

Carmel Contact



from the Australian Carmelites

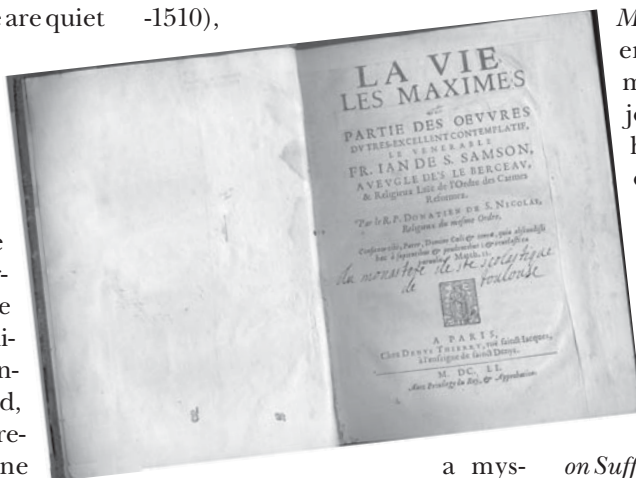
A unique collection

I don't suppose that anyone ever thought that working in a library would be a good job for a thrill-seeker. Building an important collection of books—which is what the Carmelites are trying to do in the area of spirituality—takes patient work and a willingness to plan for the long term. Still, amidst all the routine work there are quiet pleasures to be had and even the occasional small thrill.

My favourite part of running the Carmelite Library is opening the parcels of books that arrive from around the world: modern and traditional, cheap and expensive, bought and donated, in pristine condition or pre-loved and dog-eared. One day recently a batch of parcels expressed in miniature some of the directions we are following in trying to build a treasure house of the Christian spiritual tradition.

Some boxes of pre-loved books were generously donated by the Presentation Sisters. Among the many titles I was intrigued by *The Paths of Prayer* (1958, first published in 1778) by the Jesuit Pierre de Clorivière. I had never heard of him, but discovered that his spir-

itual works, some of them written in the prison where he was confined after the French Revolution, are considered among the most profound of the Ignatian tradition of his time. Another donation brought us the excellent 1960 edition of the complete works of Saint Catherine of Genoa (1477-1510),



a mystic and visionary who was also famous for her care of the sick and is patroness of hospitals.

Of course, there are also many new books coming in as well, and on this day we received a packet which happened to be full of inspiring lives. There was *Beyond the Darkness*, Shirley du Boulay's biography of Bede Griffiths, the English Benedictine who spent most of his long life in India seeking a way to marry the spiritual tradi-

tions of East and West to the enrichment of both. Père Jacques, *Resplendent in Victory* told the story of Fr Jacques Bunel, a French Discalced Carmelite, who paid with his life for hiding Jewish children from the Gestapo; he was also the hero of a recent film, *Au Revoir les Enfants*. *The Other Side of the Mountain* brought us the seventh and last volume of Thomas Merton's newly-edited journals. Thirty years after his death, Merton is still one of the most popular of spiritual writers, and we have perhaps the largest Merton collection in Australia. Not exactly an inspiring life, but inspiring for life, the same parcel brought Shella Cassidy's *Light from the Dark Valley: Reflections on Suffering and the Care of the Dying*, and *Praying our Goodbyes*, Joyce Rupp's lovely book on the experience of grief.

The same day brought Megan Holmes' sumptuously illustrated *Fra Filippo Lippi: The Carmelite Painter*. Lippi's life was not really very inspiring at all (he ran away from the monastery to marry a nun), but his tender and radiant paintings of Mary, of saints and angels, still speak to us of the divine beauty.

