



Mary: an ecologist?

It's decades now since, as a Kilbride College girl, I eagerly looked forward to the Marian Festival each year at Whitefriars Monastery, Donvale, and joined in the annual crowning of Our Lady in our school's front yard each May. Since then the wisdom of Mary of Nazareth has accompanied me on a long journey.

When I was invited to write this article it was suggested that I focus on Mary as an ecologist, given my current involvement with EarthSong, a project that offers programs in ecology and spirituality.

At first my response was that Mary was not an ecologist. Mary's middle eastern world required no such labels, faced no such issues as climate change, unsustainable economic growth and the depletion of the earth's resources.

However, as I reflected further I realised that the feminine presence that Mary has sustained for over two millennia, continues to struggle for recognition and is indeed deeply relevant for a life giving planet in distress.

Throughout the scriptures, Mary and the other women of the New Testament are constantly on a threshold.

In the visitation Elizabeth announces the presence of new life and confirms Mary's 'yes' to the dawn of a new era in Christ.

As a refugee, Mary flees with her child and husband to a foreign land. Did Jesus' later encounter with the Syrophonician woman cause him to recall that journey and strengthen his growing awareness that his mission was to all people?

In the temple a worried mother is confronted by a son who has an early insight into his role in bringing about the reign of God.

At Cana Mary's sensitivity opened the space for miracles that draw the community into a new consciousness.

At the foot of the cross Mary was jointly charged with the beloved disciple to nurture the young, fragile and frightened group of followers.

Was Mary at the empty tomb? Mary of Magdala would surely have been in her company at that time and it was

to her that the mandate was given to announce the new era of the resurrection.

With the disciples, Mary waited for the fiery eruption of understanding that took possession of her son's disciples and which ushered in a new age of insight into the God who dwells in our midst on Pentecost day.

The classic passive figure in a blue and white plaster has little to do with the real spirit of Mary of Nazareth but, it is never the less a reminder that the feminine is full of hope and possibility. In this sense Mary, woman of immeasurable hope, must weep at the prospect of a dying Earth, the place of her own personal encounter with Divine Mystery.

Acclaimed with such nature-embedded terms as Lily of the Valley, Star of the Sea, Flower of Carmel, Mystical Rose, Mary would surely be delighted, in the context of today's world, to also carry the titles of ecologist and greenie!

Anne Boyd CSB

Member of the EarthSong Coordinating Team
www.earthsong.org.au



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Make a difference ‘The Little Way’



Sr Maria Hughes ocdm
Superior of
the Carmelite
Monastery

Therese was captivated by Jesus as she met him in the Gospels. She lifted spirituality and prayer completely away from an exaggerated fear driven duty to a severe God of justice, into the heart's response of love, like a child's spontaneous relationship to a prodigal Father.

“Prayer like sanctity does not consist in this or that practice: it consists in a disposition of the heart, which makes us humble and little in the arms of God, conscious of our weaknesses, but boldly confident in his goodness as a Father.”

She rescued sanctity from the idealist's realm of achieving heroic perfection by rigorous self denial. We find God's presence, love and grace in the reality of the present moment, in the mess of our human condition.

Joan Chittister remarked that it isn't easy to be human when we have set out to be holy. That is why so few of us get to be truly holy. We suppress what we are instead of sanctifying it.

What is there in oneself that we fear to face and therefore fail to turn to positive energy? St. Therese's 'Little Way' of trust and confidence, is a sure path to inner peace and freedom: it helps us face our personal demons and turn them into fuel for love and passion for prayer: it broadens our horizons by shifting the focus of our attention away from ourselves.

Modern society is obsessed with materialism, with getting and spending and pay later. It creates a chasm between the dizzy heights of expectations and reality.

This secular malaise mirrored its spiritual counterpart in the Church and times into which Therese was born and raised. Our times are no different!

Therese was a great realist. She prayed never to be deceived by appearances. Her own fragile vulnerability as she recalled in her autobiography, 'The Story of A Soul' gave her growing conviction: 'My mission is about to begin: to make the good God loved as much as I love him.'

