternoon, Saturday 18 November 2023.

John Denis Landy was born in Brisbane, Australia, on 10 July 1935. After a time of preparation in Brisbane he became a Carmelite novice in 1955 in Loughrea, County Galway, Ireland. He professed his religious vows on 8 September, 1956. After philosophical and theological studies in Dublin he was ordained on 22 December 1962. John then studied in Rome before returning to Australia.



John was a very talented pianist and did most things with a certain flair. He was a keen gardener all his life and at one time or another kept finches in well designed aviaries. He was stationed in Brisbane, Morley, Melbourne, Varroville. He was in charge of the student house in Hunters Hill. In 1975 he was my Student Master there. During this time he also taught students what was once called sacred eloquence. John himself was a wry preacher. He did not let the grass grow under his feet. All his life he grew spiritually. In recent years while living within limits he still flourished. John served in the Carmelite General House in Rome during the 12 years Fr Camilo Maccise was General after which he served in our houses in Israel.

In recent years he was stationed in Varroville. He had suffered a stroke before returning to Australia and was not allowed to drive a car, so his external ministry was circumscribed; however he enjoyed contributing in any way he could, giving spiritual direction, hearing confessions and celebrating the Eucharist. He enjoyed doing translations 'for Father General'. His translation skills will be sorely missed.

Sunday Mass with Greg Homeming OCD, Bishop of Lismore Clinck on this link





Frequently, only silence can express my prayer.

Letters of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, Volume II: General Correspondence 1890-1897, p.56, ICS Publications

This image of Mary was painted by Kerrie Ninni OCDS of the Mary Immaculate Community, Sydney, and was inspired by a reading and re-reading of the book, *Patterns of Prayer*, by Fr. Eugene McCaffery, OCD: "Silence is an essential condition for listening. Prayer is born in silence, a still receptive silence that enables one to hear the deep things of the spirit. Silence is much more than an absence of words or noises, much more even than being quiet. Rather, it is a response of our whole being reaching out to grasp the word of life."

Angela Finnegan OCDS, also of the Mary Immaculate community in Sydney, who is currently on pilgrimage, is taking a copy of the painting of Our Lady of Silence to the shrine in Knock, County

Mayo, Ireland, where Our Lady appeared in August 1879 along with St Joseph, St John the Evangelist, angels and Jesus as the Lamb of God. There were no words but the figures in the apparition, which lasted about two hours, were profoundly liturgical. In 2021, Pope Francis designated Knock and International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine. "The arms of the Virgin, outstretched in prayer, continue to show us the importance of prayer as the message of hope which goes out from this shrine." The Holy Father continued: "The message which comes from Knock is that of the great value of silence for our faith. It is this silence in the face of mystery, which does not mean giving up on understanding, but understanding while aided and supported by the love of Jesus who offered himself for all of us as the Lamb sacrificed for the salvation of humanity. It is this silence in the face of the great mystery of a love which cannot be reciprocated unless in trusting abandonment to the will of the merciful Father."



St John of the Cross OCDS Community, Melbourne



The St John of the Cross OCDS community came together for our Reflection day on Sunday 23rd June. This was held at our new meeting place, Holy Eucharist Catholic Church, East Malvern.

We are very grateful to Father Gerard Moran OCD who led us in a prayerful time of recollection, reconciliation and celebration of mass. His gentle presence and talks were most helpful and encouraging for us to grow in our relationship with God through prayer, sacrifice and service.

It was a very happy occasion for us all as we celebrated Jane B making her First Promise, and Jasmine B being received into Formation.

Lord, God of our fathers, you brought Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross to the fullness of the science of the cross at the hour of her martyrdom. Fill us with that same knowledge; and, through her intercession, allow us always to seek after you, the supreme truth, and to remain faithful until death to the covenant of love ratified in the blood of your Son for the salvation of all men and women.



Revision of the Constitutions of Carmelite Nuns



Representatives of the Disalced Carmelite nuns met in Rome from 14 to 20 April, to work on a revision to their Constitutions.

Our own Sr Moira, from the Ormiston Carmel in Brisbane, attended. She is the President of the nuns' Association of Our Lady of the Southern Cross. Sr Moira is pictured below in the group photo with an enlarged detail in the second photo on the right, in which she is in the centre.



See <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2024/april/documents/20240418-carmelitane-scalze.html> for the Holy Fathers address to Superiors of Delegates of the Disalced Carmelite nuns.

Sr Moira Reports on International Meeting at Nemi*

* Nemi is a town in the Alban Hills, about 30 kilometers southeast of Rome.

In recent years the Holy See initiated consultations and issued subsequent documents relating to contemplative nuns throughout the world. This has necessitated the revision of our current legislation, which for the vast majority of Carmelite nuns, is the *Constitutions* approved by John Paul II in 1991.

When our Father General, Fr Miguel, asked the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life for guidance on implementing these changes, the then secretary, Archbishop Carballo, tasked him with co-ordinating the revision, suggesting he call a meeting of representatives of all the Associations and Federations in the world to consider the best way to proceed. Following consultation with all the monasteries, Fr Miguel invited one representative from each Association or Federation to send a delegate to Rome for a five day meeting in April 2024.

I travelled to Singapore Carmel, where I met up with Sisters Agustina (Indonesia) and Angeline (representing Thailand) and we flew to Rome a few days early, staying at the Teresianum, along with other sisters. During those days, Fr. Chris Surinono, General Definitior (Indonesian Commissariat), and Fr. Ramiro Casale, General Delegate for the OCDS, arranged for us to visit St Peter's, including an early morning Mass at one of the little chapels in the Crypt. We were also invited to the Generalate for lunch one day. Another day one of our friars took us down into the Catacomb under the Basilica of San Pancrazio, next to the Teresianum. On the Sunday afternoon we filled a bus for the hour long journey to the SVD Centre at Nemi where Fr Miguel, Fr Rafal and other friars were awaiting us.



For the fifty-eight Sisters from all over the world - Japan being the only Association not represented - it was a 'Kairos' experience. There were four Spanish working groups, three English, one French and one Italian. The pivotal moment each day was the Mass, with different language groups taking turns to lead the singing, and the celebrant often repeating his homily in two or three languages. Under the sensitive facilitation of Sr Lidia, a Polish Carmelite Missionary, our meeting followed a Synodal process of deep listening and dialogue 'not to convince, but to understand'. We were taken back to the heart of our original Teresian charism, stripped of all the accumulations of the centuries, truly 'disalced'. Here we were united in the desire for our charism to be reborn in our time and various cultures. After prayerful discernment, it was decided to petition the Holy See for an International Commission of sisters - and the expertise of a few friars - to take the next step in drafting a new Constitutional text, which is more Teresian, more feminine. This will probably take years, with feedback from communities needing to be incorporated into the text

A highlight of the week was the private meeting with Pope Francis who urged us 'to discover new language, new ways and new means to give greater impetus to the contemplative life.' He invited us to Evangelical Hope, 'surrendering ourselves to God, learning to read the signs he gives us to discern the future, having courage to make certain bold and risky decisions, even without knowing where they will eventually lead.'

The challenge now is to incorporate the spirit of Nemi into all our communities - to become communities of discernment. At Nemi, the Holy Spirit has renewed the unity of Carmel. 'Let us walk together, Lord!'



