

# CARMEL CONTACT

from the Australian Carmelites

No. 40, March 1999

## Untold treasure

People involved with the Carmelites sometimes say there is something special about them, or that they manage to create a special atmosphere in the places where they work. Yet as individuals, they're different. What, then, do they have in common?

Today's Carmelites are inheritors of one of the oldest spiritual traditions in the church, stretching back 800 years to the beginnings of the Order on Mount Carmel. It is a living tradition, handed down person to person over the centuries, and one that is still adapting and growing. In each age it seeks to express its perennial values: *the following of Christ through a contemplative approach to life, the building of community founded in love, and service of God's people.*

To a large extent, Carmelites learn it from one another, as a way of life: from their masters when they join the Order, and from the lifelong experience of being members of the community.

But they also learn the Carmelite way by study of and reflection on the Order's spiritual heritage, and want to share this wisdom of the centuries with others. Hence our commitment to a library which will preserve and give access to this ancient and living tradition of spiritual life.

The Carmelite Library is spe-

cialised in spirituality, and is open to all interested users. It has the largest collection of Carmelite literature in the southern hemisphere, and has world-class resources for the study of the great Carmelite saints and mystics: John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila,



**Vinea Carmeli - a collection of medieval Carmelite authors published in Antwerp in 1662 — one of the many rare acquisitions in our Library**

Thérèse of Lisieux, Elizabeth of the Trinity. It also documents the lives of Carmelites over the centuries, including its modern martyrs Edith Stein (canonised last year)

and Titus Brandsma. Our treasures include rare items dating from 1538 onwards.

The Library is not restricted only to the Carmelite tradition, but is building up a rich resource of books and journals for the study of the whole range of Christian spirituality, old and new. It is thought to be the only library in Australia with a serious specialisation in this important area. As well, we have the most extensive Australian collection of literature on the Virgin Mary, a sign of the Order's traditional devotion to her.

Years ago, the library was exclusively for the use of the Carmelite students at Whitefriars and their professors, but for a decade or more its rich resources have been available for anyone interested in the great tradition of Christian spirituality as it has been lived down the ages and is lived today.

Our books include the popular and the scholarly, the famous and the obscure, the well-thumbed and those still awaiting discovery. We've had inquiries from a professor in New South Wales wanting the meditations of an almost-forgotten 18th century Jesuit, a West Australian priest working on Aboriginal Spirituality, and an opera company needing information for a production of Poulenc's

## From the Director

*Dialogues of the Carmelites.* Our excellent periodical holdings in spirituality have drawn regular requests from around the country for articles for students working on St John of the Cross, or St Thérèse of Lisieux, or Julian of Norwich, or countless others.

Building a library is a long-term work: it is really a vote of confidence in our spiritual tradition and a sign of hope for our spiritual future. We would like to continue building this already-precious resource. We have a highly-qualified librarian and a vision of excellence, but we need your help.

Paul Chandler, OCarm.  
Provincial Librarian

### A Large Family!

The Carmelite community in the *Carminè* in Florence has grown to number twenty-seven members: three friars and five families, including 14 children! They live a community life of hospitality and prayer.

Life is inevitably a mixture of joy and sadness.

On Sunday 10 January this year the Carmelites handed back the parish of Pennington in South Australia to the Diocese after ninety seven years of ministry there. For us and for the people of Pennington it was a moment of sadness as we farewelled each other. Carmelites had been in South Australia for a total of one hundred and eighteen years. Only one Carmelite is now there: Father Joseph Phillips, who is quietly continuing his ministry in Port Pirie.

Its not easy to leave behind people and places which have been important to us.

Just as we were leaving Adelaide, Father Francis Mathew

was leaving his family, friends and Carmelite brothers in India to come to Melbourne to continue his studies in Spirituality. Together with our Indonesian Carmelites Agung and Hilarius, Francis will study at the Melbourne College of Divinity over the next two years.

On the day that Francis arrived in Melbourne we received news that one of our Filipino Carmelites would probably arrive here in April to begin his studies.

Your generosity to the Vietnam, India, Indonesia, Philippines Fund last Christmas has helped us help them to be here. The appeal raised \$19,887.00 which was a magnificent beginning. Thank you.



## Good News

### Welcome home, Bruce



Father Bruce Clark has returned from two years of study overseas. In 1997 he undertook the *Carmelite Studies* program at

Washington Theological Union during which he lived with the Carmelite Friars at Whitefriars Hall, Washington DC.

After travelling to the Holy Land and Europe visiting Carmelite places, Bruce participated in the *Institute for Spiritual Leadership* program in Chicago from August 1997 to June 1998. This was followed by studies at the *Institute for Pastoral Studies* at Loyola University where he graduated with a Masters degree in Pastoral Studies.

Now living in the Port Melbourne community, Bruce will take up his Provincial appointments as Chair of the Carmelite Family Commission, Novice Master and Lay Carmelite National Chaplain.

### Congratulations, Paul



Father Paul Chandler, Provincial Librarian, lecturer and medieval history scholar, has been appointed Acting President of Yarra Theological Union in Melbourne following the resignation of Father Campion Murray.

### We're on the Web

The Australian Carmelite Prov-

ince has launched a Website to give the members of our Carmelite Family greater access to current news and information and to provide access to Carmelite Spirituality for everyone.

The website contains information about the history and spirituality of the Order, our various ministries, vocations and discernment, and links to the Order's international websites.

In the future we will be including information about the Lay Carmelites and the Society of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. We also hope to publish article from *Carmel Contact* on the site.

