

Carmel Contact



from the Australian Carmelites

'I go to him with confidence and love...'

A family is about connections between people, and so in a way is a library like ours. The Carmelite Library, with its unique focus on spirituality, aims to document the links that connect us spiritually to the story of the great Christian family of which we are a part. It links us especially to the inner story of that family, to the long history of its members' life with God. It allows us to connect with their experience and their hard-won wisdom.

Each year at this time I write to the members of the Carmelite Family to let you know what is happening in the library and to invite you to help if you can in keeping it growing. This year will be a momentous one for the Carmelite Library. We have the best collection in spirituality and Mariology in Australia, and one of the best Carmelite collections in the world, but the library has long been overcrowded and is rather remote. Our collection has been called a "national treasure", and we want it to be of maximum use to people who want to connect with the great spiritual tradition of the Church. So after sixty-five years at Donvale, we plan to move this year to more spacious and accessible premises in Middle Park. It is an expensive undertaking, but we believe it will be well worth it. We hope the li-

brary will find a new vitality as a centre for research and reflection, study and conversation about our spiritual heritage and our spiritual future. We will not only have proper shelving for our books, but for the first time will have space for lectures, reading groups, and other meetings, which we hope will enable us to connect in new ways with people seeking a spiritual life.

In the next few weeks the relics of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux will be in Australia, and we are expecting a bit of extra attention towards the Carmelite tradition of spirituality which Thérèse represents so profoundly. Thérèse's message is one of total trust in God's love for us. The last sentence she wrote, unfinished when she ran out of strength, says: "I go to him with confidence and love..." We have a marvellous collection on Thérèse, and now that Pope John Paul has proclaimed her a Doctor of the Church we expect interest in her to continue to grow.

Thérèse was herself conscious that her life had been enriched by spiritual connections to many different people. It's a sign of the depth of our library that so many of these connections can be traced there: to St John of the Cross, her spiritual master; to Anne of Jesus, who founded the Discalced Carmel in France; to St Teresa of Avila, of course, the great reformer of Carmel; to Father Arminjon, whose book on eternal life affected her so much when she was fourteen; to Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre, the Carmelite who helped popularize the devotion to the Holy Face; and many others.

All of us
live in a
net-

PRESS RELEASE

Two ancient traditions came together on the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul on Friday 25 January 2002 when the Christian Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt became the new residents of Whitefriars Monastery Donvale. Whitefriars will soon be called St Athanasius Theological College Melbourne.

work
of such
connections.
A great library can
help us to learn how
large that network really is,
and how we are connected to
the long story of humankind's
search for God.

Reflection

God of the ordinary

Thérèse of Lisieux speaks of holiness as the need not so much to do the extra-ordinary, but rather to live the ordinary events of my life extra-ordinarily well!

The way to God and the place God chooses to reveal himself is in ordinariness. Not that God is ordinary but as we reflect on the gospel we notice Jesus doing ordinary things: sharing a meal, conversing, listening, spending time with friends, visiting people in their homes. My search for relationship with God is a search for quality living: making a difference to the way I relate with my sisters and brothers and to our common habitat, the world.

If I expect to find God 'somewhere' outside the ordinary events of my life then my experience will be of being alone and empty as if God has abandoned me. I may begin to experience a type of anger and hear myself saying, 'After all my trying to find God I am left without him'.

God's choice is to be *part* of not *apart* from the events of my life. Perhaps I need to reflect on my trust of God. Do I really believe that God cares about my life as much as I do; cares enough to be involved in it? It is more difficult to allow God to be God in my life as *he* chooses than to search for him in ways with which I am more comfortable.

Let us go into the here and now and begin to experience how rich and full living can be, instead of chaotically looking beyond and outside. God is closer to you than you can imagine if you begin to let yourself be found by him in the very ordinariness of loving and living.