Therese let her heart become the place where the tears of God and the tears of God's children merge and become tears of hope. For Therese love was not a cerebral concept, neither was truth. The mystery of the Incarnation is about a relationship between friends, with self, with God and with our neighbour.

Trust was the basis of Therese's prayer, the nourishment of her faith and the support of her love. She would have us lift up our hearts to God with trusting confidence and love, while being encouraged by the difference one 'little' person can make in this world!

What would Therese say to our brothers and sisters of Timor-Leste? Perhaps, take courage! God is faithful to his trusting people. For you too, all can be grace. Patient endurance is indeed a virtue of the strong, but in following the 'little way', the strength we rely on is not just our own. Particularly in our struggles, Jesus remains always with us and from all we know of Therese; it is hard not to believe that she too most lovingly walks their land.

Sr Maria Hughes ocdm
Superior of the Carmelite Monastery,
Wagga Wagga, NSW



*‘My mission
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Whitefriars College - 50 Years



Louis Laumen
Sculptor

This year marks the official celebrations for the 50th Anniversary year of Whitefriars. It also marks a 50 year dream of the Carmelites to have a College Chapel built in the heart of the school.

The new College Chapel was blessed and opened by the Prior General of the Carmelite Order, Fr Fernando Millán Romeral, on Sunday 2 May 2010. Many supporters and friends of Whitefriars attended this memorable day.

To commemorate this occasion the Carmelites commissioned a life-sized sculpture of the Prophet Elijah which stands at the entrance to the Chapel. It was crafted by Louis Laumen, a Melbourne-based sculptor whose fine bronze works adorn many galleries, museums, civic spaces, church grounds and sporting complexes.

The inspiration for this work is Elijah's encounter with God on Mount Horeb (cf. 1 Kings 19), recognising him 'in the sound of sheer silence' which is at the base of Carmelite spirituality. The work will complement the beautiful Schipperheyn sculpture of Mary and the adolescent Jesus, located in the Reflective Garden which leads into the Chapel. These two sculptures will stand as permanent reminder of the two iconic patrons of the Carmelites.

The following is a reflection by Louis Laumen on how he determined what form the sculpture would take.

'A still small voice'

My approach as a sculptor of the human figure is to strive to see the subject as a flesh and blood human being belonging to a real time and place. And no matter how remote this might be, to construct a plausible image based on the best information available. Where the subject is to have a spiritual dimension, it is my firm belief that the portrayal of mystical experience and transcendence is most convincingly rendered for a contemporary viewer by means of this realism.

Clues as to the appearance of Elijah are few: 'a hairy man': 'a leather belt about his waist': 'he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him'. These have

been interpreted in various ways: that he wore only goat or camel skins (like John the Baptist); or he was exceptionally hirsute; or a mantle of animal hide or perhaps coarse-woven goat hair. I have selected from these possibilities.

I chose to portray Elijah wearing a plain coarse tunic with fringed hem according to Hebrew tradition; a goat skin is draped over his shoulder and held by a broad leather belt: over this his mantle, a great shawl of woven goat's hair.

Here portrayed is a man wild of hair and beard, a dweller of the desert who has renounced the finery and comforts of the material world. Elijah the fiery prophet is shown standing before us, his sword discarded at his feet. Elijah has expected to find God in the tumult and fury of wind and fire; instead he hears only 'a still small voice'. He has let go and he breathes in deeply of the Presence that is about him.

Louis Laumen
Sculptor



Other 50th Anniversary celebrations for Whitefriars College

- Anniversary Ball, 17 July 2010
- College Concert, 4 September 2010
- Anniversary Mass, 13 February 2011

For information on these events contact Cherie Tucker on 03 9872 8213 or email: ctucker@whitefriars.vic.edu.au



Fr Bernard Shah O.Carm

1937-2010



Bernard Shah came from New Zealand to join the Carmelite Order in 1959. He was proud of his heritage and especially of his family in Christchurch where his father was fire chief for many years. Bernard missed close connection with his family, and his sister Dorothy was important to him in maintaining his connection with his extended family there.

