

Carmel Contact



from the Australian Carmelites
www.carmelites.org.au

Remembering Thérèse

A once in a lifetime opportunity

The relics of St Thérèse of Lisieux will be in Australia from 1 February to 30 April 2002. It will be a wonderful and exceptional occasion to promote Carmelite life and Spirituality through the “little way” of St Thérèse, which is gospel centered. The Reliquary first went on pilgrimage in France in 1994. Since 1997, when Thérèse was made a Doctor of the Church, she has made her pilgrimage to over a dozen countries in Europe and in North and South America. She even received a warm and enthusiastic reception in Russia. Last year, besides being in the United States of America, she was also in the Philippines and Taiwan. This year she has been in Ireland, Lebanon and will be in Canada just before she arrives “downunder”.

St Thérèse is certainly getting her wish! She once said: “I would like to preach the gospel on all five continents.” The overwhelming

response of people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds, clearly indicates that people identify with her.

There is nothing extraordinary about the lives of most people. There was nothing extraordinary about her life. No visions, no ecstasies, no melodramatic experiences.

Just the banal ordinariness of every day life. She found God in the ordinary because that is where he is: in the here and now of every day life. The present moment is where God is.

St Thérèse developed her “little way” through her prayerful and reflective reading of Scripture. She came to understand and live the Christian life in this way. Reading her autobiography, *The Story of A Soul*, is a good way of preparing for her pilgrimage to Australia. It tells her story and will help us to open our eyes to the God of love in our lives. Thérèse will help all people to satisfy their hunger for God. That is her mission and the reason for her pilgrimage around the world!

For further information on St Thérèse and her pilgrimage in Australia, check the National Committee Website at www.therese2002.com which contains a wealth of resource material.

Father Jim DeLaurier, O.Carm.

Where and When

Thérèse’s relics will be visiting our Carmelite Parishes on the following dates:

4th, 5th and 6th February 2002 – Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Hilton, WA

24th and 25th February 2002 – Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Middle Park, VIC

7th, 8th, 9th and 10th April 2002 – Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Wentworthville, NSW

26th and 27th April 2002 – Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Coorparoo, QLD

The Veneration of Relics

The visit of the relics of St Thérèse to Australia can be seen as a great grace. But it will have to be placed in an appropriate context. There is always the danger of superstition or magic where relics are involved. We can speak of these errors when power is ascribed to something beyond its natural capacities, such as to some words of a formula, to a rabbit's foot or a horseshoe. Relics have no virtue in themselves; their chequered history in the Church, however, shows both their dangers and their beauty.

Church teaching on relics

The Catholic position was spelled out over a period of some eight hundred years, even though the use of relics goes back almost to the time of the Apostles. St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) following St. Augustine pointed out that it was natural that people should treasure what is associated with the dead, like a ring or the garment of a parent. He then developed four reasons already outlined in John Damascene which would later be taken up by the Council of Trent: the saints are members of Christ, they are children and friends of God and they are our intercessors. Therefore we want to draw close to them through their relics.

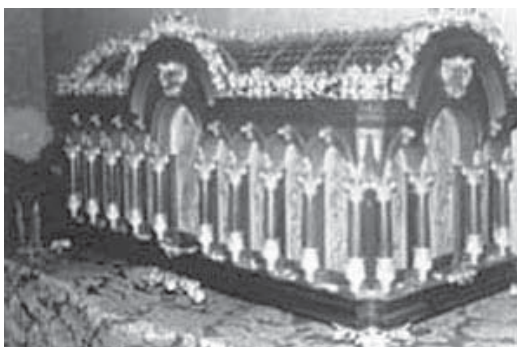
The place of relics

But do we really need relics, parts of the body of a saint such as bone, a hair (called a first class relic) or cloth that has been in contact with a saint's body (a second class relic)? If we have a lively faith in the Eucharist, do we need something infinitely inferior to the Body and Blood of the Lord? The origin of relics was largely associated with the Eucharist, which was celebrated at the burial place of holy people. In time the custom grew in the Church that Mass should be celebrated on the relics of the saints in the altar stone or wrapped in the corporal. Indeed,

since the second council of Nicea churches are not to be consecrated without relics, a point made again in Church law as recently as 1977 in the revised Rite of Dedication of a Church.

