

# Carmel Contact



*from the Australian Carmelites*

Lord,  
rest your healing hand  
upon the sick,  
may your life-giving  
power flow into every  
cell of our bodies and  
into the depths of our  
souls restoring us to  
wholeness and strength.

Come into the  
brokenness of this world  
with your healing love,  
give us a vision of the  
world as your love would  
make it and the  
inspiration and courage  
to share in the task of  
building it.

In your love grant us the  
victory  
of hope over anguish  
of fellowship over  
solitude  
of peace over anxiety  
of joy and beauty over  
boredom and disquiet  
of eternal visions over  
earthly ones  
of life over death  
through Jesus Christ  
our Lord.

Our Lady, help of  
Christians, pray for us.

## Healing takes time

Andrew would always turn up unexpectedly in the parish church. There was no pattern to his visits except that it was always late afternoon when he came and he would spend a long time in prayer.

His was a gaunt figure and there was a haunted look about him. I often wondered where he came from and what he did but his body language indicated very clearly that he was not interested in conversation.

One evening a priest arrived. He introduced himself as Paul. He had the same surname as Andrew. A missionary, he had come from an overseas country a long way away.

He told me the only reason he was in Australia was to find a brother from whom he and his family had long been separated.

Almost from the moment he started to speak I thought to myself, He's looking for Andrew, and so he was.

He told us that Andrew had once been a seminarian but he had been sent away. He had married but the marriage lasted only a short time.

Andrew had become more and more morose, convinced that the

family was ashamed of him. One day he had disappeared. Somehow Paul had now traced him.

I told Paul the little I knew of Andrew. Perhaps he would come tomorrow afternoon, perhaps it would be a week. Paul did not seem to mind.

On the third day Andrew came. We watched him through the window. "He's so changed," Paul murmured.

"Are you ready to meet him?"

"Yes, yes. Our Lady will help us," he replied, very simply. I realised I was more agitated than he was.

Less than half an hour later he came back from the church. He sat quietly.

"How did you get on?" I was really asking him if there had been the reconciliation he had come so far to achieve and longed for so much.

"I knelt down beside him," he began. "I told him a little about each of the family, and about our mother's death three years ago. He just kept looking ahead but he didn't speak."

I stared at Paul, amazed at his calmness.

"I put a photo of our family on the seat in front of him and then I left him. I'll be able to tell the family I've seen him and he is all right."

"You mean he didn't acknowledge you?" I asked incredulously.

"It's all right." He said. "I'm glad I came. You have to leave these things to God."

Next day Paul left us. Andrew never came back to our church. And I never saw either of them again.

Was there reconciliation? Was there healing? Is Andrew now as peaceful as Paul? I'll never know.

Healing can be slow. Sometimes you have to leave these things to God.

*Frank Shortis, OCarm.  
Prior Provincial*

## From the Director

In 1844 the Australian Bishops chose Our Lady, Help of Christians, as patroness of our country.

This beautiful title suggests that Mary is there whenever we need her and whatever our need. She embodies God's promise of companionship.

The image of Mary which appeals to me most in the Scriptures is of Mary sitting in the midst of the disciples waiting for Pentecost.

She is there, one of them, sharing the moment - a quiet, calm presence. That's how I think of Mary. Still here with us, sharing our moments of waiting, prayer, anxiety and hope.

We often face moments when we feel helpless, powerless to help.

Despite our wonderful science, our medicine is still not strong enough to save our dying friend. Despite the sincere desire of so many people, peace and justice seem to elude us still.

Sometimes, all we can do is to pray for healing and peace, do what we can, and leave the rest in God's hands.

It can be hard to do that. It takes much trust especially when our prayers don't seem to be heard. In those moments we have to admit the limit of our knowledge and understanding.

*Fr David Hofman, OCarm.*

## Carmel around the world

### New Foundations in Africa

On 17 January this year the Carmelites from the Betica Province were officially welcomed to **Bukino Faso** by Bishop Anselme Sanon of Bobo Dioulasso.

The coming of the Carmelites was prepared for by the Donum Dei Missionary Workers.

Thanks to their efforts, there are already nine young men who

wish to enter the Order.

The Carmelites from the Pernambuco Province have been gradually rebuilding their mission in **Mozambique** following years of civil war.

Again, thanks to the

efforts of the Donum Dei Missionary Workers there is a number of young men from **Cameroon** interested in joining the Carmelites. Three of these are beginning their Carmelite formation in the Congo. Carmelites from the Congo are visiting other candidates in Cameroon.



**Frs Ubaldo Pani, Rafael Leiva (Provincial of Betica) Eugenio Kabore, Francisco Daza & Desire Kouakou**



**The restored Carmelite house in Mozambique**

### East Timor Update

All the Carmelite students from East Timor have now returned safely to Indonesia to continue their formation. Thank you to all who offered their help and support in looking after these young Carmelites. We will continue to assist them through the VIIP Fund thanks to your generosity.

# Good News

## Welcome Paskal

*Fr Paskal arrived in Melbourne in February to begin post-graduate studies in Christology.*



My full name is Hermenegildus Paskalis Mame. Many people call me Paskal. I come from Indonesia. I live in Malang but my home town is Bajawa – Flores. Flores is a small island, part of East Nusa Tenggara near Timor in eastern Indonesia. My father is a teacher and my mother is a farmer. We have four brothers (including me) and four sisters. One of my sisters is a Passionist sister. She lives in the Passionist Nuns' monastery in Rome, Italy.

