



OCDS Provincial Newsletter

California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph – July 2020

The Garden of Carmel

“He will renew your strength, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails.” (Is. 58:11b)

Beloved of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

By Amy Holmes, OCDS, Provincial Councilor, Alhambra, California

The month of July is very special for us Carmelites. Typically, each month of the year, the church dedicates it to some special devotion. The month of July is usually a month the church devotes to the Most Precious Blood of Jesus. Well, Carmelites have been so blessed to have a whole month dedicated to many of our Carmelite Saints and Blesseds in July as well. And on top of that, we have the most beautiful Solemnity to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel on July 16. It can't get any better than that, except perhaps if your birthday falls on her Solemnity.

My connection with Our Lady of Mt. Carmel started as soon as I was born. My parents named me after my father's mother—Amada Del Carmen (which means beloved of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel). Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is also the patroness of Puerto Rico, where my mother was born. Every year in Puerto Rico, they celebrate a big festival in July in her honor. It took years for me to see the connection, but Our Lady had a special bond with me at the get go. I did not care for my name at first since the teachers in school always mispronounced my first name, and I had to constantly correct them. Also, they always wanted to call me “Amanda” instead—a natural inclination I suppose. Eventually, the nickname of Amy stuck with them, and all was well.

As I grew up, I always had a devotion and love for Our Lady, and she was always present in a special way in my life. I loved all the titles given to Our Lady, but it wasn't until I joined the Secular Order that I really could understand the meaning of my birth name and how Our Lady of Mt. Carmel was key to my vocation. On reflection, she was always present and watching over me throughout the years. Even though I had made some very poor choices early on, she literally saved my life, leading me closer to her and Jesus. I was always attracted to the Catholic Church and the sacraments, and never desired anything else. That was a special grace for which I am so very thankful. With all the pressures out there, something or SOMEONE kept me from going more astray and brought me back to what really mattered in life.

It had been years since I thought of wearing a scapular. Throughout my life, I would put it on and take it off and go for periods of time without it. I just could not get used to wearing it. It seemed to always get in the way of what I was wearing at the time. I knew nothing about the scapular medal, although I found out later that I had been wearing one for years. My mom and dad placed a medal on me as a child. It turned out to be a scapular medal. I never took it off until my late teens. I actually gave it to my sister, because she was going through a hard time, and I felt she needed it more than me, although, it was easy to let it go since my boyfriend at the time had given me a 4-way medal that I wore for years, replacing it.

It was not until the minute I began discerning a vocation in Carmel that I put on a cloth scapular, and I have never been without it since. Immediately, the most wonderful healing and peace enveloped me. I cannot describe it fully, only that my life changed for the better. I desired nothing else but to please God in every way. I was still working and raising my kids as best I could, and I wanted them to have that love for the church, Our Lady, the saints, etc. I hope that in some small way I was able to plant a seed in them by my example and practice, and that it will flourish in them in God's time.

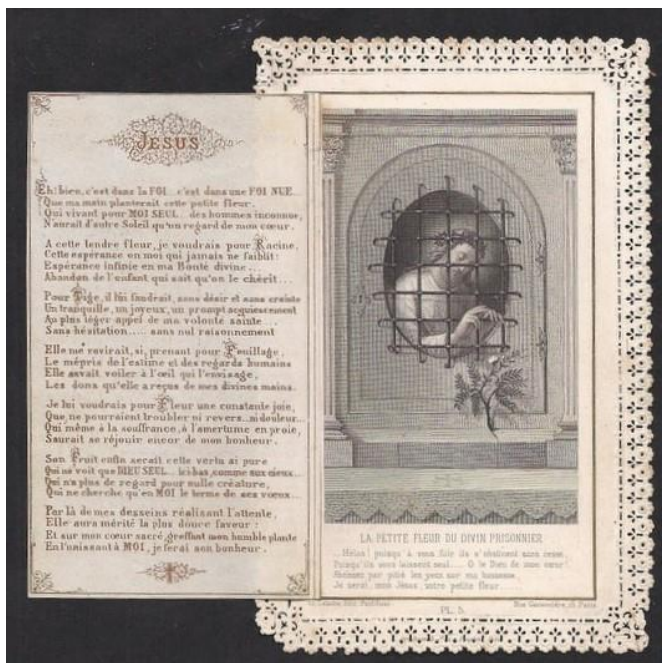
The world is changing so dramatically these days. We all need a great advocate and prayer warrior on our side. Who better than Our Lady of Mt. Carmel! Let's remain faithful to our calling and be that example to others. Happy Solemnity!

The Little Flower of the Divine Prisoner

A Holy Card Loved by St. Thérèse of Lisieux

In *The Story of a Soul*, St. Thérèse wrote, “The *little flower* of the Divine Prisoner...said so many things to me that I became deeply recollected. Seeing that the name of *Pauline* was written under the little flower, I wanted Thérèse’s name to be written there also and I offered myself to Jesus as His *little flower*.” (ICS Publications, 2nd and 3rd Editions, page 71.)