These days the Internet is a great tool for hunting out all manner of things, and this was the source for a wonderful acquisition from France, a rarity more expensive than our usual purchases, but too marvellous to pass up. This was the biography of the Carmelite mystic, John of Saint-Samson, published in Paris in 1651. John, blind from the age of three and orphaned at ten, was a talented musician, and it was through music that he struck up a friendship with Fr Matthew Pinault at the Carmelite church in Paris. Before long the whole community had recognised his holiness and gift for contemplation, and he was accepted as a novice. Within a short time he had become the spiritual director of a whole generation of Carmelites, an author of many mystical works (which he dictated to secretaries), and a much sought-after counsellor. He has been called the French John of the Cross, and is one of the

greatest mystics the Order ever produced. After his death in 1636, his friend and confrere, Donatien of Saint Nicholas, set about collecting John's voluminous works, which he eventually published in two large volumes, extremely rare today, in 1659. Before that he had published John's biography and a selection of the works in 1651: *The life, maxims, and some of the works of the exalted contemplative, the venerable Brother John of Saint Samson*. This is the work we are so lucky to have.

Step by step, we are building a real treasure house of the Christian spiritual tradition, one that has its eyes set on the future but does not forget the hard-won wisdom of the past. Can you help us to carry on this project?



Fr Paul Chandler, O.Carm.

Good News

Father Jim DeLaurier of the North American Province of St Elias moved to Australia on 28 October to be closer to his family who live in Sydney.

Father Jim has been involved in formation, in parish work and in mission work in Zimbabwe at the same time as Australian Carmelite Father Bob Dowd.

Father Jim was provincial of St Elias Province for six years and, most recently, has been director of development for the Province. We are very fortunate to have him live and work in the Australian Province.

After some weeks assisting Father Jerome Watt in Hilton parish, Father Jim has commenced a live-in renewal course at Castle Hill in Sydney until August.

He will spend weekends with the community at Wentworthville.

CARMELITES

Brothers who:

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



For further information about the Carmelites, write to:

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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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Carmel Around the World

Passing Through the Holy Door is the title of a letter published on 14 November 1999 by OCD and O.Carm., Superiors General, Fr Camilo Maccise and Fr Joseph Chalmers, to mark the Third Millennium and addressed to all Carmelite brothers and sisters.

In the introduction of their message, the two Superiors General affirm: "God has pitched his tent in our midst" (John 1:14). He dwells among us and dialogues with us; he frees us from every servitude and teaches us the path of solidarity and service.

We, the members of the great family of Carmel (men and women religious and laity), must use this event as a moment of grace, an occasion of renewal in creative fidelity.

The letter is developed around

three main themes: 1. Keep our true founders before us, 2. Crossing the threshold of the new millennium with a renewed identity, 3. Practical guidelines for crossing the threshold of the new millennium.

The letter then concludes with an exhortation to cross the threshold of the new millennium "under the protection of Mary... in company of the great prophet Elias and of our saints... through the light of Christ... We go through all the closed doors which separate, blocking communication, dividing and denying fraternity and communion. We go through the door of this new millennium with living faith and active hope to serve the Lord of the Centuries with a pure heart and unalloyed generosity."

Journey into Light

by Bernard Shah, O.Carm.

Reflection

Advent and Christmas, ordinary time, Lent and Easter – they are the one journey, the journey Jesus made to remind us that God is our friend, always.

This part of the journey begins with Ash Wednesday, moves through the five Sundays of Lent to the Great Three Days: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter.

There are ten prayer-reflections, following the journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter. Set aside ten minutes each day, at a time and in a place where you won't be interrupted. Prayerfully read the scripture passage given in brackets. Spend some time thinking about it. Use the reflection to help your own reflection and prayer.

Go gently through this part of Jesus' journey and yours. See beyond the sadness and the struggle to the generosity, love, deep friendship and hope that are his gift to us in this season. Remember always that, despite the sadness and suffering that are in our journey, it is a journey of hope.

Come Back To Me (Ash Wednesday)

[Joel 2:12-18]

'Come back to me'

Yours is an absurd generosity!

But you mean it.

Help me let go fear,

hesitation, doubt –

to be generous in my returning.

The Rainbow Contract (1st Sunday of Lent)

[Genesis 9:8-15]

Freedom for us –

that's what you want,

that's your Covenant

marked by the rainbow

brightness.