Our address is:

[www.carmelites.org.au](http://www.carmelites.org.au)

Visit us soon!

# Reflection

by Bernard Shah, O.Carm.

## Wednesday is for Ashes?

*“Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks  
come back to me with all your heart,  
fasting, weeping, mourning.”*

*Let your hearts be broken,  
not your garments torn,  
turn to the Lord your God again,  
for he is all tenderness and compassion,  
slow to anger, rich in graciousness,  
and ready to relent.*

*Who knows if he will not leave a blessing  
as he passes?*

Ash Wednesday has passed, and we're well into the season of Lent, but I think these words of the prophet Joel in the liturgy of that day sum up what Lent is all about. At first glance they mightn't dispel the gloom that many of us still see as Lent, but if we let them just be present in our hearts, then we may begin to see that there is much more to Lent than doom and gloom.

In fact, gloom and doom aren't it at all. Lent is an invitation to return to being friends with God: *Come back to me with all your heart.* Traditionally, it's called *repentance* or *conversion*; what it is, is coming home again.

So this Lent we are once more coming home again. The purple and the ashes are simply symbols. The ashes remind us of our humanity, that we are simply brushstrokes on the canvas of human existence.

As you walk through this Lent, remember that it is a homecoming, a renewing of your friendship with God.

You might like to spend some time in prayer with God-Friend, and these suggestions might help:

- ◆ Find a quiet place and time when you've least chance of interruption.
- ◆ relax in a comfortable chair (recliners are perhaps too comfortable!), and simply tell God you're there, waiting on him.
- ◆ listen in silence for a while, maybe five minutes. Some find this awkward – we live in a noisy world – so for a start just the five minutes.
- ◆ talk to God for a while. Thank him for loving you and for showing that love in Jesus, God's way of being human. Tell him about your life, ask and accept God's forgiveness if that is necessary. Tell him about the good things.
- ◆ reflect on God as Friend. Does that sit easily with you – or not? Spend a while on this.

These suggestions are just that. Be with God in your own way.

## Carmel Around the World

### Anniversary of the Rule

Last year the Carmelite Family celebrated the 750th anniversary of the definitive approval of our Rule. On 16 December our Prior General, Fr Joseph Chalmers, presented a copy of the Carmelite Rule to the Pope and the following morning all members of the General Council concelebrated Mass with his holiness in the Pope's private chapel.

The Carmelite Rule has inspired millions of people throughout the centuries to follow Christ. May it continue to attract many more people and may all of us seek to live ever more deeply the fundamental Carmelite values which are enshrined there.

### Edith Stein

A joint letter from our Prior General and the Discalced Carmelites Prior General, Fr Camilo Maccise, has been published to mark the canonization of Blessed Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein). Entitled *Losing to Win*, the publication is available from the Carmelite Centre at a cost of \$5 posted within Australia.

*Around our communities and integral to our ministry are wonderful women and men upon whom we depend. We are very grateful for their ministry with us. The Good News they are to us, we share with you.*

## Personal Profile: Mary Dalmau

I am Mary Dalmau. Six years ago, my husband, Rick and I and our four children, Naomi, Matthew, Thomas and Meg moved to Australia. Prior to our move from the United States, we lived in Evanston, Illinois just north of Chicago where Rick and I met at Mundelein College and Catholic Theological Union where we studied theology, anthropology and pastoral ministry. We both worked in pastoral care at inner city hospitals in Chicago. Our pastoral training also included some inner city community work in Philadelphia.

After graduation I worked in the Chicago Archdiocesan Office for Divine Worship, and for Liturgy Training Publications in the areas of liturgy, music and formation of parish ministries. I have been involved in parish formation work for over twenty years.

I have a great affection for Carmelite spirituality. In Littleton, Colorado, I grew up walking most mornings to the Carmelite Monastery about a mile from my home for Mass.

In later years I worked among the Mexican American Indians through the missionary outreach

of the Benedictine Monastery in New Mexico. Working among the poor elderly and children and returning to the contemplative prayer of the monastery began what would remain a pattern and rhythm of my soul: the active work and contemplative prayer. Later, our children grew up with the sound of chant and the rhythm of silence and prayer at Gethsemani Abbey, where we would often visit Matthew Kelty, a Trappist monk and our good friend.

Four years ago we found Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Brisbane. Three years ago, Fr David offered me a part time position as the pastoral associate. Being attentive to the voice of God in both our leaving and arriving 'home' has given us shelter and blessing, and is certainly a Carmelite practice!

In my work with the baptismal, sacramental, RCIA and state school ministries, I feel privileged to dialogue with people about their faith, their relationship and encounter with God and their life experience. True to the Carmelite mission, my greatest call is to welcome and care for people as they are, with their spiritual memory



and inheritance. I love to listen deeply to people as they explore who they are and what they need, bring, and leave to this evolving, changing, and living faith community.

The gift I receive from parish work is shared hope and anticipation, strength for what I don't yet know or see. Like crossing cultures, life is precarious and precious. It is wonderful to travel together.

God's heart is our home. Life calls us to holiness wrapped in the ordinary moments. I cherish and deeply love the sacramental life of the church, its rich symbols of birth, friendship, communion, healing and strengthening for the joys and wounds of living. I appreciate the great honour it is to be sisters and brothers in the family of God. What a gift it is for our hearts to be given to each other so that we may touch and reflect the God who upholds our lives.

### CARMELITES....



**Brothers who:**

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

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### CARMEL CONTACT

*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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