

Lay Carmelite Formation Program



“Brothers on Fire”



Written by:
Penny-Jude Watkins, T.O.Carm.
Province of St. Elias

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DEDICATION

**This program is lovingly dedicated to the Carmelite Friars
of St. Albert Priory;**

Father Sean Reid, O.Carm. (Deceased)
(The Province's Poet Laureat)

Father Albert Daley, O.Carm. (Deceased)
(Who sang like an angel and taught me to lament like Jeremiah)

Father Leo Broniszewski, O.Carm. (Deceased)
(My friend, who visited our Lay Carmelite formation sessions and said:
"This is like Carmelite College!")

Father Vincent McDonald, O.Carm.
(Who continually prays for the intentions of our Lay Carmelite Community)

Father Christopher Byrne, O.Carm.
(Who has a tremendously long history of support for Lay Carmelites)

Father Dan Lynch, O.Carm.
(Who walks around the Priory without his shoes on,
with grumbling on his lips, and twinkling in his eyes)

Brother Jim "The Duke" Andrews, O.Carm.
(Who supports 100% the work of Spike, Ruby, Caeli, and Babette)

Father Esteban Rodriguez, O.Carm
(Whose devotion to Mary is infectious, and who
has more beautiful statues than anyone I know)

Father Francis Amodio, O.Carm., Prior
(Who trusts the potential and capabilities of Lay Carmelites more than anyone else I know,
and knows every dollar store on the eastern seaboard)

Father Brocard Connors, O.Carm.
(Who has guided the Lay Carmelites of the
Province of St. Elias with quiet charm and dynamic Carmelite Spirit)

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for his painstaking editing and for what seems to this grateful Lay Carmelite, his overwhelming
zeal for the Lord, God of hosts.

MARIA

Preface

Ongoing formation is a way for Lay Carmelites to continue their growth in Carmelite spirituality. The program “Brothers on Fire” was developed as a Phase III Twelve-Month Formation Program. However the program format is such that individual chapters can be used for the ongoing formation portion of monthly Community Meetings, such as a series on Elijah, a series on Carmelite Mysticism: Historical Sketches, a book-study series on Prophet of Fire, or an independent self-study program for the Lay Carmelite who wants more of what the Carmelite family has to offer.

The program includes study notes and study questions for all participants. The questions relate to each of the sections in the chapters, but we have included for each lesson a question for personal reflection. It is hoped that this question, in particular, will assist in facilitating discussion at each session. At this point in each session, remember the words of Stephen Covey, from his Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

Each participant also requires Prophet of Fire by Kilian Healy, O.Carm.; and Carmelite Mysticism: Historical Sketches by Bl. Titus Brandsma, O.Carm. Assigned chapters from these works will be given for each session. Occasionally, two chapters will be combined into one lesson.

Lesson Schedule

Book(s)	Lesson	Chapter/Lecture	Chapter/Lecture Title
<u>Prophet of Fire</u>	1	Introduction and Chapter 1	Elijah Confronts King Ahab
		Chapter 2	Elijah Hides in the Wadi Cherith
		Chapter 3	Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath
		Chapter 4	Elijah’s Victory on Mount Carmel
		Chapter 5	Elijah’s Flight to Horeb
		Chapter 6	The Zeal of Elijah
		Chapter 7	The Call of Elisha
		Chapter 8	Naboth’s Vinyard
		Chapter 9	Elijah and King Ahaziah
<u>Prophet of Fire</u>	8	Chapter 10	The Assumption of Elijah
<u>Carmelite Mysticism: Historical Sketches</u>		Introduction and Lecture I	In the Spirit and Strength of Elias
<u>Carmelite Mysticism: Historical Sketches</u>	9	Lecture II	The Hermits of Carmel
		Lecture III	The Order Flourishing in the Holy Land
Book(s)	Lesson	Chapter/Lecture	Chapter/Lecture Title

<u>Carmelite Mysticism: Historical Sketches</u>	10	Lecture IV	The Brothers of Our Lady
		Lecture V	A New Dawn: The Carmelite Nuns Blessed John Soreth
		Lecture VI	St. Theresa: The Growth of the Mystical Life
		Lecture VII	The Marian “Doctor Mysticus”
		Lecture	New Blooming on Old Stock
		Lecture IX	The Apostolate of Carmelite Mysticism

In the Participant Book, an appendix is included that lists the Required Readings used in the preparation of each lesson by the Formation Directors. These additional references, if read by the individual participants, can enhance the learning experience for all.

The use of Carmelite material is essential in the formation program. By using the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Vatican II Documents, Post-Conciliar Documents, and Papal encyclicals, we are reminded that our Carmelite Family is an important, integral part of an even larger family, the Church. Connecting all of this together with the Rule will help us to live the Carmelite Way.

When this program is used for Lay Carmelite Phase III Formation, it is a requirement that the participant completes all twelve sessions. There are, of course, reasons why a participant might miss an instructional lesson. In these cases, we have designed an option for the Formation Director. The Instructor Manual includes worksheets for each session that may be used as a make-up assignment for missed lessons. The reason for missed lessons must be stated on the worksheet, and each assignment will be given a due date by the Formation Director. No more than two make-up worksheets can be used during the twelve-month program, and only for serious reasons.

Our Carmelite spirituality grows continually. So will this formation program and additional programs to follow.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at pjwlmg@gmail.com

In Carmel,

Penny-Jude Watkins, T.O.Carm.
Province of St. Elias
July 27, 2005
Feast of Blessed Titus Brandsma

Brothers on Fire References and Reference Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Source
AA	<i>Apostolicam actuositatem</i> (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity); Vatican II Document
BTB	<u>The Beatification of Father Titus Brandsma</u> ; Prepared by Redemptus Maria Valabeck, O.Carm.; Carmelite Institute; 1986
CCC	<u>Catechism of the Catholic Church</u> ; Ligouri Publications (English Translation); 1994
CD	<u>The Carmelite Directory of the Spiritual Life</u> ; Carmelite Press; (1951 Translation); 1940 Original
CL	<i>Cristifideles laici</i> (The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People); Pope John Paul II; Pauline Media; 1988
CMHS	<u>Carmelite Mysticism Historical Sketches</u> ; Blessed Titus Brandsma, O.Carm.; Carmelite Press; 2002
CS	Carmelite Spirituality, Joseph Chalmers, O.Carm.
DC	<i>Dominicae cenae</i> (On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist); Post Consiliar Document
EP	<u>Elijah the Prophet</u> ; Jane Ackerman; ICS Publications; 2003
ETB	<u>Essays on Titus Brandsma</u> ; Edited by Redemptus Maria Valabeck, O.Carm.; Carmel In the World Paperbacks; 1985
FE	<u>At the Fountain of Elijah: The Carmelite Tradition</u> ; Wilfrid McGreal, O.Carm.; Orbis Books; 1999
GS	<i>Gaudium et spes</i> (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Madern World); Vatican II Document
JFA	Justice for All; "Pastoral Letter of U.S. Catholic Bishops"; 1986
LCRRM	Lay Carmelite Resource Reference Manual, gathered together by Brocard Connors, O.Carm
LP	<i>La plenaria</i> (The Contemplative Dimensions of Religious Life); Post Conciliar Document
LG	<i>Lumen gentium</i> (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)
LPMC	A Loving Presence: Mary and Carmel; Christopher O'Donnell, O.Carm.; Carmelite Spirituality Project; 2000
MVC	<i>Mas virgines consecrandi</i> (Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity); Post Conciliar Document; May, 1970
PC	<i>Perfectae cariatis</i> (Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life); Vatican II Document
PF	<u>Prophet of Fire</u> ; Kilian Healy, O.Carm.; Edizioni Carmelitane; 2 nd Printing; 2004
PPG	<u>The Practice of the Presence of God</u> ; Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, O.Carm. (d. 1691); Critical Edition; ICS Publication; 1994
RA	Rule of St. Albert
SC	<u>Springs of Carmel</u> , Peter Slattery, O.Carm.

SOLMCCR	The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Catechesis and Ritual; North American Provincials of the Carmelite Order; 2000
STJ	“St. Teresa of Jesus”, Papal Document, John Paul II, 1982
TAC	<u>Toward an Adult Church: A Vision of Faith Formation</u> ; Jane E. Regan; Loyola Press; 2002
TDM	<u>True Devotion to Mary</u> , St. Louis de Montfort

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Lesson 1

Introduction, Elijah Confronts King Ahab

Learning about Elijah is important to Lay Carmelites, in fact, ALL Carmelites, because Elijah played an important role in the whole of salvation history, AND because he is the spiritual leader and model for all Carmelites.

Historical Elijah

At the time of Elijah, Israel was divided into two kingdoms, Northern and Southern. Ahab ruled in the north, and Asa was the King of Judah (the south).

In the north, Samaria had no temple dedicated to Yahweh. King Ahab had a temple built to Baal. God was angered, and he sent the prophet Elijah to King Ahab with a message. Elijah told King Ahab who he was (Elijah the Tishbite), who he served (the God of Israel), and that it wasn't going to rain in the kingdom until Elijah said so.

Elijah spoke with authority, fire, and zeal, and he spoke as the servant of the Lord. He insulted and humiliated the king, and he predicted a severe punishment as a result of the king's idolatrous behavior.

Carmelite Tradition

The Rule of St. Albert of Jerusalem had no mention of Elijah. The first "formal" connection was in 1226, when Jacques Vitry, the Bishop of Acre, wrote his observations of the hermits imitating the life of Elijah, near the fountain of Elijah at Mt. Carmel.

As early as 1238 life started to change for the early hermits. They started to migrate to other parts of the known world. They brought their relationship with Elijah along with them. In 14th Century writings, Elijah was called "the chief of the friars", the solitary prophet, the supreme founder of the Carmelite Order and of its first foundation. It is currently accepted: that we claim no historical succession from Elijah; and that neither Elijah nor Elisha were monks, though they are certainly excellent role models for future hermits and monks.

Philip Ribot, an early Carmelite Provincial, used the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible and defined Elijah as the "one who stands in God's presence." This expresses the prayerfulness of Elijah which is an example for all Carmelites of living a contemplative life.

Daniel of the Virgin Mary, a Carmelite historian, describes Elijah as follows:

"What do we find in our leader and founder Elias? Solitude, silence, prayer, and conversation with God in whose presence he always stood." (PF p 29)

Blessed Titus Brandsma further expands on Elijah saying:

"This placing himself before the face of God, is a characteristic which the children of Carmel have inherited from the great prophet" (CMHS p.4)

Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, a 16th Century Parisian Carmelite, in his On the Practice of the Presence of God tells us the way we can acquire the presence of God.

"The first means is great purity of life. The second is great fidelity to the practice of the presence and to the fostering of the awareness of God within, which must always be performed gently, humbly, and lovingly...we must take special care that this inner awareness, no matter how brief it may be, precedes our activities, that it accompanies them from time to time, and that we complete all of them in the same way." (PPG p.41)

The Carmelite Directory of the Spiritual Life goes further:

“It is certainly just that we earnestly embrace it and become so familiar with it that we will make it, as it were, part of our nature...For this is the spirit of the Order according to the example of our holy Father Elias.” (p. 481)

Father Kilian expresses it this way: As Carmelites, “we do not speak of an historical succession from the prophet, but share a spiritual relationship, and have Elijah as the spiritual father of Carmel, the model, the exemplar of contemplative life.” (PF p.30)

The 20th Century Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of the prophets, and of Elijah in particular when talking about the prophets’ one-to-one relationships with God:

“The prophets draw light and strength for their mission.” (CCC ¶2581-2584)

Elijah Today

“Elijah serves the Lord precisely because he stands constantly in the divine presence, always ready to fulfill His will.” (PF)

Being always ready, without hesitation, no matter what is being asked, no matter what dangers and risks may await us, requires faith and courage. Elijah had both.

Father Kilian defines faith. “Faith is a leap into an unknown future; it is a risk that demands trust.” (PF p.32)

God asked Elijah to trust his word. When Elijah trusted God’s word, a drought lasted for 3 ½ years. Elijah’s faith allowed the miracle to happen. Through Jesus’ miracles, we know that miracles only happen when the sick and troubled that came to Him for healing, believed that they would.

As Lay Carmelites today, we must live a life of faith. In the social challenges of our times - idolatry of money, power, sex - we need to be 21st Century Elijahs. Father Kilian goes on to say though that faith alone is not enough, particularly when there is a lot of stress. When things are overwhelming, we also need courage.

Elijah knew that it was risky to challenge King Ahab with a drought. Elijah believed that God would keep his word, but Elijah had no assurance that King Ahab wouldn’t just cut him down. But “he is fearless, he is undaunted. He places his life in God’s hand and he surrenders to his will.” (PF p.35)

The Prophet of Fire served God as we Lay Carmelites are called to serve God. Through Elijah’s actions, we see that our call is to stand up and witness as Elijah did against King Ahab, and as Blessed Titus Brandsma did against Adolph Hitler and Nazism.

We are expected to witness as prophets, and we are also called to serve God in prayer. St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus never left her small Carmelite convent, yet she is the patroness of the missions. Her call was to “leave” the world, and to pray.

She did not have to face an arrogant King Ahab, but she did have to face something worse, the powers of unrelenting darkness that plagued her during her illness until her death. That took courage.

Conclusion

The Carmelite calling is to contemplation. The way most Carmelites are called to go out and witness to the world our vocation of prayer, service, and community. This call to witness is often risky.

Our own Blessed Titus Brandsma, a martyr of the mid-20th Century shows us a clear example. Titus Brandsma

was a prayerful Carmelite friar in the Netherlands during the pre-WW-II spread of Nazism. As the chaplain to the Catholic newspaper editors, he was called by his bishop to speak to the editors, to have them promise to refuse printing any Nazi propaganda. Father Titus knew from the start that the Nazi penalty for his actions would be death, but before he was arrested, he had spoken to fourteen editors, all of whom promised not to print Nazi information. They all kept that promise. Brandsma's witness was so powerful, that he was known by Hitler as "the dangerous little friar."

After he was arrested, he was asked to write down why the resistance was so strong in the Netherlands, and why he did what he did. Brandsma writes:

"Our Catholic principles are at conflict with their (Nazi) principles; the contrast of principles is there. For this confession I joyfully suffer what is to be suffered."

Bl. Titus Brandsma died in Dachau by lethal injection on July 26, 1942.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Elijah

1. Learning about the Prophet Elijah is important to Lay Carmelites because

2. Elijah went to King Ahab and spoke against the action of the king. The action in question was

Carmelite Tradition

3. The Carmelite Tradition of Elijah can best be described as

Elijah Today

4. God required faith and courage from Elijah. For Lay Carmelites, faith and courage are demonstrated by:

5. Elijah risked his life when he threatened King Ahab. Titus Brandsma spoke out against Nazism even though he knew that to do so would mean imprisonment and death. What risks are we asked to take?

Application

6. Titus Brandsma is called a modern Elijah. Why?

Personal Reflection

7. How do I witness faith and courage?

Lesson 2

Chapter 2: Elijah Hides in the Wadi Cherith

Historical Elijah

After Elijah rebuked Ahab, he was told by the Lord to go and hide in the Wadi Cherith, a place of safety. The Lord further said that the wadi would supply him with water and that he had commanded ravens to bring Elijah food. Elijah stayed in the Wadi Cherith until the water in the stream went dry.

It is the Christian understanding that his “hiding” was a time of prayer and conversation with God. Christians also thus revere him “as the model and founder of monastic life.”

Carmelite Tradition

It has been a Carmelite tradition to have a picture, hanging in a prominent place, of Elijah poised at the opening of a cave along the Wadi Cherith. This reminds all Carmelites of our call to go off and be alone with God. Alone with God, we have the opportunity to foster development of our ability to converse with God in prayer.

This image of Elijah is described in the 14th Century *Institution of the First Monks*, one of ten books in *The Books of the Foundation of, and Matters Peculiar to, the Carmelites*, possibly (but not definitively) completed by Philip Ribot. These books captured in writing the history of the Carmelites up to that point in history.

In the *Institution*, the ideals of Elijah, as the Carmelites of the time saw them, were listed. More and more, Elijah was seen as the model for religious life. In brief, the ideals are:

1. Faithfulness to the Word of God;
2. Total availability to the will of God;
3. Knowledge of the truth;
4. Solitude;
5. Repentance for personal sins;
6. Living the life of love;
7. A total trust in the Providence of God;
8. A loving wisdom that comes from his closeness to God;
9. A sense of care and responsibility towards his disciples. (FE pp. 47-48)

The input from the *Institution* is important to our study because it both doctrinally presents Carmelite spirituality, and it brings forth this doctrine as commentary on Elijah during the time he was at the Wadi Cherith. Here we get the image of Elijah as the first monk, a contemplative, an ascetic whose life of prayer is offered as a role model.

The *Institution* provides a mystical interpretation of Elijah’s time alone with God. God told Elijah to go and hide. The *Institution* asserts that this means “cleanse yourself of everything that is sinful.”

“Drink from the stream” is an invitation to taste and experience the Lord’s presence, that is, the joy of contemplation.” This we receive as a free gift from God. Everyone will not receive this gift, but we all should place ourselves in the disposition to receive it.

Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection says:

“I know that few persons reach this advanced state. It is a grace God bestows on only a few chosen souls, since this simple awareness remains ultimately a gift from His kind hand. But let me say, for the consolation of those who desire to embrace this holy practice, that he ordinarily gives it to the souls who are disposed to receive it.” (PPG p. 43, ¶37)

Elijah took four steps to prepare himself to receive the gift of contemplation. They are described in the *Institution* as follows:

1. The beginner must go and hide, flee the world, family, friends, riches, and embrace poverty.
2. Once withdrawn, strive to discipline the body.
3. In silence and solitude avoid anger, greed, lust, and willingly embrace chastity.
4. Strive to avoid all sins, and practice charity.

Elijah Today

Elijah responded to the idolatry to Baal by threatening King Ahab with a long drought. Our Baal of the 21st Century is money, power, and lack of mercy to the weak and poor.

The Carmelite response is just as relevant as that of Elijah. By example, Carmelites return to the spirit of Elijah, each living in the spirit of silence, solitude, and prayer. This is easier for some living a cloistered life.

In “the world” Carmelites are often tempted to get so caught up in the demands of service that they forget who they are ultimately serving, God. If we really want to be Elijahs in the 21st Century, we must show by our actions in our lives that God dwells within us.

The early hermits lived in desert caves, but later Carmelites moved into cities, and lived together in communities. We need to remind ourselves, particularly as Lay Carmelites, that even while we work in a busy world, either in our jobs, family, volunteer work, preparing ourselves with a life of prayer is the only way we can keep ourselves in a contemplative way of life.

We have real-life modern examples of how it works: St. Thérèse of Lisieux and Father John Brenninger. We can also look at the 17th Century lay Carmelite Mary Petyt. They all send the message that “The real desert where we will find God is in our heart.”

Many Lay Carmelites, particularly in formation, ask - “How do I learn how to pray?” The Apostles asked Jesus the same thing, “Lord, teach us to pray.” (Mt 11:1)

There is no one way to pray and dispose ourselves for the gift of contemplation. Father Kilian suggests using the “Ladder of the Monks.” (PF p. 65) Its four steps, or rungs, are: reading; meditation; prayer; and contemplation. A more contemporary version is listening, waiting, experiencing.

Another way is suggested by Thomas Merton, centering prayer, or the prayer of quiet.

We still need to remember that contemplation is a gift. Everyone does not receive it.

Conclusion

Titus Brandsma says:

“It is enough for those on Carmel to live in God’s presence, in loving humility, content with what the good God may send.”

It is enough because we have to follow God’s will. We must strive for “purity of heart, fullness of charity, union of our heart with God.” The prophetic vocation, the one we are all called to, has the following message:

“Imitate Elijah. Go hide. Live in silence and solitude. Offer God a pure and holy heart. Then, be filled with his love, and experience in your heart the delight of his joyful presence.” (PF p. 68)

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Elijah

1. Describe Elijah's actions after he threatened King Ahab with the drought.

2. The Christian interpretation of Elijah's actions is best described as

Carmelite Tradition

3. The picture of Elijah poised at the entrance to a cave reminds Carmelites of

4. Describe what it means to "drink from the stream".

5. In one-word terms, what are Elijah's 4 steps to dispose oneself to the gift of contemplation?

6. Define

Purity of heart

Purity of heart ordained to contemplation

7. What are the contributions of each of the following to Carmelite Reform?

Bl. John Soreth

St. Theresa of Avila

Father Thomas of Jesus

John of St. Samson

Elijah Today

8. "Experience is teaching us once again that the only safe route to follow is to renew the eremitical ideal of the order. We must return in spirit to Elijah living in silence, solitude, and prayer at Cherith."

What message does this send to Lay Carmelites?

Application

9. "Activity without interiority leads to frustration and perhaps in the end, to a loss of faith."

Apply this concept to a busy Lay Carmelite in the modern world. Has it ever happened in your life?

Personal Reflection

10. How would you respond, if like He did to Elijah, God told you to "Go and hide"?

Lesson 3

Chapter 3: Elijah Stays with the Widow

Historical Elijah

After the brook ran dry because of lack of rain, the Lord told Elijah to go to Zarephath of Sidon. Even in Zarephath people were experiencing the impact of the drought imposed upon King Ahab. God told Elijah that in Zarephath a widow would be there to take care of him.

Elijah did as he was told. He met the widow and asked her for a drink of water. Eastern hospitality ruled, and the widow complied, even though water was scarce due to the drought. When he asked her for food, she was embarrassed. She had enough food for only one more meal for herself and her son.

Elijah told her not to be afraid, and to do what she was going to do, but bring him a little cake first. He told her that the Lord, the God of Israel, said that her flour and oil would not run out until the drought was lifted. God kept his word.

Important considerations in this Elijan story include the fact that: Elijah was a stranger to the woman, still, she did not turn him away; she had a home large enough to house Elijah for quite some time; during his stay, the woman's son became so ill that he stopped breathing.

As was the way of the times, the woman took her son's illness as a sign from God as a punishment for her sins. She also perceived that it was the unexpected presence of the prophet that brought her sins to light.

Elijah was moved at her expression of grief and asked God to revive the child. Elijah prostrated himself over the child three times. He brings the child back to life and the woman sees it as divine intervention. It's clear that Elijah speaks the truth, and she acknowledges that Yahweh is God.

Later in history Elisha and St. Paul will bring people back to life. Scripture reference to such events are limited, but they serve a purpose.

Both Hebrew and Christian literature agree that the reasons for this story's inclusion in scripture show us many things.

1. The God of Israel is also the God of the pagans;
2. This God is the only God who gives life;
3. Baal cannot give life or send rain;
4. The poor and widowed, like the Gentiles, are loved by Yahweh and are often more open to receive a divine messenger ;
5. Contrast between Elijah's compassion for this Phoenician woman while showing reproach for Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab;
6. To reveal that Elijah is one of the great prophets, and those who receive a great prophet will be rewarded; and
7. In the Gospel of Luke, the connection of this event will be mentioned in connection with Jesus raising the son of the widow of Naim to life.

Luke's Gospel shows that Elijah is still venerated in the 1st Century, and that devotion has continued through today.

Carmelite Tradition

Elijah remained a popular figure in the Holy Land. His name was associated with many places, and of course one of these places was the home of the widow of Zarephath. Here, we will look at how the visit to the widow is caught up in Carmelite tradition.

When the Carmelites were forced to abandon the mountain of the prophet, they brought their traditions with them to Europe. They identified themselves as successors to Elijah and Elisha. Early Christians further go on with a legend that claimed that Jonah, the son of the widow of Zarephath, was the first disciple of Elijah, and was the same Jonah of Nineveh fame.

The Jewish people were aware of this relationship. In fact early Christian literature makes use of it as well. In *The Institution of the First Monks* it is noted that it was Jonah who Elijah sent to look from the mountain to see if anyone appeared at sea.

Elisha also had a relationship with Jonah. He had Jonah anoint Jeho the new king of Israel. It was Jonah who proclaimed to the people of Nineveh that if they didn't repent, the city would be destroyed by God.

The Elijah-Jonah relationship was one that was eagerly accepted by the Carmelites. It strengthened the belief that the Order had origin in the school of the prophets. It doesn't have anything to do with Carmelite spirituality, but holds fast to the link with Elijah.

Now if we look at Carmelite spirituality, we can see how Elijah's visit with the widow of Zarephath serves as an example of how city dwellers could also be contemplatives. This story and concept helped Bl. John Soreth in his 15th Century Carmelite reform.

Bl. John Soreth set Elijah up as the example of a person who can remain a hermit at heart while at the same time lived in the city.

