

# Carmel Contact



from the Australian Carmelites  
[www.carmelites.org.au](http://www.carmelites.org.au)

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 companionship over  
loneliness  
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.

## Living on death row

The saints and blessed of the Church serve as models for Catholics in all walks of life and, as a Catholic prisoner on Texas' Death Row, I find myself in need of a role-model at almost every moment of every day. Having come to the Church less than three years ago, this walking of the straight and narrow is a new experience for me and old habits die hard.

I find myself constantly faced with the hatred and cruelty of my jailers – at best, with their simple contempt and indifference to my physical and spiritual needs – and meek acceptance of the situation does not come easily. Fortunately, there is a man whose example speaks directly to people in my situation: Blessed Titus Brandsma (The Dutch Carmelite martyred in Dachau concentration camp during World War II).

Titus had no crime of wrongdoing on his conscience, but he didn't rant and rave about the injustice of his imprisonment. He

was fully aware of the evil he was defying, he knew he would eventually be arrested, and he calmly and cheerfully accepted the consequences of his words and actions.

Titus' first lesson to me was that all words and actions have conse-

quences and, depending on the times and circumstances, anyone anywhere can end up with a prison number on his or her chest. And once the gate has slammed shut behind you, it really doesn't matter whether you are guilty or innocent, a political prisoner or a criminal. The reality of prison life is the same for everyone regardless of who or what you are. How

that reality affects you is the important thing – you can wallow in outrage, or in shame and guilt, or you can get over it by turning to God.

Titus brought the message and example of Christ to his fellow prisoners. He brought hope and



*About the Author  
Ted C. Cole, the author of  
this article, is studying to  
become a Lay Carmelite.  
He is an inmate on Texas's  
death row at the Charles  
Terrell Unit in Livingston,  
TX.*

comfort even though he was a prisoner himself, and he can still bring inspiration to prisoners today. Titus encouraged his fellow prisoners to pray for their Nazi captors, and he preached and lived forgiveness. I've been sentenced to die for my crime and, according to the laws of Texas, rightly so. But our guards seem to feel they have the right – perhaps even a duty – to help us “pay” for our crimes by making us as miserable as possible until the time comes when, like Titus, we will be given lethal injec-

tions. My first instinct is to lash out physically and verbally at these people who don't know me and don't know anything about me. But Titus says to me: “Accept it, forgive it, and let it go!” That can only be done through prayer and self-discipline, but if a man as virtuous and holy as Titus Brandsma says that this is the right thing to do, how can anyone as ignorant and guilty as I am possibly argue with him?

Titus' second lesson to me is that forgiving and letting go can

be very empowering. My peace of mind depends entirely on me and the way I react to those who are in positions of authority over me. The only power anyone can have over my mind and emotions is the power I give them, and following Titus' example puts power over me back into God's hands where it belongs. Titus knew this, and it was his intimate relationship with a Power much greater than the Nazis' that enabled him to live and die as he did.

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## Good News

25 February 2001 at St Joseph's Church, Port Melbourne.

Family, friends, parishioners and fellow-Carmelites came together to celebrate Paul's profession mass.

For the past year Paul has been learning, experiencing and reflecting on Carmelite life in the Novitiate at Port Melbourne. Now he will have three more years to continue discerning his vocation before deciding whether or not to make his vows for life. During this time, Paul will continue to study for ministry in the Church and live in the Carmelite Community at Middle Park.

During his homily, Father Frank Shortis (Provincial) spoke of discerning the signs of the times and of the contradictions that face us. Today, he said, we are professing one novice and he is from New Guinea. The Carmelites present who were nearest his age were not born in Australia, but in India, Indonesia and the Philippines. Many people believe that religious life has no future, Fr Frank said, “but this church is filled with people”.

“Who among us,” he said, “is going to discern these signs for us? Who will make sense of such a counter-cultural, baffling, nonsensical decision which leads a man to leave his family, his country, his opportunity for marriage and a career, his right to make decisions for himself, and come to a small religious community and say: I want to throw in my lot with you?”



Br Paul Sireh made his first profession of vows as a Carmelite on



“This ceremony you have come to is not only for Paul. It is for all of us. For Paul it is a moment of radical decision and radical action. For us it is a moment to pause, to wonder, to open ourselves to conversion and a deepened faith.”

## 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.



My full name is Fransiskus de Sales Borta Parlindungan Rumapea. My name is very long, isn't it? Please call me Frans. I am an Indonesian. I come from Samosir Island near Lake Toba in North Sumatra. Samosir Island is surrounded by Lake Toba

which makes Samosir an island. Staying in Port Melbourne, near the Bay, makes me remember my village where I was born.

My father is a retired government official and my mother is a trader, but we are also farmers. I am the third child of nine brothers. During my childhood until junior high school, I lived in my village. Its name is Palipi. I finished my elementary school in 1980 and junior high school in 1983. Then I went to senior high school and finished in 1986 in Pematang Siantar, a small city in North Sumatra. In 1988 I entered to Postulant "Stella Maris" in Batu-Malang. After that I entered the Carmelites in 1989 in Batu-Malang as a

## Welcome Frans

novice. Then in 1992 I professed my first vows and my solemn vows in 1996.

I first knew Carmelites from reading. And then I knew that Carmelites worked also in Sumatra. I am happy as a Carmelite. There are many beautiful experiences as a Carmelite. Prayer, brotherhood and concern for others make me happy as a Carmelite.

In February 1997 I was ordained a deacon and on 27 November 1997 I was ordained a priest. After that I became an assistant parish priest in Christ the King Parish Perdagangan, North Sumatra.