Below is an image of “The Little Flower of the Divine Prisoner” holy card:



In the verse beneath the picture of “The Divine Prisoner” on the right, *the little flower* is speaking to Jesus. In the poem written on the left on the inside of the paper door, Jesus is speaking to the *little flower*. Both the verse and poem have been translated by Vicky Schneider, OCDS, of Las Cruces, New Mexico, and the translations have been reviewed and approved by Fr. Donald Kinney, OCD.

Here is the verse beneath the picture:

*Alas! Because others do not remain constant,
Because they leave you alone... O, God of my heart!
Look with eyes of pity upon my lowliness.
I will be, my Jesus, your little flower.*

La Petite Fleur Du Divin Prisonnier

Tr. Vicky Schneider, OCDS, Las Cruces, New Mexico

*Well! It is in faith, in naked faith
that my hand would plant this little flower,
who lives for me alone...unknown by men.
She would need no other sun than a glance from my heart.*

*For this tender flower I would like for its ROOTS
to be a hope in me that never falters,
infinite hope in my divine kindness,
the abandonment of a child who knows she is cherished.*

*Its STALK, without desire or fear, would require
a quiet, joyful, quick consent
to the slightest call of my holy will,
with neither hesitation nor reasoning.*

*It would please me, if, for its LEAVES
she would have a contempt for esteem and human respect.
She would hide from view
the gifts she has received from my divine hands.*

*I would like for its FLOWER to be a constant joy,
which could not be disturbed, lost, or pained.
Even in the midst of suffering and bitterness,
she would still rejoice in my happiness.*

*Finally, its FRUIT would be a virtue so pure,
one only God himself would see...here below as in heaven.
She would no longer have regard for any creature,
and seek only in me the end of all her desires.*

*By awaiting my providence,
she would merit the sweetest favor:
By grafting this humble plant onto my sacred heart
and uniting it with me, I will make her happy.*





Blue tile image of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel,
Mission San Carlos Borromeo, Carmel, CA

On Gardening

By Lynn Miyake, OCDS, Las Cruces, New Mexico

In recent years, gardening has become an important hobby for me. I love seeing the new growth that surprises me in spring and the flowers that develop in summer. Being in the garden, like being in Carmel, makes me feel closer to God.

When we come to Carmel, each of us has our reasons. However, we gradually come to realize that God has planted us here for reasons of His own. If we are sincere in our desire for union with God, over time He grants us the grace to draw closer to Him. If we are truly blessed, He allows us to suffer on His behalf. Prayer becomes difficult. At times tension permeates community life.

I have come to believe that the minor irritations and major trials we experience in Carmel are the mulch and fertilization in God's garden. If we persevere, one day we may find ourselves putting out tender buds for future flowers and fruit. I like to think that God, who is all-knowing, prefers to hide the time of our blossoming even from Himself so He can delight along with us when we suddenly burst into bloom.

Let us pray that we will always provide beautiful blossoms in the garden of Carmel, which has been so carefully planted by His hand. Let us pray that we will always give Him a reason to walk among us with delight.

Prayer Time in Eden

By Michele Maitland, OCDS, Portland, Oregon

Stiff with cold on the hard church bench
I am alone with God
As Faith insists He is nearby, almost close enough to touch,
in the monstrance on the altar

While Sense, miles away and languishing
doggedly implores Him
"Where *are* you?"

Met with familiar silence
Sense sneaks off to escape the dark
and scurry among a babel of worldly thoughts

So I am off woolgathering
when His sudden presence charms me,
my heart hearing His gentle reproach
"I miss you. Where *are* you?"



Prayer Time

By Michele Maitland, OCDS, Portland, Oregon

From the doors of the old church
His Majesty beckons, and entering
I imagine myriads of angels
prostrate, singing Holy, Holy, Holy

In this august company,
He is mine to love as I will
No hurry, no worries
just—He and I and the angels

I may walk the Stations recalling His Passion
or kneel, marveling at the humility
of a God who resides in a box on the altar
for love of me

I am free to chat—sharing my concerns
and asking questions
of the All-Knowing One
who died, for love of me

Or I may simply fall silent
in the stillness of the old church
Adoring my God and
owning the Mystery

Keeping in Touch

Do you have something you would like to share with the other OCDS members in our province? Our OCDS Provincial Newsletters are one way of keeping in touch with each other during the pandemic. Original prayers, articles, poems, and photos can be sent to the editor at Lkmiyake@aol.com. All submissions should be generally or specifically related to our vocation. Please include your name, OCDS designation (if professed), and Community/Group location. Submissions from Aspirants and those in Formation I are also welcome. All submissions are subject to review and approval by the Provincial Council.

Help us fill our blank pages!