Kilian Healy says that there isn't any reason why a person would not be able to have interior solitude while working in an active ministry. In fact, that is what all Carmelites are called to do. He says "Elijah dwelling in the house of the widow is a model for those whose only desert is the heart."

The Rule of St. Albert, chapter 10, says that "each one of you is to stay in his own cell or nearby...unless attending to some other duty. Then in chapter 20, "You must give yourself to work of some kind." So like Elijah, we live in the presence of God, and serve him through the people of God.

Elijah Today

The challenge of creating one's own inner desert is more pertinent today than even in Elijah's time. Our modern culture is fast moving, high-priced, and power-dominated. Father Kilian writes:

"One of two marriages end in divorce. Twenty percent of homes with children are without a father. Over 1 ½ million abortions take place each year. In the city of New York, one person in forty suffers from drug addiction" (PF pp. 79-80)

Within this world we are called to witness, and all Carmelites are called to a spiritual conversion. As we are touched by God we accept the call to follow. Carmelites who accept the call must be aware that this is a call to intimacy, a special place in the presence of God, a place where one is always ready to serve, a life strengthened by living in the presence of God.

"Whoever gives himself or herself to this exercise faithfully cannot fail to attain the holiness demanded by one's state in life." (PF p. 82)

To open ourselves up for the opportunity to have this conversion, we have to "grow in the love of God", and we can do this by living in the presence of God. Father Kilian identifies the two ways to do this:

1. Being attentive to God our father; and
2. By fixing our eyes on Jesus our Savior.

We can be more attentive to God by experiencing God in all things. God knows all, God is all (merciful, loving,

just). God the father, in the all-perfect relationship with God the Son, shares this relationship with us. How we experience this relationship depends on our receptiveness to it. If we are open, we can turn to God at any time, knowing that he listens.

“If we pray for anything, it should be for the grace to experience our heavenly Father’s merciful love so that we can give ourselves in complete surrender to his will. Once we experience our Father’s mercy we shall turn to him often in our thoughts and live quietly in his presence.” (PF p. 87)

In the second way, we fix our eyes on Jesus Christ because he shows us how to live, how to carry the cross. We can keep the presence of Jesus with us by keeping Jesus in our presence.

St. Teresa of Avila encouraged her sisters to carry an image of Jesus, a crucifix, or a picture. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face prayed before a picture of the Holy Face.

Father Kilian visited the concentration camp of Auschwitz in Poland. While there he was touched by a roughly drawn picture of the Sacred Heart on one of the cell walls. In the state prison at Scheveningen, Bl. Titus Brandsma wrote this poem: (BTB p. 33)

Before a Picture of Jesus in My Cell

A new awareness of Thy love
Encompasses my heart:
Sweet Jesus, I in Thee and Thou
In me shall never part.

No grief shall fall my way but I
Shall see Thy grief-filled eyes;
The lonely way that Thou once walked
Has made me sorrow-wise.

All trouble is a white-lit joy
That lightens my darkest day;
Thy love has turned to brightest light
This night-like way.

If I have Thee alone,
The hours will bless
With still, cold hands of love
My utter loneliness.

Stay with me, Jesus, only stay;
I shall not fear-
If, reaching out my hand,
I feel Thee near.

These pictures and objects can be a point of peace and solace for eyes searching for a place of momentary rest. Besides images, aspirations are also helpful.

Aspirations are short prayers we say throughout the day; “Lord Jesus, hear us!”, for example. An old prayer called “The Jesus Prayer” mentioned in the Catechism of the Catholic Church says “Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” (CCC ¶2616)

These short prayers, repeated often throughout the day, remind us of the purpose of our day - to be in the presence of God. Using such a prayer throughout the day can help lead us into a more prayerful union with Jesus.

The three steps to use to get to this union are:

1. Pray the prayer often, aloud, and..
2. .. It becomes more inward..
3. .. It enters into the very core of our being.

This last stage is a gift of God, given to whom he wills. It is here where “the soul no longer strives to pray, for the Spirit of God within does the praying.” (PF p. 92)

Conclusion

We have seen that there are several ways to walk always in God’s presence. One way may be more helpful to each of us than another. Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection makes it clear that we should not get discouraged if we don’t receive the special gift from God. If we are having difficulties, we can think of Brother Lawrence’s words.

“If he does not give it we can at least acquire, with the help of ordinary grace, a manner and state of prayer that greatly resembles this simple awareness by means of this practice of the presence of God.” (PPG p.43, ¶ 37)

We also should consider the words of Father Kilian.

“In calling us, God has not asked us to be successful, but only to live in his presence and serve him.” (PF p.94)

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Elijah

1. The story of the raising to life of the son of the woman in Zaraphath was well to be included by the scripture writers because the story shows_____

Carmelite Tradition

2. The reason the Elijah-Jonah relationship was so eagerly accepted by the Carmelites was..

Elijah Today

3. The three steps to a more prayerful union with Jesus are:
 1. Pray the prayer often, aloud, and..
 2. .. It becomes more inward until..
 3. .. It enters into the very core of our being.

Describe how the process works/could work in our lives.

Application

4. What makes it difficult to be “in the desert” when living in the 21st Century?

Personal Reflection

5. I practice “living in the desert” through _____

Lesson 4

Chapter 4: Elijah's Victory On Mount Carmel

Historical Elijah

The drought continued. In the third year the Lord spoke to Elijah and told him to present himself to King Ahab, "So that I may send rain upon the earth."

Elijah did as he was told. He went to King Ahab and told him that rain would come, but only according to God's plan. (The king and his people had to be brought to their knees. The people had to decide: Yahweh or Baal. The victory of Yahweh had three parts.

Preparation:

Obadiah, the vizier of King Ahab, was out searching for sources of water. He met Elijah and was taken aback when Elijah asked him to let King Ahab know that Elijah wished to speak with him. Obadiah was nervous about bringing this to the king because Elijah was known for being "here today, gone tomorrow." However, Obadiah agrees and a meeting is set in place.

Elijah challenges Ahab to assemble the people with the prophets of Baal and of Ashera on Mt. Carmel.

The Contest:

Ahab's assembly gathers on Mt. Carmel. Mt. Carmel was considered a holy mountain by the pagans, and the domain of Baal. It is unsure when the cult of Yahweh got there, but we know that at the time of King Ahab there was evidence that the followers had also considered Mt. Carmel a sacred place, because there was an altar there that had been destroyed.

The destruction of the altar to Yahweh irritated Elijah. He thought that the people needed to know that Yahweh is a jealous God. The people had to choose - Yahweh or Baal. The contest would consist of two sacrifices, one offered on the altar of Baal, and the other one offered on the altar of Yahweh. The fire for the sacrifice would be lit through the prayers offered to Baal, or to Yahweh.

The prophets of Baal prayed, danced, and sang all day. No fire came to the altar of Baal. By dusk, the 450 prophets admitted defeat.

Then Elijah prepared his sacrifice. He prayed to Yahweh to send down fire. Lightening came down and consumed the holocaust. The victory was won.

Elijah slit the throats of the 450 prophets. That seems more than punitive, but at the time, death was the accepted punishment for apostasy.

The Consequences:

God had closed the earth to rain. Now he had to open the gates again. In answer to the prayer of Elijah, a small cloud, the size of a man's hand, appeared in the sky rising above the sea. Elijah told King Ahab to take cover so that he would not get caught up in the rain.

Carmelite Tradition

To many, the victory on Mt. Carmel was a brutal one, 450 prophets of Baal slaughtered. The real focus is the second part of the consequence, the rain. More important, it was the cloud that appeared in the heavens, “a cloud the size of a man’s hand rising from the sea.” (1Kings 18: 44) Literally the cloud was a sign that rain was coming; the drought was over. God kept his promise.

There are several spiritual interpretations which include:

1. The cloud as a symbol of Jesus Christ who would bring a torrent of saving grace;
2. A symbol of the cleansing of Baptismal waters;
3. The Carmelite interpretation that in the cloud was seen the figure of a woman, Mary.

This interpretation, author unknown, was first among the Carmelites in the 14th Century. In the 15th Century Arnold Bostius wrote:

“Just as the cloud rose light and sweet from the bitter waters of the sea,
so Mary came of our human race, yet was free of all sin, even from her origin.” (PF p.104)

By the 17th Century the accepted tradition of the order had been established.

When Elijah gazed at the raincloud, he “saw in it the Immaculate Virgin, conceived without sin, who one day would be the mother of the Savior.” (PF p.105) As the legend goes, Elijah, at this point, pledged a vow of virginity. The legend continues that he encouraged his followers to do the same. That started the monastic way of life on Mt. Carmel, and that way of life continued there.

As the hermits were converted to Christianity, they connected that Elijah’s vision of the Virgin in the cloud was actually Mary. They then chose her as their patroness and “model of the purity of life to which they were called.” (PF p.106) From that time, devotion to Mary grew, and the hermits called themselves “Brothers of the Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel.”

Father Kilian clearly points out that the legend is absent of any historical value. The value is in the spiritual message - Elijah was the spiritual father of the “Brothers”, and Mary was their patroness and model.

Elijan/Marian Devotion

The small cloud remains a joint symbol of the Carmelite devotion to Elijah and to Mary. The tradition became official in the *Constitution* in 1499. That was when the oldest known shield of the Order was published. It had the mountain of Carmel with Mary holding the Child Jesus in her arms. Two sets of text are present. One says “Mother and Splendor of Carmel”. The other set indicated that Elijah and Elisha are the “leaders of Carmel.” Accepted meaning? Elijah and Elisha are our spiritual guides, and Mary is our ideal.

Since that time, the shield of the Order has changed significantly. Mary and the prophets appear symbolically as three stars on brown and white fields, symbols of Mt. Carmel and the cloud. A variation of the shield is still in the Order today.

By the end of the 16th Century, devotion to Our Lady of the Brown Scapular became more popular. From then on, pictures of Mary holding the Scapular became more popular than the image of Mary appearing to Elijah in a cloud.

It also became more attentive to “Mary, Mother of Carmel, bestower of gifts”, rather than “Mary, splendor of Carmel”, Model of Purity. This concept also flows into the writings of Carmel as well. In both art and literature, more attention is given to Our Lady of the Scapular.

Origin

The Question Fr. Kilian asks is “Does our Elijan-Marian tradition depend upon the spiritual interpretation of the

cloud seen by Elijah?” The answer is an emphatic ‘NO’. The hermits venerated Mary long before the legend was created.

A Carmelite historian in the late 13th Century gives us two thoughts. At that time the Carmelites considered Elijah their founder, with uninterrupted succession. The same historian also stated that as early as 1252, the hermits were called “Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel”.

The devotion to both Elijah and Mary comes from the conscious level rather than the legend. The hermits lived a life of prayer as did Elijah, and they placed themselves under the protection of Mary. The Order became organized under the Rule of St. Albert.

It has to be acknowledged, however, that the legend of the cloud was an inspiration to many to join the Carmelite way of life. Marian devotion is one thing, a means to a way of life. It is an assist only when it helps us on the path to union with Jesus Christ.

Elijah Today

The Elijan and Marian devotion has been developed and enriched over time.

A late 17th Century artist designed an engraving depicting Elijah, in a white cloak, gazing at the Immaculate Virgin Mary enclosed in a cloud rising up from the sea. This picture drawn from the cloud legend shows us that the early Carmelites believed in the Immaculate Conception long before it became a dogma, they also venerated her perpetual virginity, and followed that belief in a life of continence. Today we are told to focus on Mary as disciple and to ask her to bring us to her Son.

In scripture there is no reference to Elijah’s having a home. He was always on the move, always in God’s service. This inspired St. Jerome to call Elijah the “Monk of the Old Testament.” The Carmelites on Mt. Carmel saw Elijah as a celibate, a man who stood constantly in God’s presence, ready to serve God without question.

While Mary in the cloud is a legend, Mary is a reality. She totally surrendered her will to God, and for Lay Carmelites she serves as an example that we need to have a willingness to embrace a life of chastity according to our state in life, whether married or single.

We also need to be reminded that in Elijah’s day, people believed in the One, True God, or they believed in false gods. Today, it’s a belief in one God, or in no God at all. Others don’t care one way or the other. In a world where sexual activity is often a measure of popularity, is it possible to live a chaste life?

Chastity

Kilian Healy defines chastity as the virtue that regulates the sexual appetite in all human beings, both married and single. Perfect chastity is the renunciation of all genital pleasure AS a state of life.

Love, Motive of Chastity

Complete chastity is an act of love, wanting to please God through a total surrender of self. The initial offer is only part of it. Working through the struggles evidences commitment.

Celibacy, chosen to be able to be free to minister, is not an actual requirement for a person to be effective in ministry. Ministry is not the motivator to chastity. Loving God IS. We choose a chaste life in response to a call we receive. We respond and serve as God needs us to serve.

Renunciation

Chastity requires the renunciation of “genital sex, marital companionship, physical parenthood.” We choose to live the way Jesus himself did.

No Half-hearted Love

The Carmelite friar, nun, sister, or lay, either chooses a chaste life or does not. If chosen, this gift is given to God with joy (the sign of vitality), not a grudge.

Celibacy and Friendship

Can you have close friends and still be celibate? Of course! St. Teresa of Avila required that her sisters live in houses in friendship. There were to be no cliques, no exclusive groups, no one left out. All would be friends.

In the 20th Century, in *Perfectae Caritatis*, it is further said: “Let all, and especially superiors, remember that chastity is preserved more securely when the members live a common life in true sisterly and brotherly love.” (PC ¶12)

Then it follows that “Chastity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven...should be counted an outstanding gift of grace. It frees the heart of man in a unique fashion so that it may be more inflamed with love for God and all man.” (PC ¶12)

The Voice of Experience

There is tremendous value in true friendships experienced in a community. Friendships between those consecrated to chastity serve as examples to the world that it is possible to live happily without genital pleasure. When a gift is given freely, it is given in joy. While there may be times of challenge, living a celibate and chaste life is more than possible.

Chastity is Productive

Perfect chastity is not a source of sterility. It is a source of fruitful pursuits. Often those committed to chastity are involved in various social service experiences. The consecrated person gives themselves generously to those in need, and provide service to the weak and suffering. Whether as teachers, nurses, doctors, case workers, church community volunteers...these people of God share their gift with their fellow men.

Conclusion

To help us with the commitment to chastity, the Church encourages prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was the first servant of her Son, and in the Memorare, we hear that when we pray to Mary, our prayer never goes unaided. She is the protector of all Carmelites and is the “model for all Christians.”

Elijah serves as the model of the “solitary celibate”, and Mary the model of purity. Their intercession can assist those making a consecration to the chaste life.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Elijah

1. Yahweh, with the cooperation of Elijah, brought King Ahab to his knees. The three-step victory included preparation, the contest, consequences.
 - A. In the preparation phase, Elijah sought the assistance of Obadiah. Why was Obadiah dubious?

B. The prophets of Baal finally gave up. They tried all day to light a fire over their sacrificial animal. What happened next?

Carmelite Tradition

2. Father Healy points out that the legend of Mary in a cloud is without historical value. Explain the spiritual value of the message.

Elijah Today

3. St. Jerome called Elijah the “Monk of the Old Testament.” What message does Elijah have in our life as lay Carmelites in the 21st Century?

Application

4. Father Kilian points out that the legend of Mary in the cloud shows Mary as the model of purity. The picture of Mary holding the Scapular is more like Mary, the bestower of gifts. Explain why each of the images is considered part of the Carmelite heritage.

5. Compare celibacy and chastity.

Personal Reflection

6. Mary is the role model of purity. In the 21st Century, how does this role model assist us in developing the Carmelite spirituality:

Lesson 5-A **Chapter 5: Elijah's Flight to Horeb**

Historical Elijah

Jezebel had fostered the worship of Baal. When she heard what Elijah had done to the 450 prophets of Baal, she sent a messenger to Elijah. The message was vindictive and threatening - what he did to the 450 prophets should be done to him. She was determined that Baalism would continue in Samaria (and it did).

The message brought fear to Elijah. He ran to Beersheba in Judah with his servant. Discouraged with his failure to convert Samaria, Elijah went into the desert and sat beneath a broom tree. There he prayed for death.

That wasn't the will of God. The Lord still had work for Elijah. He sent an angel to Elijah with food. The angel told Elijah to get up and eat.

Elijah laid down again, but the angel came back again and told him to eat. The angel also told him that if he didn't eat he would not be strong enough for a long journey. Elijah did what he was told to do, and was physically able to walk 40 days and 40 nights to Mount Horeb.

Scholars look at Elijah's journey to Mt. Horeb(Sinai) and cite various reasons for it. Father Kilian accepts that the most logical reason was for Elijah to go and speak with God, to pour out his feelings of self-doubt, discouragement, and sorrow for not fulfilling his mission.

Father Kilian points out two important concepts in this story.

1. The sense of failure experienced by Elijah;
2. The assurance by God that He was still at Elijah's side.

Elijah was not to slack off. He was still needed to bring Israel back to Yahweh.

Carmelite Tradition

Running away in fear presents a new aspect of Elijah as a role model. He lived and struggled through a troubled time in his life. This shows us that we Lay Carmelites can do the same. (After all, our life-giving sustenance, the Eucharist, is there for us.)

Elijah made it through his period of despair because with the intervention of Yahweh, he went through a process of conversion, or transformation.

"In the desert, God was not absent, only Hidden." (PF p. 131) Elijah could not heal on his own. He needed God's grace.

Many generations later, the great St. Teresa of Jesus was known to say "Teresa and 2 ducats can do nothing. Teresa, God and 2 ducats can do anything."

Early Carmelite authors were sparse in their writings about Elijah's flight to Horeb. Daniel of the Virgin Mary has an interesting interpretation. He wrote that Elijah ran out of fear that his death at Jezebel's hands would mean the end of the true faith in Israel.

Since Obadiah claimed to have hidden 100 prophets (in 2 groups of 50, and supplied with provisions). Therefore, Elijah was not the last of God's faithful servants. In addition, the massacre of the 450 prophets of Baal was witnessed by many people who did not bow down to Baal.

Cornelius de Lapide, a Jesuit scholar shortly before the time of Daniel of the Virgin Mary wrote that the despair on the flight to Mt. Horeb, and the subsequent nurturing by the angel, foreshadowed the agony of Jesus at Gethsemani, where an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. (Lk 22: 43)

A 20th Century author, Peter Magennis, O.Carm. Claims that Elijah fled because he was convinced that he failed on God's mission. He left his servant behind when he entered the desert because he wanted to "go it alone." His care by the angel symbolized the fact that God wasn't through with him, and the food was a prefigurement of the Holy Eucharist. Ultimately, however, God gave Elijah "his enlightening and comforting grace." (PF p. 135)

The flight to Horeb is more graphically detailed in paintings and drawings. These works of art have been a long-standing part of Carmelite traditions. Their symbolism reminds us in the 21st Century, that God will always be with us, and will always, somehow, make His presence felt.

In Liturgy, this story is read in the liturgy for the feast of Corpus Christi, and in the Liturgy of the Hours for the Octave of Corpus Christi. In our Carmelite liturgy the story is read on his feast day as part of the "post communion prayer as a symbol of the Eucharistic banquet." (PF p. 137)

TODAY

The message for us, regarding God's dealings with our role-model Elijah, is that He helped Elijah, and He will help us.

Without question, Elijah suffered from stress. He was filled with self-doubt and disillusionment, and he was exhausted. The type of stress he experienced was distress, or negative stress. (When standing before King Ahab, speaking Yahweh's ultimatum, Elijah was pumped, and experienced a more positive, productive level of stress.)

In a time when stress is so acutely experienced in our society, Elijah's example still holds as has through the centuries.

Father Kilian cites four causes of stress:

1. Environment, including our workspace.
2. Lack of support from our family and friends.
3. Poor health
4. Weak, superficial spiritual life.

Of course there are Carmelite role models who can guide us in managing our stress, stress from any of the four causes.

One such example is Blessed Titus Brandsma. Throughout his life he suffered chronic gastric illness. He was also taken as a prisoner and placed in a concentration camp.

When in Scheveningen he wrote:

"Well, being here, brought into a prison cell late at night, the door being heavily closed behind you with locks and keys, you stand and feel rather strange for a moment. The comic side of this affair, my going to jail in my old age, urged me to laugh rather than cry."

"A cell becomes more sweet as it is more faithfully dwelt in."

"I am quite at home in this small cell. I have not yet got bored there. Just the contrary. I am alone, certainly, but never was Our Lord so near to me. I could shout with joy because He made me find Him again entirely, without me being able to go to see people, nor people me. Now he is my only refuge, and I feel secure and happy."

In *Christifidelis Laici* (Post Conciliar Document) by Pope John Paul II, says: "A new state of affairs today, both in the Church and in social, economic, political and cultural life, calls with a particular urgency for the action of

lay people. If lack of commitment is always unacceptable, the present time renders it even more so. It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle.” (CL p.15)

Father Kilian gives us a key to manage stress. He tells us to cultivate a spiritual attitude that will help us in our attempts to balance our lives. This balance comes from giving up our self-reliance, and work with the loving mercy of God.

We need to continually remember and bring to mind that:
God assisted Elijah.
God the Father assisted His Son.
God is there to assist us.

He assists us ultimately through the Eucharist, which can give us both spiritual and physical union. He also gives us solace in the Word. St. Thérèse had the Word support her through her depression. Her example shows us that “The key is the cultivation of a personal relationship with God, and specifically with God as a loving, merciful Father.” (PF p. 145)

“Thérèse’s way is simply to surrender oneself completely into the merciful arms of the Lord.” (PF p. 146)

CONCLUSION

Healy doesn’t say that the stress will go away. But it will put us in the disposition to receive his mercy.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Elijah

1. Why was Elijah disappointed by his actions?

Carmelite Tradition

2. How is Elijah’s flight to Mount Horeb interpreted according to Carmelite tradition?

Elijah Today

3. List four sources of stress as cited in the text.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Application

4. Compare the story of Elijah in the desert to the story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

5. St. Thérèse’s response to stress was: “The elevator which must raise me to heaven is Your arms.”
How could this statement be interpreted?

Personal Reflection

6. “God may be hidden from us, but he is never absent.” How does this statement relate to living in the presence of God?

Lesson-5B Chapter 6 - The Zeal of Elijah

Historical Elijah

Heavy wind, earthquake, and fire came before Elijah heard the Lord in a tiny whispering sound. When he heard it, he hid his face and went to the entrance to the cave. The conversation Elijah had with God is one of the most important moments in Elijah's life as it relates to the Carmelites.

Interpretations of the conversation include:

1. It was a rebuke from God for the over-zealous massacre of the 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.
2. Elijah is rebuked because he deserted the battlefield for the purpose of going to Horeb. He should have faced Jezebel.
3. Elijah's meeting with God was that of a faithful servant receiving solace from his heavenly father.

This third interpretation warrants a little elaboration. Elijah feels himself a failure. Even so, he declares his loyalty to Yahweh.

God tells him that the battle is not over, and he sends Elijah on a three-fold mission.

1. Appoint a successor. The successor is Elisha.
2. Anoint Hazael the future King of Aram.
3. Anoint Jehu as the new King of Israel.

The fact that God gave Elijah a new mission (although Elijah only completed the first assignment) shows Elijah that he is, in fact, not alone. It also shows Elijah that God is the One in charge.

It is significant to identify Yahweh's conversation with God on Mount Horeb and Moses' conversation on Mount Sinai (Horeb). The same jealous God appeared before each of them. In the appearance to Elijah, God reaffirms the covenant with his people that was made with Moses. Moses received the law; Elijah lived and spread the law in Israel.

Here is a contrast. When Moses went to Mount Sinai, the wind blew; the earth trembled; and lightning came down and showed God's presence. In Elijah's case, the wind blew, there was an earthquake, and there was fire, but God wasn't in them. His presence was made known in a tiny whispering sound, an experience of intimacy with God.

God gives Elijah his mission, and Elijah's response shows he is still filled with fire. He says "I am zealous for the Lord, God of hosts."

Carmelite Tradition

One Carmelite tradition describes Elijah as worn out, and a self-despised failure. In spite of this he cries out bravely his zeal for God. A cry like that was seen by the early Carmelites, and still seen today, as a cry from the heart, a heart of a loyal servant. The Carmelites eventually took his cry "I have been most zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts" as the motto for the Order. The Carmelites could have taken other words of Elijah, but this quote on Horeb spoke of the determination of Carmelites to live in the presence of God, and serve Him with hearts burning in love.

On the original Carmelite shield of 1499, there were two quotes.

"I am the Mother and Splendor of Carmel."