The Church is therefore comfortable with relics and the Eucharist being somehow coupled together. Indeed Mass begins with the priest kissing the altar, that is the relics contained in it.

Ultimately the use of relics can be understood only in a double context. Relics have had divine appro-



bation and they reflect the incarnational nature of our Christian religion. The issue of God's approval emerges from the fact that there have been at all times miracles and especially healings associated with the relics of the saints. Already in the New Testament we find that handkerchiefs and other garments which had touched the flesh of St. Paul at Ephesus cured diseases (see Acts 19:12). In the Old Testament miracles had been worked through the mantle of Elijah and the bones of Elisha (see Kings 2:14; 13:21).

Granted then that God has been pleased in this way to work wonders in biblical times and up to the present, we might still ask, why? Here we touch the deepest reality of our religion. God respects the human nature that he created: we are both spiritual and material. Even God's salvation of humanity from sin was by way of Incarnation: God became man in Jesus Christ. In the Christian

religion we move from what is visible to what is invisible. Jesus tells us that if we see and know him, we also see and know the Father (see John 14:6-9). God comes to us through signs and symbols: the sacraments are tangible and visible – such as water, bread, wine, oil, imposition of hands – but through them we come into divine life. God comes to us in our very bodyliness. Whenever people forget that we are closely related in mind and body – either by neglecting the spiritual or the material, they come into serious distortions of life itself.

Relics are one way in which God helps us in our bodily humanity to rise to spiritual realities. Through relics we can feel close to a holy person. We have a deeper awareness of their life and mission, of their presence in the Communion of Saints. Religion can never be purely intellectual; it must rather touch us at different levels of our being. Relics are clearly not as important as the sacraments. And like the sacraments, relics can be abused. We cannot stop at the holy relics of the saints, but we must reach further into God's plans. Buddhism, the only other major religion apart from Catholic Christianity to have a major place for relics, insists too that we must go beyond the relic. One of its traditions is that the Buddha himself told his followers not to concentrate on his bodily remains but on his teachings.

Welcoming the relics of Thérèse

The correct veneration of relics looks beyond what is visible and material to God's love at work in the saint, to the inspiration of the saint's life and to God's good pleasure in confirming the virtue of the saint by signs and cures. People will go to those churches that are to welcome the Thérésian reliquary. But it must not be magical. True veneration of Thérèse will involve people turning to God and allowing his love to enter their lives through her intercession.

*Excerpts from an article by
Father Christopher O'Donnell, O.Carm*

Welcome Fr Jim!

Hello! My name is Father Jim. I am the new Director of the Society of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Father David has been appointed the Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Joseph's Parishes in Bayside area of Melbourne. We wish him well with his new ministry after his many years of service as Director of the Society.

I am an American Carmelite who has immigrated to Australia because my only immediate family, my brother, sister-in-law, two nieces were transferred to Aus-



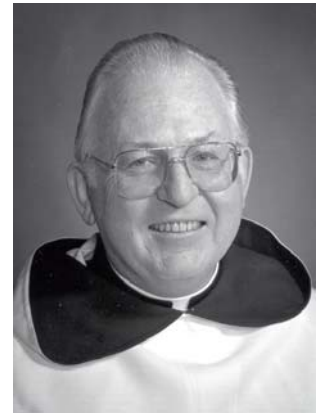
Father Arnold Vaneman, O.Carm., was born in Zoeterwoude, The Netherlands in 1925. He survived the German occupation of his country in the early 1940s. He came to Australia in 1952 and lived in different parts of Australia such as Perth and Swan Hill working in his trade as a pastrycook. Five years later he returned to The Netherlands but returned to Australia after just six months.

Father Arnold commenced his Carmelite life at Whitefriars Monastery in 1958. His fellow novices were Benedict Baldacchino, Adrian Jones and Bernard Shah.

He was ordained at St Patrick's Cathedral on Saturday 16 January 1965. A highlight for him was the arrival of his 76 year old father.

tralia in 1993. They asked me to consider moving to Australia since I am the 'favourite uncle' and only uncle for my two nieces and my nephew who was born here in Australia. The Australian Carmelites also welcomed me with open arms.

I arrived in October of 1999. For the last 21 months I have been living and working in all the Carmelite parishes in Australia to learn the 'Aussie' way of doing things. I was appointed the Director of the Society of Our Lady of



Mount Carmel in August of this year. I look forward to working with you. Hopefully, I will be able to make a contribution to the Carmelites and the people of Australia.