Mary Immaculate Community, Sydney Celebrates 60th anniversary of Canonical Erection



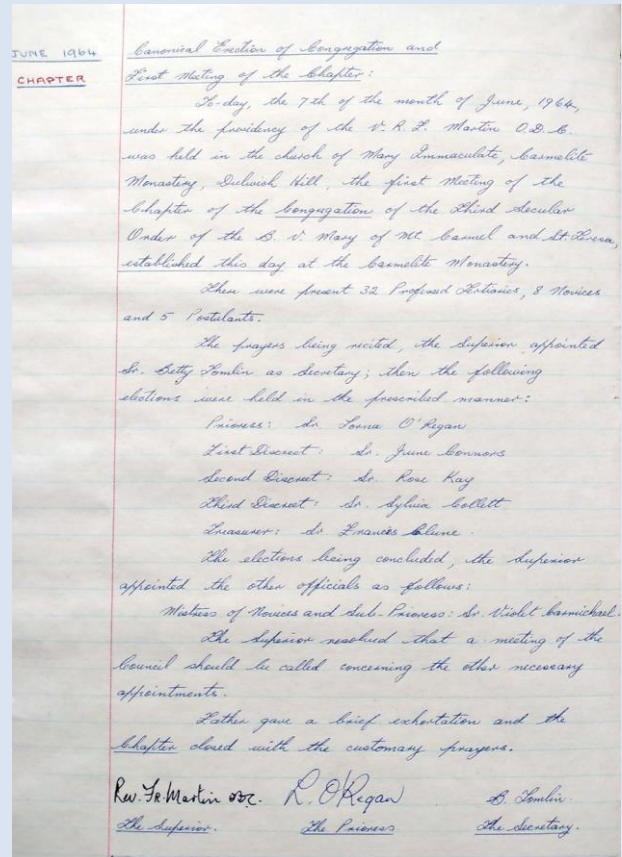
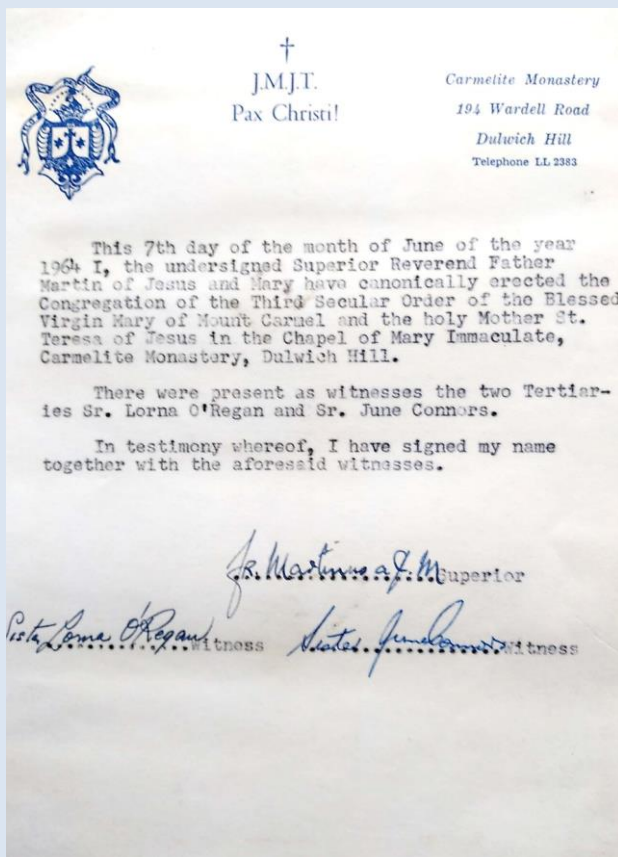
On Sunday, 7 July 2024, the OCDS Mary Immaculate Community, Sydney, celebrated the 60th anniversary of its canonical erection, which took place on 7 June 1964.



Fr Gerard Moran OCD celebrated Holy Mass for the community in the beautifully restored parish church of St Thomas of Canterbury, Lewisham, Sydney, which was followed by a festive afternoon tea. Ms Kerri Ninni, OCDS, a long-standing member of the community provided reflections on the early days of the Sydney OCDS community, which was promoted and fostered by the late Sr Margarite, OCD, an extern sister of the Carmelite Monastery, then located at the Dulwich Hill, where the OCDS community held its meetings. Jill Ditton, OCDS baked an



anniversary 'pilgrims' cake' decorated with the pilgrim cross of St James. Below are some documents concerning the canonical erection of the community and the first chapter meeting. Older OCDS members will remember Lorna O'Regan, OCDS and June Connors, OCDS, both now deceased, whose signatures as witnesses appear on the notification of erection, which was signed by Fr Martinus of Jesus and Mary, OCD (Fr. Anthony Kelleher, OCD).





Christchurch Carmelites Reflect on Holy Father's Letter on St Thérèse



Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation on St Thérèse of Lisieux brought to the fore her message of abandoning oneself to God's plan to find peace.

The Carmelite nuns in Christchurch were "delighted to hear he was writing this, and [were] appreciated it when it came". Sr Cushla of Mary Immaculate said that, as Carmelite nuns, they "are not given to expressing their opinions on a document publicly", but as this letter is about St Thérèse, she shared her own reflections as well as "those gleaned [from] the document", as well as "gleaned from some nuns here and in our wider region".

"[Pope Francis] directs the attention of the Church once again to this young woman whose message was 'a breath of fresh air'. Pope Francis, a long-time fan of St Thérèse, gathers up the main strands of her message and presents them, with an eye to the situation of the Church at this time," Sr Cushla said.

The letter captures the essence of the saint's spiritual life. "Her doctrine is universal and applicable for every person's spiritual journey, not just Carmelites, or even just Christians. [Pope Francis] illustrated the point by mentioning that Thérèse is presented by UNESCO as one of the most influential women of all time."

Paragraph 24 of the letter stood out for Sr Cushla: "If we are in the hands of a Father who loves us without limits, this will be the case come what may; we will be able to move beyond whatever may happen to us and, in one way or another, his plan of love and fullness will come to fulfilment in our lives."

"As I perceive it, I do see a lack of confidence in people, and a lack of trust. Our world is currently in a situation which must be rather frightening to people. To actually believe that God has a plan for us, and to abandon ourselves to that plan, is conducive to living in peace. So many are untrustworthy, and the media particularly seem to be moved by partiality and untruth. In our confused world, with all that might happen, this is a clarion call to not worry; all will be well. There's a plan behind all this, and there is a loving Father guiding us."

"I think a lot of the brokenness today comes about because men and women do not believe in this, so have to forge their own way. When a child feels truly loved, they have the security to make their way forward in the world, knowing that they have a basis to return to. If we had this confidence, the whole problem, it seems to me, would be resolved. We could operate from a place of unfathomable security, not living out of our insecurities."

"Another point Pope Francis drove home more than once is that St Thérèse's missionary/apostolic spirit – launched by the experience of praying for Pranzini and his last-minute conversion – is the polar opposite of a self-centred spirituality that habitually looks only inward". Sr Cushla expressed hope that people will read the exhortation and then read St Thérèse's autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*.

Carmelite Father Steven Payne, chair at the Center for Carmelite Studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, called St Thérèse, who, at 15 years old, entered the Carmel Convent of Lisieux, where she remained until she died of tuberculosis at the age of 24, one of the most popular saints of all time.

"Thérèse was always a profoundly reflective person, keenly aware of her weakness and limitations, despite her intense desire to become a saint. Little by little, however, she learned not to rely on her own efforts, but to entrust herself completely, like a child, to God's infinite merciful love, in what has come to be called the 'little way of spiritual childhood' or the 'little way of confidence and love.' Her writing speaks to people today. Although Thérèse lived in a time and cultural context very different from our own, contemporary readers still easily identify with the day-to-day struggles and hard-won insights she recounts in *The Story of a Soul* and are drawn to her warm personality."