"Elijah and Elisha, the Leaders of the Carmelites"

This original coat of arms declared that “Elijah and Elisha are the spiritual guides of Carmel, who lead us to the Virgin Mary, the model and ideal of all Carmelites, Mary, the Virgin most pure.” (PF p.158)

A radical change came in 1595 when the new coat of arms was adopted. There were many changes in the escutcheon which can be seen when looking at the two escutcheons comparing the two coats of arms. However, the words “I am most zealous for the Lord, God” are the only words on the emblem.

So why the change? Why did the image of Our Lady disappear? The sword is there. Why the prominence of Elijah?

There are several opinions as to why the emblem changed. Among them are:

1. The change was made in a time of renewal. The sword of Elijah seemed to be a more powerful tool to use to arouse members to develop stronger, more spiritual lives.
2. The burning zeal of Elijah was a powerful call to serve in the necessary missionary apostolate.

Whatever the reason for the change, the “change” is still with us. The emblem’s focus on Elijah shouldn’t effect the Marian identity with the Carmelites. We know the history, and we know the symbolism of the various aspects of the coat of arms.



Perhaps the current coat of arms does not immediately call attention to the Blessed Virgin, or identify that Mary is the ideal contemplative. The crown can indicate Mary, crowned Queen of Heaven. However, the flaming sword of Elijah represents both the active and contemplative spirit of Carmel.



The cry of Elijah, “I am most zealous for the Lord” has made a definite impact on the Carmelite Order. His cry has been passed down to us, and now it’s our turn, for “Every Carmelite knows that he or she is called, like Elijah, to abhor mediocrity, and to serve the Lord with his whole heart and strength.” (PF p. 163)

Carmel Today

“If Elijah were to return today, would he find any zeal in Carmel?” Absolutely! Father Kilian picked out four modern Carmelites who exemplified zeal. Before looking at these four, the working definition of “zeal” comes to mind.

Zeal: intense enthusiasm as in working for a cause.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897)

Thérèse is so well known that it isn’t necessary to bring forth a history of her short life. However certain moments in her life demonstrate the zeal of Elijah. From an early age, Thérèse had a heart filled with fire. As a child she declared “I choose all.”

When told that she would have to wait a year before entering Carmel, Thérèse went to the Pope and begged him to intercede for her.

She suffered physically and spiritually for several years, and she faced the challenge with great courage. In fact, she embraced her suffering.

When she declared, “My vocation is love” she gave us another outstanding example of her zeal for the Lord, God of Hosts.

Blessed Titus Brandsma (1881-1942)

The name “Titus Brandsma” is an automatic response in Carmelite circles, when asked if there are Carmelites with Eiljan zeal.

He was a college professor, a confessor, a public speaker, a writer, a chaplain, and a prisoner in a cell in Sheveningen and Dachau.

All of this was done with the Zeal of Elijah. “He was the new Elijah living always in God’s presence, and ready to serve.” (PF p. 167)

He was called at a point in history when Nazism was steam rolling over Europe. Holland was not going to give up willingly. Brandsma was asked to speak with all the Catholic newspaper editors in Holland and tell them not to print any articles sent from the Nazis. To accept this mission was a certain condemnation to death.

Father Titus accepted the mission, and by the time the Nazis came for him, he had already spoken to 14 newspaper editors. (History tells us that Catholic newspaper editors followed the wishes of the Church, and did not print Nazi items in their papers during the war. Many paid for their refusal.)

Hilarion Januszewski (1907-1945)

Father Hilarion was a school companion of Father Kilian’s during the early 1930’s when they were both in Rome. While in school, Father Hilarion was all but invisible. His zeal was not to be noticed for several years.

He was taken by the Nazis in 1939, when they overran his native Poland.

While he was in Dachau, an epidemic of typhoid broke out. Prison authorities asked for volunteers to help take care of the sick. Father Hilarion knew that if he responded to the call, he would most certainly die. He did it anyway. He asked another priest (who would later tell the story), Father Albert, to come with him. Father Albert said no, and only Father Hilarion went to sick bay.

Several weeks passed, and Father Albert answered the call to help the stricken. When he got to sick bay, he found out that Father Hilarion had already died from typhoid fever. He was one of over 850 Polish priests who died at Dachau during the war.

Father Albert contracted typhoid as well, but he lived to tell the story of the courage of Father Hilarion. There is no question that Father Hilarion demonstrated the zeal of Elijah.

Bartholomew Marie Xiberta (1897-1967)

Father Kilian shared personal recollections about Father Bartholomew. He reminded Father Kilian of Elijah because Father Bartholomew demonstrated outstanding zeal. He was “small in stature but with a big heart, he was like a ball of fire.” (PF p. 172)

He never walked, he scurried. He was animated in everything he did. He would actively argue with enthusiasm over a point of theology. He was also staunch in his opposition during the Civil War in Spain. (1936-1940). He

was so vocal in his opposition that he was expelled from Italy while speaking against Fascism. He was a Carmelite who was a defender of causes “when truth and justice were at stake.” (PF p. 173)

His heart was on fire for matters of the church as well. His doctoral dissertation, *Clavis Ecclesiae*, on Penance, years later, won him an invitation to participate on the Theological Commission at the Vatican Council.

He had strong feelings about what the opening document should be - Christology. His opinion wasn't the prevailing one.

During the Council, his health failed and he couldn't see the Council through to the end.

He is described by Father Kilian as:

- . Loving the Order and the Virgin Mother of Carmel
- . Appreciating the vocations of women called to the cloistered Carmelite communities, so much so that he gave up his summers to provide retreats for them
- . Being an intellectual giant
- . He enjoyed the faith and piety of a little child

When asked “What is the greatest problem of the Carmelites?”, he would answer “Is the Blessed Virgin Mary pleased with Carmelites?”

She certainly must be pleased with him.

Conclusion

Who can doubt the zeal of Carmelites when we see role models such as these. They were characterized by enthusiasm, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all-consuming love. Yes, there IS still zeal in Carmel today.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Elijah

1. What were the three sounds Elijah heard before the whisper?

2. What are three interpretations of God's conversation with Elijah?

3. Contrast the meeting of Moses and God on Mt. Sinai, to the meeting of Elijah with God on Mt.Horeb (Sinai).

4. What three actions made up Elijah's new mission from God?

Carmelite Tradition

5. Describe the components of the 1499 Carmelite Coat of Arms.

Words: _____

Symbols: _____

6. What significant changes were made to the Carmelite escutcheon in 1595?

Words: _____

Symbols: _____

Today

7. How did the following modern Carmelites evidence their zeal for the Lord?

St. Thérèse of Lisieux _____

Blessed Titus Brandsma _____

Hilarion Januszewski _____

Bartholomew Maria Xiberta _____

Application

8. The four previously described zealous Carmelites most likely had an impact on the people around them. How do you think their zeal was received?

Personal Reflection

9. How do you demonstrate the zeal of Elijah?

Lesson 6
Chapter 7 - The Call of Elisha

Historical Elijah

God had given Elijah a new mission. This mission included appointing his successor, Elisha, the son of Saphat.

As the ever-faithful servant, Elijah went and found the young farmer, Elisha, plowing the fields. He called the young farmer to follow him, and Elijah threw his cloak over him.

Scripture scholars claim that the cloak was a symbolic gesture of Elisha’s divine call. Whatever it was, Elisha immediately understood.

In looking at the event, we see that Elisha asked for the opportunity to kiss his parents good-bye. This indicated his love and respect for his parents. Still, his desire to follow Elijah was so strong that he destroyed his oxen and plow, a sign of total obedience.

There isn’t much written in scripture about the relationship between Elijah and Elisha. What we do read in scripture is that their initial relationship was that of servant and master. The friendship and the bond grew so strong that when Elijah was leaving the earth, Elisha was heard to cry out: “My father. My Father.” Then he tore his cloak in two.

In comparing the calling of the two prophets, there were a few differences.

ELIJAH	ELISHA
Called by God	Called by Elijah at the request of the LORD.
Elijah “came upon the scene” all of a sudden	
We know nothing about his family life.	Came from a wealthy farming family; had a mother and a father
Traveled with what little he had	Owned 12 pair of oxen

Before Elisha could follow Elijah, he had to “say good-bye” to his parents. Jewish scholars indicate that this may have been so that Elisha could obtain the permission and blessing from his father.

Elijah’s response to Elisha’s request, “Go back, have I done anything to you?” Has received several interpretations. Did he mean “Go back. Am I stopping you?” Father Kilian accepts this interpretation. When Elisha went back, slaughtered the animals and said good bye to his family, he had time to better understand the commitment he was making by answering God’s call and leaving his old life behind.

It is important to remember that accepting the call brought along with it many risks. Elijah certainly faced life-threatening periods in his life. By going with Elijah, Elisha would have to face the same threats, still, Elisha said yes.

Carmelite Tradition

The filial relationship between Elijah and Elisha, along with their common mission, was not the only aspect of their lives that stands out.

Our Carmelite tradition tells us that they were “considered the fathers and originators of Monastic life.” (PF

181). (Remember, though, monastic life/monks didn't come along until many years after Elijah and Elisha) We see evidence of this in the earliest Carmelite writing, and we see it visually displayed in the 1499 Coat of Arms, written in Papal documents, and displayed in older Carmelite churches.

However, what we focus on is the vocation, the calling of Elisha. Through to current times, Elisha's response is an example of the zealous response to God's call. The challenge here is to look at ourselves. Have we responded to God's call with a ready, generous heart as did Elisha?

True, Elisha was called to be a prophet of God, so how does this carry over to our lives as lay persons?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church quotes *Lumen Gentium*:

“By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will.” (CCC ¶ 898, LG ¶)

Elisha got a personal request from Elijah, but our call may be slower in coming. John Paul II describes it this way:

“To be able to discover the actual will of the Lord in our lives always involves the following: a receptive listening to the Word of God and the Church, fervent and constant prayer, recourse to a wise and loving spiritual guide, and a faithful discernment of the gifts and talents given by God, as well as the diverse social and historic situations in which one lives.” (CF, p. 149)

In the end, it is up to us to discern just what vocation we are called to.

1. Literature

In Carmelite writings we see John of Chemineto writing in 1337, that Elijah was the founder of our Order and that Elisha was his first disciple. Today we clearly identify that Elijah was our “Father”, or our inspiration, not our founder.

Lezana, in the mid 1600s further develops the concept of Elisha as Elijah's successor and therefore the heir of the leadership of the friars of Carmel.

Daniel of the Virgin Mary goes even further. He states that when Elijah anointed Elisha by throwing his mantle over him, he made Elisha a prophet, companion, and designated successor. He became a religious and gave up all he had, and lived his life as later did the disciples of Christ.

These writings have been influential in our Carmelite traditions. As we see today, Elijah and Elisha are the spiritual founders and models for all Carmelites. They show us that in spite of the pressures evident in our society, we can still be successful in living in the presence of God.

2. Art

The dramatic act of Elijah placing that mantle over Elisha has been popular as an inspiration for graphic display in almost every medium of art. We see depictions in a 16th Century monastery in Romania; in the Museum of Beaux Art in Antwerp, in other monasteries, chapels, frescos in Rome as well as in other parts of the world.

When most people of the time were unable to read, artwork was a source of learning, so this artwork certainly had an impact on our Carmelite tradition.

3. Liturgy

Carmelite history is prolific in its list of saints and souls. But even before the formal establishment of the Carmelite Order, the feast of Elisha was commemorated in both Greek and Latin churches.

Before any liturgical honor was given to Elijah, in 1369 came the first official decree among the Carmelites in the west, approving the feast of Elisha.

Looking at the call of Elisha again, in the liturgy for his feast day in the Missal of 1478 we see the reference to his call and response presented in 1Kings 19:19-21. By 1587, less attention was committed to Elisha. The Missal of 1587 focused more on the “double spirit of Elijah that descended upon Elisha.” (PF p.186) Other changes occurred over time until the revision of the Liturgy after Vatican II omitted the feast of Elisha entirely. What remained was a commemoration in the votive Mass of Elijah and Elisha, and this commemoration did not include the call of Elisha. His call remained, and remains to this day in the Roman Missal and Carmelite Missal for the Mass for Religious Profession. Elisha’s response to the call is a model for all young religious, but also serves as inspiration for lay persons. We too are called to holiness.

As early as 1462 there is evidence that the Divine Office included the call of Elijah, and from the late 17th C to the end of the 20th C the same office was celebrated in the universal Order.

Carmel Today

We’ve seen the call of Elisha in literature, art, and liturgy. In whatever form, we see Elisha giving up everything to follow God. Elisha serves as a role model but he also serves as a reminder that God is the one who makes the call. Once made, the call was responded to with a spirit of generosity.

1. The Family of Carmel

So how do we live the call of our two leaders Elijah and Elisha in today’s world? We live in the Carmelite tradition, but just what is the spirit of that tradition?

Father Kilian defines our Carmelite vocation: “It is a divine invitation to share in the life of the Carmelite family, a family that includes lay people as well as those living in community.” (PF p.189). Healy immediately looks at Blessed Titus Brandsma. Brandsma was martyred in Dachau on July 26, 1942 at 62 years of age. While he was giving a series of lectures in the United States in 1935, he described the call to Carmel as having

“caught from the flame a spark of the love and zeal which burned in the great prophet. Fire is the most expressive symbol of his love.... Carmel must ever feel the glow of its founder’s zeal. It is the mark of the true follower of Elias.” (CMHS p.10)

Some examples...Father Bartholomew Xiberta donated his summers to giving retreats for Cloistered Carmelite nuns. He was known for his generous spirit. To describe Carmelites he said: “Let’s live each day in the presence of God, singing his praises, mindful that in this way we share in some way in the life to come when we shall live always in the loving presence of God.” (PF p.190-1)

Elizabeth of the Trinity wrote “The life of Carmel is a communion with God from morning to night and from night to morning.” (PF p.191)

Father Falco Thus, former General of the Order, called Carmelites to encourage contemplative prayer and promote it in the community; have the Bible hold a central place in the community; live in the presence of God; offer people example of experiencing God in their life. (PF p.191)

Father Ernest Larkin says that “to be Carmelite has meant the challenge to be prayerful, the gift of friendship, and the privilege of proclaiming God’s Word.” (PF p.192)

Father Redemptus Valabeck wrote that to him Carmel means “to share with all those whose lives we touch, and who touch our lives, the familiarity and intimacy of life in Mary’s family.” (PF p.193)

Father Kilian goes on to cite many more modern Carmelites, and we can see the experiences of all of these Carmelites and the many different ways to live the life of Carmel. We will add, however, words from Father

Francis Amodio, Prior of St. Albert Priory, Middletown NY, in 2003, when speaking with a group of young men going through the process of discernment: “Carmelites do everything. If it needs to be done, we do it.” It might seem that our call to live in the presence of God gives us the zeal to do so.

In all Carmelites, prayer is long-standing in Carmelite tradition, starting formally in the Rule of St. Albert, “Let each remain in his cell, or near it, meditating day and night on the law of the Lord, and keeping vigil in prayer, unless occupied with other lawful duties.” (RA Ch.7)

Admittedly, not every Carmelite will immediately identify the importance of Elijah and Elisha in the history and life of our Order. However each will still acclaim “That God lives in whose presence I stand.”

We know that prayer is not the only important dimension to Carmelite spirituality. To it we must add the Marian element and our active service. Still we need to remember that “Carmel has always emphasized its contemplative dimensions because Carmel without prayer is meaningless, a body without a soul.” (PF p.196)

2. Body of Christ

It comes down to the Church today. As Carmelites are we necessary? Is our charism important to the present and future of the Church? Does the Church need our call to prophecy and to prayer?

The laity have a definite role to play. Cardinal George Basil Hume, O.S.B. identified the arms race, disparity of wealth between rich and poor nations, and man’s inhumanity to man as the three manifestations of human wickedness. (PF p.197).

All over the world, the same manifestations can be seen, and over and over, in Vatican II documents, Post-Conciliar documents, and Papal encyclicals, the laity is cited as the solution. Father Kilian asks: “Are we ready to meet the challenge? (PF p.199)

Conclusion

The European/North American countries face the problem of decline in the practice of the faith. The non-Western countries are facing the spread of our faith and how they go about that path successfully. As Carmelites become more and more international (St. Elias Province has missions in Trinidad and Vietnam), what do they have to offer?

As Father Francis says, Carmelites do what needs to be done. Surely the spirit of Elijah, living in the presence of God, and the spirit exemplified time and again by our Carmelite saints could assist our faith to flourish in the developing countries in today’s world.

“IT” is up to us. Are we up to “IT?”

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Elijah

1. What is the significance of learning about the relationship between Elijah and Elisha?

Carmelite Tradition

2. Explain the Carmelite tradition regarding the vocation and response of Elisha.

3. Why were these two inseparable companions important in Carmel?

Elijah Today

4. How are Elijah and Elisha seen in our modern times? What role models exemplify their message?

Application

5. Identify the three branches of the family of Carmel.

6. How do the branches differ in their functions?

7. How are they similar in their charism?

Personal Reflection

8. The vocation of Elisha is important for me to ponder because

9. For me, being a Lay Carmelite means

Lesson 7-A **Chapter 8 - Naboth's Vineyard**

Historical Elijah

Again Elijah comes to King Ahab. This is their third interaction.

King Ahab wanted to purchase adjoining land from Naboth, land for which the king was willing to offer a good price.

Naboth, according to the custom of the time, could not sell the land. According to tradition the true owner of the land was God. The land was bestowed to Naboth's ancestors and must be passed down through his descendants.

King Ahab knew this custom, had made the offer anyway. Upon the refusal, King Ahab became so disappointed that he refused to eat.

Jezebel had little respect for Israelite customs and traditions. She set a plan in motion, having Naboth and his sons killed, that would thereby free the land for future ownership by King Ahab.

Yahweh called in Elijah to protest this act of injustice. Elijah did as God asked. He completed the three-fold mission by: 1) confronting King Ahab; 2) telling King Ahab of God's anger; and 3) stating the punishment that would be handed down.

This three-fold mission was important in the life of Elijah because this time his God-given purpose was to defend the people, in this case, Naboth's family. His other interactions with King Ahab were in the defense of Yahweh.

Healy describes this difference by comparing the interaction of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. This was a contest between the true and false religion. The vineyard of Naboth incident was an incident regarding the right and wrong of social justice.

King Ahab repented the actions, did penance. He tore his garments and wore sackcloth directly over his flesh, and he fasted.

Yahweh, a God of justice, was moved by King Ahab's remorse and humility. The punishment originally dealt upon King Ahab was lifted, and would be dispensed upon his sons.

Ultimately, Elijah's intervention showed that in the eyes of God, all, rich and poor, are equal in God's sight.

Carmelite Tradition

Father Kilian clearly acknowledges that this interaction between King Ahab and Elijah is not considered to be an important aspect of Carmelite tradition. Elijah's responsibility here was not to warn, but to deliver the judgement and subsequent punishment by God. It is Yahweh, not the king, who rules Israel.

Still, others saw a connection. The then still Anglican, Msgr. Ronald Knox referred to the taking of the monasteries and other Church properties by Henry VIII as the same action as King Ahab taking Naboth's vineyard.

Later in the 1600's, Fr. John Baptist Lezana wrote a life of Elijah. He wrote of the vineyard story, and in fact indicates that King Ahab was actually afraid of his adversary Elijah. In the Elujan biography, Lezana had Elijah going back to his disciples and sharing the story of Naboth with them. He doesn't go further however, in the social right or wrong in the taking of Naboth's vineyard.

The only mention of the incident in Carmelite liturgy is on the feast of Elijah. Here, the crime and punishment of King Ahab is recalled. This mention was removed with the liturgical revisions of Vatican II.

As far as art is concerned, we do see reference in three drawings by the Dutch artist Abraham Diepenbeke. He depicts Elijah's confrontation with Ahab, his meting punishment upon Ahab, and Ahab's show of remorse.

Just because we see so little reference in early Carmelite writings, liturgy, and art, it doesn't mean that Carmelites were not involved in issues of social justice. In the late 1800's, Carmelite Archbishop Joachim Luck y Garriga spoke regarding his concern for the poor and workers; the need for Catholic schools and hospitals, along with the need for religious communities to staff them. His contemporary Fr. John Sprat was best known as a temperance crusader.

From the 20th century, we can reflect on St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) who spoke on womens' rights; on Blessed Titus Brandsma who spoke against Naziism.

Elijah Today

Father Kilian states that some say we need a new Elijah with a message from God, or another Moses to lead people out of slavery. The challenge he gives lies in answering this question:

"I am called to be a prophet, and as a prophet, what can I DO today?"

He suggests a "conversion of the heart." (PF p.219) This conversion, or metanoia, is experienced through total change, a change from evil to the Lord, from sin to acceptance of God and His will.

We see this conversion in St. Paul on the road to Damascus; in Zaccheus in his tree; St. Augustine who in his Confessions wrote "(I) was filled with a light of confidence and all the shadows of (his) doubt were swept away."

Closer to our time, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, who had abandoned Judaism for atheism, read the life of St. Teresa of Avila and she was converted to Catholicism. She subsequently lived a life that led her to become a canonized saint of the Church.

Coming into 2003, we see in the second paragraph of "Living the Carmelite Way: The Rule for the Third Order of Carmel:

"Therefore, all the faithful, of whatever state, are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love: from this holiness a more human lifestyle is fostered, even in earthly society. The counsels that Jesus proposed to his disciples in the Gospel, favour in a special way a path of holiness and transformation of the world in accordance with the spirit of the Beatitudes. These counsels are lived in various stable forms of life, raised up by the Holy Spirit, and regulated by the Church."

So, being the humans that we are, we are called to ongoing conversion, a non-stop mystical path to God.

According to Jesuit Fr. William Johnston, in Christian Mysticism Today:

"Mysticism means loving the Gospel, and allowing ourselves to be transformed by the Gospel."

We have scripture and religious writers all saying the same thing. We are ALL called to holiness, not just some of us. As Lay Carmelites, we need to look at what Father Kilian asks of the Carmelite family. In our response to the call of God...

How generous are we?

Are we totally dedicated to a life of poverty, chastity, humility and love of Christ?

Are we 'bogged down in a state of spiritual flabbiness'? (PF p.227)

Look at the conversion of St. Teresa of Jesus. She saw a statue of the wounded Christ. She was touched by how He suffered for us, and her “heart broke”. She begged for the strength not to offend God any more. While overwhelming, it was “only the beginning of the radical transformation.” (PF p.227)

Everything this tremendous Carmelite gave us came from her commitment to God. For us, we can commit to a cause, work within our Carmelite family, but without a personal, ongoing conversion, it won't be enough.

Father Kilian again goes back to Blessed Titus Brandsma, the new Elijah. He is offered as our model. In an address to journalists, Pope John Paul II stated:

“Titus Brandsma could not have been the teacher, the journalist, the writer he was in the stormy center of that cruel drama had he not drunk at the fountain of intense personal spirituality.” (PF p.228)

Father Kilian offers us a suggested plan for developing a spiritual life.

1. Daily prayer to the Holy Spirit.
2. Fidelity to daily Mass
3. Prayerful recitation of liturgical prayer
4. Daily mental prayer and reading, and study of Sacred Scripture
5. Life-style of genuine poverty
6. Tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary
7. Frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Conclusion

The “Naboths” of this world are many: people from Third World countries; people who are mentally ill and/or developmentally challenged; the unborn; people living in poverty; all of us who are trapped in the world-wide machinations of war.

Justice is what is needed. Starting at a local level is a good way to go. Do we march to Washington declaring our belief in the right to life? Do we visit our senior members who are homebound? Are we supportive of agencies working to set up group homes in our communities?

In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus reached out and touched the leper. In Matthew and Mark, Jesus ate in the house of Simon, a man with a disease of the skin. Three gospel-writers were inspired to include these stories. The example of Jesus is there for all of us to see. All we have to do is to go and do likewise.

In October 2003, the Carmelite International Justice and Peace Commission met at St. Albert Priory in Middletown, New York. Among their “Utopian Hopes” were included:

- * integration of justice in all our ministries rather than just in a specific project.
- * the need for studying the Elijan tradition in Carmelite history and spirituality
- * defining a “prophetic tradition”
- * Discovering the connection between human rights and divine grace

The Commissions ongoing discussion and our own individual conversion experiences are clear indications that the Carmelite family is working along its Elijan tradition.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Elijah

1. What was God's mission for Elijah?

2. How was this interaction between Elijah and King Ahab different from the others?

Carmelite Tradition

3. Early Carmelites were not involved in efforts related to matters of social justice. Explain why.

4. What were the contributions of:

Joachim Luke y Garriga

John Sprat

Elijah Today

5. "I am called to be a prophet, and as a prophet, what can I DO today?" Explain Father Kilian's challenge.

