

# Carmel Contact



*from the Australian Carmelites*

It all began with LOVE.

God so loved the world He GAVE us his only Son.

He chose a WOMAN and asked her to WALK the path with him.

He asked this woman To become a MOTHER, To make real 'GOD WITH US'

Never before had a woman been ASKED.

In a quiet poverty She said 'YES' to the offer and they walked the path

TOGETHER

Her emptiness FILLED With LOVE incarnate.

## They always blame the parents!

"They always blame the parents!", the voice on the radio angrily announced. "No one ever praises us when our kids do something good, they just blame us when things go wrong."

I began to think how true this statement was: when a person does well we think of it as *their* achievement. But when things go wrong we start looking for people to blame. Often that blame ends up on parents.

I suppose that our modern psychology has made us more aware of how critical the early years of a person's life are. It seems that many attitudes and patterns of dealing with life's events are established when we are still very young.

Perhaps that's the reason we so easily blame parents for what goes wrong in a person's later life.

It's curious, though, that we do not feel the need to praise parents when their children do well. We feel a need only to blame.

While I was thinking about all this I remembered the words which the people spoke about Jesus when he taught at Nazareth: "They said: 'Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these miracles that are worked through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of

Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us?' And they would not accept him." (Mark 6:1-3)

For a long time I imagined that Jesus somehow knew from his earliest years who he was. I suppose I thought of him as like an adult living in a child's body.

Eventually I came to understand something of what the mystery of the incarnation meant for Jesus - that he had to become fully human, subject to all the natural laws of human development - physically, intellectually, psychologically, spiritually.

That means he, too, had to learn - learn about life, how to face the difficulties and sorrows, how to build relationships, how to understand the God within.

Who helped him develop the capacity to wonder about life, about who he was and what he was called to do? From where did he get the deep and abiding awareness of God's companionship and love? Who helped him develop the courage he would need to face rejection, suffering and death?

Surely Mary and Joseph must have been very important in forming these values and attitudes in Jesus. *David Hofman, OCarm*

# From the Director

## Carmelite Assembly

In the first week of May twenty one Australian Carmelites gathered at Whitefriars, Donvale for our annual Provincial Assembly.

Each year we meet to review and develop the decisions we make at our triannual Provincial Chapter.

This year we continued our planning process as a way of dealing with the particular challenges of the three main aims we set at the Chapter in 1998: establish prayerful and fraternal communities; develop strategies to attract people to these communities; actively share our spirituality with others.

Under these three headings we have begun a major review of the life and ministry of our Province.

We are looking at how and

where we minister; how to develop our vocations and formation programs; how to share more effectively our Carmelite spirituality with those among whom we minister; how to care properly for our older brothers; how to develop our website so that it can be a source of enrichment and a help to prayer and how we can continue to help the Carmelites from other Provinces in our Asian Region.

Some of these issues are very complex and require careful thought and good decisions. Please continue to pray that our reflection and decisions will be guided by God's wisdom. Thank you.

# Good News

## Carmelite Cards

This ancient icon from the early part of the 13th century is the oldest image of Mary adopted by the Carmelites.



We have reproduced this beautiful image as a full colour folded card measuring 10 x 15.8 cms. The inside is blank to carry your own personal message.

Pack of 6 cards and matching envelopes - \$10.95 including postage. Order from: The Carmelite Centre 214 Richardson Street, Middle Park Vic 3206. Phone (03) 9690 8822 or Fax (03) 9696 0207.

# Carmel Around the World



## Relics of St Thérèse to visit Australia in 2002

The relics of St Thérèse of Lisieux have been touring the United States during this year.

They have become a focus of de-

votion and prayer wherever they have been.

The Australian Catholic Bishops have requested that the relics, normally kept in the Carmelite Monastery at Lisieux, tour Australia early in 2002.

St Thérèse of the Child Jesus lived a simple and obscure life as a cloistered Carmelite Nun. She died in 1897 at the age of 24 yet today she is known throughout the world. Her "little way of trust and absolute surrender" to God has brought hope and comfort to many.

Thérèse used the contemplation of nature, especially of flow-

ers, as a metaphor for her rich experience of God's love.

"It seems to me", she wrote, "that if a little flower could speak, it would tell simply what God has done for it without trying to hide his blessing...and that his mercy alone brought about everything that is good."