He noted that different groups are attracted to her for different reasons, from young people drawn to her youth, to priests who appreciate her dedication to praying for them. "But, in general, I would say that, at a time when many Catholics believed that sanctity required grim determination, great deeds and heroic asceticism, she taught the 'little way' of total confidence in God's merciful love, accessible to everyone. Thérèse is approachable, a friend to all." Father Payne hopes



that the Pope's letter will lead to a re-reading of St Thérèse's works, and a more profound assimilation of her message. He also hopes it will inspire many to follow even more faithfully her "little way" of living the Gospel.



The letter might also inspire Catholics only vaguely familiar with St Therese to learn more about her. "I would guess that it would be the rare Catholic who 'doesn't know anything' about St Thérèse, since she has been an almost inescapable presence in the Church for over a century," he said, noting the statues or pictures of her in almost every Catholic church, school and rectory. "Still, those who only know the sentimental image of Thérèse will discover, through [the Pope's exhortation] that this youngest Doctor of the Church offers much more. She has a profound and timely message for facing the challenges of our times."

[Edited version of article by Rowena Orejana in *New Zealand Catholic* of 20 November 2023.]

Sister Matilda's 60th anniversary of profession



Sister Matilda of the Ormiston Carmel had an anticipated celebration of her Diamond Jubilee with her family in mid-January.

Fathers Frank and Prem concelebrated the Mass and Sister's family appreciated her presence during the day. The community celebrated her jubilee of profession on 25 February.

Below is an edited version of a [reflection by Sr Matilda](#), the full version of which can be viewed on the website of the Ormiston Carmelite Monastery of the Holy Spirit.

A Refugee Welcomed - Sister Matilda's Story

The plight of refugees and asylum seekers being held indefinitely in detention centres touches the heart of every Carmelite, called to intercede before the Lord for all victims of injustice. For Sister Matilda, herself a refugee as a child, it resonates with particular insistence.

I was born in Budapest, Hungary. Eighteen months later in December 1944, just hours before the communists arrived, we crossed Lake Balaton in a leaking boat, which Dad managed to paddle with a single oar. We had only two small cases with us as we fled Hungary, and my parents were aware that divine intervention accompanied us.

Our situation was fairly difficult when we began a new life here in Australia. One day after school I ran in to Mum telling her that Jesus had been a refugee too! Before long I was attending daily Mass at Auchenflower Carmel, just 10 minutes away, never dreaming I would one day enter there.

My desire to help people originally made me want to be a nurse. However the Lord upset my adventurous plans..... He called me to Carmel.

I had understood by then that people's needs were more complex than merely physical ones. Through prayer and reflection, I realised that Carmel did not thwart my desires to help, but actually fulfilled them. Of myself I could reach out only to a limited number of persons and could not penetrate to the ultimate causes of distress. But God could - if I opened myself to the creative Love longing to be allowed into our world to heal and transform.

The difficult years of poverty and loneliness I'd been through turned out to be a blessing, preparing me for the solitude of Carmel where 'God alone suffices.' While I don't limit my prayer intentions to refugees, I can naturally identify with their plight - whether they are on the move, in camps/detention centres, or struggling to build a new future. It hurts me as an Australian to see that they are not welcomed today as generously as our family was over 50 years ago. It's like an incurable wound, despite the many who do take newcomers to their heart and work for their interests. Yet the truth is that the dividing line between acceptance and rejection does not run through a population, but through my own heart. My personal efforts to be welcoming in my attitudes, thoughts and actions are not unimportant. I may be unaware of the consequences, but we are all linked to each other and affect each other - God's inclusive love can become operative through us.

The difficult years of poverty and loneliness I'd been through turned out to be a blessing, preparing me for the solitude of Carmel where 'God alone suffices.' As a child I had been thrilled to know Jesus was a refugee, and now in the mystery of our common union in him, I can be in solidarity with today's refugees when I meet lesser versions of their experiences: disappointment, hurt, poverty, rejection, helplessness, bewilderment, not belonging, vulnerability, indignity.... the list seems endless. I trust that Jesus can multiply my small offerings to nourish and support countless others.



The Eucharistic & Marian Life of Ven. Lucia of Jesus and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary OCD

From the letter *Sister Lucia of Jesus, a pathway of light* by Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD, Superior General: Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 16 July 2024.

The grace of her First Communion On 30 May 1913, Lucia received her First Communion, recording it in her Memoirs, as follows: «But he [the priest] had no sooner placed the Divine Host on my tongue than I felt an unalterable serenity and peace [...]. Then it seemed that in the depths of my heart, our dear Lord distinctly spoke these words to me: “The grace granted to you this day will remain living in your soul, producing fruits of eternal life”. I felt as though transformed in God!».⁸

Later, in a note from her Diary dated of the 13th of January of 1944, when remembering this event, Lucia mentions that she would have felt these same words deep in her soul, at the time she was making her consecration to Our Lady, on the eve of her First Communion: «I saw Your smile, O Mother! – I heard Your Yes! And I heard the sound of Your Voice: “My daughter, the grace that is given to you today will remain forever alive in your heart, producing fruits of eternal life”. It was not an apparition, but a presence. These words so indelibly engraved on my soul that they are still the bond of my union with God».⁹

It was, therefore, a Eucharistic and Marian grace, so memorable, that it is with the memory of her First Communion that Lucia begins her Diary: «The smile of my First Communion».¹⁰ It seems to be established in the sacramental grace of her First Communion, the first stone of the spiritual building that the Lord wanted to build.



The Apparition of 13 May 1917 After the Blessed Virgin Mary asked them if they wanted to offer themselves to God, Lucia – along with her cousins – generously gave her yes, which would be continually renewed until the end of her life. It is a continuous refrain in her writings: «I renew once again the yes I gave on 13 May 1917». When the Blessed Virgin Mary speaks to them for the first time, that reflection of the immense light that is God, they are moved by an interior impulse to fall on their knees and pray: «O most Holy Trinity, I adore You! My God, my God, I love You in the most Blessed Sacrament».¹¹ Her whole life is a development of this 13th day of May 1917.

The grace of 6 April 1951 until the transforming union: «I am his Living Tabernacle»

The Decree of her heroic virtues states that Lucia, «docile to the Holy Spirit, walked the path to the transforming union with the Eucharistic Jesus, the Spouse of her life». Until she entered Carmel, her entire relationship with the Eucharistic Jesus was established with Him present at the Tabernacle of the chapel, during the moments of Eucharistic Adoration. From that date, even though she continued to cultivate the attitude of adoration focused on the “outer Tabernacle”, her attention turned inward in a new way, in an interiorisation of the grace of the Sacrament, as the experience of an indwelling centered in the Eucharist. This is how she describes it in her Diary: «First Friday, I make the monthly retreat, I feel the presence of God. I feel that I am His living Tabernacle where He lives with Infinite mercy, in Three Persons. He possesses me and I am His, I repeat to Him in the depths of my soul: “O Most Holy Trinity, I adore You! My God, my God, I love you in the Blessed Sacrament.” And I feel the echo of these distant words: “The grace that is given to you today will always remain alive in your breast, producing fruits of eternal life”».

From this moment onwards, we can identify in Lucia an ever-growing conscience of inhabitation, the presence of the Triune God in her soul, united to the Eucharistic presence. In this process, she comes to experience, in the last stage of her inner journey, a true Eucharistic transformation, perceiving herself as a “host of love”. The novelty of her path is the fact that the experience of the inhabitation of God-Trinity in the soul is related to the Eucharist.

To express this grace, which occurred in 1951, Lucia goes back to the founding experiences of her childhood – the grace of her first Communion and the experience of the First Apparition on 13 May 1917.