6. What is conversion of the heart?

7. Define mysticism.

Application

8. List the 7 steps for developing a spiritual life suggested by Father Kilian.

Personal Reflection

9. What are your Utopian Hopes?

Lesson 7-B Chapter 9 - Elijah and King Ahaziah

Historical Elijah

Ahaziah, the son of King Ahab and Jezebel ruled over Israel in Samaria for two years.

His confrontation with Elijah was unlike any other of Elijah's interventions requested by Yahweh. It is also a confrontation of such brutality that it is hard for today's people to fathom.

Then why is it included in the Elijan narratives, and why discuss it here? The incident shows the evil reign of King Ahaziah, who turned out to be no better at ruling than his parents. The actions of Elijah, commanded by Yahweh, show the anger and punishment of a just and jealous God.

Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his roof terrace and was hurt. He was a superstitious man so he sent messengers to Baalzebub, the god of Ekron to ask if he (Ahaziah) would recover. Yahweh was angry at that, because Ahaziah could have asked the God of Israel.

Yahweh called again upon his loyal servant, Elijah. He asked Elijah to intercept the messengers, and send them back to the king with the message that was sure to bother Ahaziah, 'he wouldn't leave his sick bed because he was going to die!'

This angered the king and he sent his soldiers to capture Elijah. This is not a surprising response considering the long-time struggle Ahaziah and his parents had with the messenger of God.

The actions of Elijah, on the other hand, seem drastic. Elijah calls down fire from heaven to kill the captain and his fifty soldiers. Ahaziah sent another captain with fifty soldiers and they received the same "warm response" from Elijah.

Ahaziah would not give up. He sent a third contingent. This time Elijah's response was different because the captain of the fifty men was a man of courage. He knelt down before Elijah and pleaded for his life and the life of his men. He says "let my life mean something to you."

An angel of the Lord brought a message to Elijah to spare the men. Elijah was told to return with them to the king. The message to Ahaziah didn't change, because he sent messengers to another god, he was still going to die.

And die he did! Once he died, Elijah was gone.

The question is always asked, why treat the first two contingents of soldiers so horribly? They were only following orders. There are three theories cited by Father Kilian:

1. The king and soldiers deserved it
2. The story is only a compilation of fact and legend
3. It is a preposterous tale, but fits well into the Elijan story.

One thing is certain. The story shows a powerful relationship between Yahweh and his chosen messenger.

Carmelite Tradition

Carmelite tradition fills the story out, focusing on Obadiah, one of the earliest of Elijah's disciples. Earlier in 1Kings:18, we read that Obadiah was a zealous follower of the Lord. He hid 100 prophets in two caves and cared for them to protect them from King Ahab. While Obadiah was faithful to the King, he was more faithful to Yahweh. After King Ahab died, Obadiah remained faithful to Ahab's successor, King Ahaziah.

According to the Carmelite work *Institution of the First Monks* Obadiah was the captain of the third contingent

sent by King Ahaziah. When he asked Elijah to spare him and his 50 men, Elijah remembered the 100 prophets cared for by Obadiah, and that's why Elijah pardoned them all.

According to the legend, in gratitude Obadiah left his royal post and his family. He then joined Elijah.

In the late 1600's, Father John Baptist Lezana repeats the story, and Daniel of the Virgin Mary embellishes it. The legend continued in Carmelite tradition to the point that it was believed that this Obadiah was the author of the book of Obadiah in the bible.

The Dutch artist Diefenbeke again took an Elijan story and made it into an artwork, four engravings. These engravings were included in Speculum the work of 14th Century Daniel of the Virgin Mary.

Through History this legend was not always accepted. The 20th Century Elias Magennis, in his biography of Elijah, did not go along with it.

It cannot be denied, however, that the early fathers of the Church, including Epiphanius, said that Obadiah was a disciple of Elijah. It was Isidore who identified the captain of the third contingent as Obadiah.

As with other Elijah-related texts, parts of this incident were minimally used in the 1853 Breviary on through the 1938 Breviary, which was the last one to be published by the Carmelite Order. The revised Liturgy of the Hours, developed after Vatican II does not include the story of this confrontation between Obadiah and Elijah.

The minimal mention of the confrontation over the years in Carmelite liturgy is an indication that the more legendary passages were often passed over in favor of the more historically accepted passages.

Father Kilian acknowledges that 20th Century authors work very little with this section of Elijah's story. At the same time he asks - isn't there some value in the courage shown, that would give us a lesson to use in our 21st Century battles of power?

Elijah's weapon of choice is fire, a weapon of violence. If we compare Elijah with Jesus and His use of fire, we would see a big difference.

ELIJAH	JESUS
Elijah uses a violent fire to destroy.	Jesus used a fire of love, to save.
Elijah came to purify Israel with recrimination and punishment.	Jesus came to purify Israel, but with himself as the victim of violence.

The time of Elijah was quite different than the 21st Century. The God of the Old Testament was a god of wrath. Elijah was Yahweh's faithful servant, and he did what he was told. Jesus, too, was Yahweh's faithful servant. His message was peaceful, though it brought an inner burning in the hearts of His followers.

We also cannot forget that Elijah was feared and he wasn't popular. We can say the same thing of Jesus, because there were many who saw Him as a source of discord.

There will always be conflict and discord; our paths will not all be easy. If we wish to follow and imitate Elijah, as well as share in the journey of Jesus, we have to be prepared for conflict with the powers of evil.

Elijah shows us that we need to:

1. Be defiant and courageous;
2. Strike out for good over evil;
3. Worship truth over falsehood;
4. Choose justice over injustice.

Jesus shows us that we also must love.

We face three major conflicts; The first is conflict in ourselves. There is always some kind of conflict going on in our lives. Sometimes conflict is healthy and leads to positive growth. Elijah is a perfect example for us in this instance. He shows us how to offer a pure and willing heart to God. Another example is John of the Cross. He offers his dark night as a source of ongoing inspiration.

Father John Brenninger offers us these words from the Carmelite Directory of the Spiritual Life. “The purity of heart has two phases: freeing ourselves from sin and from every inordinate affection to creatures and this part is negative; and a sincere and entire clinging to the heart of God alone, and this part is positive.” (CD p.349). The inner conflicts will always exist, but our Carmelite spirituality gives us armor for the battle.

The second conflict is within the Church. This conflict exists because we will always have questions.

In the early Church there were conflicts. Conflict often arises in times of growth. The early Church suffered persecutions, trials in their missionary work, mediocre Church leaders, and clashes between the rich and the poor.

Today we see persecutions in Central America, missionaries being killed in all corners of the world, Church leaders who are involved in scandal, and the poor remain ever-with-us.

After Vatican II, we saw the initial struggles created by change, and some of these conflicts continue; abortion, birth control, role of women in the Church, the shortage of vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

On the other hand, we see an increase in the involvement of the laity in all phases of the Church, including within our own Carmelite family. Today, lay members share in the actions of almost all Commissions connected with specialized new initiatives. Rather than be discouraged, we have stepped up to the plate to help seek the answers and develop solutions. Hopefully, we are doing this with the zeal of Elijah, and the fire of the love of Jesus.

The third conflict is within society. Particularly in our life as Lay Carmelites, we live a vocation, a specific calling to a different way of life than society at large.

Father Kilian tells us that “This role necessarily brings with it a conflict with evil that is unavoidable.” (PF p.247) Our first step is to denounce this evil in the world. He sites five major concerns.

1. The dignity of the human person
2. Marriage
3. The family
4. Culture
5. Social and economic life

While all of these are serious concerns, he specifically addresses two - the devaluation of life, and the poverty that hits millions and along with it, the uncontrollable evils.

As a Church, we have concern for every human life from conception to death. It doesn't matter if a child is “different” or a teenager is less than attractive, or an adult who has far less than perfect memory. As a Church-people we respect life, ALL life.

Society argues the right of a mother over the right of the unborn. Many governments approve of laws permitting abortion. One of the more recent threats to the unborn is stem-cell research. Then there is cloning.

As a people of God we do not ignore developments in science, but we have an obligation to use a “moral standard.” Continually we re-confirm the traditional teaching of the Church. Human life is sacred. Life is a gift from God; and life exists the very instant an unborn child is conceived.

Answer Father Kilian's question:

"Carmelite, you call yourself a follower of the prophet of fire. Where do you stand in this confrontation with evil?"

As far as poverty, Father Kilian defines poverty as "the lack of sufficient material resources required for a decent life." (PF p.251) Poverty is not merely a problem for the Church, it is a problem for the world.

Elijah Today

The Second Vatican Council "wanted to go on record as a council that gave preference to the poor." It is over forty years since the end of the Council. Still the statistics tell us that we have a long way to go.

In the U.S. Pastoral Letter, "Economic Justice for All", the U.S. bishops identify that:

- * more than 33 million (or 1 in 7) Americans are poor; another 20-30 million are needy (§16)
- * children are the largest single group among the nation's poor
- * More than one third of all female-headed families are poor; among minority families the poverty rate is over 50% (§ 178)

Other statistics listed are also disturbing and thought provoking. The bishops tell us what to do:

"It is the responsibility of all citizens, acting through their government, to assist and empower the poor, the disadvantaged, the handicapped and the unemployed...the way a society responds to the needs of the poor through public policies is the litmus test of its justice or injustice." (§ 123)

We can also look upon the Christian vocation, a call to a conversion of heart. Father Kilian wrote of that type of conversion when he wrote Prophet of Fire in 1990.

Conclusion

We've looked at Elijah's conflict, and as before, he responded to Yahweh with zeal. He didn't succeed in wiping out Baalism, and in our lifetime we may not wipe out poverty. Like Elijah, our 21st Century Carmelite zeal will assist us in our response to God.

Father Kilian asks us a few questions we need to seriously think about. Where is the fire of love in Carmel today? Are we bogged down with mediocrity and complacency? We see in the life of Titus Brandsma that to win the world for Christ we have to come into conflict with it. Do we have the courage to come into conflict, even if just in our own communities, in order to win the world for Christ?

Well, do we?

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Elijah

1. What was the reason for Yahweh's request regarding Elijah's confrontation with Ahaziah?

2. In Elijah's life, what was the significance of fire?

What is the significance of fire in reference to Jesus Christ?

Carmelite Tradition

3. Explain the conversion to a purity of heart.

Elijah Today

4. In your own words, define poverty.

Also in your own words, who are "the poor"?

Application

5. We see the use of fire in the Old Testament. We see the use of fire by Jesus in the New Testament. What are some examples of this fire in the 21st Century?

Personal Reflection

6. Do I do enough to step into conflict with evil in order to bring the world to Christ? Explain.

Lesson -8A
Chapter 10 - The Assumption of Elijah

Historical Elijah

Elijah knew that it was his time to leave his life on earth. His disciple, Elisha, knew his mentor was leaving. Elisha wanted to spend as much time as he could, staying with Elisha until the end.

It started with a journey together. At one point, Elijah told Elisha to “Stay here.” Elisha is adamant. “No. I’m not going to leave.” They continued on together.

They arrive at Bethel where Guild prophets confront Elisha. They are associated with Elisha, and they know that Elijah is to be taken from them. While there, Elijah again tells Elisha to stay, and again Elisha will not leave Elijah.

They continued on to the Jordan River. Here Elijah uses his mantle to part the water, as both Moses and Joshua had parted water before him. They cross over. This was the end of their journey.

Elijah asks what he can do for Elisha, as his last gift before he, Elijah, leaves. Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. This puts one in mind of Thérèse of Lisieux. Her older sister, Leonie, who feels that she is too old for dolls, asks Thérèse which dolls she would like to have. In the spirit of Elisha, Thérèse answered quickly: “I’ll take them all!”

As Elijah’s first disciple, Elisha is asking for his right as the “first born”. He is asking to be Elijah’s heir. Just like grace, spirit is a gift from God, and only God can grant Elisha’s request. Elijah tells his disciple that the request will be granted, provided that when Elijah departs, Elisha is able to see him go.

Elisha received his answer. He saw Elijah being taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire. He immediately tore his garment in two. Elisha then picked up Elijah’s mantle, that had fallen to the ground as Elijah ascended. The spirit of Elijah had been passed on, and Elisha was able to part the Jordan River by using the mantle. The guild prophets were watching. They went to Elisha, who had now become “the father of the family of prophets.” (PF p.281)

Did Elijah die, or didn’t he? The Book of Kings doesn’t say. At the time, some held that Elijah didn’t die, that he lived and was going to come back. That belief is supported in the Book of Malachi. Many hold that belief today.

We see this belief in many Jewish traditions. A chair is left vacant at the rite of circumcision. During the Passover meal, there is always an extra glass of wine poured in case Elijah chose to come to the Passover celebration. Not only Jews believe that Elijah is alive. Many of the early Fathers of the Church also believed Elijah would return.

Others believed that John the Baptist was the returning Elijah who came before Jesus. Jesus himself said “Elijah is indeed coming and he will restore everything. I assure you though, Elijah has already come but they did not recognize him and they did as they pleased with him.” (Mt 17:11-13). John, the new Elijah, the Baptizer, had the Elijan spirit.

Whether Elijah died or not, Elisha had been passed the spirit of Elijah, and only could have been given that spirit by God.

Carmelite Tradition

Elijah’s being taken to heaven has always been important in our Order. We have the Elijan spirit as part of our heritage. What stands out more from this event, however, is the bestowal of this spirit upon Elisha.

Looking at this event, early Carmelite documents indicate the belief that Elijah was alive. We see this in early versions of the Constitutions, and we see it in the *Institution of the First Monks*. Elijah was taken to an earthly paradise.

The story is retold by Lezana in the 17th Century, and by Daniel of the Virgin Mary. Daniel even goes so far as to give reasons why Elijah did not die: his zeal, his intimacy with God, his chastity, and his fasting. This traditional belief was bound to be held fast because the roots of the belief were so deep.

Today “there is no common teaching”. (PF p.285) It isn’t even a topic of current conversation in most cases, even though for some of us it is a topic for lively debate.

Father Roland Murphy, a well known Old Testament scholar, says that there is no clear revelation that Elijah is still alive. He also says what we stated earlier, that Elijah has already come as John the Baptist. (PF p.285)

In the liturgy, Elijah’s being taken to heaven has had many references through the centuries. Unlike some of the other Elijan stories, this one is currently prominent in the Liturgy of the Hours in the revisions after Vatican II.

In art, the story of the fiery chariot lends itself to creative reproduction. Many dramatic pieces are in Carmelite churches throughout the world. There are paintings, stained glass windows, engravings and frescoes. These pieces of art serve as reminders that Elijah was taken to heaven, alive or not, and even there, he went as a faithful servant.

Father Kilian quotes the *Book of the Institution of the First Monks*:

“(To know) the spirit of the Order, one must first live it.” (PF p.287)

We can learn about this spirit, indeed that is the purpose of this formation program.

The *Institution* also identifies the two-fold goal of Elijah’s life - to offer God a pure and holy heart, and then if God wills it, to receive “a taste of the divine presence.” (PF p.288) If this is to be understood correctly, then it can only mean that we have a call to the mystical life. As with any call, we have the choice in our response.

Within fifty years of receiving the Rule of St. Albert, the hermits were moving into Europe, and into a mendicant life style. They added the active dimension to their lives, and in spite of the problems of a growth period, the active spirit was only possible from living a contemplative life.

St. Teresa of Jesus followed the Carmelite spirit as it was described in the *Institution*. Her reform resulted in a separate branch of Carmelite nuns, the Discalced Carmelites. It wasn’t twenty years after her death that the Reform of Touraine took place in France. This was a reform predominantly affecting the Carmelite friars because the friars were trying to successfully develop an active ministry within a contemplative life style.

In 1604 the reform was started by Prior Peter Brehort. This was called the “strict observance”. He may have started it, but it was John of St. Samson (1612-1636), a blind lay brother, who was the guide of this reform. This simple lay brother is acknowledged along with Sts. Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross, for living the contemplative spirit. He describes the Carmelite call as a call to the mystical life, that is called to “experience the presence of God.” (PF p.290)

Later on in the 17th Century, Michael of St. Augustine, one of the leaders of the Reform, defended the active/contemplative life. He said that this spirit was how Elijah lived his life. While he defended the active apostolate, he too claimed that the spirit of Carmel was the contemplative life, the life to which we are called. It is through his writing that we come to understand the Reform of Touraine. This reform left its mark on the Order. It made clear that a pure and holy heart is the way we prepare ourselves for the gift of contemplation. (PF p.290)

Elijah Today

“We are convinced that the Elijan spirit is timeless.” (PF p.292). It also seems that the spirit of Elijah is essential for the world today. Elijah cooperated with God and acted as his messenger even when to do so was at the risk of death.

It is almost universally understood within the Carmelite Order that Blessed Titus Brandsma is the “New Elijah”. Blessed Titus Brandsma also cooperated with God, and as a result, he died in a prison camp, Dachau. Priest, professor, writer, journalist, chaplain, Father Titus was a Carmelite who was known for his public speaking, lectures, and living the contemplative life in the spirit of Elijah.

Father Titus was asked by God, through his bishop, to speak with Dutch newspaper editors, and tell them not to print material sent to them from the Nazi government. To say yes to this assignment would put his life in danger, more than heal ready was. Hitler had already begun calling him “that dangerous little friar”.

Added to his writing, public appearances and radio broadcasts, Father Titus was able to see at least fourteen newspaper editors before he was taken from his priory and arrested in January 19, 1942. He met with fourteen editors, but ALL the Catholic newspaper editors in Holland refused to print Nazi propaganda, they held with the ruling of the Church. Father Titus died by lethal injection on July 26, 1942, at the age of 62.

Elijah stood before King Ahab with zeal, as Titus Brandsma, in his zeal, stood before Adolph Hitler and Naziism.

Father Kilian quotes Elijah from scripture, and Titus Brandsma from a response he gave at Scheveningen, a German prison, and in both cases we see Carmelite zeal. They both spoke up for God in spite of the dangers involved.

Information about Elijah has been passed down to us through the scriptures and the voices of tradition. While Father Titus did not leave us a journal or personal diary, we have his writings, and the writings about him by those who knew him.

His book Carmelite Mysticism, Historical Sketches will be discussed in the next four lessons, where we will clearly identify the range of history and spirituality expressed within this powerful work. In the very first lecture in CMHS, Father Titus describes the spirit of Elijah in such a way that there is no doubt in the reader’s mind that Father Titus lived that spirit.

He describes a two-fold spirit of Elijah as our call to “be ascetics”, living a life of penance and mortification, to gain purity of heart. Along with a spirit of prayer, this purity of heart will dispose us to receive the gift of contemplation.

CONCLUSION

Father Titus has something to offer to all Carmelites. He is truly a “prophet” of our times.

He shows us how to speak up against evil. He shows us how to courageously challenge and face personal illness and oppression. He shows us how to use our specific talents in the works of the Lord.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Elijah

1. Describe the way Elisha received a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

Carmelite Tradition

2. What were the Carmelite beliefs over the centuries regarding the death of Elijah?

3. What was the two-fold goal of Elijah's life?

4. Compare the reform of Teresa of Jesus with the Reform of Touraine.

Elijah Today

5. What actions of Bl. Titus Brandsma indicate his Elijan spirit?

Application

6. Describe the similarities in how Elijah, Elisha, and Titus Brandsma served God.

7. Identify what you have in common with them.

Personal Reflection

8. In reading “A Prayer Before a Picture of Christ”, how does your Carmelite spirit respond?

Lesson 8 - B
Carmelite Mysticism Historical Sketches
Introduction and Lecture 1

Introduction

Father Titus Brandsma is known within the Carmelite Community as a highly esteemed historian, and an acknowledged philosopher and scholar on mysticism. That, and other accomplishments, makes Father Titus an important contributor in Lay Carmelite formation.

Three important conclusions Father Titus makes about Carmelite history are:

1. The Prophet Elias was the inspiration for all eremitical and religious life.
2. St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross were not at the beginnings of Carmelite spirituality. They were formed by it, and were simply continuing with the tradition.
3. The Marian character of the writings of St. John of the Cross is accepted. His doctrine could not have come about without devotion to Mary.

Lecture I - In the Spirit and Strength of Elias

It is important in the spiritual life to have a role model. Carmelites have such a role model in Elias.

“Carmel is the natural retreat of the contemplative,” (CMHS, p.1) a place of peace and solitude. The memory of the Prophet Elias is still there today.

Elias was filled with fire and spirit, but he was also the “first of a long line of those who would worship God in spirit and in truth. Elias had his followers, including Eliseus and from Elias they learned to live his spirituality. Followers continued over centuries in this spirit as hermits.

With the coming of the Crusades, Mount Carmel was one of the first places to be won back from the Saracens. The eremitical life was attractive, and many European crusaders stayed on.

Elias’ fire and spirit come down to his double spirit, the life of activity, and the exercise of virtue, whether alone or amidst social activity.

This double spirit is three-fold:

1. A double portion of the inheritance of the Father, the portion of privileged children.
2. Combination of contemplative and active life. No matter what God asked Elias to do, when it was done, Elias prayed.
3. The double spirit consists of a balance between the human and the divine. The life founded on a life of prayer and meditation along with our life of labor and daily services.

Characteristics of this prophetic life of prayer include:

1. Living in the presence of God. This is not limited to members of Carmel. It is an element for all in religious life. This also includes those in our Lay Carmelite membership. Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection is one of the foremost authors on the presence of God. St. Thérèse of Lisieux practiced this presence. Both were simple Carmelites who lived this life of prayer.
2. Love of solitude. God sent Elias into solitude, and Elias, on his own, returned to solitude when he thought he had not succeeded in his mission. Before he could have the peace and solitude, he had to experience the desert.
3. Detachment from the world. Elias left his family, his country, and he was alone. Father Titus

writes “ and as Our Lord after him, he tastes the bitterness of a lonely world.” (CMHS, p 6)

God demanded cooperation and unquestioning faith from his servant. Father Titus, many years before Father Kilian wrote Prophet of Fire, stated that the mystical graces are a “free gift from God, but you had to show heroic virtue before you got them.”

Combination of Liturgical and Contemplative Prayer

Prayer was the chief characteristic of Elias, and his prayer was both oral and liturgical along with meditative and contemplative. He sang God’s praises (a form of liturgical prayer), alone and with others. Liturgical prayer comes to us from a long tradition. St. Teresa of Jesus was also a lover of liturgical prayer and found that often her experience would evolve into contemplative prayer.

Contemplative Life in the Desert

In his writings, Father Titus refers to growing and thriving plants, such as rambling roses, sunflowers, and the Great Gardener. These analogies are meant to show that spirituality grows, and our contemplative experiences deepen in the process.

Growing things need food, and our food is the Eucharist. Father Titus says “In the school of Carmel, the mystical contemplative life is the fruit of the Eucharistic life, as Elias’ food was the bread he received at the cave entrance in the desert.”

Carmelites are not alone in their devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, but several Carmelite saints stand out among the mystics who adored the Blessed Sacrament. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi stands out among them. She entered her particular Carmel because the practice of daily Communion that the Carmel followed. This was in a time when daily reception of Communion was frowned upon. Another Carmelite saint, St. Teresa of Jesus, had her sisters recite the Canonical Hours in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

You can also see devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in the churches built by the Carmelites. The building structure is quite simple. However, the sanctuary is far more grand, and often lavishly adorned.

Father Titus also reminds us that Elias was fed by God in the desert. God spoke to Elias in the desert as in a silent, gentle breeze. So also we are fed with the Bread of Life, and in the depths of our spirit, during the union of ourselves with Jesus Christ, God brings the message in a gentle, quiet, and peaceful moment in time.

The Mother of God Governing Carmel’s Life of Prayer

Father Titus calls Elias’ vision on Carmel the foundation of the Marian character of Carmelite spirituality. He sees the little cloud, bearer of rain, a prototype of Mary, who carried Jesus within her womb. This is supported by the cloud that covered the ark of the covenant through the desert. In that case, the covering cloud represented the presence of God.

Father Titus also identifies that this vision of the little cloud was the stimulus for the early hermits to build the sanctuary on Mount Carmel, and dedicate it to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Harmony of Intellectual and Affective Prayer

The two visions of the Prophet Elias (on Mount Carmel and at Horeb) are interconnected.

In the small cloud on Mount Carmel, the frightened Elias saw the parched land watered. (Elias was frightened

because of the potential retaliation from Jezebel.) This first vision was intellectual in nature. He saw the cloud. The cloud brought rain.

On Horeb, Elias experienced the peace that only the intimacy of God’s presence holds for us. This grace for Elias was the reward for his devotion and service. This was an experience affective in nature. He felt the love and presence of God in a very special way.

This joining together of the heart (affect) and mind (intellect) is the happy mean that Father Titus describes when he talks about the spirit of Carmel. “With Zeal I have been zealous for the Lord God of Hosts.” This is the legacy of Elias.