After that our provincial asked me to continue my study. I arrived in Australia on 31 January and live in Port Melbourne. I am studying English at the moment. Later I will study spirituality. I hope my study quick finishes and then I will return as soon as possible to Indonesia.

I am grateful to Carmelites to get an opportunity to study here. I'm much pleased with my surroundings. I believe that what we are what we become is determined by who loves us.

## Carmel Around the World

### Blessed George Preca

*Carmelite Tertiary and Founder of the Society of Christian Doctrine*

George Preca was born on 12 February 1880 in Valletta, the capital of Malta, near the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. As a child, and according to the custom of the times, George joined the Carmelite Family by being enrolled in the Scapular. As a young man he felt called to the priesthood and was ordained on 22 December 1906.

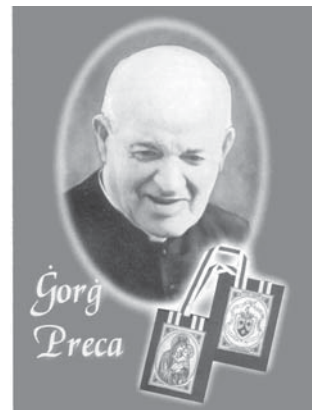
During the early months of 1907, the young Fr George began his mission by gathering around him a small group of young men in their twenties. He formed in them moral principles and a deep awareness of the infinite love that God bears humanity. These young men were the first seeds of the Society of Christian Doctrine. Fr George's vision for the Society was the religious education of children and youth, undertaken by well-prepared lay people.

Fr George was not satisfied with a minimal Christian life. As a way of deepening his following of Christ he joined the Third Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. He really felt he belonged to the Carmelite Family, so much so that several times in his writings he calls himself a Carmelite and uses the name he

took at his profession as a Tertiary rather than his own name. In 1952, in recognition of his untiring efforts to spread devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Fr

George was affiliated to the Order by the then Prior General, Fr Kilian Lynch. Fr George spent the last years of his life in Santa Venera, a Carmelite parish where he died at age 82 on 26 July 1962.

Fr George Preca is a modern day saint, not because of any extraordinary events recorded during his life, but because of the living monument that he left behind in the Society of Christian Doctrine which has today spread to Australia, Sudan, Kenya, Great Britain, Albania and Peru. He has been called a true Carmelite, not just because he was a member of the Third Order or because he wore the Scapular but because he lived a life of intimate union with God and served his brothers and sisters after the example of Mary.



# Marian Year

*I declare a MARIAN YEAR for the Order in 2001. In this way I want to focus the*

*attention of the Order on our relationship with Our Lady. I hope that all of us will use this opportunity to deepen our relationship with Mary and our understanding of what this relationship means for us individually and as an Order.*

Fr Joseph Chalmers OCarm, Prior General

## Marian Year Program

### June 21

Triduum at Coorparoo Part 3. Night Prayer and presentation by Dr Pat Mullins, *A Spirituality of Humour*.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, 312 Cavendish Road Coorparoo 7.30pm

### June/July

A series of talks on Contemporary Marian Spirituality  
Kilbride Centre, Beaconsfield Parade, Albert Park 8.00pm on:

Wednesday June 13	Sr Maryanne Confoy RSC
Wednesday June 20	Fr Richard Leonard SJ
Wednesday June 27	Fr Michael Brundell OCarm
Wednesday July 4	Clare Renkin

*(Talks presented at the retreat will be published by July 31, 2001)*

### July 8-16

Novena of Prayer in preparation for the Feast of Our Lady of Mt Carmel

### July 15

Mothers' Mass in celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel,  
Cnr Richardson and Wright Streets, Middle Park 10.30am

Solemn Mass of Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
Carmelite Monastery, 94 Stevenson Street, Kew 3pm

### July 16

Solemn Mass of Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
Carmelite Monastery, 151 Ballina Rd, Goonellabah NSW 10.00am

Solemn Mass of Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
Carmelite Monastery, 94 Stevenson Street, Kew 10.30am

### September 8

Carmelite Family Day of Reflection  
Whitefriars College, Park Road, Donvale 2pm  
(concluding with Eucharist at 6pm and BYO dinner)

### December 8

Reflection and Closing Eucharist for the Marian Year  
National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel,  
Cnr Richardson and Wright Streets, Middle Park 10am  
(concluding with Eucharist at 12pm and BYO lunch)

Titus also confirms for me the fact that I will find God where I am, and not necessarily where I expect Him to be. We on Death Row in Texas are no longer allowed to have religious services. The last Mass I had the privilege of attending – actually a very hurried and haphazard Communion Service – was more than a year ago. But Titus' life in prison is a poignant reminder that, regardless of how our actions may seem to prove otherwise, God is not confined to a church or a chapel or to any other physical place, nor is He confined to any rite or ritual, even one as sacred as the Holy Mass. Even as he lay dying at Dachau, Titus was himself a chapel where God was alive and well and still reaching out to others. Titus assures me that I can also be a chapel dedicated to God, and that one's duty to serve others and to influence others to do good does not stop simply because "home" is now a prison cell.

He also shows by his example that the solitude and loneliness of prison, far from being a burden or a frustration, can be an asset in one's spiritual life. Time alone with God is so very precious, and it seems to be something that very few people are able to take advantage of. Titus wrote, "I am here alone, but never was our Lord so close to me." I firmly believe that what was accomplished in one man can, with the grace of God, be accomplished in me. If being able to sit attentively at Jesus' feet is, as He said, the "better part" – then along with Titus, I have indeed been blessed!

So by following Titus' example I have a model of how to live with myself, how to live with others, and how to live with God. What more could anyone possibly need to know?