Bernard worked in most Australian Carmelite parishes but his main gifts came to the fore in his writing and his work as editor of the Scapular magazine. Many people will remember with affection Bernard's thoughtful and encouraging pieces where he would lead the reader to God.

In the earlier years Bernard worked in the Library where he absorbed much of what the sense of being Carmelite should mean. This shaped the way he viewed the evolution of his life in Carmel.

Bernard was at his best in the one to one encounters of retreats, spiritual direction or just the informal meeting of people around the various parish communities in which he lived. Bernard came to life most within the friendships he was graced with. He was a good listener and when you were in his company, you were the focus of his attention. His friends and those who got to know Bernard loved him, especially for what they called his wicked sense of humour.

Bernard's health was never robust and through much of his life it was simply faithfulness to his personal, religious and priestly journey that was his call. It was this faithfulness that allowed God's grace to work its mystery in him.

Paul, in the reading (Romans 5:1-6) reminds us that hope comes to us especially through perseverance with the struggles of our life and Bernard in learning this truth calls us on the same journey.

Thank you for encouraging us by your words, your fun and your presence. May you rest in God's peace.

Adrian Jones
Lay Carmelite

Fr John Powell

Prior of the Carmelite
Wentworth community, Sydney



What attracted you to the Carmelites?

In my early 20's while I was a member of St Vincent de Paul Conference in Braddon, Canberra, one of my jobs was ordering pamphlets for my local parish St Patrick's. With a recently arrived order were some handouts about Whitefriars College in Melbourne, featuring on the front a very young (Br) Matthew McPhee. This was my first glimpse of Carmelites. Again in the vocational magazine, Signposts, my eyes were drawn to a picture of Fr Noel Kierce. The accompanying article talked about Carmelites running parishes while living in community. That sparked my interest because the concept of living in a parish on my own held no interest for me whatsoever.

I am indebted to Carmelite Fr Peter Davies who gave me the encouragement to become a Carmelite.

What do you find particularly satisfying in your present role and in being a Carmelite and a priest today?

Since 1986 I have been working in parishes fulltime – Port Melbourne, Port Adelaide and now Wentworthville, Sydney. The variety of parish life I find very attractive. To be with people at important moments in their lives is a real privilege and very satisfying.

It is also wonderful to see the growth of the Order in Indonesia, India, East Timor and the Philippines. This certainly makes up for the decline of the Order in western countries including Australia.

What interests do you have outside of your ministry?

Interests that appeal to me are reading, films and following cricket and Australian Rules Football. My footy team is the Mighty Demons! in Melbourne.

Who is the most inspiring person you have met and why?

One of the most inspiring people that has influenced me would be a Canberra resident, Bernard Fennessy. I had known Bernie for over forty years. He mentored me and his strong faith and common sense has been a great help over the years. In Western Australia where I grew up, I owe a lot to my parents, brother and my guardians, Frank and Nancye Collopy.

My life as a Carmelite has been deeply satisfying and I consider it a very fortunate life indeed!

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75 Wright Street, Middle Park, Vic, 3206

New Provincial & Council



On 29 May at the Provincial Chapter of the Carmelites of Australia and Timor-Leste held in Melbourne, Fr Denis Andrew was elected Prior Provincial (leader) for the next three years.

Many of you will know Fr Denis who has been a Parish Priest of Coorparoo in Brisbane, Port Melbourne/ Middle Park and Park Orchards in Melbourne and most recently, Wentworthville in Sydney. He is a 'local lad' from Mitcham, Melbourne where his mother and brother still live.

Together with the new Council, Fr. David Hofman, Fr. Paul Cahill, Fr. Bruce Clark and Br. Sean Keefe they will effect the decisions taken at the Chapter.

The Provincial Chapter was also an opportunity to gather to discuss matters that are important to us.

This included our continued involvement in Whitefriars College and in the three parishes for which we currently have responsibility. As well, we considered the ways we have responded to the invitation from our Timorese Brothers to accompany them as they determine their future.