The school of Carmel warns us about the importance of the “intellectual foundation of the contemplative life.”

In fact, St. John of the Cross, the Mystical Doctor, strongly supported the “necessity of imaginative and intellectual meditation.” There is a good reason for this: not all of us will soar to mystical experiences.

We also cannot forget the apostolic character of Elias. He was led by the same “zealous apostolic spirit” that has led Carmelites over the centuries. Apostolic work has been a continuing call of Carmelites.

The Deep-Red Rose Clustering Over Carmel: Symbolic of Elias

Throughout the text of Carmelite Mysticism Historical Sketches, Father Titus uses analogies to Carmel as a garden.

He sees Elias as a red rose, and he saw Elias’ followers (that’s us today) as climbing and interlacing with a girdle of fire. He interprets that for us by comparing the description with the climbing as the exercise of virtue; the red roses as the ardent love that burns in Elias and his disciples. (Again, that’s us today.)

Father Titus refers to Carmel as a “deep-red rambler-rose” that will grow and spread and cover the mountain. It is in our hands now, to be those rambler-roses.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Commentary:

1. Identify at least 4 parallels between Elias and Titus Brandsma.

2. What was the impact of the Crusades on the eremitical life of the hermits on Mt. Carmel?

3. What are 3 characteristics of a “prophetical life of prayer”?

Carmelite Tradition:

4. How have Carmelites combined liturgical and contemplative prayer over the centuries?

5. What are 3 ways into which Father Titus divides the double spirit of Carmelite Spirituality?

6. How does Father Titus explain the Eucharist in the life of Carmelites?

Today:

7. God spoke to Elias with a silent, gentle breeze. Today how would we place ourselves in the disposition for God’s whisper?

Application:

8. Is it important in the spiritual life, to have a role model ? Why?

9. Why is the combination of intellectual and contemplative prayer so important?

Personal Reflection:

10 Explain YOUR deep-red rambling-rose characteristics.

Lesson - 9A

Lecture II - The Hermits of Carmel

Carmelite Crusaders

Tradition says that the “formal” beginnings of the Carmelite structure started some time before 1200. At this point there was no actual rule, simply a structured way of life that the hermits followed. In 1209, St. Brocard received the first Rule from Albert, the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

In the 13th Century, *Institutio Primorum Monachorum* was written. This summarized the spirit and principles of the lives of the hermits. Both this and the Rule identified prayer as the essential life of the Carmelites. They were to remain apart from the busy life of the world.

The hermits each had to have a separate cell, a sanctuary where no visitors would enter unless there was an emergency. Work was not done in common when it could be done alone, but when the need arose to work together, it was permitted.

The hermits prayed together, ate together, and had periods of recreation together. The rest of their day was spent alone.

It remains today, that although a mendicant order, the Carmelite Rule defines a need to experience a great love of solitude, and remain in their cells or near them, day and night, meditating on the Law of the Lord. (Rule, Chapter 10)

Necessity of Active Life

While drawn to the Carmelite life of solitude, historically, Carmelites had, and continue to have, an active apostolate, “when God must be forsaken for God.” (CMHS p. 14)

Recently, a Carmelite Prior was working with a group of young men who were in the process of discerning whether they were being called to the Carmelite way of life. One of the young men asked the Prior, “Father Francis, what do Carmelites do for their apostolate?” Father Francis replied, “Carmelites have always done what needed to be done. We do everything.” It was no different for the early Carmelites as they made their way through Europe.

St. Thomas Aquinas, a great Dominican theologian, has an interpretation of the active life that indicates the highest ideal of the spiritual life is the imparting the fruit of contemplation to others, by the active life. (CMHS p. 15)

Father Titus clearly indicates that the Carmelite calling to solitude is not necessarily at odds with the Dominican calling to preach. Done in the truest spirit, both receive God’s graces.

The pressures of today’s society draws upon Carmelites to serve their needs. This isn’t a problem as long as the Carmelite roots the activity in contemplation.

In the case of lay persons, a life of activity and work is essential aspect of life. The Vatican II Document, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, ¶ 4 says it this way.

“The life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is maintained by the spiritual helps shared by all the faithful, especially by the active participation in the Liturgy. Lay people should so use these aids that, while doing what is expected of them in the world in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not separate their union with Christ from the *ordinary life, but actually grow closer to him by doing their work according to God’s will.*”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, quoting the Vatican II Document *Lumen Gentium*, goes on to say:

“By reason of their special vocation, it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will.” (CCC ¶ 898)

Since it is the responsibility of the laity to support the Church, work is essential part of our lives. What needs to be done must be done. However, work done after the nourishment of the Liturgy, particularly the Eucharistic celebration, is done in the zeal of Elias, because the work is fueled by the very power of God.

Difficulty of Drawing Dividing Line

There are times, quite frankly, when we “must leave God to work for God”, when an important endeavor calls us away from our life of solitude for a time. If role models such as St. Teresa of Jesus had difficulty with a dividing line, and St. John of the Cross spent a lot of his time on the road preaching, it’s fair to state that drawing the line between our active and our contemplative lives will sometimes be difficult. We can’t give up trying. St. Teresa of Jesus, wrote in her book, *Foundations*, says:

“In solitude, some say there are fewer occasions for offending God and purity is more easily kept. But when obedience or charity bids us run the risk of occasions, love comes out far more clearly than it does in the recesses of solitude...Believe me, we make much greater gain and that beyond comparison, even if we commit more faults and suffer great losses.” (CMHS p. 16)

Apostolate of the Contemplative Life

The School of Carmel was called to a life of contemplation. Like Elias, we are called to a life of prayer. For Elias, prayer is what kept him going.

In the Mystical Body we all play a part, and Father Titus writes that the prayers and sacrifices of cloistered contemplatives are also apostolic. In our Carmelite Family we see at least three notable examples of such a concept: St. Teresa of Jesus, Spain; St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, Florence, Italy; and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, France. In fact once Thérèse left her home for Carmel, she never left the convent. Yet she is the Patroness of the Missions. The prayers of these contemplatives, and all contemplatives, keep all of us going in all of our ministries.

Love for Mystic Life Characteristics

Mystic life was seen in the Order by the first century after the Order spread to the West. This gift has been a hallmark of the Carmelite School, and Elias is one of our models. All Carmelites are called to this life of prayer and contemplation, not just one branch of the Order. We must remember that while St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross are widely known as mystics, and that they were great writers on the spiritual life, this mystic life was already in place in the Order long before their reform was accomplished.

Double End of Contemplative Life: Ascetical and Mystical

While the mystical life is what we are called to, we must remember that it is to be considered a “gift”, not a right. It is up to each of us to develop the disposition for the reception of this gift. There are two schools of thought on how this gift is given.

The school *Oratio Infusa* looks at the mystic life purely as a gift; that there is nothing that a person can do to receive it. The other school, *Oratio Acquisita* supports that the person has some influence, and by developing the disposition, God is all but obliged to give the gift.

Father Titus observes that this gift is what we are all working toward. The fact that God doesn’t give it to

everybody indicates that he gives it to those who are ready to receive it.

Combination of *Oratio Infusa* and *Acquisita*: Happy Mean

As Carmelites, we see in our ancient documents that we are obliged to work toward the attainment “of this high state of mystical communion”. (CMHS p.18) Yet it is still the understanding that this mystical communion is a free gift that only God can give.

Father Titus writes that St. Teresa says “the life of grace is built on natural foundations.” (CMHS p. 18) While we are all created by God and therefore have the susceptibility to receive his gifts, we must practice the virtues, and have worked on prayer and contemplation because these must precede the mystical experience. ‘ Father Titus then says: “May I say how gratifying it is to me to put before you this idea of the spiritual life of the Order?” (CMHS p. 19) Practicing the virtues has been a constant tradition of the Order from the beginning.

The *Institution of the First Monks* say that the Carmelite life has a two-fold end:

1. The first is obtained by our toil and virtuous efforts aided by divine grace.
2. The other is communicated to us by a free gift from God.

This gift helps us to taste, in some way, the presence of God. (CMHS p -19)

We can't be discouraged. Father Titus makes it clear that mysticism is not the only way to achieve sainthood. After all there aren't many saints in heaven who were mystics.

Still, if we work to live in God's presence, and are content with the gifts God sends, we can be like the bud in the Good Gardener's garden. Perhaps the bud doesn't bloom fully , but in a garden with all beautiful flowers, we are still part of the Mystical Body of Christ, still part of a beautiful garden, and we need to remember that the gift is given by “His own mysterious choice.” (CMHS p. 19)

Practically speaking, to be given this gift, the School of Carmel demands:

1. Preparation
2. Exercise of virtue
3. Ordered lives
4. Lives according to the focus of the Order.

Common Way - Characteristic Virtues

To clarify what this practice of virtues is all about, Father Titus presents the three characteristic virtues: Purity, Recollection, and Spiritual Armor.

Purity

We've read quite a lot about purity in Prophet of Fire. Both Carmelites, Healy and Brandsma, emphasize purity because it is essential to the Carmelite way of life. While Obedience may encompass all virtues, purity stands out. Our Rule says that our service is to be offered with “a pure conscience and a pure heart”.(CMHS p. 20) Our role model is Mary, Mother of God, Virgin of Virgins, and we wear her white mantle as a reminder.

Recollection

“Silence and recollection (are) a necessary condition of prayer.” (CMHS p. 20) We may not always be in an area of silence, but when we practice active recollection, we can live in the presence of God. Without living in God's presence, contemplation doesn't happen. We see the best example right in the life of Elias. On Mt. Horeb, he didn't hear God in the noise of an earthquake or a storm. He heard the Lord in a silent gentle breeze. For us, that's in the silence of our interior. Active recollection will help us in our preparations to become in communion with God.

Spiritual Armor

In Chapter 19 of the Rule of St. Albert, six pieces of armor are identified, and Father Titus expands upon them with a more modern spin.

1. Cincture of Chastity - mortification, physically, to our bodies, but even harder, bending our will to God.
2. Breastplate - protects the heart, the vital part of any combatant. Fill your heart with holy thoughts.
3. Cuirass (a piece of armor that covers from neck to waist) of righteousness - it makes walking difficult, but the longer you wear it, the easier it gets.
4. Shield of Faith - Faith is the source of our power. It gives our lives purpose and redemption.
5. Helmet of Salvation - This is a symbol of our hope and confidence. It protects the head, the source of intellectual prayer.
6. Sword - This is the Word of God. All is done with him and through him.

It's easy to forget, but Father Titus reminds us that the early hermits were followers of the Crusaders who were trained and fashioned to express gallantry and devotion to their Lady, so there is a basic reason why the spirit of the Order is also characterized by modesty, simplicity, and spirited chivalry. A knight would die in battle to fulfill his Lady's slightest request. It was also the tradition that on the night before a young man was to be knighted, he knelt throughout the night, praying that he would be worthy to serve. In this case, to serve God.

Carmelites, Busy Bees

There are two garden analogies in this chapter, the flower bud, and the busy bees, the pollinators of nature. Father Titus got this analogy from James of Vitry (Jacques d'Vitry) who saw Carmelites as busy bees on their quest for honey. Their honey-quest eventually brings them to the desert. Many would say that a desert is no place to find the sweetness of honey.

But not so for Carmelites.

In tiny desert flower bells the honey is found. The flowers are simple, not grand. Something like our lives. However, simple things done in the spirit of love will prepare our store of spiritual honey.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Commentary

1. What were the contributions of the following early Carmelites:

St. Brocard _____

St. Albert of Jerusalem _____

Nicholas Gallus _____

2. Why were the early Carmelites in Europe considered to be Mendicants?

Carmelite Tradition

3. List the 4 demands of the School of Carmel.

4. Explain the 3 virtues that are characteristic of the Carmelite way of life.

Purity _____

Recollection _____

Spiritual Armor:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Today

5. What are some of today’s examples for “when God must be forsaken for the sake of God”? Is this related to the Lay Carmelite requirement that we attend to “our state in life”?

Application

6. Explain the union of the active/contemplative life as lived today.

7. What is the two-fold end of the Carmelite way of life?

Personal Reflection

8. Where is your “cell”? Describe it.

Lesson - 9B
Lecture III
The Order Flourishing in the Holy Land

Menaced by Mussulmen

The Crusades were initially successful in winning back the Christian holy places, but early valor wore down. Eventually, Christians retained only a few of the primary Christian locations. At the same time, the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel rapidly spread throughout the Holy Land and Syria.

The early Brothers were to suffer great losses but were, at the same time, blessed with courageous spiritual leaders. Like Berthold and Brocard before him, St. Cyril was confident that the Order would flourish in spite of any persecution.

Difficult Position

The attacks by the Mussulmen (Muslims) continued. Monasteries were destroyed, and Brothers were murdered. It was here in the beginning of the 13th Century that we see the Carmelite Brothers moving into Europe. In 1237, it was decided that it had become impossible for the Brothers to remain in the east.

Growth in Europe

Within ten years, the major transition to the west was completed. The Motherhouse of the Order was still on Mount Carmel, but Ayelsford, in Britain, became a major Carmelite priory.

Simon Stock was elected General of the Order around 1250. Under Simon's leadership the Order grew and gained direction. During his twenty-year rule, he founded many houses in Europe, and traveled to Rome regarding the concerns of the Carmelites.

In spite of all the challenges during the transition, the Order maintained its focus, and the life of prayer remained the spirit of the Carmelites. Innocent IV sanctioned Simon's adaptation of the Rule, and St. Teresa accepted it as the embodiment of the true life of the Order. This is the Rule St. Teresa used for her reform.

This was an exciting period in Europe. Religious groups were growing, and the unique contemplative character of this mendicant Order stood out. It was during this period that the "apostolic character of the mystical life appears more and more." (CMHS p25) Now, however, the solitary life of hermitages in the desert was replaced by cloisters within the cities where they were called.

Mitigation of Solitude, Abstinence, and Poverty

As stated earlier, St. Simon Stock brought the Rule to Pope Innocent IV. The Pope established a team of advisors to review the Rule. As a result, the friars were given permission to have their houses in towns; were permitted to do apostolic work; retained common refectory and common liturgical prayer; continued to observe poverty. Over time, this way of life became part of the dual spirit of the Carmelites.

A big discussion ensued regarding abstinence. At this time in history, abstinence from meat was the norm. The Carmelites, with their eastern heritage thought that abstinence from wine would be more in keeping with the early prophets who ate the paschal lamb. Another argument was the nutritional benefit of meat to the hard-working Brothers. The argument against abstinence from wine was that wine was used in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The Pope was in favor of abstinence from meat, and the Carmelites reaffirmed that in their rule.

Struggle to Maintain Contemplative Life

The subject of abstinence may seem trivial when the way of life of the Brothers came into question. It wasn't

easy to maintain a contemplative life when the demands of active service became so intense. The Rule defined a life in theory, but the reality was much more difficult.

At this time Nicholas the Frenchman, mentioned in a previous lesson, became the successor to St. Simon Stock. In his treatise “The Flaming Arrow”, Nicholas, and later his successor Theodoric, gave a warning to other Carmelites. He warned Carmelites to be careful with the active life, and appealed them to “return to the spirit of the desert.” (AFE,p33) While many became heavily involved in the active life, there were many who didn’t. These active contemplatives were the seeds through which the Order continued to flourish.

Five Great Figures

Already we’ve seen Brocard, and Cyril. These friars lived the very spirit of Carmel. Others included St. Simon Stock, and later, Sts. Angelus, Albert, and later still, Sts. Andrew Corsini and Peter Thomas.

While it may be true that this period of transition was a challenging era in our Carmelite history, with St. Simon Stock the contemplative and active life was solidly lived out. This spirit, so essential to the Carmelite Order, continued to live on through his disciples.

It is interesting here that Father Titus states:

“I would here state my conviction that St. Teresa was not the founder of the school of Carmel, as is very often taken for granted. A study of her life shows that she built on ancient foundations. Contemporaneous with St. Simon Stock we find a mystical teaching which is in harmony with what St. Teresa was afterwards afraid to develop. It takes in her a more complete form, it is true, due to the outstanding religious genius of this great Saint, but it is not essentially new.” (CMHS p.28)

We know from his writings that Father Titus had great devotion to St. Teresa. Like her, he had an unlimited trust in God. We will read more of St. Teresa in Lesson 11.

A collaborator of St. Simon Stock was Henry de Hanna of England. Henry, in his writings, emphasized an affective approach to Carmelite mysticism as opposed to purely intellectual. Henry identified six degrees of the soul’s ascent to God. These six degrees are:

1. The opening of the soul to God;
2. The Trinity draws the soul up to himself (Henry sees this as God being born in us)
3. Transformation of the soul in God, the mystical experience of God; a degree of illumination;
4. God releases great energy in the soul, and the natural side of the soul becomes supernatural. The soul understands more fully the all-powerful Creator.
5. Complete union of the soul with God;
6. Light shines in the soul and the soul is wrapped in the light.

Ideas of Hane Familiar to Saint Teresa

Father Titus states that St. Teresa must have been familiar with the works of Henry de Hanna (Henry Hane), for she also declares that first, the soul needs to be open to God. Both use the image of flying, and being enveloped in light. Her successive steps to God are almost identical to Henry’s. So it seems that the Discalced Carmelites and the Ancient Observance have more in common than in differences.

Old Tree Flourishing Again

Father Titus again uses a comparison to nature. He sees the Carmelites in their transition to Europe as a tree transplanted in new ground. Note the clear indication that this is an “old tree.” An old tree cannot be successfully transplanted unless it is provided with a vast amount of tender care. In this instance, Father Titus identifies that the caretaker of the old tree is the “Heavenly Gardener.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Commentary

1. What were the contributions of the following early Carmelites?

St. Cyril _____

St. Simon Stock _____

2. Why did the Carmelites move from Mount Carmel into Europe?

Carmelite Tradition

3. What warning was given by Nicholas the Frenchman in his treatise “The Flaming Arrow”?

4. What are the Six Degrees of the Ascent of the Soul to God?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Application

7. St. Simon Stock relied on Henry de Hanna. What Carmelite writings might we rely on?

Today

8. There are struggles in today's world that have an impact on the Lay Carmelite and the ability to live a contemplative life. What are they?

Personal Reflection

9. How do I handle the struggle of living an active/contemplative life?

Lesson 10A
Lecture IV
The Brothers of Our Lady

Cloud Seen by Elias, Symbol of the Mother of God

In earlier chapters of this program, we have discussed the long-held legend/tradition that in the little overshadowing cloud that St. Elias observed from Mount Carmel, we see a prototype of Mary, the Mother of the Redeemer. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church we see a connected observation.

“The Holy Spirit comes upon the Virgin Mary and “overshadows” her so that she might conceive and give birth to Jesus.” (CCC ¶697)

This tradition is an indication of the ancient devotion the Carmelite Order has had for Our Lady. In fact, even before the Order became organized, a sanctuary in honor of our Lady had been built on Mt. Carmel. The first Brothers were called the “Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.”

Name, “Brothers of Mary” Transpired to Devotion

Throughout his lifetime Father Titus Brandsma was acknowledged for his special devotion to Our Lady. He kept his rosary with him until his very end in Dachau. This devotion is evident in this Lecture.

These earliest Carmelites prayed in ‘Our Lady’s Chapel’. It was located in the very center of their physical environment. It reminded them that they were under the watch of our heavenly Mother. Local people acknowledged this devotion and began calling them the Brothers of Mary.

On his deathbed, St. Brocard, told his brothers:

“You are called “Brothers of Our Lady. Take care that after my death you prove worthy of that name.” (CMHS p.32)

Devotion to Mary Confirmed in Europe

When in 1247 Pope Innocent IV approved the mitigation of our original Rule, he officially assigned the name “Order of the Brothers of Our Lady.” The devotion to Our Lady became known as the Brothers spread throughout Europe. Indulgences were officially attached to the use of the name as well.

When St. Simon Stock was the General of the Order, he wrote many prayers and songs to Our Lady. *Flos Carmeli*, his favorite, is still prayed and sung daily by Carmelites world-wide. Simon knew that devotion to Mary would assure the future of the Order even though the spread throughout Europe was going to be completed with great difficulty.

There were many challenges facing the early Community. These challenges included:

1. Doubts of the Church powers as to the need for another mendicant order. In fact, in 1215 the 4th Lateran Council had rejected the foundation on any new orders.
2. It wasn’t easily identified how the Order differed from those that already existed.
3. Monasteries were only established after great difficulty during the spread through Europe.
4. The new circumstances caused by this spread created turmoil within the Order.
5. Just because the Order was approved by the Pope, it wasn’t accepted by many. For example in 1374 The Dominican John Stokes “impugned the Order’s Elujan origins, its Marian appellation, and its Canonical approval.” (LPMC p.17)

St. Simon Stock’s trust in Mary never waivered however, and he continually prayed for her intervention.

Here we see mention of the apparition of Our Lady to St. Simon Stock, and of her promise that the habit was her pledge of “special protection”. In 1950, Pope Pius XII endorsed Simon’s Scapular Vision, but later the vision was seen differently. Also in 1950, Bartholomew Marie Xiberta also defended the Scapular vision. He writes:

“St. Simon Stock was an Englishman, a man of great holiness and devotion, who always in his prayers asked the Virgin to favor his Order with some singular privilege. The Virgin appeared to him holding the Scapular in her hand saying ‘This is for you and yours a privilege; the one who dies in it will be saved’.” (LPMC p.4, quoting ‘*De visione Sancti Simonis Stock*’ by Xiberta)

We need to consider that conflicts and interpretations regarding the acceptance of the vision were many. For example in 1287 the wearing of “the Scapular had a Christological sense of obedience rather than a Marian one.” (LPMC p.39)

After all is said and done, Christopher O’Donnell, O.Carm. Makes this pointed statement:

“It is perhaps best not to dwell on the details of the vision, but on the meaning of the Scapular as an expression of Mary’s care.” (LPMC p.40)

The 2000 Catechesis and Ritual on the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel refers to the Scapular, a sacramental, as a “sign of parental love and care... our earthly mother clothes us; our heavenly mother clothes us. Without a word of explanation we know exactly what that means.” (SOLMCCR p.5)

Let us look at the Scapular as a sacramental. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church,

“Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that sacraments do, but by the Church’s prayer they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it.” (CCC ¶ 1670)

(Please note, the Scapular Vision of St. Simon Stock is not to be confused with the 14th Century vision of Pope John XXII that resulted in the belief of the Sabbatine Privilege. As far back as 1613 the Holy See identified the Sabbatine Privilege as unfounded. While they didn’t always comply, Carmelites were told not to preach this as doctrine.) (SOLMCCR p.4)

Still, we see the tradition as an indication that devotion to Mary has been strong throughout Carmelite history. Father Titus also sees this as a period when the Carmelites were seen as “the” Marian Order. In 1936 he spoke at the Mariological Congress. Quoted within the Scapular Catechesis and Ritual content, we read more of Bl. Titus Brandsma’s words:

“We are put in profound Harmony with Mary the Theotokos and become, like her, transmitters of divine life. ‘The Lord also sends his angel to us...we too must accept God in our hearts, carry Him in our hearts, nourish him and make him grow in us so that he is born of us and lives with us as the God-with-us, Emmanuel.’” (SOLMCCR p.45)

Our Lady Venerated as the Mother of God

Father Titus sees the character of this devotion to Mary focusing on Mary as the Mother of God. This was also the case from the earliest days of the Order on Mount Carmel. This led to what he sees as the “two-fold devotion to Mary” (CMHS p.34), imitation of Mary leading to union with Christ. At differing periods in our history, one part of the devotion was more important than the other. Still, Father Titus indicates that the blend is quite special.

Mary, Before Us as an Example

Mary has been chosen and given to us by God himself, as both an example and as guide. In the 16th Century, in the collection prepared by Philip Ribot, we see a work included that was written before the end of the 14th Century, most probable by John Baconthorpe. In this work, comparison is made between the willingness of Mary to say ‘yes’ to God during her life as written in scriptures, and the Carmelite Rule. Some of these comparisons include her obedience and poverty; living apart, and not in places filled with the turmoil of the times; silence. It

is no wonder that imitation of Mary, and adoration of her Son, are hallmarks of the Carmelite Order.

Mary In Us as Living Through Us

We've discussed our imitation of Mary, now, our union with her. Father Titus indicates that if we are to have complete intercourse with God, we need to conform ourselves to Mary, in other words "be other Marys." (CMHS p.35) We should allow Mary to live in us.

In the early 18th Century, St. Louis Grignon de Montfort wrote the work True Devotion to Mary. He said:

"The more we honor the Blessed Virgin, the more we honor Jesus Christ, because we honor Mary only that we may the more perfectly honor Jesus, since we go to her only as the way by which we are to find the end we are seeking, which is Jesus."