In a note written in her *Diary* from 1985, when she already was in her full spiritual maturity reached in the 1980s, she writes: «“Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit... I offer You the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the Tabernacles of the world”. Wooden Tabernacles, marble Tabernacles, bronze Tabernacles, silver, gold, I don't know, living flesh Tabernacles, those like mine, so poor, where You dwell, where You live, communicating Your own Life to me, life of grace, life of forgiveness, life of power, life of being lost in You, hidden, light that merges into another Light from Whom it receives the radiance of its Being. This is the only way I want to live: in and for You!»¹²



On Friday, 2 August 2024, the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints opened the diocesan enquiry into an alleged miracle attributed to Blessed Marie-Eugène of the Child Jesus founder of the Institute Notre-Dame de Vie in Venasque (France).



⁸ Lucia of Jesus – *Fatima In Lucia's Own Words: Sister Lucia's Memoirs*. Second Memoir, 16th ed. Fátima: Secretariado dos Pastorinhos, 2007, p. 72-73.

⁹ Lucia of Jesus – *My Pathway*, vol. I, p. 1 [January 13th, 1944] apud Carmel of Coimbra – *A Pathway under the Gaze of Mary*, p. 38.

¹⁰ Lucia of Jesus – *My Pathway*, vol. I, p. 10 apud Carmel of Coimbra – *A Pathway under the Gaze of Mary*, p. 117.

¹¹ Lucia de Jesus – *Fatima in Lucia's Own Words: Sister Lucia's Memoirs*. Fourth Memoir, p. 176.

¹² Lucia of Jesus – *My Pathway*, vol. X, [December 22th, 1985]



My Journey to Carmel | Brother Nathanael of Jesus, OCD

Four years ago, Nathaniel Gregor of Christ the King in Ann Arbor entered the novitiate of the Discalced Carmelite Friars, whereupon he took the religious name of Brother Nathanael of Jesus. To help mark National Vocations Awareness Week, 5-11 November 2023, Brother Nathanael now charts the providential path that led him to Carmel. He writes:

“My vocation to Carmel began with a confusing experience. I was in formation with a good religious congregation. I had a good spiritual life of communal and personal prayer. My community was joyful and close-knit. I had good friendships, good mentors, good formators. I was participating actively in the community's fruitful and growing apostolate. Yet it was becoming confusingly clear that interiorly our Lord was working something different. While the community's prayer life was solid, I longed to spend more time with God. While I resonated with the community's zeal for souls, I desired to contribute to the ministry of the Church in a way flowing more directly out of prayer. Together with my spiritual director, I discerned that Jesus was calling me to a contemplative charism. The question remained: Which one?”

“When my temporary vows expired I returned home. I spent a year and a half working, praying, discerning. A visit to a good Benedictine community confirmed I was on the right track but wasn't quite what I felt drawn to. A priest and mentor had recently introduced me to St. John of the Cross. When I encountered his teachings, I felt someone understood my own longing for God. This pointed me in the direction of Carmel. When I read St. Teresa of Avila, I found her love for Christ and concern for the salvation of souls expressed something of the ideals my own heart had been longing for. I soon learned that with St. John of the Cross she founded her friars as a response to hearing about the great needs of the Church, in order to live the contemplative life and deepen it among the faithful through a ministry flowing from their life of prayer. I felt intrigued. I was soon making a discernment visit with the community of Carmelite friars at Holy Hill, Wisconsin. Not long after I started my application to postulancy.”

“On that first visit and continuing throughout my life in Carmel, I discovered another aspect of the Teresian charism that found an echo in my own heart: her emphasis on joyful charity in community. One picks up her Way of Perfection in order to learn how to love the God that one cannot see, and find that no one can do so without learning to love the brother or sister that one can see. The close community life St. Teresa envisioned for her friars and nuns is a joyous support while also a daily training in virtue and selfless love. To stand in God's and to love with Jesus's love, all in imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: This is our life in Carmel.”

To know more about the life of Brother Nathanael and the Discalced Carmelite Friars go to: <https://brightonfriarsocd.org/>



Br. Nathanael has a very important summer project. In the past year or so, he has been learning to make habits under the direction of Br. Augustine, our Provincial Taylor. Br. Augustine has been away in a nursing home for a few years. We miss him here a lot.

He has given much time to train Br. Nathanael and his efforts have paid off. See the habit Br. Nathanael is wearing. That is his first effort. It looks great. In the picture, he is in Br. Augustine's room with the four postulants from Holy Hill [see above]. The Postulants will need habits when they become novices soon. So, Br. Nathanael is charged with making four habits this summer. In the picture, Br. Augustine is teaching Nathanael how to measure their habits properly.





Extracts from: *In Mary a dawn of hope: in Mary our way of praying*

For the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Generals of the two branches of Carmel, the O.Carm Prior General and the Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites, issued a joint letter for the Year of Prayer.

The joy of the Magnificat

With the joy of Mary's Magnificat, we greet you, dear brothers and sisters in Carmel (O.Carm and O.C.D.): Peace and Hope!

Magnificat, the Carmelite charism

Carmelite prayer is woven with humility (land that waits), thanksgiving, voices that sing of the wonders that God has done in human history, a movement that is for us like an exodus, a liberation, a willingness to serve and to give totally of ourselves. Mary's canticle is like a summary of human history. It captures the essence of the spirituality of Carmel. It is possible to sing this canticle only when there is sincere communion among brothers and sisters, each one recognising in the other the presence of the Saviour. Authentic prayer comes about in the encounter we have with the dignity of the other person in whom God lives and the respect we have for that dignity.

In the womb of Mary

Carmel was born in the womb of Mary, from the inexhaustible Source of the God who called her to be the Mother of his Son, under the shadow of the Holy Spirit. We have been woven and shaped in the image of Jesus, as sons and daughters in the Son. We feel that in this constant being gestated and given birth in Mary, the vocation of every Carmelite becomes more and more authentic every day.

The disciple received her into his home

In the moment of greatest suffering, Jesus left us the best possible inheritance in gifting us his mother. The disciple received her into his home (*eis ta idia*), into the intimacy of his home, as the most precious gift not only for his home but for the depths of his interior life. This kind of intimacy is known to many Christians and many Carmelites, as the treasure of their lives. We live with the desire to awaken and renew this intimacy each day, as the source of unending light.

OCDS National Council Elections



After long delays to clarify the requisite voting procedures and protocols for compliance with the OCDS Constitutions and the OCDS National Statutes, the elections for National Council were held in person in April at Varroville to fulfil those requirements. Voting delegates were present from the following OCDS communities: Sydney, Melbourne, Varroville, Launceston, Brisbane and Samoa. Delegates from the communities in Townsville and Tonga were not able to attend. Outgoing councillors Barbara S (Varroville) and Chris F (Sydney) also attended, as did Fr Gerard Moran, OCD, our Regional OCDS Delegate from the friars. The outcome of the elections can be seen from the adjacent photo.

Back row from left to right: Helen A (Melbourne) Reserve Councillor; Lorraine Murphy (Varroville) Third Councillor.

Front row from left to right: Sandra W (Launceston) Second Councillor; Wendy R (Brisbane) Fourth Councillor; Sandra J (Melbourne) President; Brett D (Sydney) First Councillor.

From 2024, St Elisha, the successor to the Prophet, St Elijah, can be celebrated by Discalced Carmelites as an optional memoria on 14 June, the celebration having been approved for inclusion in the Discalced Carmelite calendar. This is also the day for the optional memoria of Blessed Maria Candida of the Eucharist.

Elisha, whose name means 'My God is Salvation,' succeeded the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 2:9–13) and performed numerous miracles (Sirach 48:12–14). These miracles include healing Naaman of leprosy (2 Kings 5:1–14), raising a child from the dead (2 Kings 4:32–37), and cleansing the impure waters of Jericho, making them pure and life-giving (2 Kings 2:19–22). The prophet Elisha died about 790 B.C. and was buried near Samaria, where in St. Jerome's time his tomb still existed.



