

## DEEP TRADITION

If you want to understand Carmelite history and tradition, the place to start is Mount Carmel itself. A mountain range along the Mediterranean in Israel, Mount Carmel is a green oasis surrounded by desert; hence its name "Carmel," which means "Garden of God" in Hebrew. It was also the home of the Prophet Elijah.

We trace our beginning to hermits who settled on Mount Carmel in Palestine during the Crusades more than 800 years ago. We don't know the names of any of those first Carmelites. Unlike most religious orders, we have no founder. The history of our Carmelite way is intimately connected to the lives and stories of men and women who sought out prayerful solitude together in the world. Carmelite spirituality is always about recognising how God is shaping you to become everything God wants you to be.

## LIVING AND WORKING DEEPLY

What we call "Carmel" is really a way of life in which we strive to be aware of the presence of God in the most ordinary, everyday things. We're contemplative, but we live out our service in the world. We're prayerful, but we're also practical. We were founded 800 years ago on a mountaintop, but we have our feet firmly planted in today's problems and concerns.

Carmelites live together in small communities so that we can support one another in our desire to live up to what God wants of us. Carmelite friars are pastors, teachers and spiritual directors, as well as lawyers, social workers and chaplains. There is no one career that defines a Carmelite. We pray for the freedom to respond to needs wherever we find them.

"I HAVE FOUND MY VOCATION  
MY VOCATION  
IS LOVE"

ST THERESE OF LISIEUX



## SPIRITUAL DEPTH

Our greatest saints – Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Thérèse of Lisieux – often described their vocation as Carmelites on a journey: the interior castle, the ascent of the mountain, the little way. What makes Carmelite prayer distinctive is not the prayer itself – in fact, there is no 'method' for Carmelite prayer – it is all about the time and energy that is actually put into prayer.

During the canonisation of Carmelite Saint Nuno Alvares, Pope Benedict said, "Carmel teaches the Church how to pray." That's what Carmel has always been about: prayer. And that's what being a Carmelite – whether friar, nun or lay Carmelite – is all about: prayer. It's not a method, it's emphasis.

## GO DEEPER WITH US

Are you ready to go deeper? We invite you to join us on the path up Mount Carmel. Walking in the footsteps of Jesus with Elijah, Mary and the host of Carmelite saints is a wonderful, deeply satisfying life. We welcome your interest in the profound and exciting Carmelite journey of contemplation and service in community and invite you to get in touch with us:

[vocations@carmelites.org.au](mailto:vocations@carmelites.org.au)

GO DEEP



A recent Carmelite inquirer said it well:

**"To me, the mission of the Carmelites is the evangelization of the world to open its eyes to the spiritual necessity of contemplation and prayer. Most religious congregations I've explored go wide-Carmelites go deep."**

'Going deep' is an apt description for what a Carmelite vocation entails. Whether it's community life, ministry or our 800 year-old spiritual tradition, the consistent thread that runs through Carmelite life is our focus on prayer. The deepening of our interior journey is one distinguishing characteristic of all Carmelites. It is the passion from which our entire tradition springs.

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, "Carmel teaches the Church how to pray." We invite you to go deeper with us and experience what our Carmelite tradition of prayer, community and action is all about.



Carmelites

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