While this is still acknowledged as a masterpiece of Marian work, it wasn't a new concept. Two years before de Montfort was born, the Dutch Carmelite Michael of St. Augustine published a treatise on the devotion to Mary. He sees Mary as Mediatrix. He wrote that the spirit of Mary had to live in us so that we may live in that spirit. As we can live in union with God, we can live in union with Mary because of her union with God.

Baconthorpe sees this mediation as ascending and descending. "There is a descending mediation mainly through her exemplarity seen in ... an ascending movement in her continual intercession for the Order." (LPMC p.46). Going further, "In a popular theology which saw grace more or less as a "sacred thing", we could easily imagine Mary passing out graces like spiritual jewels through her hands." (LPMC p.47).

Pope John Paul II calls this "maternal mediation", and this meshes with our Carmelite devotion to Mary, Mother of God.

Referring to *Lumen Gentium*, the Catechism of the Catholic Church quotes:

"This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross until the eternal fulfilment of all the elect... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix." (CCC ¶ 969, LG ¶ 62)

Carmelite Another Mary

The aim of our devotion to Mary is that we also become "another Mother of God, that God should be conceived in us also, and brought forth by us." (CMHS p.36)

Through the Incarnation we are shown how important we are to God, and through Mary, this gift is given to us. So important is the Incarnation in our Carmelite history, that Father Titus states:

"The Mystery of the Incarnation is another summary of Carmelite mysticism, Carmelite life." (CMHS p.37).

Sunflowers in the Garden of Carmel

This garden reflection of Father Titus is a favorite among many. He compares the devotion to Mary with a sunflower. It's height towers above all other flowers, and this flower, in fact, also provides protection.

The sunflower, throughout its day, rotates its face to the sun. Its roots are deep as the devotion of Mary to her Son is deep. Father Titus sees the sunflower representing the soul created in the image of God to absorb His Light. The sunflower "cannot turn itself away from Him." (CMHS p.37) He goes on to say that we "flower from her seed" (CMHS p.37) which reflects back to the special union we share with Mary, the Mother of God.

STUDY QUESTIONS

History

1. There were many indicators of Marian devotion among the early Carmelites. Identify three.

Tradition

2. Describe the traditional Scapular Vision of St. Simon Stock.

3. What is the current teaching regarding the Sabbatine Privilege?

Carmel Today

4. How is the Scapular vision seen as a sign of Mary's care?

Application

5. St. Berthold said "You are called "Brothers of Our Lady. Take care that after my death you prove worthy of that name." How can we demonstrate that WE are worthy of that name?

Personal Reflection

6. When I was received as a Lay Carmelite, and I was given the Scapular, it meant that ...

Lesson - 10B
Lecture V
A New Dawn: The Carmelite Nuns
Blessed John Soreth

Foundation of Carmelite Nuns Increasing Number of Vocations

Blessed John Soreth has been called “a mirror of monastic life”, “the most worthy priest of God’s Church”, and a “light for all mendicants.” That’s a lot said about a Carmelite who is not generally spoken of today outside the Carmelite family.

In the middle of the 15th Century, however, he was certainly a light for the Carmelite Order. He helped bring “new life” to Carmel, not just in numbers, but in substance. John Soreth brought women into the life of Carmel. He is also responsible for bringing the Third Order into the Carmelite family as well.

As Carmelites spread throughout Europe and moved into more populous areas, the “desert fervor” began to weaken. True, there were many saintly Carmelites, Nonius, Angelus, Augustinus, and others. Still, overall, a sway towards a more active life had the result of a changed focus on the life of contemplation.

Fr. Titus looks at the introduction of women into the Carmelite family in two ways: as being earned for the Carmelite Order by the sanctity of its friars, or as a free gift from God to the Order. Either viewpoint brings along with it the understanding that the Carmelite Sisters were a welcome addition to the family. The community grew in numbers. Because of the contemplative spirit, the women who were attracted to the Order were among those searching for this call to holiness.

The Carmelite Sisters had become the Second Order. Their role was focused on the contemplative spirit of the Order, a life lived within the confines of the cloister walls. Such a life afforded more opportunity for developing intimate relationships with God, and the graces from God were bestowed upon the Order with abundance. Fr. Titus describes their life as “a Mary in the solitude of their convent, a Mary who chose the better part, which should not be taken from her.” (CMHS p.41)

The Carmelite Sisters of Geldern began the partnership of Brothers and Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The partnership worked because “the Fathers are called upon to keep the memory of this ideal green in the souls and hearts of the Sisters; conversely the example of the Sisters will stimulate the Fathers to a more complete striving after their mutual ideal.” (CMHS p.41)

Frances d’Amboise and Her House
Example of Observance

What started in Geldern spread throughout Europe. To a convent in Northern France was given special graces. After the death of her husband, Frances d’Amboise, Duchess of Brittany, entered Carmel. She received the veil at the hands of Bl. John Soreth.

Her example attracted so many to join the Order that a new house, Les Couets, was established. Frances was asked to be the leader of the new house but only accepted after the Pope said that she had to. For many years, this house was a model of Carmelite spirituality.

Explanation of the Rule: Solitude in Interior and Exterior Cell

Soreth was committed to a reform in Carmel. He wrote an “exposition” of the mitigated Rule of 1431. This Rule was observed by the Carmelite Sisters in his new foundations. The Rule included the practice of solitude both when alone in the cell (the internal cell) and among others when at work (external cell). This practice was an assist at remembering always that we are living in the presence of God.

Threefold Subject of Meditation

This life in solitude included a devotion to contemplation. To that end, Soreth outlined a three-fold meditation: 1. Admiration of nature; 2. Reading of Scriptures; 3. Introspection into our own lives.

This method did not mean that all three were done at the same time. He explained the first, admiration of nature, as appreciating the creations of God, an opportunity to think about what God intended as he staged out what He created. We can look at Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection as an example. He exemplified meditation on the “beauty and wonder of God.” (FE p.77)

Six Steps of Meditation on Holy Scripture and Books

The second meditation is reading the word of God and books, books that have been identified as based on solid Carmelite spirituality. Today we include writings of the early Fathers of the Church, and writings of our Carmelite ancestors. All of these are used for the purpose of bringing our minds and hearts to God.

The six steps Soreth suggests are as follows:

1. Read to learn and to know the truth.
2. Let ourselves be “caught by the truth”; ponder the words in our heart.
3. This truth should enlighten us, but it should also open our minds. It should then..
4. Motivate the growth and the path we take in our lives. Then...
5. The truth becomes the subject of our contemplation (CMHS p.44) At this point ...
6. We see that truth leads to better understanding of God’s grace.

Today we also have guidelines for reading the scriptures and holy books, Lectio Divina. Father Robert E. Lee, O.Carm., in his article “The Lectio Divina”, wrote a definition and guidelines for Lectio Divina, a prayer form that is a “format, a system, a procedure for reading the Sacred Scripture in a meditative, reflective fashion.” (LCRRM)

Father Robert identifies five steps that can be practiced individually or in community. Through frequent practice of Lectio Divina, the individual and the community can be open to many graces.

1. Open with an invitation to the Holy Spirit.
2. Read a Scripture passage (or listen while another community member reads it aloud)
3. Reflect on the passage.
4. Share a brief personal reflection on the passage.
5. “Pray with the text.” Take a piece that hits home, and keep it as a pearl, a treasure.

Another 20th Century tool that we have is from Father Brocard Connors, O.Carm. He helps us out with his article “Outline of Long Form Meditation”. (LCRRM)

We select and complete a reading. We begin the meditation by placing ourselves in the presence of God, then review the topic. Request a special grace, such as being able to understand the message, incite us to do more, etc. The body, or larger part of the meditation uses memory, understanding, and will. It concludes with a flow into conversations with God, Mary and/or others, and a review of the meditation. This brings us back to the third meditation of John Soreth, meditating on ourselves, a process of introspection.

Six Steps of Meditation on Ourselves

Soreth's six steps for meditating on ourselves includes:

1. Keep conscience clear and at the same time lead a life that actually demonstrates what we say we believe.
2. Understand ourselves, our motivations, "secret inclinations (CMHS p.44)
3. Establish a direction for our lives, and the path that we chose to follow.
4. Review what we have chosen in our life; in this case, what we have promised to do as a Lay Carmelite.
5. Do not demean how far we have come, nor puff-up what we think are our accomplishments.
6. Stay in the moment, exclude other activities that are from the other parts of our lives.

Methodical Spiritual Life

It is certainly clear that John Soreth had a structure for several aspects of developing our lives as contemplatives. John of the Cross gives a practical reason for this. He says that in the beginning, our spiritual lives are "disorderly". The steps give us a guide, an assist.

Father Joseph Chalmers, O.Carm, asks us to remember that:

"Contemplation is a pure gift of God. Like salvation, it cannot be merited. God is not an idol whom we can control by means of a proper ritual. We cannot force God to grant us the stupendous gift of contemplation, in the final stages of which we are united with God in a way which words cannot describe, and our understanding cannot grasp." (CS)

To his credit, Blessed John Soreth did present a methodical process to follow when developing a spiritual life. This was not a common practice in his time. We can look at his process of spiritual development and see that in her reforms, St. Teresa of Jesus included the very same process in the formation of her sisters.

Position of Prayer in Life

Father Titus writes that John Soreth recommended "both the practice of virtue as well as the preparation for prayer, followed by the practice of prayer." (CMHS p.46) Prayer is something that isn't an isolated part of our life but is actually integrated into all our daily activities. This practice would also be exemplified in the life of Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection. He explained that all we had to do was to create moments when we experienced God closely present. He tells us not to get anxious about it, and not to worry if we fail. We can only succeed through effort, and the effort itself puts us in His presence.

Father Titus points out, and we've read it before, that the two prime examples of living in the presence of God are Our Lady and the Prophet Elias.

The Precious Pearl

We are brought back to a garden reference, the pearl buried in a field. Though not used in Community at this time, the pearl he speaks about refers to the practice of weekly Chapter as a method of improving the practice of the Carmelite Rule.

"Chapter" is also called Chapter of Faults, a weekly practice in many religious communities of men and women. At Chapter, a religious will self-declare an infraction of the rule he/she committed during the week. There is also an opportunity during Chapter for other members of the community, in the spirit of charity, to identify additional observed infractions made by the self-accusing religious.

This can be an opportunity to dig for the treasure, to fully live Carmelite spirituality through the daily practice of virtue.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Commentary

1. Describe the significance of the establishment of the Carmelite Sisters.

Carmelite Tradition

2. A partnership has existed between the Carmelite Friars and the Carmelite Sisters. Describe this partnership.

Today

3. How does the Lay Carmelite community fit in with/contribute to this partnership?

Application

4. Describe the personal experience you have had with Lectio Divina, bot when doing it alone, and when doing it with your Lay Carmelite Community.

Alone _____

In Community _____

Personal Reflection

5. How do you contribute to the Carmelite Community?

Lesson - 11A
Lecture VI - St Teresa: The Growth of the Mystical Life

The Doctrine of St. Teresa

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines mysticism as living in an intimate union with Christ. It also says that intimate union with Christ is mystical.

“God calls us all to this intimate union with Him even if the special graces or extraordinary signs of this mystical life are granted only to some for the sake of manifesting the gratuitous gift given to all.” (CCC ¶ 2014)

St. Teresa of Jesus was a recipient of this gift, and as such is an example for us all. Father Titus mentions a eulogy given by Father Martin, a Jesuit priest, speaking on the occasion of the third centenary of her death. He declared St Teresa to be “the glory and praise of Spain”.(CMHS p.49)

In modern times, celebrating the fourth centenary of her death, Pope John Paul II goes further. In his 1982 papal document “St. Teresa of Jesus” he writes:

“We have recalled the luminous and ever-present figure of Teresa of Jesus, the daughter especially loved by the Divine Wisdom, God’s traveller, the reformer of Carmel, Spain’s glory and luminary in holy Church, an honor to Christian women, meriting a distinguished place in the world’s culture.”

No wonder Teresa of Jesus was the subject of so much study by Titus Brandsma. While he was in prison, Father Titus started to write a biography of St. Teresa. He wrote on paper, toilet paper, on empty book pages, and in between the lines of written work. He himself did not complete the book, but his knowledge and understanding of St. Teresa were well known.

In this Lecture, he refers to The Life of St. Teresa by Ribera. In this work, Ribera discusses the seven mansions of the Interior Castle. He breaks them into two divisions.

The first three mansions are more ascetic in nature. They speak to “the efforts people make when they begin a serious prayer relationship with God. St. Teresa calls this meditation or active prayer.” (SC p. 57)

As to the last four mansions, the soul moves through each of the mansions as it draws closer to the “calling” God. The soul moves from the attractions of the world on to a “rising to a new life.” (CMHS p.49) Not everyone moves on through to the seventh mansion.

Father Peter Slattery, O.Carm., in Springs of Carmel writes:

“Some people find the third place comfortable and satisfying, but others feel a call to move deeper into the castle.” (SC p. 58)

Father Titus describes this as the growth in holiness.

The Law Four Degrees of the Mystical Life

The fourth mansion is where St. Teresa looks at collection, and the necessity to keep moving towards the center of the soul, “God who dwells in us.” (CMHS p.50) Here is a place of quiet and wonder, where the Beloved dwells in the soul. We need to look in no other place. Here is the sense of quiet and of peace.

Father Peter brings us St. Teresa’s metaphor of two troughs of water. The first trough is filled with water by a system of aqueducts, man-made after much work. The second trough is filled quickly and easily by a spring. “The first trough is active meditation, and the second is the prayer of quiet.” (CMHS p.50)

By the fifth mansion, the soul is not readily available to the calling of the world. It has been carried away to a place of closer union with God, in slumber, dreaming of the Beloved. While the calls from the “external world” continue, the peace of slumber is precious and the soul chooses to stay in the state of contemplation.

The peaceful slumber in the sixth mansion points the soul in the direction of the place where the soul not only slumbers and dreams of the Beloved, but becomes immersed, and enjoys being with its “object of love.” (CMHS p.50) It wants to stay with the Beloved always. It is faithful through its trials, but the world no longer has its appeal. The soul is happy with the Beloved, and celebrates the unbreakable union, a special marriage.

In the seventh mansion, the soul has “risen to a new life, a life in which the natural and supernatural are merged in a wonderful way.” (CMHS p.51) St. Teresa compares this merging as rain falling into a river. Just as the rain cannot now be separated from the river, nothing can separate the soul from its Beloved.

In short, the fourth mansion is recollection and quiet; the fifth is slumber and spiritual sleep; the sixth mansion is passage and death; the seventh is resurrection and new life.

The Necessity of Recollection for Finding God in the Soul

Father Titus says “Nothing else is asked of the soul than that it accomplishes God’s wishes and desires, puts its trust in Him, and in Him only finds its happiness.” (CMHS, p.51)

That doesn’t go to say that a person can’t have any love for created things. When called by God, the soul follows the call. It tears itself away from earthly bonds.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says it this way.

“The divine initiative in the work of grace precedes, prepares, and elicits the free response of man. God responds to the deepest yearnings of human freedom, calls freedom to cooperate with it, and perfects freedom.” (CCC ¶ 2022)

The Indescribable Beauty of the Soul and Our Lamentable Indifference to It

It was hard for St. Teresa’s Sisters to imagine the beauty of the soul, and it is no easier for us today. This being so, she says “The fact that the divine Majesty says the soul is created to His image is enough to inform us of its great dignity and beauty.” (CMHS p.52)

“The soul refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him that by which he is most especially in God’s image: ‘soul’ signifies the *spiritual principal* in man.” (CCC¶ 363)

Since this is so, how is it that we ignore the gift that God has so readily given to us? Why don’t we try to travel to the inner castle? That is where God “dwells in the inner mansion of the soul.” (CMHS p.53)

Affective Prayer Based on Exercise of the Intellect

St. Teresa used the Scriptures as a guide for meditation. She believed that through the humanity of Christ we could go to the Father. It didn’t stop there. It leads to experiencing through the heart what one can read with the mind. We need to remember that both approaches to prayer are essential.

Her Whole Philosophy: Effort Essential

Teresa used everyday examples in teaching her Sisters. For example, the water troughs. What she explains with logic and intellect are often revealed by God with ease. She reminds us that no matter within which mansion we dwell with God, we still need to actively practice virtues.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it this way.

“The moral virtues are acquired by human effort. They are the fruit and seed of morally good acts; they dispose all the powers of the human being for communion with divine love.” (CCC ¶ 1804)

“Charity is superior to all virtues.” (CCC ¶ 1826)

“Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of divine love.” (CCC ¶ 1827)

St Teresa insisted on the practice of virtues. We can't truly have intimacy with Christ if we don't practice active demonstration of virtues. The practice of virtues takes us through the first three mansions and goes on through to the center.

Father Titus explains that virtues are our “best preparation and proof of receptivity; are a required adornment of the soul; are a promised fruit of our intercourse with God. He mentions that there are infused (theological) virtues (faith, hope, charity) that give us almost “irresistible pressure of God's grace.” (CMHS p.54) These virtues are only proved by our own voluntary acts.

Positive View of Spiritual Life: Resurrection Must Follow Death

St. Teresa speaks of the journey from one castle to another. The journey is a long one if our goal is union with Christ. Part of the journey entails fighting what makes up our human nature. While much must die, St. Teresa states emphatically that these things don't just simply die. They are resurrected and they pass on to a new life.

Here Father Titus brings in another garden analogy. The Great Gardener helps us. He gives us abundant rain when we need it. The Divine Gardener throws the seeds (infuses) of virtue (faith, hope, and charity). We must plant and water the seeds. The sun provides energy for growth, then flowers form. Most of the watering and weeding is our own responsibility.

The Solitude of God: Spiritual Chess

God still is our helper. He sends water, brooks, canals and springs to help us from within. This watering is a basic fact in nature. Without it we will not be ready for the journey. This is a necessary and quite practical side of St. Teresa's spirituality.

Mary, Our Model in Attaining First Degree of Mystic Life: God's Birth in Us

“God, acting in us and dwelling in us is the starting point of the mystical life.” (CMHS p.55) It is a normal path in the continuance in growth of the spiritual life. Christ shared our humanity so that we could share in his divine life. Mary, who conceived this human Christ within her womb, serves as a role model and shows us how to bring a re-birth of Christ in each of us. Just say “Yes.”

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Commentary

1. St. Teresa has been called God's Traveller, Reformer of Carmel, Spain's Glory, Luminary of the Church, and Honor to Christian Women. Why?

2. St. Teresa used images in describing her relationship with God because it was hard for her to do it any other way. She used the images of an Interior Castle, Water, Travel/Journey. Describe each of these in your own words.

Interior Castle _____

Water _____

Travel/Journey _____

Carmelite Tradition

3. Describe each of the seven mansions in the Interior Castle.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

Today

4. In 1936, Titus Brandsma said “Nothing else is asked of the soul than that it accomplishes God’s wishes and desires.” St. Teresa said something similar in the late 16th Century. Apply that concept in the 21st Century.

Application

5. Describe the role that virtue plays on the journey to the seventh mansion.

Personal Reflection

6. How do I reflect the image of God?

Lecture - 11B
The Marian “Doctor Mysticus”

No Sign of Opposition, But of Union

Father Titus tells us that if we are looking for Carmelite role models, we should take advantage of the example given by the saints from the Discalced Carmelites as well as from the Ancient Observance. John of the Cross is just such a Carmelite.

A Marian Mystic: His life was Truly Marian

John of the Cross is not known for his writings on Mary. Quite the contrary! Considering the volumes that he authored, one would think he would dedicate major works to Mary. He didn't. In this lecture, Father Titus points out the Marian character in John of the Cross' "mystical system."

Mary, Ideal of the Soul

While John's writings did not always cite his devotion to Mary, as a Carmelite, John had to experience her as his ideal.

What we do know is that he "praised her because throughout her life she always followed the Holy Spirit. He also wrote of Mary as the glorious one, Mother of God." (CMHS p.58)

About John of the Cross and his relationship with Mary, the Mother of God, Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen wrote:

"Indeed, she is for him, as is truly reasonable, the ideal of the soul aspiring to the summit of Mount Carmel. He has not dedicated many written words to her, but the few he has written about her show that he regarded her as the archetype of a soul aspiring to the enjoyment of that unity, to the teaching of which he seems to have dedicated his life." (CMHS 58-9)

Marian Images: Window Through Which Sunlight Passes

According to Father Titus, the works of John of the Cross are filled with Marian images. Whether John meant or not, the images he used clearly indicate his "mysticism as a mysticism of Marian character." (CMHS p.59)

One such image is that of a window. The window allows the sunlight to pass through it. There is a gentle place where the sunlight and the window become one. Just like the window, Mary became one with the Divine Light she brought into this world.

When John says "If the pane of glass be clean and spotless, the sunbeam will light it up and change it in such a way that it seems to be the light itself and gives out light itself." (CMHS p.59) As with the pane of glass, Mary did not stop the light, but willingly received the Light and gave it to us. Only Mary was pure and clear enough for the role of the Mother of Light. Of its very nature, a clear pane of glass cannot stop the light from shining through, so powerful is the light. As simple humans, we need to 'clear' ourselves so that we can be prepared to receive His Light ourselves.

The Overshadowing

The Living Flame of Love is in each of us, and this flame has another role, to overshadow. To overshadow means to "protect, favor, pour full of grace." (CMHS p.60) As for the recipient of such overshadowing, John did not have to identify her by name. We immediately put her name to the image.

We all have a shadow, and the shadow somewhat takes of the shape of the creator. We see God's shadow in the singing of the birds, or whispers from the trees. We see God's shadow in our soul, for the soul itself is a part of God, and only the soul can experience "the exquisite loveliness of God." (CMHS p.60) Being overshadowed by God, Mary experiences that beauty as well, and therefore equals the soul..

The Incarnation Again

God dwells secretly in the soul in the closest communion. The soul knows that God is there, and this knowledge brings happiness, the desire to be with God alone. John of the Cross writes that it is the same with the Bridegroom and the Bride. He also writes that the Bridegroom and His Bride will rest in sleep and experience joyful union. Partially awake, the experience becomes so powerful that if experienced fully awake, it would be overpowering.

The indwelling of God within the purest heart of Mary, while overwhelming as it seems, is an indication that our soul, God's shadow, dwells deeply in us.

The Field with the Precious Pearl

From Scripture we know the parable of the treasure hidden in the field, and the pearl of great price. The treasure is so desired, so precious, that a man will sell all that he has to purchase the treasure. John shows us the treasure lives within ourselves. He gives this as another image, the image of the Living Treasure Mary welcomed within herself, another Marian connection for John of the Cross.

Spiritual Marriage

The written picture of the Bridegroom resting in His Bride is another way of expressing the Mystery of the Incarnation. We can hardly think of any other bride being more worthy than Mary.

Father Titus uses another garden reference here when he calls Mary the "enclosed garden, reserved for the Bridegroom only." (CMHS p.62) They embrace, she is united with Him alone, a spiritual marriage "which is an embrace between God and the soul." (CMHS p.62) This embrace is like the moment light passes through the window pane.

John says that we cannot obtain this union without remarkable purity that is only attainable through much effort.

Great Happiness of Our Knowledge of Incarnation

John of the Cross is known for his references to the mystery of the Incarnation. Mary is the Christ-bearer of the Incarnation. Mary is therefore a part of the mystery. It follows that she was in John's mind and heart as he wrote. Again, he doesn't have to mention her name for us to know she is there. Father Titus uses another garden reference. Not only does he identify Mary as the mystical rose. He sees us as bees attracted by her sweetness, and fly towards her, and her Highest Bloom.

At His Incarnation and at His death, Mary was there. She is our example when she says : "He who is mighty has done great things for me." (Luke 1:49) If we follow her guidance, He will do so for us as well. That won't happen just because we want it to. We need to work for it. We have Mary's example, and we have the example of her son.

The Example of Mary's Life: Four Incidents

St. John of the Cross points out four special moments in Mary's life. Interestingly enough, he starts with Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth. In going to Elizabeth, her actions were immediate and self-less. As soon as she heard of her older cousins pregnancy, Mary, pregnant herself, went to help. Father Titus calls this the first practice of her active life.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church calls this “a visit from God to His people, and it was Mary who brought the Visitor.” (CCC ¶ 217)

At Cana, all Mary did was to tell Jesus what was needed. The rest was left to Him. She said to the wine stewards “Do what He tells you.” She says these same words to us. (CL ¶ 58)

At the foot of the cross, Mary shared another public moment in the life of her Son. John of the Cross tells that through her suffering she shared in Jesus’ redemptive work.

Finally, John brings us to the Upper Room. Mary was there with the apostles. They went there frequently to pray together. The Holy Spirit descended upon them in tongues of fire. One can imagine the initial panic, but not from Mary. She had already been filled with the Spirit. We can almost hear her say “Do what He tells you.”