An important feature at the Chapter was the presence of many lay people who are already involved with us in the ministries of the Province. We were happy to have for the first time, the presence of our new Prior General, Fr. Fernando Millan and Councillor for this region, Fr Albertus Herwanta.



Paul Gurr O.Carm
Chaplain

Special thanks go to Fr. Wayne Stanhope who guided us for the last nine years.

Paul Gurr O.Carm
Chaplain, Jamberoo Abbey, NSW

Help Amanda...run across the finish line for East Timor

Some of you will know me from my role at the Fundraising and Development Office. But there is another side to me - I like to keep fit.

This year I have decided to participate in the Run Melbourne fun run on 18 July 2010, and I will be running for East Timor.

A lot of people ask me "what is fun about running? Why do you put yourself through it?" The reason 'the sense of achievement at the finish line!'

I am asking all my family, friends and Carmelite supporters to help me. With each new donation that is being made online I am feeling a great sense of pride and privilege that this small act of mine will help others. Please jump online and make your donation at: runmelbourne.everydayhero.com.au/amanda_georgiou

Your gift will help the Carmelites continue their East Timor mission work in education, scholarships, skills training, farming, safe drinking water and much more. Thank you.

Amanda Georgiou
Database & Donor Administrator



A visit with Mary

Is Mary the type of woman you would like to imitate? She knew who she was as a mother, wife, disciple and friend.

What would she think of today's world and what might she say to us. As we prepare for the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, you might like to have a 'conversation' with her as prayer about our world and personal needs.

July 7: Birth – new life

Mary, you understand the anxieties and joys that accompany a birth. For the times we are faced with new challenges in our lives, help us be confident like you and respond with the same "Yes!"

Mary, whenever I am invited to start life anew, give me the courage to explore my options.

July 8: Parenthood – understanding youth

Mary, you understand our pride and joy as parents. Help us as parents and help those who work with youth to say and do the right things to guide young people.

Mary, may we not be too harsh with ourselves for making the occasional mistake.

July 9: Loss – when dreams fade

Mary, how did it feel to lose your child in Jerusalem when he was just twelve. Did your heart lose hope? Did worry consume you? Your compassionate heart understands all those who experience loss; the loss of income, self-esteem, hopes and dreams or the loss of a loved one.

Mary, help me to be gentle with myself when I experience personal loss.

July 10: Joy – the promise of better times

Mary, our world is troubled and often consumed by negativity. At times it is difficult to celebrate joy and to celebrate the wonder of the future with confidence.

Mary, be with us when we are tempted to be negative, and help us restore a sense of hope.

July 11: Love & Celebration– the unexpected hitch

Mary falling in love and celebrations give us a vitality we did not know we had. Yet even in such times there are hurdles. An unexpected bill, financial worries or concerns for things that don't go the way they were planned.

Mary, help us when we feel overwhelmed by life. Encourage us to go directly to Jesus with any concerns.

July 12: Pain – from strength to weakness

Mary, you experienced pain and suffering. Physical pain can overcome the strongest of us, but the pain of the heart weakens our resolve and makes us feel helpless.



You showed us that God's promise is to restore us when we experience pain.

Mary, shower us with words of comfort in our times of pain and suffering, for you are our Mother who always wants to help us in our need.

July 13: Employment – a time of anxiousness

Mary, we pray for all those who have lost their job recently. May they face the future with optimism and courage. For you know personally, that God will look after our needs.

Mary, in times of anxiousness, help us to remain calm and confident in God's help.

July 14: Hope – a time of solidarity

Mary, you want all your children to live in love and in harmony. Our world is at risk as global warming threatens our future. We need to work in solidarity to protect our earthly home

Mary, help us with simple solutions to bring about the health of the earth. Help us with our stewardship before we get it too wrong for future generations.

July 15: God and justice – working together

Mary, your sense of justice and love kept you at the foot of the Cross. You understood first-hand the injustice committed towards your son, Jesus.

Mary, help us to be people of justice and to bring about the kind of world that Jesus described.

Rachele Tullio

*Director of Religious Perspectives
Sacred Heart College South Australia*