May I see it in friendship, light

on the water, a smile...

In The Presence (2nd Sunday of Lent)

[Psalm 115:10,15-19]

The faith of the psalmist –

my faith too? Perhaps.

Do I really know and feel

that in the dark and despair

you are with in for me?

You see it through with me.

The Holy Fool (3rd Sunday of Lent)

[1 Corinthians 1:22-25]

It must be rational or

enjoyable,

and certainly of this life and world:

for it is all we've got.

Yet you are God-one-of-us,

with us in foolishness and weakness,

God here and now and beyond.

Life in the Desert (4th Sunday of Lent)

[John 3:14-21]

Ours is a culture of death,

of impermanence and waste.

Moses' serpent then, Jesus now –

Ours to choose: life in the desert

or death –

reality or mirage.

You are where life is.

Renewing the Contract (5th Sunday of Lent)

[Jeremiah 31:31-34]

More absurd generosity:

'I will write my law on your hearts.

I will be your God

and you shall be my people.'

A promise and reality never revoked,

a love and forgiveness always here.

Beyond the Limit (Passion Sunday)

[Philippians 2:6-11]

Is that what being God is –

absurd generosity, generous absurdity?

God completely human, nothing reserved,

throwing your lot in with us, loving and living?

Really knowing what it is to be human?

My brother.

Something in Common (Holy Thursday)

[John 13:1-15]

Peter was great on the

concrete,

not so good on the symbolic,

but he got the message;

'I love you, and I show my love

in true and real service.

Be like me.'

Personal Profile

Lorraine Jelley

I have been working one day a week during the school year at the Carmelite Library in Donvale at Whitefriars Park since June, 1991. I was employed by Fr Paul Chandler shortly after I finished a Diploma in Library Studies at Box Hill TAFE. Since then I have completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Librarianship by correspondence through Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga. Apart from my small library position with the Carmelites, I also work at Box Hill three days a week as a Librarian at St. Paschal Library at Yarra Theological Union where Fr Paul Chandler is President.

My two positions are very interesting and quite specialised in theology. Over the years I have become friendly with some lovely theologians and lay people connected with the Carmelites and Franciscans. Since Whitefriars Park Conference Centre has closed the place is very quiet and I miss the wonderful priests I became friendly with. However, I

am lucky to work in such beautiful surroundings.

This year my husband Peter and I will be celebrating our 30th wedding anniversary. We met at a church dance at the North Blackburn Methodist church run by the Youth Group which I belonged to at the time. I now attend St Margaret's Anglican Church in Eltham. We have been living in Eltham for 24 years and have two children, a son, Martin aged 22 and a daughter, Ruth who will be 21 in February. My husband has just retired after 31 years as an air traffic controller, and added to his stressful occupation he has managed to cope with two children completing VCE at the same time as I was completing tertiary education. We have found that parents of VCE students do survive!

Apart from raising children, studying part time and working four days a week, I have travelled overseas and hope to do more travel now that my husband has

retired. In June, 1998, we went to London for a week, then toured around parts of England for a few days before visiting Ireland. We travelled around Ireland for 10 days, returned to England by ferry and visited friends in Somerset for a few days before our return to Australia. I had not been to England since 1973 and noticed a lot of changes especially the city of London. One of the highlights in England was seeing the famous Gutenberg bible on display at the British Museum. Another highlight was seeing the Book of Kells exhibited at Trinity College Dublin. We hope to get back to England and Ireland later this year and hopefully this time visit Aylesford.

If I find my job with the Carmelites very enriching and challenging and hope the future of the library remains positive.

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.

Reflection

Death in the Desert (Good Friday)

[John 18:1 – 19:42]
Betrayal by a friend,
politics and pettiness,
cruelty and cynicism,
desert, and in the desert
death,
and love.

Making it New Again (Easter Sunday)

[John 20:1-9]
The tomb was empty,
yet none thought his body stolen.
They believed –
they saw it clearly.
The tomb was empty.
You fill my emptiness,
you are my life
where there was death.