Spending time in quiet

- 🕯 Find a quiet place and time in your day
- 🕯 Begin with ten minutes sitting in a relaxed, but not too relaxed (in case you fall asleep!). The length of time is not important – allow God to increase your desire for more time.
- 🕯 Be consistent in your prayer – therefore, remember each day that praying is about being in relationship with an intimate friend who desires time with you.
- 🕯 Listen to the sounds around you – do not focus on any one sound, each time listening more deeply to birdsong, wind.
- 🕯 Read and reflect on the words of the prophet Jeremiah (29:11-13)
I know the plans I have in mind for you... plans for peace, not disaster, reserving a future full of hope for you. Then when you call to me, and come to plead with me, I will listen to you. When you seek me you shall find me, when you seek with all your heart; I will let you find me... I will bring you back to the place from which I exiled you.
- 🕯 Choose a moment/event in your day to thank God for.
- 🕯 Ask who God wants to be for you and what relationship with him could be.
- 🕯 Conclude by praising him for his presence. Like Jesus in his prayer to the Father, anticipate in praise what you hope for in your heart.

Wayne Stanhope, O.Carm.

The Carmelite Province of Great Britain has published a work by Carlos Mesters, O.Carm. on their website. It is **MEDITATING DAY AND NIGHT, Keeping Vigil in Prayer**. The address is www.carmelite.org/mesters/
Carlos is one the leading scripture scholars in the Order and is known for his work alongside the Basic Christian Communities in Brazil.

Members of the New General Council

The Carmelite General Chapter in Sassone, Italy in September last year elected a new General Council.

Fr. JOSEPH CHALMERS, Prior General



Born in Glasgow, Scotland, on 5 April 1952, and a graduate in law, Fr. Joseph Chalmers entered the

Carmelite Order in 1975. He completed his philosophical and theological studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome) with a licence in spirituality which won the *Papal Gold Medal*. In 1981, a year before finishing his studies, he was ordained priest in Glasgow by the Cardinal, Archbishop Thomas Winning. Before his election for the first time as Prior General of the Order in 1995, Fr. Joseph was Prior Provincial of the British Province of the Assumption.

Fr. CARLO CICONETTI, Vice Prior General



Born in Pianella (Pescara), Italy, on 6 February 1934, Fr. Carlo Ciconetti made his simple vows on 13

October 1951 and his solemn profession on 25 April 1955. He was ordained to the priesthood on 6 July 1958. He graduated in *Utroque Jure* from the Pontifical University of the Lateran with the doctoral thesis on *The Rule of Carmel*, Rome 1973. He qualified as Advocate of the Rota in 1973. In 1991 he obtained his Licentiate degree in Spiritual Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University. His thesis was

on the symbolism in the Rule of Carmel. He held many offices during his religious life: Provincial of the Roman Province (1973-1979), Procurator General (1979-1983), General Councillor (1983-1989), Master of Professed Students of the Italian Province (1991-1997) and when he was elected to the office of Vice Prior General he held the office of Provincial of the Italian Province (from 1997).

Fr. CARLOS MESTERS, General Councillor for Latin America



Father Carlos was born in the Netherlands on 20 October 1931. In 1949, while he was still a student in the

Carmelite minor seminary, he and seven other companions went to Brazil in order to become missionaries. He entered the Carmelite Order in 1952, studied philosophy in São Paulo, Brazil and pursued his theological studies from 1954 to 1963 in Rome at St. Albert's International College and at the University of St. Thomas (Angelicum). He also did biblical studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute and at the *École Biblique* in Jerusalem. On his return to Brazil in 1963, he was appointed professor of Scripture at the seminary until 1973. From 1973 to 2001 he worked among the Basic Ecclesial Communities, helping the people of God to read and understand the Word of God. Fr. Carlos is one of the founders of the *Centro Ecumenico de Estudos Bíblicos* whose director he was from 1977 to 1989. Since 1987 he has been a member of the team that started the project *Tua Palavra é Vida* of the Confer-

ence of Religious in Brazil. This project assists in the biblical formation of religious. Since 1987 he also takes part in INTERCAB, inter-Carmelite meetings in Brazil.