I finished my elementary schooling in 1982 and junior high school in 1985 and seminary senior high school in 1989 in Flores. I entered the Carmelites in 1989 in Malang as a novice. In 1992 I professed my first vows as a Carmelite and in 1996 I professed my solemn vows as a Carmelite.

I joined the Carmelites without knowing very much about who they were or where they originated or what they did. However, I was trusting in God and open to learn and grow.



## Welcome Paul

*On Saturday 26 February this year Paul Sireh was received into the Carmelite Novitiate at Port Melbourne to begin his formal Carmelite formation.*

I was born on the 12th July, in Derimbat village, on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. Manus Island is in the New Guinea Island region known to many as Admiralty Island before the country had its independence in 1975.

There are eight boys and one girl in my family. My dad passed away in 1986 and we survived only with mum. I am the eighth in the family.

Many people said that the Carmelites are the best and now I know that is true. I feel very happy because I have had many beautiful experiences as a Carmelite. Prayer, brotherhood and concern for others give me happiness. I cannot tell you of these experiences, one by one, because that is my own experience and I have difficulties to explain them. On the other hand, I want to say that my experience with God has been felt deeply and I had many such experiences as a Carmelite.

On 3 September 1997 I was ordained a priest. From 1997 to 1999 I was an assistant parish priest in Good Shepherd Parish Batu, near Malang on the island of Java. Then my provincial asked me to continue my studies in Australia.

I started my elementary schooling in 1975. From 1981–1984 I went to Manus Provincial High School for my secondary years. In 1988 I continued my schooling at St Peter Chanel minor seminary in Rabaul, East New Britain Province. From 1991–1996 I went to Holy Spirit Regional Seminary in Port Moresby, for philosophy and theology. From 1997–99 I helped with teaching at Port Moresby Grammar and the Catholic Youth Development Centre.

During those years of training and studying I had a desire first for the priesthood in a diocese. Then I felt a special call into an Order. The Carmelite nuns in Port Moresby strongly urged me to take this special step to join in the Carmelite friars in Australia.

During my time of discernment, I felt a strong and deep desire to search for the face of God and to live in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and to serve Him faithfully within the community I lived in, for the service of the people.

## 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.

Society of Our Lady of Mt Carmel  
214 Richardson Street  
Middle Park Vic 3206

by Bernard Shah, OCarm

Our Lady Help of Christians – a title familiar to us in Australia and New Zealand, patroness of both countries. Patroness, too, of the Australian Carmelites. Woman of love, compassion, loyalty, listening. A woman in the crowd, yet an extraordinary woman.

Mary was mother of Jesus, she bore and reared him. Something of Mary is in Jesus – something of her compassion, listening, love.

That love and compassion came into play when he met another woman in the crowd. You'll find the story in Mark's gospel (5:25-34), in Matthew and Luke too. You could use it for a week – there are seven reflections – or sometimes, if you have a longer time available, you could reflect on the whole story. Be there with Jesus and the woman in the crowd in that quiet time and space that is his and yours.



### **a woman in the crowd**

Twelve years have I had the bleeding, twelve long years. And now the rabbi was here, the one they all talked about, the one who loved the poor and ignored, who challenged the scribes and Pharisees. But there was such a crowd around him, how could I get through...

*Jesus, I feel hemmed in, lonely, scared. Help me break through, break out.*

### **if I could touch even the hem of his cloak**

I pushed through the crowd, heedless of the mutterings of the people, and came to where he was. He was turned away from me, listening intently to one of the fishermen who were his friends. I bent down painfully and touched the hem of his cloak...and light flooded within me, pain faltered...and left.

*Jesus, trust – of you, me, anyone – is so hard. Teach me.*

### **who touched me?**

He straightened and looked around. I heard him say 'Who touched me?', and his friends telling him it was the pressure of the crowd. I was still, wrapped in hesitant wonder. Even like that I felt the light and the going of the pain.

*Jesus, I want to be aware of your healing touch.*

### **power has gone out of me**

I looked at him. He spoke with certainty. And this power, I had felt it...the light, the pain lessening, drifting away, gone for ever. I knew

now that he was someone different, yet he seemed so much a man of the country, rabbi though he was, and more than he seemed...

*Jesus, let me see how many ways and places and people are your healing.*

### **your faith has restored you to health**

He looked at me and spoke. He talked of faith, and this confused me. I didn't think I had faith. I was desperate, that's why I just pushed through the crowd and made my fingers brush the hem of his cloak. His eyes said it really was faith.

*Jesus, walk with me from fragile hope to trusting faith.*

### **be in peace**

I don't know if he said anything – friends say he did – but I felt peace and total trust. I felt that I would again be needy, for life is like that, but that he would always be there – listening, touching, healing.

*Jesus, remind me you once said you are with us always.*

### **be free**

The crowd moved on, he with them. Again I heard – felt? – his words and began to feel their truth. I was free from twelve years pain, bleeding, embarrassment. I was becoming strong, aware – no more shrinking from people. I was free to trust, to help, to love.

*Jesus, help me to be what you want me to be, to love, to trust.*