Carmelites a shining light of faith in Tasmania for 75 years

Published: June 6, 2023, by Wendy Shaw

<https://hobart.catholic.org.au/2023/06/06/carmelites-a-shining-light-of-faith-in-tasmania-for-75-years/>



As the Carmelite community prepares to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its foundation in Tasmania, Prioress Mother Teresa Benedicta of the Cross OCD, reflects on the enduring power of prayer and outlines her hopes for the future of the community.

The presence of the Carmelite community in Tasmania has contributed richly to the faith lives of Catholics for 75 years.

The anniversary of the establishment of the Carmelite Monastery of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is being marked with a number of special events, including a Jubilee Mass on 17 June at the Carmelite Monastery in West Launceston.

It will be a time for prayer, reflection and thanksgiving for the six founding nuns, under the leadership of Mother Mary Teresa of Jesus as Prioress, who arrived in Launceston on 15 June, 1948, and those who have followed since then.

The founding six came from the Carmelite Monastery at Glen Osmond in South Australia, responding to a request from the then Archbishop of Hobart, Ernest Victor Tweedy. They established a new Carmel in Longford and later moved to West

Launceston in 1975, to be nearer to the priests and people.

Current Prioress Mother Teresa Benedicta of the Cross OCD said: "All the essential aspects of our life are the same as they were 75 years ago: a life of prayer understood and lived as intimate friendship with Christ, and lived in a delicate blending of silence and solitude, community life, manual work and recreation.

"Any charism can only be lived in the present time, so of course, life for us now involves some aspects of modern life that were not around in 1948 – computers, for example. And the type of work we do has changed insofar as we are no longer in a rural setting as at Longford where farm work was dominant. But the similarities would far outweigh the differences."



The Carmel has provided enduring support, encouragement and prayers for the Catholic community in Tasmania. Mother Teresa Benedicta said: "I hope the presence of Carmel in our State has helped Tasmanians to gain a deeper love for prayer and a greater faith in the power of prayer in their lives, as well as a deep sense that they are not alone on their journey of faith; we are here praying for them, supporting and encouraging them to seek intimacy with God in the midst of their busy lives, as they grow in holiness in their own vocations."

Looking to the future, the Prioress hopes for new Carmelite vocations to grow an ever-stronger community and presence of prayer in Tasmania. "I also hope that coming generations of Tasmanians will discover the beauty of the Carmelite charism through contact with us Carmelite spirituality is based on "the beautiful dogma of the indwelling of the

Blessed Trinity in our souls", the Prioress added. "We seek to live in a deepening awareness of God's presence in our lives, in friendship with Him, and from that communion of love with Him, to channel His love and mercy to others through prayer. The Carmelite seeks to live with and for God alone, but in so doing, she is deeply inserted into the very heart of the Church's mission to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to all people.

"Our life is centred in the celebration of daily Mass, and flows into praise, adoration and thanksgiving offered to God through the Divine Office prayed in Choir seven times a day, as well as the distinctive feature of St Teresa's Carmels, two hours of silent prayer, one morning and the other in the evening. As well as seeking union with God in our own lives, Carmelite prayer has an essentially apostolic focus, especially praying for the Church, the Holy Father, and very specially our own archbishop and priests, as well as the needs and intentions of all people, especially here in Tasmania."

Catholics are encouraged to share the Carmelite life by: enrolling in Our Lady's Perpetual Lamp Association; joining the Auxiliary mailing list; requesting prayers; and wearing the brown scapular, which is made and sold at the monastery. See <https://launcestoncarmel.com/> for details.

Mother Teresa Benedicta added: "We wish to express our deep gratitude to all our friends and benefactors whose generosity and support has enabled our community to take root in Tasmania during these 75 years, and which continues to help us live our hidden life of prayer today, relying on divine providence for all our needs."



Jubilee celebrations

The 75th anniversary of the Foundation of Carmel in Tasmania will be marked with a Jubilee Mass of Thanksgiving, celebrated by Archbishop Julian Porteous, at 9.30am on Saturday, 17 June at the Carmelite Monastery, West Launceston.

This coincides with both the Solemnity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the anniversary of death of founding prioress Mother Mary Teresa of Jesus, who was from the well-known Holyman family of Launceston.

Prioress Mother Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, OCD said: "In the spirit of the jubilee, there will be a rare opportunity for those who attend the Mass to greet our Sisters in the visitors' parlour after Mass which will also avail us the opportunity to thank personally our friends and benefactors for their unwavering support."



The community will spend time over the jubilee weekend reflecting with gratitude on the past 75 years.

There are also plans for special Masses on the foundation day, 15 June.

"We hope to have our regular morning Mass as a Sung Votive Mass of Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest, as a way of highlighting the special place prayer for priests has in our charism, and also a private Mass later in the day in our burial vault offered for our 17 deceased Sisters who have made an outstanding contribution to our community over these 75 years," Mother Teresa Benedicta said.

"We are also hoping to have a Holy Hour for vocations in our chapel that evening."

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**News from Brisbane OCDS community**

**MY DAY BEGINS**

Do not let anxiety  
sabotage your search for God.

You know well  
that when you search for something too anxiously  
you can come upon it a hundred times  
without ever seeing it.

Anxiety masquerades  
as true spiritual energy,  
even as it wearies our mind,  
drains our enthusiasm,  
and deadens our soul.

It pretends to stir up our souls,  
but all it does is dampen our spirit.

It pushes us until  
we stumble over our own feet.

We need to be on the watch for this impostor  
that would have us believing  
that our spiritual life  
depends completely on our efforts,

The Brisbane OCDS had their annual retreat at Santa Teresa Spirituality Centre Ormiston recently.

It was very life giving - a retreat with a difference with Fr Frank Jones our spiritual assistant. He shared a lot about his missionary experiences and tied them up with many of the doctor saints incl our Carmelite ones.



The theme was really about getting back to basics in our spiritual life and the importance of being real.'

On the left is one of the quotes shared from St Francis de Salles( 30 days with a spiritual teacher).'







**VENERABLE ANN OF JESUS WILL BE BEATIFIED FOLLOWING A MIRACLE OBTAINED BY HER INTERCESSION**



Ana de Lobera y Torres (1545-1621), better known by her religious name, Sister Ana de Jesús, helped expand the Discalced Carmelites to France and Belgium. More than 400 years after her death, on the solemnity of St John of the Cross, Pope Francis has recognized a miracle attributed to Ana de Jesús, who was a spiritual daughter of St. Teresa of Ávila and a friend to St. John of the Cross. In a decree signed on 14 December 2023, Pope Francis authorised the beatification of Ven. Ana de Jesús.

The adjacent painting is from the monastery of the Discalced Carmelites, Brussels, ca. 1650.

Ana was orphaned at the age of 9 and in 1569 in the city of Toledo was introduced to St. Teresa, who saw Ana's virtues and invited her to join the Carmelites. Ana and Teresa went on to form a strong bond and even shared a cell in the Salamanca monastery while Teresa was writing *The Book of the Foundations*.

The following brief biography of Ann of Jesus by Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. is from *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila* (ICS Publications).