*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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## CARMELITES

Brothers who:

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



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# Carmel Around Australia

## The Carmelite Nuns of Varroville

By Carmelite standards, the past fifteen years or so have been rather eventful ones for us. In the latter part of the 1980s we closed two Monasteries, one at Dulwich Hill and one at Parkes in the Central West of NSW.

The Monastery at Dulwich Hill had been established in 1911, after many painful vicissitudes, by an intrepid community of French Carmelite Nuns,

who came from a Monastery in Angouleme, arriving in Sydney on 30 July 1885. The Prioress of the founding community was Mother Mary of the Cross, a saintly women who died just five years after their arrival in Australia, leaving the small struggling group at what seemed, from the human perspective at any rate, the worst possible time.

Providence had an equally challenging task ahead of the community that remained in Angouleme. Due to deterioration in the political climate in France in 1901, the Sisters went into voluntary exile in Enghein-les-Herinnes in Belgium, rather than risk any interference in their life by the Government of the day. When it became possible for them to return to France the Carmel settled in Tourcoing, because their Angouleme property had been illegally seized in their absence and auctioned by the Government. They suffered much hardship during the Second World War, as of course did many others caught in the path of armies of Europe. At the invitation of Bishop Fox, nine sisters set out for Parkes, arriving on 10 July 1949. They were told not to bother bringing vases, because they they would see no flowers or grass, but only drought.

So, when negotiations were begun in 1984 between the two Carmels then at Dulwich Hill and Parkes, to look into the possibility of merging the two communities, it was as if we had come full circle. The two parts, separated in 1885, were being put back together again in a new venture, which we hoped would be a new beginning for us. But, it was certainly a costly exercise. Costly, not only in terms of practical



effort, but costly in terms of the emotional wrench of leaving well-loved homes.

We moved into our present Carmel in July, 1990. We had put a lot of thought into the design of the Monastery, trying to get a nice view and sunlight in all the rooms. We used sky-domes to avoid the dreary dark corridors that are inevitable in large buildings.

The move also gave us the opportunity to review our living of the life in a radical way. While remaining faithful to what we see as the essential aspects of the charism, we have tried to look at other elements in a new light, following the guide of the Second Vatican Council. However, renewal is not a task that can be accomplished in a matter of days or years, but it is a daily effort to live out our lives in allegiance to Jesus Christ, in accordance with our Carmelite Rule.



**The Community at Varroville: Sisters Gemma, Elizabeth, Cathy, Jennifer and Ann**

# Reflection

## Nine days with Mary

Bernard Shah, OCarm

The intentions for this year's Mothers' Mass Novena are as universal as we can make them: you'll find that one or some will apply to you, your family, friends, colleagues. The daily praying of the intentions mustn't become a burden: rather, see it as a time and place to tell Jesus about the needs and hopes of his – and your – sisters and brothers.

When you begin each day's novena time, choose a place and a time where you've some chance of being uninterrupted; time could be around ten minutes.

Sit quietly, and read the day's intention.

Become aware of your sister Mary with you. She is accompanied by her Son, and the three of you begin to talk together about the people you're all praying for: how do older people you know cope with today's frantic pace...has a homeless person asked you for help...have you ever lost your way in life...is someone close to you seriously ill....? As you talk, open your heart to God, loving father and mother, and know that Jesus and Mary are doing the same.

Pray in your own way and your own words for the people of this day of the novena, especially those who are known to you.

And finish your time with Mary and her son, with the Novena Prayer.



### July 7 – for people everywhere

- protection for young people
- strength for families
- care for the elderly
- companionship for single and unpartnered people

### July 8 – for our world

- justice and peace for all people
- respect for culture and religious practice
- deep regard for human rights

### July 9 – for those who live with violence and abuse

- healing for those physically harmed
- strength for those emotionally hurt
- courage for those building new lives

### July 10 – for the homeless and the lonely

- comfort for the lonely
- shelter for the homeless
- acceptance for refugees

### July 11 – for those without work

- hope for those who cannot find work
- contentment for those who are retired
- courage for those prevented from work by illness, injury or disability

### July 12 – for the sick

- healing for the physically ill
- peace for troubled minds
- mending of broken hearts

### July 13 – for all Christians

- faith and commitment in marriage
- fulfillment for single people
- increase in religious vocations

### July 14 – for those in need

- food for the hungry
- support for those struggling to make ends meet
- hope for those who despair

### July 15 – for those deprived of freedom

- justice for the oppressed
- friends for the housebound
- peace for the anxious