Living Lanterns in a Murky Night

John helps bring us through the dark night. Everything is stripped away but the light burning in each of us. “We are living lanterns in a murky night.” (CMHS p.66) With this Light, we are not alone. More than that, with this Light within us, we, like Mary, are Christ-bearers.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Commentary

1. Why is John of the Cross seen as a hero of Carmel?

2. What did Titus Brandsma mean by his comment “Cold snow of the world”?

Carmelite Tradition

3. Titus Brandsma wrote that Mary was the “window through which sunlight passes.” Explain

4. The imagery of John of the Cross includes the following. Explain.

The overshadowing Living Flame of Love _____

The Incarnation _____

The field with the precious pearl _____

Carmel Today

5. With frequent references to the Incarnation, John of the Cross connects with Mary, the Mother of God. Identify other references in this lecture of Mary's relationship with each of us.

Application

6. In your own words, describe why Mary could be seen as the Ark of the New Covenant.

Personal Reflection

7. Do I find the imagery of John of the Cross hard to follow? Why?

Lesson - 12A **New Blooming of Old Stock**

John of St. Samson, A New Mystic of the Old Observance

The reform of the Carmelite Order at the end of the 16th Century eventually developed into a division of the Order into two branches, the Ancient Observance, and the Discalced Carmelites.

It didn't take long before reform in the Calced (Ancient Observance) Carmelites gave proof that even with a mitigated rule, the Carmelite spirit could grow and flourish. (CMHS p.67). St. Teresa was the spark that ignited the reform that resulted in the formation of the Discalced Carmelites. John of St. Samson was the flame that nourished the reform in the Ancient Observance.

John of St. Samson has been called a "weighty exponent of the mysticism of Carmel", "one of our most extolled mystics", "one of the brightest flames of our small observance." (CMHS p.67) He was one of several Carmelites who fostered the reformation movement that would later be known as the Reform of Touraine.

In the beginning of the 17th Century, it was a time of new growth in the Church. In France, many communities were devastated from religious wars and conflicts at the end of the 16th Century. It was time for a renewal; the papacy was revitalized; a group of Carmelites were brought together by God at a right moment in time at the Carmelite monastery in Rennes.

Prior Peter Behourt began the Reform in 1604. He was supported by Philippe Thibault, his sub-prior and eventual successor. Thibault focused on the Carmelite Spirit, and enlivened it with the growth in spirituality that had come alive in France. It was Brother John of St. Samson who became the soul of the Reform.

Brother John was born into wealth, lost his sight to smallpox at the age of three, and was orphaned at the age of ten. He was a poet and musician. He played several instruments, and his talent was acknowledged by those who would come to hear him play.

While he was living with his brother in Paris, John became a part of the court of Marie de Medici, the future queen of France. When his brother died, John depended upon the good will of others for his survival. It was during this phase of his life that he became associated with the Carmelites at Place Maubert in Paris.

He developed a friendship with a young friar, Matthew Pinault. John was eventually given a room at the Carmel in exchange for playing and teaching the organ. He was 35 years old before he revealed to Father Pinault his desire to enter the Carmelite Community. He was received as a Lay Brother in the Carmel at Dol in 1606, and arrived at Rennes in 1612.

Philippe Thibault quickly realized that John of St. Samson was to be an essential part of the Reform in France. In those days, it was uncommon for a lay brother to be at the center of anything. When asked to describe his manner of prayer, it was clear that Brother John was gifted with something special.

Stricter Observance Spread Over Many Provinces

Brother John became a teacher of young novices, and others gradually came to hear him speak on prayer. His simple presence was influential, and the house in Rennes became a "model of strict observance." This observance spread throughout France and throughout several European countries. Father Titus tells us that his real contribution to us is his spirit of the ideal of the Order.

All Called to the Mystical Life

Brother John identifies that we are all called to the mystical life, to experience and enjoy God. He says we will experience that if we make ourselves open to it. Our contemplation of God comes first and should not be pocketed away in favor of our other obligations.

Work and study are important, but the foundation had to be on contemplation. If that was accomplished, then everything done would be done in an intimacy with God.

He believed that the mystical life consisted of “seeing God before us, and with us, and in us, being consumed with love for Him.” (CMHS p.69) He also believed that the mystical life was not for everyone. God would give these graces to those He wished. We can’t develop it on our own. As others have said, it is clearly a gift from God.

To be susceptible to the gift, we could prepare ourselves by the “steady practice of virtue.” (CMHS p.70). As taught by St. Teresa of Jesus, “a steady activity in practicing virtue and holiness is the first and indispensable preparation for the higher grades of mystical life.” (CMHS p.70)

The Order is a School or a Family

Father Titus writes that our Order is a place where we learn to practice virtue. We move forward together with a common goal. We need this family for teachers and guides.

In the case of Carmelites this family became the “Carmelite School of Mysticism”. There are other schools, each with God as their source, and each school no better than the other. Each family/school has its own character specific to itself, a character that over time is preserved.

To these families, and Father Titus specifically identifies the Carmelites, young seedlings are transplanted with the expectation that they will be cared for and nourished. That was a role John of St. Samson took seriously.

Splendor of God’s Wisdom

John Soreth expressed his desire to make known the “splendor of God’s wisdom”. He tells us that God wishes to share much with us but that we hinder the reception of the gift through our unworthiness. We would be overwhelmed if we knew how lovely God’s Wisdom is, and would do anything to share in it. The wonder is that the less focused we are, the more we shall receive.

Special Form of Prayer, Aspiration

Brother John has taken the word ‘aspiration’ and gave it a new spin. Aspirations had been used for centuries. The exercise is said to assist our ability to share God’s graces because through it you become more receptive.

Father Titus describes aspirations as loving dialog, soaring to God, attempting to unite ourselves closely to God, an impulse or desire to lose ourselves in God. Aspiration, or uplifting, is based upon intellect and love. It takes practice.

Four Steps to Aspiration

The four steps to aspiration are:

1. Sacrifice oneself and all of creation to God.
2. Request His gifts.
3. Make oneself similar to God by loving Him fervently.

4. Unite oneself perfectly to God. This actually includes the previous three steps.

The concept seems simple, but it takes time and effort. Eventually our efforts will be successful. It might sound intimidating to some of us, for indeed, even just the thought of sharing this intimate experience of God would be overwhelming.

We are reminded that we shouldn't push so far that we go past the humanity of Christ on our way to the Father. Christ will ever remain our "Intercessor." (CMHS p.72)

Knowing by Not Knowing

In John of St. Samson's idea of contemplation, the subject (soul) is actually drawn right into the object (God) in a perfect union. The soul is bewildered. Words couldn't express it if it had to be expressed. Understanding would only be shared by those who have experienced the same union.

The Scintilla Anima

All of us in the Carmelite Family should be enmeshed in the effort to be united with God "in the innermost recesses of (our) souls." (CMHS p.73)

John of the Cross refers to the Living Flame. John of St. Samson uses "scintilla anima", the spark of the soul. The disciples on the road to Emmaus felt their hearts burning within them. That fire is "the reason of our existence and of everything we do and are able to do." (CMHS p.73) Once started, that fire has no choice but to flame up.

The Breach is Spanned

Here is another picture from nature. Father Titus describes two Carmelite observances, each with its own fire and each with its own saints and holy ones. He helps us to see two "trees bending towards each other, their spirits intermingling. We are "one and the same lovely wood." (CMHS p.74) The mitigated rule of the Ancient Observance did not lose the Carmelite Spirit, the spirit of Elijah.

Our old stem "put forth new bloom" with the help of Brother John of St. Samson.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Commentary

1. List the three main figures in the Reform of Touraine. What were the contributions of the two Priors?

Carmelite Tradition

2. Describe John of St. Samson's understanding that we are all called to a mystical life.

3. Define the mystical life according to St. John of St. Samson.

Today

4. “Our Order resembles a large family in which the members strive together toward a common goal with greater facility than is possible to do with individual effort.” (CMHS p.70) Explain using your current experiences living in Carmel.

Application

5. The third step to aspiration is the making of oneself similar to God by loving Him fervently and by desiring all to accept this love and incite it in ourselves. How do we incite others to accept this love of God?

Personal Reflection

6. What do I have to prune so that new growth will happen in my living Carmelite spirituality?

Lesson - 12B
Lecture IX
The Apostolate of Carmelite Mysticism

St. Thérèse Draws the World to Carmel

Father Titus was a professor, and some say that his writings reflect the sometimes stuffy world of academia. When reading Father Titus' description of St. Thérèse, you wouldn't think so. He calls Thérèse a "ravishing beauty." (CMHS p.75) Her impact was tremendous within only a few years after her death. Father Titus writes:

"They examine anew the secrets of this beauty, and once more ask themselves of what the loveliness of Carmel consists." (CMHS p.75)

It is hard for us to imagine today with the shortage of vocations, but as a result of the popularity of this little flower in Carmel's garden, Carmelite convents were being founded worldwide. Her autobiography is still one of the most popular books in print, and has been printed in almost every language. Why? In this lecture, Father Titus explains.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HER LIFE

Practice of the Presence of God

Thérèse knew fully how to live in the presence of God. She conversed with Him daily. He was the object of her love. She had a great devotion to the Holy Face and was a true follower of Elias as she stood before God, and did His bidding regardless of personal consequences. She would pray before a picture of the Holy Face and received graces from God.

Her Love of God

Her vocation was love, but this love developed "from intellectual contemplation from knowledge acquired through faith." (CMHS p.76) In her life and through her writings she encourages all of us to notice and appreciate all God's gifts in nature, and to see them all "as a means not an end." (CMHS p.76)

Her Humility and Simplicity

In her life Thérèse saw herself as being small and insignificant compared to God. She saw herself as a little child at the feet of her Lord. Humility and simplicity all are hallmarks of the Order. These are two characteristics that make our order different. We only need to look at Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, Brother John of St. Samson, and Father Titus himself to see prime examples.

The Carmelite School is one of great simplicity. The call is not to great accomplishments for all to see, but a call to silent introversion in order to live with God.

Mary Magdalen de Pazzi speaks of this simplicity and humility in Carmel. She says:

"His love comes to the soul without being requested, because it depends on holy humility. If we have perfect love we can perfectly unite with God and thus we can become something similar to Him." (MMP p.17)

Through this simplicity and humility, Thérèse trusted in God to help her with her everyday struggles. With the sister who splashed soapy water in her face in the laundry, with the sister who made noise with her rosary beads, Thérèse continually used these moments to bring her mind and heart to God. For us these might be considered trivial daily events. We might even ask why she didn't just move out of the way of the soapy water. No, Thérèse

took each of these moments as an opportunity to show her love for God, and each of His creations.

The new Catechism of the Catholic Church wasn't even thought of in Thérèse's time, or in the time of Father Titus. Interestingly enough in the first paragraph of Part 4-Christian Prayer, Thérèse's definition of prayer, taken from her autobiography, is cited.

“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy. (CCC ¶ 2558)

In the second paragraph it is stated that “humility is the foundation of prayer.” (CCC ¶ 2559)

Her words and example are still here for us. Indeed, Father Titus put it this way when he said of Thérèse, she in “one of the loveliest and most eloquent examples of the School of Carmel.” (CMHS p,75)

Her Conformity to the Will of God

Thérèse is known for her willingness to do her Bridegrooms' bidding. Whatever discomfort she experienced, she accepted ad God's will.

Father Titus tells us the Mary Magdalen de Pazzi also exemplified this trait. Thérèse emulated de Pazzi. Little of what is written about this Italian Carmelite mystic is in English. What is clearly acknowledged about her is her ever-present willingness to accept her condition, it is God's will.

In the case of Thérèse, Father Titus calls this response 'constant conformity' (CMHS p.78) She never diverted from acceptance of God's will. He quotes Thérèse:

“I fear but one thing, to retain my own will. Take it Lord, for I choose only what Thou choolest.” (CCMHS p.78)

Mary Her Ideal

The fifth characteristic of Thérèse's spirituality cited by Father Titus is Mary as the ideal role model for her “little way.” “Behold the handmaid of the Lord.” (Luke 1:38)

From an early age Thérèse had a devotion to Mary. When she was seriously ill, Thérèse's condition started to improve when on Pentecost Sunday it seemed that her statue of Our Lady smiled at her. Thérèse surrendered herself as Mary did, and for the sole purpose of wishing to please God.

Like Mary, she performed acts of charity. Mary visited Elizabeth, and Thérèse was nice to a sister who was unkind to her. Thérèse at the request of her superior, wrote letters of love and support to a young seminarian who needed prayers and comfort.

These were all little things, seemingly insignificant to some. It didn't matter to Thérèse because everything she did, she did for God.

TWO FINAL POINTS

First Point: Her Apostolate of Prayer

Throughout her life in Carmel, Thérèse said she wanted to be a missionary. She asked to be sent to the new Carmel in Hanoi. It was not God's will, and Thérèse accepted that. However as all Carmelites do, along with a

contemplative life, there must be an apostolic activity. She found out that her work was 'love'.

She knew that each of us had a role to fill in the work of God. Father Titus quotes her.

"I understand that if the Church has a body, built up of different organs, the chief, the most necessary organ of all, could not be wanting. I saw that it must have a heart burning with love... I understand that love contains all vocations. My vocation is love. I have found my proper place in the church."

Great St. Teresa Practiced It Before Her

St. Teresa of Jesus also practiced this apostolate of love. To do this, she did the little every day things, but did these things with charity. She encouraged and expected the sisters in her community to do likewise. She also counseled her sisters to do all of these things focused on God. If the Ultimate End of our efforts is not God, we are doing it all for nothing.

Mary Magdalen de Pazzi: Another Model of Apostolic Prayer

We talk about the lights in the Carmelite family, John of the Cross, Teresa of Jesus, Thérèse of Lisieux, all from the Discalced branch of the Carmelite. Father Titus asks us to look at St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi as an example from the Ancient Observance. De Pazzi was born in Florence in 1566. She died in 1607. She is known as a great mystic, yet her writings are not as readily available as for other saints, nor is she easily understood. From within her cloistered walls in Florence, she prayed for all people and desired to bring all people to God. We see this same form of apostolic activity from Thérèse.

Contemplative Convents, Aids to Missions

Both Thérèse and Mary Magdalen de Pazzi wanted to conquer the world for God, yet both of them entered cloistered Carmelite communities to achieve their goal.

We might ask how this could happen, and Father Titus says we might not all be able to grasp the understanding. In this lecture he says:

"In praying for grace and in sacrificing our life in union with The Sacrifice of Calvary, God's grace is obtained (CMHS p.83)

This, and leaving all that is safe and known behind us is at the very center of the vocation to the missions.

In the Mystical Body of Christ, there are many roles to be played. We identified Thérèse's role earlier, her role is that of the heart, burning with love and devotion, and the willingness to serve. We see this role has been well acknowledged because she was made the Patroness of the Missions.

These two cloistered Carmelites also remind us of the importance of prayer. Missionary work is sponsored by those who are in the background praying for the missions. A modern day example of this very concept is the Maryknoll Missionary Community. Very early on in their foundation, a cloistered group of sisters was established. Their role was to pray for the thousands of members in their community who were sent to mission countries all over the world. Our own Carmelite Nuns were established for that same purpose centuries before.

We Should Imitate the Little Flower

Thérèse is there as a role model for all Carmelites. We acknowledge that the dual spirit of the Order is

contemplation and activity. The activity cannot be spiritually fruitful without prayer behind it. Thérèse exemplified this spirit. Pope John Paul II says:

“God calls me and sends me forth as a laborer in his vineyard. He calls me forth to work for the coming of His kingdom in history.” To be able to discover the actual will of the Lord in our lives always involves the following: a receptive listening to the Word of God and the Church, and fervent and constant prayer.” (CL ¶ 58)

We might go back to the Upper Room on Pentecost. Mary was there praying with the apostles. We can only imagine that her prayers supported the apostles on their missionary journeys that were soon to come.

Second Point: Her Continued Apostolate After Death

St. Thérèse is widely known for her promise that after death she would spread roses on the earth. A rose is a symbol of love, her vocation is love, and the rose petals as they fall off the rose are her image of offering herself to God.

There are many flowers in the Garden of Carmel, and we have read Father Titus’ words about them. Through Mary, our Sister, Mother, Mediatrix, these flowers are blessed, and serve as escorts on our journey to God. For that journey to bear fruit, we need the seeds of these flowers transplanted to the garden of our soul. It is here that the Master Gardener will water the soil, and Mary will tend the seedlings as they grow.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Commentary

1. St. Thérèse is known to have looked upon St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi as a role model. Identify instances where this can be identified.

Carmelite Tradition

2. How do we see Thérèse’s practice of living in the presence of God?

3. St. Thérèse is the Patroness of the Missions. How does this exemplify the dual spirit of Carmel?

Today

4. St. Thérèse remains one of the most popular flowers of Carmel. Why?

Application

5. Father Titus used the term ‘constant conformity’ in describing St. Thérèse. How can we Lay Carmelites display this characteristic in our lives?

Personal Reflection

6. What can you do that would improve your practice of living in Carmelite simplicity?

Appendix

- A. “A Dangerous Little Friar”, a biographical sketch of Bl. Titus Brandsma, O.Carm., July 27, 2003, P. Watkins, T.O.Carm
- B. Other Carmelite Saints (Pictures and mini-biographies from Carmelnet.org)
- C. Recommended Readings, by Lesson

APPENDIX A

“A Dangerous Little Friar”

“A Dangerous Little Friar”

“Once I was present when a man standing close to his bed was telling him about his life in tears. And I heard the Servant of God tell him ‘But my good man, what you are saying is not all that serious. Everything is passing.’” For the most part, sick persons are concerned about themselves, but the Servant of God was always in a good humor and was a support to all, and myself in particular. He had great compassion for me. He asked me how I ended up there. I told him how things had gone. He did not show the slightest bit of hatred for me. Once he took me by the hand and said ‘You’re a good girl, I will pray for you very much...’ He gave me his rosary to pray. I told him I was not capable of praying, and so it was no use to me. He told me that even if I could not pray, I could at least recite the second part of the rosary, ‘Pray for us sinners.’ I laughed at that. He told me that if I prayed much, I would not be lost.”

These statements were made by the nurse who gave Blessed Titus Brandsma the fatal injection at 2:00 pm on July 26, 1942.

Anno Sjoerd Brandsma was born in the Protestant province of Friesland in the northwest corner of the Netherlands on February 23, 1881. He was the fifth child of devout Catholic parents. Five out of the six Brandsma children entered religious life, two became priests, and three became sisters.

The Brandsmas lived and worked on the family farm. It was soon noticed that Anno was not cut out for farm life. Academically, Anno was more than satisfactory, and he was a willing worker, but the tasks of a busy farm were too much for him.

It was noted very early in his life that Anno had a vocation to the priesthood. Although his parents were concerned about his health, they gave him permission to try the seminary. At eleven years of age he entered the Franciscans in Megen.

He was witty, dedicated to his studies, and an all-around favorite of teachers and classmates alike. He still remained quite small, and earned the nickname “Shorty.”

At some point during his third year in the seminary, Anno developed a severe intestinal disorder, and as a result, he lost quite a bit of weight. The problem cleared up but periodically returned. His Franciscans were concerned that the strict life of poverty was too much for him, and it was decided that he was not meant for the Franciscan way of life.

This didn’t stop Anno. His vocation continued to grow, and he looked at the possibility of entering several communities. The combination of prayer and service in the Carmelite way of life attracted Anno. He entered the small Carmelite community in Boxmeer. Here 39 friars spent their days in prayer and solitude. His sleeping space was a simple cell. The bed had a straw mattress. He ate simple foods. He prayed with his fellow Carmelites. He found what he was seeking.



His ability to express himself in writing was an early identified success. As a young novice he started studying St. Theresa of Avila, and eventually translated several of her works. They were published in 1901 under the title Selected Writings from the Works of St. Teresa. This would most certainly NOT be the last contribution he made to the literature of mysticism. His translations were well written and concise, and it put him on the successful path of a writer and journalist.

Titus also activated his fellow novices into writing for publication, and he brokered their works on various religious topics. Around the same time, he developed an in-house Carmelite publication that later was published for all Dutch Catholics. While it was true that his attraction to mysticism was obvious, he also made it clear that the Frisian concern for matters of social justice was also extremely important to him.

Titus Brandsma worked through the novitiate and was given permission to study for the priesthood. These more advanced studies were no problem for him. He was ordained on June 7, 1905.

From that point, it appeared that the little friar was a “sure thing” for study in Rome. Titus received a serious disappointment however, when he was not sent to Rome for his studies. Another friar was sent instead.

For some the disappointment would have been devastating. But for Father Titus, he accepted the decision as part of his

commitment to obedience.

He said:

“The superiors know better than Titus Brandsma where Titus Brandsma can be useful.”



The following year, it was decided that Father Titus would be sent to Rome to study. When told the good news, he responded to his superior,

“Are you aware of my independent spirit?”

His superior responded “Perfectly. That’s why you must go to Rome.”

His studies were not a problem for him, with one exception - preaching. In this, his voice was monotone, he made a lot of gestures, and he was very “academic” in his presentation style. In a nutshell, he was quite boring in his presentation skills. Amazing as it sounds, with practice over time, his voice would become one of the most familiar voices throughout Holland, both at conferences, radio broadcasts, and lectures. It was his sincerity and conviction that hooked his listeners.



His health was another issue. He continued to have frequent attacks of intestinal problems which brought about a general weakness. He was to take his doctoral study test, but was ill and he was advised to put the test off. He insisted on taking the test and then failed. He retook the test within a few months when he was well, and he passed. He had received his Doctorate in Philosophy from the Pontifical Gregorian University in 1909. He then returned to the Netherlands to teach at Oss, where young Carmelites were trained..

Titus combined writing and other activities with his teaching career. He founded Carmelrozen, a journal of Carmelite spirituality, which he edited and for which he encouraged his students to write. In 1916 he organized a team of scholars to do more translations of the voluminous works of St. Teresa of Jesus. He was appointed editor of the local daily newspaper in 1919 and collaborated on a Frisian translation of the famous spiritual guide, Imitation of Christ. Ever the practical businessman, he negotiated government and business loans for a new library in Oss and engaged in numerous civic and religious projects.

He didn’t know how to rest. Father Titus traveled throughout the Netherlands giving conferences on mysticism, the missions, the glories of the Netherlands, and especially the province of Frisia. He was particularly popular after he was named professor of philosophy in the new Catholic University at Nijmegen. By the summer of 1921, his condition was so severe that he collapsed. He experienced recurrent hemorrhaging, and persistent pain. There were moments that his superiors and fellow friars expected him to die. His superiors even lifted his obligation to assist at the midnight office and other monastic duties in order to give him time to rest. They tried to remind him to go to bed early but invariably he confessed to staying up late and finishing another project.

He was considered to be a first-class organizer and planner, he had to be to keep the schedule he did. But he wasn’t a very good superior. He was a wonderful counselor, but he wasn’t a decisive person. He also had such a generous nature that he would “give away the store.” The poor always seemed to find him out, and he just couldn’t refuse their needs. When he met people who were hungry, he fed them. If he had no money to give, he brought them to his home. He provided clothing, rent, money and consolation without stint to all who came his way. Once he took the blanket off his own bed to warm a poor person.

Kneeling in prayer by the hour, leaning over his desk while preparing his lectures, listening patiently to the words of a suffering human being, counseling a student, sitting at his typewriter with his head concealed by billows of blue smoke from the cigar or pipe clenched in his teeth—Titus Brandsma was a happy man. And he brought happiness with everything he did and to everyone he met.

He was also known for his commitment to his Carmelite community. No matter how busy he was, made every effort to be with his community for prayer. He was known to end meetings early so he could pray with his confreres. He said:

“ For me community life is indispensable if I am to keep everything else in order.”

The dual charism of prayer with action was what drew Father Titus to Carmel, and throughout his life, prayer and community action made up his way of life. He was in great demand as a speaker, and not only on Catholic activities. He was known for his convictions, and was quite willing to express them.

As the years of his career moved on, a great force was spreading throughout Europe. As far as Father Titus was concerned, it didn't matter whether he was speaking from the teacher's lectern or the pulpit, he spoke out against the evils of Nazism. He said:

“The Nazi movement is a black lie. It is pagan.”

He was insistent in his speaking that the Catholic Church must oppose Nazism. In fact, this very conviction put Father Titus on the list of the Gestapo's. It was just a matter of time. Father Titus noticed unfamiliar students in his classes taking copious notes during his lectures. This happened when he spoke from the pulpit as well. Years later, it would be said of Titus “He was the only mystic on the continent of Europe who had a season's railroad ticket and who became holy in a train compartment.” Titus knew that what he was doing put him in a dangerous position. On the other side, he was labeled by the Gestapo as a “dangerous little friar.” Many of his friends and fellow-friars thought he was making a big mistake being so vocal. But Titus couldn't stop.