*Born in Medina del Campo, she entered St. Joseph's in Avila, but made her profession in Salamanca on 22 October 1571. Teresa brought Anne with her to be prioress for the new foundation in Beas in 1575.*

*In 1582, Anne travelled to Granada, accompanied by St. John of the Cross, to make a foundation for nuns there. It was to her that John dedicated his commentary on the Spiritual Canticle (1584). In 1586, after Teresa's death, again accompanied by John of the Cross, she made a foundation in Madrid. While prioress there she enlisted the help of Luis de León to serve as editor for the publication of the works of St. Teresa, which appeared in 1588.*

*Falling into disfavour with Nicolás Doria, the vicar general of the discalced friars and nuns, for having obtained a brief from Sixtus V stating that no one has authority to change or modify the nuns' constitutions (given in Alcalá a year before Teresa's death), Anne was deposed as prioress in Madrid. After Doria died, she was elected prioress in Salamanca in 1596.*

*At the head of five Carmelite nuns from Spain, and in response to the urgent appeals of Pierre de Bérulle, she made a foundation in Paris in 1604. Accompanying Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew on the foundation in Pontoise in 1605, she some months later made a foundation in Dijon. But noting that Bérulle held firmly to his jurisdiction over the discalced Carmelite nuns in France and was determined to direct them in accord with his own plans, she went to the Spanish Netherlands at the beginning of 1607.*

*Under the jurisdiction of the discalced Carmelite friars, she made foundations in Brussels (1607), Louvain (1607), and Mons (1608). In 1614, she was struck down by illness and for eight years underwent painful bodily sufferings: sore throats, pleurisy, sciatica, paralyses, dropsy, tumours, and burning throughout her entire body.*



For more on Ven. Ann of Jesus and the other collaborators of St. Teresa of Ávila, see *The Heirs of St. Teresa of Ávila: Defenders and Disseminators of the Founding Mother's Legacy* by ICS Publications.

Ann of Jesus died in Brussels where her beatification will take place on 29 September 2024.

*Left: Ann of Jesus, St Teresa, Ann of St Bartholomew: from Stella Maris Church, Haifa, Israel.*

Towards the end of the 18th century, Madame Louise de France, Prioress of the Carmel of St. Denis, writing to Pope Pius VI, recommended to him with most filial earnestness the causes of Mary of the Incarnation, Anne of Jesus, and Anne of St. Bartholomew, wishing to see all three raised to the altar.

Pius VI made this reply: "We recognize more and more how the interests of religion touch you, and that you live only for the glory of God. We will beg of Him to guide us by His spirit of counsel and wisdom to do that which He wills of us for His glory, for, you know full well, the issue of an affair of such consequence to the Church is not in the power of any human will." Soon all three will have been beatified.

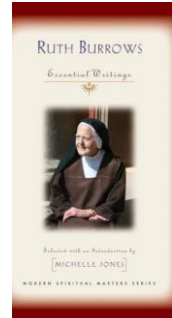


Sister Rachel Gregory OCD, who wrote under the pen name Ruth Burrows, died recently at age 100. She was a nun of the Quidenham Carmelite Monastery in the UK. Thanks be to God for her life of surrender to God's love in trust and for teaching us to do the same.

Her *Essential Writings* by Michelle Jones, the webmaster at *Carmelite.com*, and published by Orbis Books

Below is an edited article from 1987 by Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, the original of which can accessed via this link:

<https://ronrolheiser.com/sitting-at-a-mystics-feet/>



**SITTING AT A MYSTIC'S FEET** by Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI - 1 August 1987

A certain mystique surrounds Ruth Burrows. Although she is one of the foremost spiritual authors of our time, very few people know her real name or know where she lives. It is known that she is a Carmelite nun, living somewhere in England. In her books, she is most careful to disguise places, dates and names. Nowhere do you see on the covers or dust jackets of her books particulars regarding her person, age, place of residence, involvements, and so on. She prefers a certain anonymity. She is a Carmelite, trying to live the hidden life of Christ. More importantly, there is a mystique about her because she is, in some circles, much to her own chagrin, regarded as a mystical writer. In our age, that kind of insinuation creates its own mystique, usually a false and harmful one. Burrows rejects the label "mystic," especially as the word is commonly understood. Because of the nature of some of her writings, that title is destined to plague her. She does deserve some extraordinary label since her writings are, in fact, exceptional. She is one of the great, and deep, spiritual writers of our time. She is the author of more than a half dozen books, but is best known for three of them: her autobiography, *Before the Living God*, which, perhaps more so even than Merton's, *Seven Storey Mountain*, traces the struggles of a soul to come to single-mindedness in Christ; her *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer*, with its novel and systematic outline of the spiritual life; and her recent, *Ascent to Love*, which is the best commentary in English on John of the Cross.

I offer you here a small smorgasbord of quotes from her:

**On anger and bitterness**

*Bitterness is an infallible indication of selfishness. The heart of trouble is the craving for attention, to have one's own way.*

*At the heart of anger lies the rebellion against what is truly human.*

**On suffering and desolation**

*In paschal suffering, we cling to God, in neurotic suffering we cling to ourselves. In clinging to God we experience Gethsemane, in clinging to ourselves we experience neurosis. Christianity must never be allowed to degenerate into 'Cross-tianity.' We must never make an ideology out of suffering. That is the constant temptation, to think ourselves superior or deep because we suffer. Everything that can be said of consolation applies equally to suffering. True religious experience erases all sense of being special and superior, even in the area of suffering. Suffering is not an infallible indication of growth, it can just as easily indicate neuroses. We must be careful not to cast a mystical garb over indigestion.*

**On sloth and laziness**

*I am slothful when I feel that the total demands and promises of God are not for me and therefore I do not hold myself responsible in failing to meet them.*

**On pride and honesty**

*I am shocked to see how little contrition, searing contrition, features in our living and dying. Only a saint can afford to die the death of a saint. The rest of us need to go out as sinners in our own eyes and in the eyes of our entourage, and our peace must come from trust in God's goodness, not in the complacent but unexpressed assumption that I have lived for God. The way we worry about spiritual failures, our inability to pray, our distractions, our ugly thoughts, and the temptations we can't get rid of...it's not because God is defrauded, for he isn't, it's because we are not so beautiful as we would like to be.*

Given all this, it was with considerable nervousness that I ventured into the ungrilled parlor of a small monastery in rural England. What kind of person would I meet? A writer larger than her words? A spiritual figure more powerful than her books? None of these questions now seems important. I met a woman of about 60, whose face, person, and words reflect everything her books talk about: Faith in God; exceptional prophetic vision; humor; the choice for life; the difficulties and pain in that choice, a pain that is not neurotic but which steadies, warms, and matures the heart; the importance of the ordinary, of the hidden life of Jesus, of the martyrdom of obscurity where Christ is all in all.

There is something deeply easeful in her person and manner. I was soon very much at ease. Never did I open my briefcase with its carefully prepared interview sheet. We talked of many things, the church, religious life, John of the Cross, the Carmelite reform, her ideas as expressed in *Guidelines*, and of her novices (her real pride and joy). Her books are strong. Everywhere they stare death, desolation, and chaos boldly in the face. It was not surprising to me; therefore, that the person I met radiated all that is antithetical to death, spiritually, intellectually and emotionally. Like her books, her person exudes consolation, hope, life and energy. Reading Ruth Burrows, or meeting her, makes you realize more than ever that our Christian faith is far from dead. We are very much alive!





Below is an edited article from 2019 by Fred Sanders, the original of which can be accessed via this link: [Ruth Burrows: Our Nothingness as a Gateway to the Trinity](#).

## Ruth Burrows: Our Nothingness as a Gateway to the Trinity

by Fred Sanders on April 25, 2019

### [Ruth Burrows: Our Nothingness as a Gateway to the Trinity](#)

Humans are not nothing. But fundamentally we are made from nothing, and deep down, we know it. At least some of us do.

Ruth Burrows knows that humans are poised between God and the nothing out of which we were made, the nothing that is always with us in the form of weakness, precarity, vulnerability, and, in short, essential poverty. “Human poverty” is the phrase Burrows prefers for this state: not financial poverty, that is, but the poor state of being limited and endangered creatures. And since our universal experience of being creatures is of being fallen creatures, we have no direct access to what an experience of finitude would be if it were not an experience of fallen finitude.

Burrows is an acutely sensitive experimenter of this condition, and has written about it for years. If you don’t know the writings of Ruth Burrows, now is an auspicious time to get acquainted: there is a brand new, handy collection of her *Essential Writings* (Orbis, 2019) in the *Modern Spiritual Masters* series. “Ruth Burrows” is the pen name of Sister Rachel (Gregory), a Carmelite in the monastery at Quidenham in the county of Norfolk, England. Rowan Williams describes her as “one of the most challenging and deep exponents in our time of the Carmelite tradition – and indeed of the fundamental Gospel perspective.” And Sister Wendy (late, lamented BBC art nun!) ranks her writings alongside Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, and Theresia of Lisieux.

In a number of recent publications, [Michelle Jones](#) has been exploring Burrows’ spiritual writings from a theological angle. Her 2018 article “The Riches of our Human Poverty: Insights into the Mystery of the Trinity from Ruth Burrows” (*The Way* 57:3 [July 2018], 49-56) caught my eye. It draws out from Burrows’ writings her insight into the correlation between the poverty of human existence and the fullness of Trinitarian grace.

Here is the key insight: “Human poverty is a deep mystery that plunges us into Trinitarian depths” (Burrows, *Love Unknown*, 2011, p. 11).

Jones explains,

*Burrows’s understanding of the mystery of the Trinity originates in her lived experience – in particular her vivid experience of ‘human poverty,’ by which she does not mean material poverty, but rather the fundamental contingency and vulnerability of the human condition. For her it is our own essential nothingness that is a gateway into the life of the Trinity. (p. 49)*

Biographically speaking, Burrows was “vividly aware since her earliest childhood of the terrifying reality of humanity’s inescapable contingency and the fundamental chasm between God and humankind” (50). She experienced this as the anxiety and self-loathing that are common enough in our world, but she was always one of those highly sensitive people who felt it more deeply. And she began to analyze it spiritually. This is where a Trinitarian dynamic begins to register in her thought:

*Burrows has embraced the truth that her own nothingness is a pure capacity for the Holy Spirit to articulate Jesus’ ‘Yes’ to the Father in her. So, in one of those paradoxes of which God seems so fond, the desert of Burrows’s interior life has blossomed into a vivid illustration of the fundamental gospel message that we cannot save ourselves; but as dependent, loved children, we are scooped up into the divine life (50).*

Burrows struggled for years in the monastery with the besetting feeling of an empty spiritual life: either no feeling at all, which is distressing enough, or the feeling of desolation and abandonment. Her testimony is not about breaking through that to a higher level of spiritual joy and comfort ... at least not directly. The breakthrough, such as it was, was oblique. Her fundamental insight seems to be that there is already something happening in the weakness and emptiness she feels when approaching God, or when hoping to receive any comfort from God. That something, rightly understood, is an experiential echo of Jesus’ absolute reliance on the Father.

I don’t know what Burrows has to say about the eternal relation of Father and Son with the Spirit in life of the blessed Trinity above all worlds; I’ve only read a little bit of Burrows over the years, and have read more for reflection than for analytic comprehensiveness. Perhaps she doesn’t write about theology proper, since her vocation lies on the more experiential side of spiritual guidance. I hope she would affirm divine



blessedness, and recognize that the Son's openness to the Father is a perfectly realized event of absolute unity. From that paternal fountain of blessedness comes the mission of the Son who, always perfectly receiving from the Father, comes to us as a fellow-human participating in our finitude in a fallen world. As Jones puts it, this time in her book *The Gospel Mysticism of Ruth Burrows Going to God with Empty Hands* (ICS Publications, 2018), according to Burrows "Jesus lived out his perfect receptivity to the Father's love by embracing unto death the sheer poverty of the human condition" (28).

A Christian, praying in great weakness from a frail humanity, is aligning with the incarnate Son who aligned himself with us. He lived out in our common humanity the Trinitarian receptivity of Son to Father, showing how it could be done in human nature. When we experience the besetting failures and weaknesses of human life, and confess that we are utterly enmeshed in them, it is possible to perceive in those very weaknesses the kind of dependence Jesus had toward the Father.

"Our daily experience of imperfection," as Jones paraphrases Burrows' message, "can take us into the life of the Trinity." Or, in Burrows' own words,

*There is One who always did his Father's will; who offers the Father perfect love and worship. And this One is the Father's gift to us. From the shelter of the Son's heart we go on trying, with him, to do always what pleases the Father; but at the same time never wanting to feel we are becoming holy and good, without spot or wrinkle. Never are we more truly in Christ Jesus than when, deeply conscious of our sinfulness, we peacefully rest in the heart of our Redeemer. (Living Love, 22-23)*

This sentence seems to capture it all: "from the shelter of the Son's heart we go on trying, with him, to do always what pleases the Father." By itself, the phrase "trying...to do...what pleases the Father" could be merely the voice of the law. And indeed, one does get the sense that Burrows' particular message about resting in Christ is a message that only has its powerful, catalytic effect for people who have long been attempting to please God by their religious duties. As a Protestant evangelical reader, I often find myself wondering how Burrows can be presenting, as a spiritual breakthrough, what I generally take to be the very first steps of the life in Christ: trust in salvation by grace (alone, may I add?). On the other hand, what a wonderful thing it is to hear this message of recumbence on Jesus as savior, shared as a hard-won and new-treasured thing, and spoken with an overwhelming awareness of the relief and excitement that comes from it.

And the rest of the sentence, wrapped around "go on trying to do what pleases the Father," holds the grace: we do this "from the shelter of the Son's heart," and we do it "with him." What the Son's heart shelters us from, apparently, is crass righteousness by works. We strive to please God without thinking that we are establishing a track record, or a full account, or worrying that we are failing to do so. "From the shelter of the Son's heart, we go on..."

This recognition of grace, of deep need and present supply, is what led Jones to title her 2018 book *The Gospel Mysticism of Ruth Burrows*. What Burrows is bearing experiential witness to, in her own spiritual idiom, is simply the gospel.

Again drawing out the Trinitarian reference, Jones quotes Stephen Sundborg, SJ, who wrote in his dissertation on Burrows,

*Her discovery and surrender to Jesus changes her trust in God by making it the trust of Jesus in the Father. The trust is still utter but it is no longer blind or without support because it is a participation in the trust of Jesus who alone knows and reveals the Father. (29)*

Jones concludes her article, "The Riches of our Human Poverty: Insights into the Mystery of the Trinity from Ruth Burrows," with this summary of the insights we can gain from this modern spiritual writer:

*For Burrows, we have been created to share in the life of the Trinity, and Jesus is our way into this communion of love. The Spirit can utter Jesus' definitive self-emptying 'Yes' to the Father's love within us in so far as we lay aside our attempts to be spiritually impressive and to purchase divine favour through our own merits. So our manifold experiences of fragility and inadequacy – so naturally abhorrent, but so rich in divine potential – must be resolutely embraced and surrendered to God in empty-handed trust. As we try to let God love us within the raw reality of who we are, we may not feel that we are sharing, through the Spirit, in Jesus' intimate communion with the Father; we may not feel that our poverty is plunging us into the Trinitarian depths. But Ruth Burrows assures us that this is the glorious truth – if only we have the eyes to see (56).*





## St Elijah Community - Varroville



Between 31 May and 2 June, the Varroville OCDS of Saint Elijah community attended our annual retreat at Mt Carmel, Varroville, presented by our Spiritual Assistant, Father Ferdinand de la Cruz OCD. As Sunday was the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Father Ferdie led us through three meditations under the title of “Self-Emptying Love, based on Jesus' kenosis (Philippians 2:5-11) and various passages from Genesis, highlighting:

- Receptivity: Despite human shortcomings and resistance, God remains open to us.
- Restraint: God's love compels Him not to force Himself upon us, but to respect our freedom.
- Resilience: Like a mountain stream, God's purpose/will persists, finding new ways to reach us even when we create obstacles.