Fr. ANTHONY SCERRI, General Councillor for Asia, Australia and Africa



Father Anthony was born in Mini (Egypt) on 1 January 1931. In 1951, after going to Australia, he

entered the Carmelite Order and was ordained priest in 1958. He graduated at the University of Melbourne. His early pastoral life was dedicated to the Maltese migrants in Sydney and to education. During the 70's he went to Indonesia where he lived and worked in North Sumatra. In the meantime he completed several studies in France, the United States of America and England. Before he assumed the office of General Councillor for the first time in 1995 he was the Vice

CARMELITES

Brothers who:

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



Contact:

Fr Wayne Stanhope, O. Carm.
Carmelite Provincial Office
23 Whitefriars Way
Donvale Vic 3111
Tel: (03) 9872 3871
Fax: (03) 9872 4792
Email: ocarmprov@ie.net.au

Rector of a Catholic University in Medan, Indonesia.

Fr. RAFAEL LEIVA SÁNCHEZ,
General Councillor for the
Mediterranean Area



Born in Alcalá de los Gazules (Cádiz), Spain, on 30 November 1942. He entered the Order in 1954 and

in 1960 took his simple vows. In 1968 he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Telesforo Cioli, O.Carm., in St. Albert's International College, Rome. He studied philosophy in Osuna (Spain) and obtained his doctorate in dogmatic theology at the Gregorian University in Rome. Before he was elected General Councillor, he was Prior Provincial of the Betica Province (Spain).

Fr. WILLIAM J. HARRY,
General Councillor for Nth
America and North-Central
Europe



Born in Louisville, Kentucky (USA) on 31 August 1954, entered the Carmelite Order in 1976 at

Niagara Falls, Ontario (Canada), after completing undergraduate studies in history, education and philosophy at Marquette University. He received a baccalaureate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University

(Rome) and a Licentiate in Sacred Theology with a specialization in Spirituality. In 1996 he received a Doctorate in Ministry with a specialization in communication. After ordination in 1983, Fr. William was a teacher, campus minister at Salpointe Catholic High School in Tucson, AZ (USA) and the principal and then president of Carmel High School in Mundelein, IL (USA) for 10 years. Before being elected to the General Council, he was the Western Commissary Provincial for PCM Province of North America.

Fr. JOSEF JANCÁR,
Procurator General



Born in Tesov, archdiocese of Olomouc (Moravia), Czech Republic, on 22 May 1951 Fr Josef entered the Carmelite Order in secret during the Communist regime while he was pursuing his studies at the interdiocesan seminary in Litomerice. He did his Masters in theology at the Charles University, Prague. He was ordained to the priesthood on 25 June 1977 in Olomouc. Because at that time religious Orders were suppressed and functioned in secret only, Fr. Josef ministered officially as a diocesan priest in various parishes in the archdiocese of Olomouc. When the Communist regime fell (1989) and religious life experienced a renewal, Fr. Josef was appointed General Delegate of the Delegation of Bohemia and Moravia. He held this office for six years and in 1997

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went to Rome to specialise in Canon Law at the Pontifical University of the Lateran where in 1999 he obtained his Licentiate degree and a diploma in *Turisprudencia et Praxis I. V. C. S. V. A.* from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life as well as in *Praxis Administrativa Canonica* from the Congregation for the Clergy. He is now preparing his doctoral thesis on the theme "Parishes entrusted to Religious". Before his recent election as Procurator General, Fr. Josef completed the six-year period in the same office of Fr. Lucio Renna who, in 1999, was consecrated bishop of Avezzano.

Fr. JAMES DES LAURIERS,
Bursar General



Born in Detroit, Michigan and raised in Los Angeles, California (USA) where he attended

St. Raphael's Carmelite Parish and Mount Carmel High School. A member of the North American Province of St. Elias, he was professed in 1954 and ordained in 1960. He is a graduate of St. Bonaventure University and Iona College in New York and Whitefriars Hall, Washington, DC. His ministry began in Zimbabwe, Africa. He later served in the St. Elias Province as Formation Director, Prior Provincial, Director of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Director of Development. For the past two years he has ministered in the Australian Province.

The Society of Our Lady of Mount Carmel supports the life and work of the Carmelites in Australia. Donations to the Society help educate young Carmelites, support the Carmelites in East Timor, properly care for aged and sick Carmelites. Our address is: 214 Richardson Street, Middle Park, Vic, 3206. Telephone: (03) 9690 8822 Fax: (03) 9696 0207 e-mail: carmcnet@carmelnet.org