Father Arnold Vaneman

3 December 1925 – 25 May 2001

The people of the farming town he came from, Catholics and Protestants, had raised 6000 guilders to buy him an airfare.

From 1970 to 1980 Father Arnold's community was Hilton in Western Australia. For four years during that time he lived on his own in the town of South Hedland. Whilst in the north he encountered the aboriginal people and began to question how they could best be helped.

In March 1982 he moved to the town of Collie, WA, where he lived in a cabin on the outskirts of the town near an aboriginal settlement. He remained there, a presence for the aboriginal community whilst assisting priests in the local parishes.

When the aboriginal apostolate came to an end, Father Arnold moved to Brisbane where he worked in the Coorparoo parish before taking on the ministry of chaplaincy at Holy Spirit Hospital for the next twelve years.

Failing health forced him to finish this ministry in 1999. As his ill health worsened, Father Arnold

moved to Marycrest at Kangaroo Point, Brisbane. He died there peacefully on Friday evening 25 May.

In the Eulogy at Father Arnold's Requiem Mass, Father Frank Shortis said of him, 'Arnold was a private man, a quiet man... There was a stoicism about Arnold, an asceticism. ..he did not expect the Lord to come to him. But he did without question what he believed the Lord was asking of him.'

Rest peacefully, Arnold.

CARMELITES

Brothers who:

- Seek the face of the Living God.
- In the midst of the people



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Father Robert Dowd

14 February 1923–10 July 2001

Robert Dowd was born in North Adelaide in 1923, the oldest son of Bede and Ellen Dowd and brother of David, Mary, Margaret, Bede and Philomine. They were a close-knit family.

He grew up in the Woodville section of the then Carmelite parish of Alberton. Before joining the Carmelites he worked on the railway as a fitter and turner at Tailm Bend.

Father Bob was ordained a priest in St Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Adelaide in 1954 and from 1955 until 1967 he was one of a small number of Australian Carmelites who joined the Irish Carmelites' mission in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

He was called back to Australia in 1967 and between then and 1994 he served as either Pastor or Assistant Pastor in the Carmelite parishes of Wentworthville NSW, Hilton WA and Port Melbourne,

his last place of formal public ministry from 1989 to 1994. It was here that he responded to the needs of the emerging Korean Catholic community of Melbourne and provided a place of welcome and acceptance for them.

From 1995 Father Bob lived a quiet and secluded life at the Little Sisters of the Poor Hostel at Northcote and subsequently at their Nursing Home on the same site, coping with the severe disabilities which diabetes (leading to the amputation of one leg) and a subsequent stroke inflicted on him.

At Father Bob's Requiem Mass, Father Paul Cahill said of him, 'Throughout the ordeal of the last six years, Bob has retained that essentially cheerful, kindly, faith-filled, peaceful and accepting spirit which so endeared him to family, friends, Carmelites, priests and parishioners in the seventy-two



years which preceded his move to Northcote'.

'Bob was a "legend" – a big man, larger than life, who was also kind and gentle and essentially a very happy person – at ease with himself and at ease with those around him. He was generous of mind, heart and spirit.'

We give thanks for Father Bob's life and pray that he may rest in peace in the kingdom of the risen Lord.

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Carmel Contact is a publication of the Australian Carmelites designed to keep you, our friends and supporters, informed about the members of our Order, our hopes and our spirit. It also provides an opportunity for us to support you in your Christian life.

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College Sculpture

Australia's pre-eminent sculptor, Peter Schipperheyn has completed a new work for his old school, Whitefriars College, Donvale, to celebrate its fortieth anniversary.

The bronze Madonna and Adolescent Christ has been located in the centre of a reflective garden within the College grounds. Reflecting the College motto 'in the care of a loving mother' it was formally blessed and the garden opened on 11 May by Father Joseph Chalmers, Carmelite Prior General together with the whole school student population.

Within the garden a granite plinth has been placed to honour the names of deceased loved ones. Among these names are Father James Pilkington, Brother Thomas, Father Peter Slattery and Father Shane O'Connor.

It is hoped that this whole garden space and form will help all to be sensitive to the



Father Frank Shortis, Peter Schipperheyn and Father Paul Cahill admire the sculpture

presence of God in the life of the College.