Father Ferdie was able to present these deep mysteries to us in a way that we could access. His gentle way of communicating made it all the more impactful and inspirational. His Carmelite heart was evident to all, and we came away with much to ponder and put into practice.

Some had travelled far to be with us (Brisbane, Old Bar, Broulee, Bathurst and from throughout the Sydney basin) and a number of our Special Members upheld us in prayer. The retreat was well attended, very well received and we are indeed grateful for God's many blessings over the weekend.



On 4 February 2024, the OCDS Community of St Elijah in Varroville elected a new Council

- President: Susan Bucknell OCDS
- First Councillor: George Morkel OCDS
- Second Councillor: Matthew Delasey OCDS
- Third Councillor: Irene Bajda OCDS
- Reserve Councillor: Diane Zerafa OCDS

The following appointments were also made:

- Director of Formation: Barbara Stenning OCDS
- Secretary: Matthew Delasey OCDS
- Treasurer: Diane Zerafa OCDS
- Infirmarian: Beverley Curtis OCDS.

From Left to Right: Diane Zerafa; Susan Bucknell; Irene Bajda; George Morkel; Matthew Delasey and our Spiritual Assistant, Father Ferdinand de la Cruz OCD.

Three Enquirers were received into Formation:

- Julie Redican
- Nellie Rafidi
- Christina Walker

In the photo on the right: from left to right are: Diana Zerafa OCDS (their facilitator); Julie Redican; Nellie Rafidi, Susan Bucknell OCDS (formerly Director of Formation and now President); and Christina Walker.

At our meeting on 3 March, Lorraine Murphy OCDS treated us to a talk on the history of our St Elijah Community. She provided insights from the first meeting at Varroville on 2 July 1980, to the Community being canonically erected on 3 March 1991, and key moments that followed. Her presentation was supplemented with thoughts from some of our other original members and was a great blessing, giving perspective to all those who have come after.





## Sr. Marie-Chrissie OCD was inspired to religious life from a young age



Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB greets newly solemnly professed Sr Marie Chrissie OCD, on Saturday 20 January at the Carmelite Monastery of the Holy Trinity, Nedlands. Photo: Michelle Tan.

On Saturday 20 January 2024, at the Nedlands Monastery, Sr Marie Chrissie of the Holy Trinity OCD made her solemn profession as a Disalced Carmelite.

Sr Marie-Chrissie was born in Sabah, East Malaysia. “I was inspired to become a religious sister from a young age. My mother used to read to me about the saints and taught me to pray and love Jesus.”

“I was so fascinated by religious communities that I decided to write to several of them and asked to be admitted to the religious life at the age of 12, thinking I was old enough to serve God like them,” she said. However, they told me to continue my studies for the time being. Nevertheless, what inspired me were their words of encouragement and that they were praying for me.”

Speaking during his homily, Archbishop Costelloe explained that in our Catholic tradition, reaching right back to the early centuries of the Church’s, existence, religious life has always focused on two things. He said: “The first is the profession of the three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. The second, for most religious orders and congregations, is the call to live this way of life within a community. These three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience are often referred to as the evangelical or gospel counsels. This means, firstly, that they come to us from the teaching and example of Jesus. It also means, of course, that they are not expected from every Christian, at least in the sense that not everyone is called to life in a religious order or congregation.”

Sr Marie-Chrissie explained that she felt her call to religious life become stronger over the years, following her initial enquiry. “When I visited the Carmelites in Malaysia, I felt there was something special there in the life of the enclosure. There is a sort of power inside that flows out and I could feel it. This hidden life to me was something beautiful. There are so many religious congregations, but the Carmelites gave me this aspect of prayer which I related to and found so important.” She added that though they may be a small community, how they live their lives more closely to the Gospel by loving God and neighbour, is at the heart of the community. “We know that through our life here living in prayer, we can offer something to the Church. Not just locally, but to the wider Church in the world. Just like the example of St Thérèse of Lisieux and her little way – doing simple little things with great love, and having the intention of doing everything for Jesus, no matter how small, because there’s a value in everything; that’s how we contribute to the Church.”

Archbishop Costelloe explained that to live in poverty of spirit, conducting all our relationships with sensitivity, care and respect for each other, and always seeking to discover the will of God and put it into practice: this is the vocation of every Christian. “But because we are all fragile and weak, and can easily push God to one side and then find ourselves wandering away from him, God calls some people, as today he calls Sister Marie Chrissie, to accept the challenge and the privilege of living in such a way within a religious community, in this way becoming a constant and powerful reminder to us all that the values to which she has committed her whole life are values which the Lord is calling the rest of us, in our own particular situations, to place at the heart of our lives too. “Today, with her solemn profession, Sr Marie Chrissie confirms her desire to be for all of us a kind of sacrament – a visible and powerful sign – of something which lies at the very heart of the identity of the Church as a community of disciples of Jesus: that every single one of us is called to commit ourselves to the way of Jesus – the way of poverty and simplicity, the way of respectful and life affirming relationships with others, and the way of obedience to all that God asks of us each day of our life,” he said.



Malaysian born Sr. Marie Chrissie OCD, centre, stands behind the grill following her solemn profession as a Disalced Carmelite, Saturday 20 January 2024 at the Carmelite Monastery Nedlands. Photo: Michelle Tan.

This is a redacted version of an [article in \*The Record\*](#) from the Archdiocese of Perth from 1 February 2024.





### ‘Encounter Carmel’ in Albury



For several years, there has been a ‘Carmelite Reading Group’ meeting in the Albury parish organised by Gary (Gaetano) Carcarello OCDS, a Special Member of the St John of the Cross OCDS Community in Melbourne. They have been hoping for some time to move forward with exploring whether the formation of new OCDS community in Albury might be viable.

Sandra, the President of the OCDS National Council, met with the Carmelite Reading Group on 20 July 2024, the Feast of St Elijah the Prophet, Father of Carmelites. Those present were very interested in the writings of the Carmelite saints and in the Discalced Carmelite Order. Gary made a very informative display of books, brochures and other materials. The Reading group helped to set up the display and prepared a delicious afternoon tea.

The 'Encounter Carmel Meeting' followed. About 25 people attended along with Fr. Peter Murphy, the parish priest Fr. Michael Perry, assistant priest of the Lavington (north Albury) parish. The parish of Jindera (St Mary's church and St Mary Mackillop's school, where Gary is Vice Principal) is amalgamated with Lavington parish. Sandra gave a talk about the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites and Gary spoke about his journey in Carmel and how he incorporates Carmelite vocation into his own life with family and work duties. A question and answer section followed. Gary made some very suitable background PowerPoint slides. (Right: Gary Carcarello with this wife and youngest son.)



### Carmelite Retreats at Varroville



- 23-25 August
- 25-30 August
- 7 September
- 5 October
- 18-20 October
- 2 November
- 7 December

- How do I pray? Am I doing it the right way? - Fr. Ransom Rapirap, OCD. **This retreat is now full.**
- Turning to God - Fr. Aloysius Rego, OCD. **This retreat is now full.**
- The Face of Mercy (*Misericordiae Vultus* of Pope Francis) - Dr Robert Gascoigne.
- St. Thérèse's Poverty of spirit: the Path to Holiness - Fr. Ferdinand de la Curz, OCD.
- Themes in the Spiritual Life - Bishop Greg Homeming, OCD. **This retreat is now full.**
- O my God, Trinity whom I adore - Elizabeth Flynn.
- Looking at the Heart of St. Joseph: an Advent Recollection - Fr. Ransom Rapirap, OCD.



Bookings at: [bookings@mtcarmel.com.au](mailto:bookings@mtcarmel.com.au) - 0435 857 690