The Catholic Church was the chief source of resistance to the Nazi regime in Holland. In the spring of 1941, Catholics were strictly regulated by the oppressors. Priests and religious could no longer be principals in secondary schools. Salaries of priests and religious were cut by 40%. Catholic schools were mandated to expel Jewish students.

Because of his willingness and skill in his public support for the Netherlands and its peoples, Father Titus was asked by Cardinal DeJong, the Archbishop of Utrecht to act as the chaplain to Catholic journalists.

The press has always been a strong force in political arguments, and his involvement with the press was a purposeful assignment. Through the Catholic press, ideas could be passed across to Catholics throughout the country. After all, there were over 30 Catholic newspapers in Holland, almost completely run by Catholic laymen.

Father Titus was asked by the church hierarchy to meet with representatives of the Hague to protest the Nazi demands. It didn't work. Further efforts were needed.

The hierarchy of the Church eventually responded in 1941 by stating that the sacraments would be denied to Catholic supporters of Nazism which was against all

Christian conception of life as being sacred.

Titus warned the press that censorship was coming. It was only a matter of time. He said:

“The day will come when The Hague will expect us to become the propagandists of Nazism. No, my friends, we must give way no further; there are limits and we have reached them.”

It eventually came to pass that the Nazi government would attempt to take over the press. The Archbishop asked Father Titus to convince Catholic newspaper-men not to cave in to Nazi directives. The Archbishop asked, “Titus, you do understand this mission is dangerous. You do not have to undertake it. Titus knew very well how dangerous it was, but he couldn't refuse. He willingly accepted the duty.

On December 31, 1941, he wrote to the newspaper editors explaining the bishops' directives. He encouraged the editors to resist Nazi demands, and clearly identified what the possible cost of such action would be. He told them that the limit had been reached, and under no circumstances were the newspapers to serve the Nazis. If they were to remain Catholic newspapers, they had to defy the Nazis

After the letters, he visited the editors personally. For ten days from the first of January, Father Titus traveled up and down the country. He knew he was being followed and that his actions were being observed. It was clear to him and those who

knew him that he was a marked man. He had visited 14 editors and all refused to collaborate with the Nazis.

On January 10, 1942, a joint pastoral letter from the Church hierarchy was published. It stated that the Catholic press was forbidden to publish Nazi propaganda.

The Carmelite Father Provincial warned Father Titus "Return as quickly as you can; the abyss is yawning beneath your feet; one must not rush towards martyrdom."

At that point, the Archbishop wanted Titus to place the weight of the bishops' proclamation on the head of the bishops since they were less likely to be harmed than a Carmelite friar. But Father Titus insisted that he stand alone in the responsibility for the action.

On the night of January 19, 1942, two young men came to the door at the Boxmeer monastery to see Father Titus. He never refused to see anyone. The men turned out to be Gestapo agents. One of the agents said "Brandsma, your recent activities in support of the Catholic press and with regard to the bishops have been watched, and it is because of these dangerous political machinations that you are arrested." They ransacked his rooms, and they told him he could not be allowed to wear his Carmelite habit. Throughout it all, he remained polite, helpful, and courageous. Before Father Titus would leave the monastery, he knelt for the blessing of the prior. He laughed with his captors and said:

"Imagine my going to jail at the age of 60."

He spent a night in the prison at Arnhem, and then they took him to Scheveningen, a seaside port very close to the Hague. They locked him in cell #577.

During his interrogation, he was asked why he challenged the Nazi position and followed the requests of the Catholic bishops. He clearly stated that this was the only thing he could do as a Catholic. If he had to do it over, he'd do it all again. He also said:

"The Dutch episcopacy is convinced that if the Catholics stand united they constitute a great and formidable political power. In these unsteady times, it is the Faith which gives the faithful the courage to bear patiently great material sacrifice."

His interrogators reported that it was felt that "Professor" Brandsma be held in custody for a considerable length of time. Following the bishops' request was not the only mark against him. They wrote that Brandsma was an enemy of the German mission, and they objected to Brandsma's writing against the German policy against the Jews. He was found guilty of exerting pressure on the directors of newspapers, and he would be imprisoned until the end of the war. Six weeks later he was moved from Scheveningen to Amersfoort. From there he went to Dachau.

The Nazis had a yearbook, and in the Yearbook for 1942 was summarized the views of Tutus Brandsma and other brave people. So far that year, 238 people from Holland had been executed, and other action was taken against 10,000 more Dutchmen. The book also included the case against the Catholic church, and against wicked Professor Brandsma himself.

Imprisonment was not what we would have imagined for Father Titus. When he first went to Scheveningen he experienced a joy and peace. He had the time he always longed for to spend with his Lord. He wrote:

"Seldom have I felt so happy and content...If God ordered it, I would stay here forever."

Alone in his cell, he organized his day to the last moment. He wrote poetry, started a biography of St. Teresa of Jesus, composed a series of meditations on the Way of the Cross for the Shrine of St. Boniface, martyr of Friesland, wrote two booklets (*My Cell, Letters From Prison*), read his breviary and knelt in silent prayer often during the day. He had a scheduled time for morning walks in the confines of his cell. He even smoked his pipe on schedule—until January 29, the feast of St. Francis de Sales, patron of Catholic journalists, when guards peremptorily took away his pipe and tobacco. As always, he did not complain. He simply struck smoking time from his daily schedule.

"I felt at home in Scheveningen," he wrote to his Carmelite superior. "I pray, I write. The days are too short. I am very calm. I am happy and satisfied." So calm that he managed to complete six of 12 proposed chapters of his biography of St. Teresa

The sense of feeling at home was not to last. On March 12, 1942, he was transferred to the notorious penal depot at Amersfoort. When he arrived there, along with his companions, he was ordered to stand in the freezing rain. After several hours, the prisoners were led to a dressing room, ordered to strip, and were handed prison uniforms. Before they could

dress, they were driven like cattle back out into the freezing rain.

Father Titus still had major problems with his health. Maltreatment made his conditions worse.

Having never been a physically strong person, his assignment to a work detail to hack out a shooting range in the forest by taking up stumps and clearing ground was a severe challenge. His fellow prisoners were dropping from dysentery and other diseases, the worst of which may have been despair.

On Hitler's birthday, several prisoners were awarded amnesty. Titus Brandsma wasn't one of them. He kept his good spirits though, and sent word to the Carmelites telling them not to worry about him. "I'll be all right."

Father Titus quickly developed a reputation in prison. His fellow prisoners considered him to be generous to a fault. He would give his meager rations to help other starving prisoners. He was also known for his care and concern for the Jewish inmates.

According to prison rule, no minister was allowed to give spiritual counsel. Violators were severely punished.

Titus remained Titus, and quietly and coolly defied the ruling. He led the prisoners in the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, and through meditations on Christ's passion. He managed to hear confessions and visit the sick. He urged all the prisoners to forgive their captors for their brutality, even when it was hard to do so.



On Easter, Nazi authorities celebrated by sentencing 76 members of the Dutch underground to death. The other prisoners had to stand silently facing the condemned for over two hours. Titus prayed for them and signaled this to them whenever he could by folding his hands and pointing heavenward.

In late April, Titus was taken from Amersfoort and brought back to Scheveningen for further question. He didn't back down on anything he had previously said, so he was then sentenced to spend the rest of the war in Dachau.

On the way to Dachau, he spent some time in a prison in Kleve. The chaplain there visited Titus whenever he could. He encouraged Titus to request completing his imprisonment in a Carmelite monastery in Germany. The chaplain encouraged him to do so because he was getting even sicker. His intestinal problems continued, and he had developed uremic poisoning which affected his memory.

The Nazi powers refused saying that he was too dangerous a risk to take.

Titus wrote to friends before he left for Dachau:

"I could be in Dachau for a very long time. It doesn't have such a very good name that you really long for it."

His arrival at Dachau was irritating to his captors. They were infuriated by his calmness and gentleness. They beat him mercilessly with clubs, fists, and boards. They kicked and punched him, gouged him to the point of bleeding, and would leave him lying in the mud. Titus remained calm, gentle, and forgiving.

One day a priest said Mass in the Catholic chapel at the camp. Titus was able to smuggle out a piece of host in his tobacco pouch or eyeglass case. (Authors differ). Shortly after he got the pouch, one of the guards beat and kicked Titus because he thought that Titus hadn't cleaned the kitchen floor. During the beating, Titus kept the pouch under one arm clenched tightly to his body. He managed to crawl away from his angry tormentor, and dragged himself to his bunk. Another Carmelite, Brother Tijhuis, came to help him. Brandsma replied:

"Don't have pity on me. I had Jesus with me in the Eucharist."

As if his health weren't bad enough with the intestinal problem and uremic poisoning, he developed a severe foot infection. The prisoners were only allowed to wear sandals, and that didn't help. The sores on his foot wouldn't heal, and oozed continually. Often his fellow prisoners would carry him back to his bed after work because he was too weak to walk himself.

Years later one of the prisoners wrote that Father Titus radiated with cheerful courage. Even more than that, Father Titus continued to tell his fellow prisoners:

“Do not yield to hatred. Be patient. We are here in a dark tunnel but we have to go on. At the end, the eternal light is shining for us.”

Titus Brandsma’s health couldn’t get much worse, but he refused to go to the Dachau infirmary. Conditions there were even worse than in the other prison barracks. Patients in the infirmary were used for brutal medical experimentation and mutilation. They were human guinea pigs for the Nazi doctors.

It came to the point that Titus had no choice. He had to go to the infirmary. There on July 26, 1942, he was injected with carbolic acid, and he died.

References: The Beatification of Father Titus Brandsma, Carmelite, prepared by Redemptus Valabek, O.Carm.
Titus Brandsma, Carmelite Educator, Journalist, Martyr, edited by Redemptus Valabek, O.Carm.
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(Prepared for presentation at the
National Shrine of our Lady of Mount Carmel
Feast Day of Bl. Titus Brandsma
July 27, 2003
Penny-Jude Watkins, T.O.Carm.

Appendix B

Other Carmelite Saints

Other Carmelites

ALBERT of TRAPANI

Albert degli Abbati was born in Trapani in Sicily in the thirteenth century. Having joined the Carmelites and been ordained a priest, he soon became famous for his preaching and miracles. He was provincial in Sicily in 1296, and died at Messina, probably in 1307, with a reputation for purity and prayer.

ANDREW CORSINI

Andrew was born at the beginning of the fourteenth century in Florence and entered the Carmelite Order there. He was elected provincial of Tuscany at the general chapter of Metz in 1348. He was made bishop of Fiesole on October 13, 1349, and gave the Church a wonderful example of love, apostolic zeal, prudence and love of the poor. He died on January 6, 1374.

ANGELUS

Angelus was one of the first Carmelites to come to Sicily from Mount Carmel. According to trustworthy sources, he was killed by unbelievers in Licata during the first half of the thirteenth century. Acclaimed as a martyr, his body was placed in a church built on the site of his death. Only in 1632 were his relics transferred to the Carmelite Church. Veneration of St. Angelus spread throughout the Carmelite Order as well as among the populace. He has been named patron of many places in Sicily. Even to the present time devoted persons invoke him in their needs and faithfully honor him.

PETER THOMAS

Born about 1305 in southern Perigord in France, Peter Thomas entered the Carmelites when he was twenty-one. He was chosen by the Order as its procurator general to the Papal Court at Avignon in 1345. After being made bishop of Patti and Lipari in 1354, he was entrusted with many papal missions to promote peace and unity with the Eastern Churches. He was translated to the see of Corone in the Peloponnesus in 1359 and made Papal Legate for the East. In 1363 he was appointed Archbishop of Crete and 1364 Latin Patriarch of Constantinople. He won a reputation as an apostle of church unity before he died at Famagosta on Cyprus in 1366.

SIMON STOCK

Simon, an Englishman, died at Bordeaux in the mid-thirteenth century. He has been venerated in the Carmelite Order for his personal holiness and his devotion to Our Lady. A liturgical celebration in his honor was observed locally in the fifteenth century, and later extended to the whole Order.

FRANCES D'AMBOISE

Frances was born in 1427, probably in Thouars in France. She was the wife of Peter II, Duke of Brittany. After his death, and under the direction of Blessed John Soreth, the prior general, she took the habit of the Carmelite Order in the monastery she had previously founded in Bondon. Afterwards she transferred to another foundation in Nantes, also erected by her, where she held the office of prioress and nourished the sisters with wise teaching. She is considered the foundress of the Carmelite nuns in France. She died in 1485.

JOHN SORETH

John Soreth was born at Caen in Normandy and entered Carmel as a young man. He took a doctorate of theology in Paris and served as regent of studies and provincial of the province. He was prior general from 1451 until his death at Angers in 1471. He restored observance within the Order and promoted its reform, wrote a famous commentary on the Rule, issued new Constitutions in 1462, and promoted the growth of the nuns and the Third Order.

MARY MAGDALEN de PAZZI

Born in Florence in 1566, she had a religious upbringing and entered the monastery of the Carmelite nuns there. She led a hidden life of prayer and self-denial, praying particularly for the renewal of the Church and encouraging the sisters in holiness. Her life was marked by many extraordinary graces. she died in 1607.

Appendix C

RECOMMENDED READINGS BY LESSON

RECOMMENDED READINGS BY LESSON

(Excluding readings from required texts)

Lesson 1:

Scripture	1 Kings 17-19, 21; 2Kings 1-2:17; Malachy 3: 23-24; Sirach 48:1-12; Ps 123:2; Ps. 69:10; Mt 11:14; Mt. 17: 1-13; Mt. 15 : 28; Mk 9:2-13; Mk 1:40; Mk 5:34; Mk 10:52; Lk 1:17; Lk 9:28-36; Lk7:9; Lk 7:50; Jn 15:16; Jas 5:17-18
Rule of St. Albert Chapter 7	
Living the Carmelite Way Paragraph 35	
Carmelite Authors	<u>Carmelite Mysticism Historical Sketches</u> , Bl. Titus Brandsma, O.Carm; pp. 4-5
Vatican II Documents	Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life, Section 7
Catechism of the CC	Paragraphs 2581 2584

Lesson 2:

Scripture	1 Kings 17: 2-6 Exodus 16: 8, 12; Dt 6:5 Ps 24:3-4; Mt 5:8; Mt 11:1; 1Tim 1:5
Rule of St. Albert Chapters 10, 20, 21	
Living the Carmelite Way Paragraphs 14, 22, 28, 31, 32, 33, 39	
Carmelite Authors	<u>Carmelite Mysticism Historical Sketches</u> , Bl. Titus Brandsma, O.Carm; pp.19, 69 <u>At the Fountain of Elijah: The Carmelite Tradition</u> , Wilfrid McGreal, O.Carm.; pp. 47-48
Vatican II Documents	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i> (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity) <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)
Catechism of the CC	¶2744, 2745

Lesson 3

Scripture	1Kings 17:7-24; 2Kings 4: 8-11; 2Kings 4:34; Mt 10: 41-42; Mt 11: 28; Lk 4: 24-26; Lk 7: 16; Lk 7: 14; Acts 20: 9-10; Heb 2: 18; Heb 3: 1-2; Heb 7: 25
Rule of St. Albert	Chapters 10, 19, 20
Living the Carmelite Way Paragraph 19	
Carmelite Authors	Beatification of Father Titus Brandsma, edited by Redemptus Maria Valabek, O.Carm. (p. 33) The Practice of the Presence of God, by Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, (p. 43, ¶37)
Vatican II Documents	<i>Perfectae caritatis</i> , Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, ¶12 <i>La Plenaria</i> , The Contemplative Dimensions of Religious Life (Post Consiliar Document)
Catechism of the CC	¶2616

Lesson 4

Scripture	Ex 22:19; Dt 13: 13-17; 1 Kings 18; 2 Kings 4: 23, 25; 1Cor 6: 19-20; James 5: 17-18; Rev 12:1
Rule of St. Albert	Chapters 4, 19
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraph 14
Carmelite Authors	Carmelite Mysticism Historical Sketches, Bl. Titus Brandsma, pp. 19-20
Vatican II Documents	<i>Christifideles Laici</i> , (The Lay Member of Christ's Faithful People) ¶56 (Post Conciliar Document, 12/30/88) <i>Mas Virgines Consecrandi</i> , Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity, (Post Conciliar Document, May 1970) <i>Perfectae caritatis</i> , Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, ¶12
Catechism of the CC	¶928-929

Lesson 5

Scripture	1 Kings 18: 13; 1 Kings 19: 1-8, 18; 2 Kings 10: 28 Gn 26: 23-24; Sm 17: 11ff; Ps 22: 15-16; Ps 86: 15-18; 2 Cor 7: 5-6; Lk 22: 43
Rule of St. Albert	Chapter 18
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 21, 35, 48
Carmelite Authors	Essays on Titus Brandsma, edited by Redemptus Maria Valabeck, O.Carm., pp 291 - 295
Vatican II Documents	<i>Christifideles Laici</i> , (The Lay Member of Christ's Faithful People) ¶3 (Post Conciliar Document, 12/30/88)

Lesson 5A

Scripture	1 Kings 19: 1-18 2 Kings 9: 1-13; 10: 28; 8: 12-15 Ex 22: 19 Rv 12: 1
Rule of St. Albert	Chapter 11
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 22, 35, 48
Carmelite Authors	Essays on Titus Brandsma, edited by Redemptus Maria Valabeck, O.Carm., pp 291 - 295
Vatican II Documents	<i>Cristifidelis laici</i> (The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People), Chapter 3
Catechism of the Catholic Church	¶ 897-913

Lesson 6

Scripture	1 Kings 19: 19-21	2 Kings 1:8	2Kings 2:12
Rule of St. Albert	Chapter 18		
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 44, 46, 47		
Carmelite Authors	Carmelite Mysticism Historical Sketches, Bl. Titus Brandsma		
Vatican II Documents	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church <i>Christifideles Laici</i> (The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People (Post Synod)		
Catechism of the CC	¶ 898		

Lesson 7A

Scripture	1 Kings 21	Mt 8:2; 26:6	Mk 1:40; 14:3	Lk 5:12
Rule of St. Albert	Chapters 18 and 20			
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 26, 28, 29			
Carmelite Authors	<u>Into the Land of Carmel</u> , Joseph Chalmers, O.Carm. (available through www.ocarm.org) <u>At the Fountain of Elijah</u> , Wilfred McGreal, O.Carm. Chapter VI of Carmelite Constitutions, paragraphs 91-96 <u>The Carmelites: The Province of St.Elias</u> , Alfred Isaacson, O.Carm. Minutes, October 2003, Carmelite Justice and Peace Commission (available through www.ocarm.org)			
Vatican II Documents	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Ch. 4 and 5 <i>Christifideles Laici</i> (The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People)(Post Synod), par. 14 <i>Apostolicam actuositatem</i> ; nn 2.3 "Reconciliation and Penance", Post-conciliar document (available at www.ewtn.com/library)			
Catechism of the CC	¶ 545, 1036, 1426, 1439			

Lesson 7B

Scripture	1 Kings 22: 52-54			
Rule of St. Albert	Chapters 12, 13, 18, 19			
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 46			
Carmelite Authors	John Benninger, <u>Carmelite Directory of the Spiritual Life</u>			
Vatican II Documents	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)			
Catechism of the CC	¶ 2426 - 2436			

Lesson 8A

Scripture	Mt 17:11-13
Rule of St. Albert	Chapters 20
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 25, 26, 27
Carmelite Authors	Bl. Titus Brandsma, <u>Carmelite Mysticism, Historical Sketches</u>
Catechism of the CC	¶ 2004

Lesson 8B

Scripture	1Kings 19:9-18; 1Kings 18:41-46; 1 Kings 19: 1-3; 2Kings 2:11-13; Luke 9: 28-36
Rule of St. Albert	Chapter 7
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraph 35
Carmelite Authors:	Teresa of Jesus, John of the Cross (several of their books)
Vatican II Documents	<i>Dominican cenae</i> (On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist), ¶ 5
Catechism of the CC	¶ 2581 2584; ¶ 1391-1396

Other Required Readings:

Appendix 1 - A Dangerous Little Friar, Penny Watkins, T.O.Carm.

Lesson 9A

Scripture	1Kings 19:9-18; Luke 10: 38-42
Rule of St. Albert	Chapters 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 27, 28, 31, 33
Carmelite Authors	Foundations by Teresa of Jesus, Chapter 5 Interior Castle, Teresa of Jesus, 5 th Mansion
Vatican II Documents	<i>Apostolicam actuositatem</i> (Decree on Laity) ¶ 4 <i>Cristifidelis laici</i> (The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People) ¶ 32
Catechism of the CC	¶ 2713

Lesson 9B

Scripture	Mt5: 4-8 Eph 5:3
Rule of St. Albert	Chapters 12, 16, 17, 20
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 18, 22, 46, 47, 49
Carmelite Authors	Adrianus Staring, O.Carm, Ch. 6, <u>Essays on Titus Brandsma</u> Wilfrid McGreal, O.Carm., <u>At the Fountain of Elijah</u>
Vatican II Documents	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> ¶ 39-40
Catechism of the CC	¶ 2014

Lesson 10A

Scripture	Mt1:18-25; 2: 1-23 Luke 1: 26-56 John 2: 1-12; 19: 25-27
Rule of St. Albert	Chapter 14
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 5-8, 34
Carmelite Authors	Christopher O'Donnell, "A Loving Presence: Mary and Carmel: A Study of the Marian Heritage of the Order" from the Carmelite Spirituality Project North American Provincials of the Carmelite Orders, "The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Catechesis and Ritual"
Vatican II Documents	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> ¶ 60, 67
Catechism of the CC	¶ 697, 969, 1670

Lesson 10B

Scripture	Luke 24: 45
Rule of St. Albert	Chapter 10
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraph 15
Carmelite Authors	Brocard Connors, O.Carm., "Mental Prayer, The Long Form" Robert E. Lee, O.Carm., "The Lectio Divina" Wilfrid McGreal, O.Carm., <u>At The Fountain of Elijah</u>
Vatican II Documents	<i>La Plenaria</i> (The Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life), ¶ 1-3, 1981

Lesson 11A

Scripture	Titus 3:5; 1Peter 1:3-8
Rule of St. Albert	Chapter 21
Living the Carmelite Way Way	Paragraphs 32, 34, 36
Carmelite Authors	Writings of St. Teresa of Jesus Peter Slattery, O.Carm., Springs of Carmel
Vatican II/Papal Documents	“St. Teresa of Jesus”, Pope John Paul II, November 1982
Catechism of the CC	¶ 363, 1804, 1827, 2014, 2022

Other Readings of Interest: [I Consider the Labor Well Spent](#), Joel Giallanza, CSC, Edizione Carmelitane, Rome 2001

Lesson 11B

Scripture	Luke 1:35-45; John 2: 1-12; John 19: 25-27; Acts 1: 12-14
Rule of St. Albert	Chapter 6, 10
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 34, 36, 39
Carmelite Authors	Bl. Titus Brandsma, O.Carm., “The Heart of the Mystical Life; St. John of the Cross and Mary’s Motherhood of God” , 1931 Christopher O’Donnell, O.Carm. “A Loving Presence: Mary and Carmel”, Carmelite Spirituality Project John Welch, O.Carm., “Seasons of the Heart”, Carmelite Spirituality Project Peter Slattery, O.Carm., Springs of Carmel
Vatican II/Papal Documents	<i>Cristifidelis laici</i> (The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People) ¶58
Catechism of the CC	¶ 217, 495

Lesson 12A

Scripture	Luke 24: 32
Rule of St. Albert	Chapter 20
Living the Carmelite Way	Paragraphs 42-44
Carmelite Authors	Wilfrid McGreal, At the Fountain of Elijah
Vatican II/Papal Documents	
Catechism of the CC	¶ 2709, 2728, 2742-2745

Lesson 12B

Scripture Luke 1: 38 Acts 1: 13-14 Ephesians 4:4

Rule of St. Albert Chapter 18

Living the Carmelite Way Paragraphs 36, 47

Carmelite Authors Wilfrid McGreal, O.Carm., At the Fountain of Elijah
Peter Slattery, O.Carm., Springs of Carmel

Vatican II/Papal Documents *Apostolicam actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity)
Cristifidelis laici (The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People) ¶ 58
Lumen gentium (Dogmatic Constitution of the Church) ¶ 41

Catechism of the CC ¶ 898, 900

Other Readings of Interest: Armando Maggi (Translator), Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi