

Presenza del Carmelo
nuova serie







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INTRODUCTION

In many and various instances, our spiritual masters have taught us a life of *in obsequio Jesu Christi*, whose authentic meaning is that personal encounter with Jesus Christ and discipleship is indispensable on being Carmelites. This is also the core of Carmelite formation. It is “a specific process through which a person learns to identify fully with the Carmelite ideal of life” (Con. 117), therefore it is “a continual process of conversion of heart and spiritual transformation” (Con. 118). This formation should be presented in such a way that individuals can experience, understand and embrace it as a dynamic process which is to continue throughout their lives (RIVC 19) enriched with the Carmelite tradition and grounded on the socio-anthropological-cultural context where the persons live.

Our Ratio asserts further, “The formative process can never be said to be completed: growth to human, spiritual, religious and Carmelite maturity progresses along with the unfolding of the lives of those who, having encountered Christ, answer his call and follow him in the Carmelite life, allowing themselves to be grasped and transformed by his love. Therefore, formation... should be viewed as a way of acquiring a capacity for discernment, flexibility and availability-qualities which enable us to constantly renew

our lives and to constantly struggle to adhere radically to Christ according to the Carmelite way of life" (RIVC 19).

Responding to these Carmelite ideals, on October 31 to November 12, 2016, in Indonesia, on the hilly part of the Malang county, precisely at a cool town called Batu, the General Formation Commission organized the International Course for Formators and Vocation Promoters of the Order. The course was participated in by 50 formators and vocation promoters from 18 countries. The two-week course was centered on the theme *Walk with Us: Growing in the Contemplative Dimension of One's Life* (RIVC 10). The Commission provided an occasion, particularly to the formators and the vocation promoters, to spend a quality time with their international brothers in an on-going formation program.

Some Carmelite experts were invited to expound on the theme of contemplation.

Fr. Berthold Anton Pareira (Indo) presented *The Sacred Scriptures as the Source of Contemplation*. Instead of explaining the idea of contemplation in the Bible, Berthold explored the advice of Rule in chapters 10 and 19: "The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, must abound in our mouths and hearts." Berthold asserted that the Bible is a book of contemplation. We need to develop our effort to read, listen and respond to it. Reading and listening to the word of God is not an easy task. A pure mind and soul is required, also a good and ongoing formation is needed. Contem-

plation given by God is a fruit of listening heart to his Word.

Fr. Michael Plattig (Ger) presented *Contemplation in the Carmelite Tradition*. Michael emphasized that contemplation marks the very basis of Carmelite lifestyle. He showed this from the Rule and early documents of the Order, the Teresian and Tourine reforms, also in the (proposed) updated formulations of the charism of the Order in our Constitutions. The tradition of the Order has always interpreted the Rule and the founding charism as expressions of the contemplative dimension of life, and the great spiritual teachers of the Carmelite Family have always returned to this contemplative vocation.

From the psychological viewpoints, Fr. Quinn Connors (PCM) gave two conferences. In the first talk, *Ability to Give Love and Give of Oneself*, Quinn explored the ability to give love and give of oneself as an adult skill. In the psychology, this ability is seen as an important and necessary part of human growth and maturation. The individuals who are called to religious life as Carmelites are expected to be able to grow in their ability to give love and give of oneself, and our formation programs are intended to be environments in which that ability is developed, encouraged, and evaluated. In the second talk, *The Capacity for Responsible Care and Stewardship Expressed in "Service in the Midst of the People,"* he offered a perspective from a human development point of view that will help us to understand the call to leadership as an important area of development as adults and a series of skills, which are needed.

Responding to the contemporary challenges in the formation work, Fr. Desiderio García Martínez

(ACV) addressed the topics of multiculturalism and the influence of technology. In the first talk, *Accompanying Formandi in a Multi-Cultural Community in Growing into Contemplation*, Desiderio explored one's journey which inevitably encounters diversity and the contemplative journey of growth in inculturation, which entails in deepening one's experience of Carmelite brotherhood. In the second talk, *Accompanying Simple Professed Formandi in Growing into Contemplation in the Midst of Technology Influx*, he presented how to train the formands to have a healthy detachment with technology by developing contemplative attitude and employing technology for evangelization.

To speak about vocation promotion, two vocation promoters from America and Asia were also asked to share their experiences during the meeting. Br. Daryl Moresco (PCM) presented *The Theological Basis of Vocation Promotion and Its Practice in the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary*. Daryl explored the theological thought on "casting the net," and shared his experience on promoting vocation in the United States. While Fr. Irvin Mangmang (Phil) shared his experience on *Rising to the Challenge of Vocation Ministry in the 21st Century: the Philippine Experience*, particularly in the Philippines which he called as a journey to the peripheries and sitting by the well.

These conferences were held in the mornings, while the afternoons were spent in the practice contemplative prayers. This was the expression of the mystagogical approach employed in the works of the General Commission. The practice involved adoration of the blessed sacrament, prayer in the name of Jesus, chanting and dancing prayers, and

also meditation practice lead by a Buddhist monk in his monastery.

The General Commission gives thanks to Fr. Edison Tinambunan (Indo) and his team for the local organization, Fr. Ignasius Budiono (Indo), the Provincial of Indonesia for hosting and great support, the Carmelite student friars, and all the benefactors and people working behind the scene. All the participants departed hopeful with renewed spirit.

After quite a lengthy process of rechecking the translation into three official languages of the Order, now we present to you this book, dear Carmelite brothers and sisters, for sharing the wealth of Carmelite spirituality, particularly in the field of formation. May this book provide a help, particularly to you, the formators and the vocations promoters, in your weighty, yet substantial work for the Order and the Church.

May God's name be glorified forever and ever!

Rome, 23 June 2018

BENNY PHANG KHONG WING, O.CARM.
General Councilor for Formation



THE BIBLE AS THE SOURCE OF CONTEMPLATION

BERTHOLD ANTON PAREIRA, O.CARM.

1. INTRODUCTION

This talk is not about the contemplation in the Bible, but about the Bible as the source of contemplation (cf. DV, art. 25). It is more about how to read and listen to the Word of God.

2. THE BIBLE AND CONTEMPLATION

Listening to the revelation of God, to the Word of life, is the essence of contemplation. The dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) has the following beautiful introduction:

Hearing the Word of God with reverence and proclaiming it with faith, the sacred Synod assents to the words of St. John, who says, 'We proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us - that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ' (Jn 1:2-3). The eternal life and fellowship with God are given in contemplation.

The whole Carmelite vocation is also expressed in this introduction even when Jn 1:4 is not cited, for example "We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete."

The nature and objective of divine revelation is expressed as follows:

It pleased God in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known his will. He wills that men have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit and thus become sharers in the divine nature. By this revelation, then, the invisible God, from this fullness of His love addresses men as his friends and moves among them, in order to invite them and receive them into his company" (DV, 2)

Furthermore, *Dei Verbum* develops the theme of divine revelation (#2-6) in terms of the nature of this revelation. The Conciliar Fathers reaffirm that the word of God proclaims eternal life in Christ. For them, Word, Life and Communion are inseparable.

All the preaching of the Church, as indeed the entire Christian faith, should be nourished and ruled by Sacred Scripture (DV, art. 21). Therefore, all clerics should immerse themselves in the Scriptures by constant sacred *reading* and diligent *study*. Likewise all the Christian faithful especially those who live in the religious life are encouraged to learn "the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Phil 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine Scripture. As *Dei Verbum* reiterates "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ. Let (us) remember that prayer should accompany the reading" (DV, # 25).

A person cannot be enamored of God without the knowledge of His goodness. Therefore St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians writes, "I pray

that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (3:18-19).

What was encouraged by Vatican II had been laid down by our Rule in Chapters 10 and 19: "The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, must abound in our mouths and hearts." Our meditation becomes vigilant prayer and contemplation leading to an indwelling of the Word. Our saints and great personalities have lived by this spirituality.¹

One of the most beautiful witnesses on this subject is Blessed Baptist Spagnoli in his treatise, *De Patientia*, in which he celebrates the virtues of the Holy Scriptures in the second reading of the Liturgy of the Hours on the commemoration of the saints. His meditation on the mystery of the joy of heaven in the second reading of the office of reading on the feast of all Carmelite Saints is especially beautiful. It is truly a fruit of contemplation and we are reminded that ruminating on the word of God and *vacare Deo* (to be occupied with God) must be learned. Without a love of silence and giving special time for God, we cannot do all things for the love of God and man.

3. READING, LISTENING AND RESPONDING

There are three main activities in our relation to Sacred Scripture: reading, listening and responding.² We need to learn all of these. Our Lord rebuked

¹ Emanuele Boaga, "Listening to the Word of God with Mary: The Experience of Carmel," *Carmel in the World* LII:3 (2013), 189-202.

² R. DUVAL, "Dire, lire, écouter," *La Vie Spirituelle* no.608/57 (Mai-Juin 1975), 324-337.

the Jews with the following words, "You *search* the scripture because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse *to come to me* to have life. I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know that you do not have *the love of God* in you" (Jn. 5:39-42). How to read the Scripture is important to come to a right understanding of "what is written in the law? *How*³ do you read there" (Lk 10:26).

The Christian Tradition *makes progress* in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is continual growth in insights into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways but it especially comes through *the contemplation and study of believers who ponders these things in their hearts* (cf. Lk 2:19 and 51). It comes from *the "intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience"* (DV. # 8). The Church is always advancing to the plenitude or fullness of divine truth through *lectio divina*.⁴ This also applies to the life in the Order. Contemplation is our call.

Our Lady and St. Joseph were amazed at what was being said about the child Jesus (cf. Lk.2:33; also 1:29). Regarding our Lady, "she was deeply troubled by this word, and wondered what this greeting meant". Both Mary and Joseph did not understand what the boy Jesus said to them (Lk 2:50). Nevertheless Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart (Lk 2:19, 51). That is the way of

³ Most modern translations read "*what* do you read there?", but cf. Nova Vulgata reads "*quomodo legis?*"

⁴ Cf. B. CALATI, "Lectio Divina," in BORRIELLO, E. CARUANA, etc. (eds.), *Diccionario de Mistica* (Madrid: San Pablo, 2002), 1039-1042. The book will be cited only with the title.

contemplation.⁵ May Mary, Virgin of listening and contemplation, be our mother and mistagogue on this way. May St. Joseph with his great silence become our model of contemplative life, as well.⁶

How to listen? The book of Proverbs can be our guide. It contains not only practical and human wisdom (how to live the good life), but great spiritual wisdom. True wisdom comes from God. Only God can tell us, teach us and guide in what we are to do. Only God can confer wisdom to us as a gift because wisdom itself is an attribute of God.⁷ The wise men of the Old Testament state this concisely in the following proverb, "The beginning of knowledge is the fear of the Lord" (Prov 1:7).

Wisdom, in the book of Proverbs, invites us to listen to her words, treasure them in our memory, wrap them up inside our hearts. We have to cry out for insight, raise our voice for understanding, seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasure. Then we "will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God" (cf. Prov 2:1-4,5). All these activities come under the category of contemplation.⁸ The various nuances of contemplation are listen and do it (cf. Lk 8:21), watching daily and waiting beside the doors of wisdom and we will find life and favor from the Lord (Prov 8:32-36).⁹ Wisdom comes from listen-

⁵ A. GIABBANI, "Escucha" *ibid.*, 631-633.

⁶ Cf. PAUL FEELEY, "On the Threshold of the Jubilee: A Silence," *Carmel in the World* XXXVII: n.3(1999), 200-204; T. Stramare, "San José," *Diccionario de Mística*, 967-970.

⁷ MICHAEL A. MACHADO, *The Book of Proverbs The Wisdom of Words* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 29.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 74-77,

ing; it is the fruit of contemplation¹⁰: "When the Spirit of Truth comes He will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come" (Jn 16:13). True wisdom is the gift of the Holy Spirit.¹¹

This is one of the confessions of Jeremiah, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the *delight* of my heart" (Jer 15:16).

And the Psalmist gives praise to the Lord with the following words, "The law of the Lord is perfect, *reviving* the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, *making wise* the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, *rejoicing* the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, *enlightening* the eyes" (Ps 19:7-8).

Remembrance of the word of God is basic for a contemplative life. Without the remembrance of the word of the Lord there is only fear, sadness, concern and panic: "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you,..." (Lk 24:5-6). Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved run to the tomb "for as yet they did not *understand* the scripture, that he must rise from the dead" (Jn 20:9). They did not remember what he had said to them (cf. Jn 2:22).

4. THE BIBLE IN THE LITURGY

The Bible is the book of the Church. It's first and foremost place is in the Liturgy. We cannot talk

¹⁰ E. DE CEA, "Sabaduria," in *Diccionario de Mística*, 1534-1539.

¹¹ Cf. PAULE MARTIN, "La crainte de Dieu, don de L'Esprit Saint," *La Vie Spirituelle*, no. 626, 60 (Mai-Juin 1978), 405-420.

about contemplation in the Bible without Liturgy.¹² Both are inseparable. Liturgy (more specifically the Eucharist) is the place where we encounter the Bible daily in our lives. It is the moment where we celebrate the great deeds of God as our salvation. It is the place of contemplation, of our encounter with God (cf. SC, #1-13). Word and Eucharist are deeply bound together. The relation is beautifully expressed in Lk 24:13-35. It is the place where life is given in abundance as has been promised: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). Our Lord wants to abide with and be in us (Jn 14-17).

Christ is always present in the liturgical celebrations of the Church. "He is present in his word since it is himself who speaks when the scriptures are read in the Church" (SC, # 7; cf. also # 33). The Lord is present: "The Lord be with you - And with your spirit". This greeting¹³ is taken from the Bible.¹⁴ Our liturgical texts are richly imbued with the Bible. Therefore, Vatican II exhorts all the Christian faithful to be **familiar** with the Bible and be imbued with its **spirit** (DV, #25). According to SC, #24: "Sacred Scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy... Hence in order to achieve the restoration, progress, and adaptation of the sacred liturgy it is essential to promote that warm and lively appreciation of sacred

¹² Cf. GIOVANNI GROSSO, "Carisma carmelitano e liturgia," in *Fons et Culmen Vitae Carmelitanae* (Roma: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2007), 19-42.

¹³ In his treatise entitled *Dominus Vobiscum*, St. Peter Damian applies this greeting to the solitary life of the monks "que la oración del solitario tiene lugar en comunión con la Iglesia universal" (cf. G. PICASSO, "Pedro Damián San," *Diccionario de Mística*, 1431-1432).

¹⁴ BIRGIT JEGGLE-MERZ, "Der Tisch des Wortes ist reicher gedeckt als gedacht," *Bibel und Kirche* 70:2(2015), 101-106.

scripture to which the venerable tradition of the Eastern and Western rites gives testimony."

The Bible is a book of communication. When God speaks¹⁵, man has to listen and respond.¹⁶ In the liturgical celebration, the text becomes a part of a subtly differentiated communication and action-event.¹⁷ A good celebration of the Liturgy of the Word is demanding. We pray with the psalmist, "Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your word" (Ps 119:18).

To become a good listener is not easy. Therefore our Lord reminds us: "Let *anyone with ears* listen!" (Mt.13:9) and "Pay attention to *how* you listen; for to those who have, more will be given; and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away" (Lk.8:18). Listening is a heightened form of attention, of active receptivity. A good listener does not pay attention only to what is said, but also to the person himself, to his presence.

R. Maria Valabek made the following remark on the relationship between liturgy and contemplation: "A strong liturgical life, which delves deeply into the inner reality of the liturgy as a share in the mysteries of Christ's life, death and resurrection, is the surest food for a life of authentic contemplation which is freed of possible individualistic exaggerations. Contemplation which springs from the liturgical mysteries guarantees a Church-oriented spiritual life."¹⁸ Blessed Paul VI gave the

¹⁵ L.A. LASSU, "Quand Dieu parle," *ibid.*, 339-347.

¹⁶ A.M. BESNARD, "Il faut répondre," *ibid.*, 348-363.

¹⁷ ANSGAR FRANZ, "Die Bedeutung der Bibel für die Liturgie," *Bibel und Kirche* 64:4(2009),233-238.

¹⁸ REDEMPTUS M. VALABEK, *Profiles in Holiness IV* (Rome: Edizioni

following exhortation: "Beloved sons, *intelligent and active* participation in liturgical celebrations... is the path open to everyone for a personal meeting with Christ, *with the light of his consoling word and with the strength of his healing grace.*"¹⁹ A good preparation and celebration of liturgy is required. It is to be performed with joy.

5. PSALMS AND CONTEMPLATION

The psalms have been used since the earliest days of the Church. It is so important that ancient tradition has decreed that the entire Book of Psalms must be read every week during the Daily Office. As Kilian Healy writes "Scripture is used by the *Methode* of the Touraine Reform as a prayer book and offers ready-made formulas for inexperienced novices. Verses especially from the Psalms... are presented to the novices as ideal formulas that will help them to practice the presence of God and accustom them to make aspirations."²⁰

The Book of Psalms is the most cited book in the New Testament.

The Carmelites are to stay in their own cell or nearby pondering the Lord's law day and night and keeping vigil at prayers, unless attending to some other duty (Rule, art. 10). It is "the best habitual disposition for singing the divine praises in the work of God par excellence....Indeed it is precisely for this last-named duty that Carmelites have been 'called to the Order', as our Constitutions advise us in the article on the Divine Office."

Carmelitane, 2011), 77-78.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁰ KILIAN J. HEALY, *Methods of Prayer* (Roma: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2005), 78.

²¹ Let us now look briefly how the psalms can play their part in our formation in prayer and how the Liturgy of the Hours can become a contemplative prayer.²²

According to St. Teresa of Jesus, in a perfect recitation of vocal prayer, the Lord may raise one to perfect contemplation. The soul is *enkindled in love*. There is a difference between contemplation and mental prayer. Mental prayer consists of "being aware and knowing that we are speaking, with whom we are speaking and who ourselves are who dare to speak so much with so great a Lord."²³ Further Teresa asks: "Who can say that it is wrong, when we begin to recite the Hours or the rosary, to consider whom we are going to speak with, and who we are, so as to know how to speak with Him?"²⁴

The Psalms are, according to the *Carmelite Directory of Spiritual Life*, a school for aspirative prayer.²⁵

St. Augustine read the Psalms and more than once he uses the language of being "set on fire" by their words.²⁶

Of all the books of the Bible in which poetry plays a role, According to Robert Alter the book of

²¹ AUGUSTIN FORCADELL, "Liturgical Prayers and Personal Prayer" *Carmel in the World* LI:1(2012), (33-44)44.

²² Cf. JOHN MARY BURNS, "The Liturgy of the Hours in the Carmelite Charism," in *Fons et Culmen Vitae Carmelitanae*, 207-250.

²³ ST. TERESA OF AVILA, *The Way of Perfection* 25:3, *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol II, (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1980), 131.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 22:3 (*op.cit.*, 123).

²⁵ (J. BRENNINGER), *Directorium Carmelitanun Vitae Spiritualis* (Roma: Vaticanis, 1940), 458-460. On aspirative prayer, cf. KILIAN HEALY, *Methods of Prayer* (Rome: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2005), 60-73.

²⁶ Cf. ROWAN WILLIAMS, "Augustine and the Psalms" *Interpretation* 58:1 (2004), (17-27), 17.

"psalms is the one set of texts whose poetic status has been most strongly felt throughout the generations..."²⁷ Psalms are poetry of faith and prayer. The Church loves the psalms because as poetry they express deep human feelings: joy and hope, grief and anguish, wonder and fear, etc. Psalms are songs, they are the voice of the heart. Liturgy and poetry cannot be separated.²⁸ It is not surprising that Karl Rahner, one of the greatest theologians of the 20th century, made the following remark:

And so, it is true that the capacity and the practice of perceiving the poetic word is a presupposition of hearing the word of God. The poetic word and the poetic ear are so much part of man that if this essential power were really lost to the heart, man could no longer hear the word of God in the word of man. In its inmost essence, the poetic is a prerequisite of Christianity.²⁹

To become a contemplative we need to have an ear to good literature, to poetry. The Bible is also a book of literature (good stories, parables and poetries). We have to have a sense of the art of biblical narrative and biblical poetry.³⁰ Besides, the Bible is a book of life. Our daily life is an interpretation of the biblical message.³¹

²⁷ ROBERT ALTER, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 111.

²⁸ PATRICE DE LA TOUR DU PIN, "Langage Poétique et Liturgie," *Lumière et Vie* 19 (1970), 121-140.

²⁹ KARL RAHNER, *Poetry in the Christian* quoted in *Mount Carmel* 50:1 (2002), 24.

³⁰ Cf. F. Castelli, "Literatura," in *Diccionario de Mística*, 1075-1079.

³¹ Cf. MICHAEL BLUM und ERICH PURK, *Ein Wort für dich* (Stuttgart: Katolische Bibelwerk, 2003), 16-19.

The basic formal elements of Hebrew poetry is semantic parallelism between the lines.

The rhetorical effect of parallelism is an invitation to a meditative reading. A slow reading, attention to the word and interaction between the words are necessary. Hebrew poetry intensifies our experience of reading and hearing.³² There are structures of intensification.

The psalmists are men of deep faith. Their God is not of far away, but very close. They speak freely to and about God. There are deeply human longings for God, "'Come,' my heart says, 'seek his face!' Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me" (Ps 27:8-9)³³. In times of distress, they always seek refuge in the Lord. Seeking God (*darasy*) is one of the central themes of the psalms.

Ps 47:8 invites us to "to sing praises with a psalm" (NRSV); "psalite *sapienter*" (Nova Vulgata); "cantate inni *con arte*" (La Bibbia); "tocad *con maestria*" (Alonso). But how? That is the question that has been raised since the time of the early church.

The basic faith of the psalms is that God exists and He reveals himself. Only fools say in their hearts: "There is no God. They are corrupt, they commit abominable acts; there is no one who does good" (Ps 53:1).

The God of the psalms is the God who is present in the temple and in the midst of his people.³⁴ The

³² JEFFREY D. ARTHUR, *Preaching with Variety* (Malang: Literatur SAAT, 2012), 54-59.

³³ The verse number of psalms in English translations many times one verse less than in the original Hebrew and many other modern translations.

³⁴ HANS-JOACHIM KRAUS, *Psalmen I* (BKAT XV/1; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1966), LXIV-LXXX.

God of the psalms is the God of life especially in laments, psalms of confidence and thanksgiving. **Psalms 120-134** are a collection of the Songs of Ascent, of man's pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Ps 134 is the crowning point of this pilgrimage, which starts from the periphery (Ps 120) and moves to the center in Jerusalem.³⁵ From this center the Lord blesses His people living and struggling in the world, but who seek him (Ps 121) and try to live in harmony (Ps 133). Life is a place of journey toward God.

The experience of God is expressed everywhere in the psalms but particularly in the psalms of thanksgiving and in the wisdom psalms. It is very well expressed in Ps 36:8-10:

How precious is your kindness, o God! / The children of men take refuge in the shadow of your wings./They have their fill of the prime gifts of your house; from your delightful stream you gave them to drink./For with you is the fountain of life,/and in your light we see light.

In the Christian liturgy all the symbols mentioned in this psalm are fully fulfilled.

Examples of the signs of fruits of contemplation in the Psalms are:

Blessed are those who "delight in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate *day and night*" (Ps 1:3 NRSV). Happy is he who "is lost in his religion; who is filled with thought of God's deeds or his will." Wisdom comes from listening and

³⁵ GERT T.M. PRINSLOO, "The Role of Space in the syire hama'a lot (Ps 120-134)," *Biblica* 86 (2005), 457-477.

listening presupposes silence, inner silence. Mary, our Mother is called "the true seat of wisdom" because she is the Virgin of listening.

Ps 119 is a prototype of meditative activity in the Christian tradition. The psalmist "chews and re-chews the divine law, the marvelous deeds of God in Israel, His judgments and His deeds."³⁶ The Law is a source of wisdom: "Teach me *wisdom* and knowledge, for in your commands I trust" (v.66 NAB; "enseñame a *gustar* y a comprender, porque fio de tus mandatos" (Luis Alonso Schökel). The Law is his delight (Ps 119:14, 16, 24, 47, 77, 92, 143) and his song (v. 54) because he loves it (v. 47-48). He will meditate on the precepts of the Law (119:15, 97) and incline his heart to perform them (119:112). Blessed are those who keep the Lord's decrees and *seek Him with their whole heart* (v. 2). The exclamation "blessed" is born from experience (vv. 9-16).

Ps 119 is one of the most moving "meditations of my heart" (v. 15). There is a distinctive theme and language for each of the three parts (vv. 2-7, 8-11, 12-15), but there is a unity between them. The heavens are telling the glory of God without words, yet their voice goes out through all the earth. The sun is witness to God's glory (vv.2-7). "Light is sweet and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun" (Eccl 11: 7). "Like the sun, the Torah of Yahweh, with its joyful light, penetrates into every area of human life."³⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the

³⁶ A.M. BESNARD, "Meditation a partir de la Parole," *La Vie Spirituelle*, Novembre-Décembre 1977. 59 année. no. 623. Tome 131, (804-838), 814.

³⁷ J. ROSS WAGNER, "From the Heavens to the Heart: The Dynamics of Psalm 19 as Prayer," *CBQ* 61:2 (1999), (245-261), 253.

soul and causing rejoicing of the heart (vv. 8-11). Then the psalmist makes a personal plea that he can detect his hidden faults and be granted an unbroken relationship with Yahweh (vv. 12-15). In the liturgy of the Hours, Ps.19 reminds us of our Lord who as the dawn from on high breaks upon us "to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Lk 1: 78-79).

Ps 39 is a meditation in silence in which the heart of the psalmist became hot within himself (vv.2-4) and a prayer of hope (vv.5-14). The Vulgate (Nova Vulgate) gives the following translation for v.4b: "In meditatione mea exardescet (arsit) ignis." St. Thomas Aquinas cites this verse to explain the relation between knowledge and love. The fire of contemplation tends to give itself.³⁸ *Gaudium de veritate* (St. Augustine). A similar problem with God is found in Ps 77 (cf. also Ps 22:4-6).

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage (Ps 33:12). Who is the Lord? He has created the heavens and all their host only through his word. Let all the inhabitants of the world *stand in awe* of him (vv.8-9). He frustrates the plans of the nations (vv.10-11).

A fruit of contemplation can be heard in the invitation, "O taste and see that *the Lord is good*, blessed is the man who **seeks refuge** in him" (Ps 34:9). It is used as an antiphon for the canticle of Zechariah of the Morning Prayer for the feast of

³⁸ FRANCOISE DUMOULIN DE CASTRO, " La contemplation dans la Somme Theologique," *La Vie Spirituelle* no.626/60 (Mai-Juin 1978), (422-444), 432-434.

St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi. Fr. Alonso gives the following note, "The experience of God in contemplation is tasty/lovely/pleasant and is blessedness."³⁹

Ps 63 reveals a contemplative spirit. This praying man has searched all day for God and at day's end he can say, "On my bed, I remember you. On you I muse through the night for you have been my help" (v. 7-8a). There is a thirst for God.⁴⁰

Ps 29:3-4 writes, "The voice of the Lord is over the waters." The Church sings this psalm as a celebration of the words of the Father on the feast of the Baptism of Lord. We are privileged to hear these on this feast.⁴¹

6. CONTEMPLATION AND THE SONG OF SONGS

I would like to comment briefly on the Song of Songs (Song of Salomon), one of the great books in the spiritual life. The book is purely secular, about human sexual love. The Song, to quote Roland Murphy, "manifests unusual literary qualities. One easily recognizes the pleasant profusion of images drawn from the atmosphere of the fields: gazelles and hinds, doves and foxes, sheep and goats. *The gifts of nature* abound: wine and vineyard, cedars and cypresses, figs and pomegranates."⁴²

³⁹ *Salmos y Canticos del Breviario* (Madrid: Ediciones Cristianidad, 1977), 93.

⁴⁰ PAUL FEELEY, "Psalm 62(63)," *Carmel in the World* XLI:3 (2002), 162-165.

⁴¹ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Homiletic Directory* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), art. 135.

⁴² Roland Murphy, "Canticle of Canticles," in *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* 29:9 (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 463.

The Song of Songs is the garden of metaphor⁴³ and metaphor belongs to the language of the mystics.⁴⁴

Any text of the Bible has an after life in the community that treasures it. Many interpret the Song of Songs as an allegory. It is a specific manner of reading, a spirituality of reading. St. Benedict describes it as a listening with the heart. The reader "sought a transformative rather than merely informative engagement with the Bible."⁴⁵

The Song of Songs is the word of God on human love.⁴⁶ This human love can be seen as a symbol of the mystery of God's love. A symbolical interpretation of the book is possible.⁴⁷ The language of human love is used in our relation to God. Seeking and finding, falling in love occur also in one who falls in love with God. Paradise is the center of the desire.⁴⁸

Dialogue between lovers occurs in 1:7-2:7; 4:1-5:1 and 6:4-12. Often the Song of Songs uses the

⁴³ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 185-203.

⁴⁴ Cf. A. Pacciolla, "Lenguaje metafórico," in *Diccionario místico*, 1043-1049.

⁴⁵ Mark S. Burrows, "To taste with the heart: Allegory, Poetics, and the Deep Reading of Scripture," *Interpretation* 56 (2002), (168-180) 172.

⁴⁶ Gianni Barbiero, "La ricerca nel Cantico dei Cantici," *Horeb* no.45/XVI(2006/n.3), (14-22)15.

⁴⁷ G. Ravasi, "Cantar de los cantares," in *Diccionario de Mística*, 356-359; R.E. Murphy, "Revelación en la Biblia", *ibid.*, 1518-1521 opts for the interpretation of the symbol of the love of God and his people.

⁴⁸ W.G.Tilmanns, "Das Paradies als Zentrum des Verlangens. Eine strukturelle analyse des <<Cantico>>," in Otger Steggink (coord.), <<Juan de la Cruz, Espiritu de Llama>> (Roma: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1991), 413-448. According to the Basil the Great, the three book of Solomon (Proverb, Ecclesiastes and Song of Song) are related to each other.

language of admiration (1:15-2:3; 4:9-5:1; 6:4-7; 6:0; 7:7-10). It is the language of contemplation.⁴⁹

Allegorically the book has been interpreted by Fathers of the Church e.g. Origen (+254), Gregory of Nyssa (+394), Gregory the Great (+604), Bede the Venerable (+735)⁵⁰ and mystical authors as a "love letter in which God gives free rein to his sovereign inspiration as artist, poet, painter, musician; in which he engages the whole of his creation – flowers and fruits, the seasons of the year, birds and precious minerals-and in which, above all, he pours out without restraint the ardent love of a Bridegroom for an entire people as well as for the humblest among us."⁵¹

It is surprising that the Song of Songs is never used in the Sunday Masses in our present liturgy⁵² whereas the Church Fathers especially Origen and Gregory the Great gave homilies from this book.⁵³ In our liturgy celebrating the Saints of Carmel the Song of Songs is used only on the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi (Song 5:4b;8:6-7 for Mass; 2:1-5,8-14,16-17a;7:10;8:6, for Office of Reading). The mystic of Florence's "experience of God as Love led her to desire that everyone come to know "Love that is not loved". This is her affir-

⁴⁹ L. Borriello, "Contemplación," *Diccionario de Mística*, 458-(467).

⁵⁰ Cf. K. Suso Frank, "Einleitung, in Origenes und Gregor der Grosse," *Das Hohelied* (Benziger, Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1987), 9-24.

⁵¹ Blaise Arminjon, *The Cantata of Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988), 11.

⁵² It is however used in the Office of Reading in the Christmas Season (cycle 2). In the Jewish tradition it is read during the Passover as an allegory of the love of God to Israel. Spring is the time for love (2:11-13; cf. Dov-Levy Barsilay, "<<Die Schrift ist heilig, aber das Hohelied ist hochheilig>>," *Bibel heute* 198/50 (2/2014), 22-24.

⁵³ Origenes und Gregor der Grosse, *Das Hohelied* (Benziger, Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1987).

mation: "even the *mystical kiss* must be given with both lips: with the love of God and of neighbor, with contemplation and action."⁵⁴

The seeker of her beloved, whom her soul loves is the central theme of this love song. Refrain and repetition abound. One example is from 3:1-4:

Upon my bed at night/I sought him *whom my soul loves*;/I sought him, but found him not;/I called him, but he gave no answer./

I will rise now and go about the city,/in the streets and in the squares;/ I will seek *whom my soul loves*./I sought him, but found him not./

The sentinels found me,/as they went about in the city./"Have you seen him *whom my soul loves*?"

Scarcely had I passed them /when I found him *whom my soul loves*;/I held him, and would not let him go/until I brought him into my mother's house,/and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

Song 8:7 is used by the Liturgy of the Hours for the reading of Morning Prayer in the office of Virgins.

The garden setting is the longest episode as well as the central image of the Song (4:12-5:1 and 6:1-12). The Beloved is an enclosed garden. Love between lovers is exclusive. Love is stronger than death and is not quenched by the great floods. If one offered for love all the wealth of his house (cf. Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22), he (or it?) would

⁵⁴ Joseph Chalmers, *The Love of Christ surpasses all knowledge* 22 and 28. Letter to the Carmelite Family (Rome: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2006), 11 and 14. Further, cf. Charlò Chamilleri, *Union with God as Transformation in Beauty* (Rome: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2008), 267-269.

be utterly scorned (Song 8:7). "In the eyes of the world, to give one's entire fortune for love is folly; from the perspective of the Song, in which riches are ultimately worthless, it is wisdom."⁵⁵ The wise man "looks forth like the dawn,/fair as the moon, bright as the sun,/terrible as an army with banners" (Song 6:10; Antiphon for the Canticle of Zechariah for the Morning Prayer of the doctors of the Church and cf. the memorial of Sts Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, 2 January).

This is the testimony of our great sister, St. Teresa of Jesus: "For about two years, more or less, it seems to me the Lord has been giving me, for the sake of my purpose in writing this work, some understanding of the meaning of certain words, and I think these words will bring consolation to the Sisters our Lord lead by this path and also for me."

⁵⁶ She warns her Carmelite sisters: "It will seem to you that in these Songs certain things might be another style. Our stupidity is such that this would not surprise me. I heard that certain people say that they would rather avoid listening to them. Merciful God, how great is our stupidity."⁵⁷

St. John of the Cross had the Song of Songs read to him on his death-bed. The Song became a foundation for his own spiritual poetry. In the intimate

⁵⁵ Francis Landy, "The Song of Songs," in R. Alter - Frank Kermode (eds.), *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (London: Collins, 1987), (305-319)318.

⁵⁶ *Meditations on the Songs of Songs*, Prologue 2 (Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila, vol. II, (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1980), 215.

⁵⁷ ST. TERESA OF AVILA, *Meditations on the Song of Songs* 1:3 (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1980), 215; Teresa de Jesus, *Obras Completas Conceptos del Amor de Dios* 1:3 (Burgos: Editorial Monte Carmelo, 1987), 1499.

union with God in the fourth stanza of the *Llama de amor viva* (*The Living Flame of Love*) he says:

Cuán manso y amoroso,/recuardas en mi seno,/ donde secretamente solo moras,/y en tu aspirar sabroso,/de bien e gloria lleno,/cuán delicadamente me enamoras!" (How gently and lovingly/You wake in my heart,/Where in secret you dwell alone; And in your sweet breathing,/Filled with good and glory,/How tenderly You swell my heart with love) [Kieran Kavanaugh - Otilio Rodriguez].

There is no need to read the whole book. A selection of a few poems will suffice for our reading and reflection especially for the beginners. By analogy of faith we can read these poems for our life to express our thirst for the word of love and life. We can compare the reading of Songs 2:8-14 and Lk 1:39-45, or Songs 3:1-4 and John 20:11-18.

A caution

A serious problem is posed by the Song for the unprepared reader. Gregory of Nyssa puts it: "The soul of certain people is not ready to listen [to the Song], let them listen to Moses admonishing us not to dare start the climb on spiritual mountain... We must when we want to devote ourselves to contemplation [of the Song], forget thoughts related to marriage... so that having extinguished all carnal appetites, it will be only through the spirit that our intelligence will simmer lovingly, warmed by the fire that the Lord has come to bring on earth."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Cited by BLAISE ARMINJON, *op.cit.*, 43.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux in one of his sermons on the Song says, "One cannot start reading this book unless he has reached a certain degree of purity... Light is useless to the eyes of blind man, and the animal in man does not perceive what comes from the Spirit of God."⁵⁹

Our Sister, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus has discovered in this book profound things very early in her religious life. One of her most beautiful reflection on the Word of God is on Song 1:4, "Draw me after thee, we hasten."⁶⁰

7. CONCLUSION

The Bible is a book of theology and of prayer. We have to pay great attention to how to listen and how to read (cf. Lk 8: 18; 10:26). Reading and listening to the word of God is not an easy task. A good and ongoing formation is needed. A pure mind and soul is *required*. That is what we hear repeatedly stated by the great masters of spiritual life in the Tradition. Contemplation given by God is a fruit of listening with the heart.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶⁰ THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX (trans. Ronald Knox), *Autobiography of a Saint* (Glasgow: Collins, 1985), 245-246.

CONTEMPLATION IN THE CARMELITE HISTORY

MICHAEL PLATTIG, O.CARM.

Contemplation in the Carmelite History is the theme of a project of the Institutum Carmelitanum which has run for several years. So far, two conferences have been organized and a third is planned for January 2017. We will then get to the beginning of the modern period. A later conference will predominantly focus on the Reform of Touraine.

Obviously, I cannot provide a detailed survey here, as it would take a whole week to do so. I have therefore made a selection. I will start with the Rule and the first documents of the Carmelites and will refer to a contribution from Pat Mullins that is expected to be published in 2017 together with the other contributions to the conferences. After an intermezzo, I will discuss the Reform of Touraine in detail, as it has influenced the spirituality of the Order to the present day. By way of conclusion, I will present a draft of the first part of new Constitutions, which I drafted together with Josef Chalmers and Claudemir Rozin.

THE RULE AND THE FIRST DOCUMENTS OF THE ORDER

The term contemplation is not found in the Formula of Life or in the Carmelite Rule of 1247 but it began to be used by Carmelites to describe the

fundamental *orientation* of their lives during the thirteenth century.

PRAYER AND MEDITATION IN THE FORMULA OF LIFE AND IN THE RULE

The only explicit references to “prayer (*oratio*)” in the Formula of Life are the reference to keeping watch in prayers in n. 10, and the references to the Lord’s Prayer in n. 11. These texts were not modified when the Formula of Life was adapted to become the Carmelite Rule in 1247.

Many writers identify the Vulgate text of 1 Peter 4:7, “vigilate in orationibus (keep watch in prayers),” as Albert’s source for “in orationibus vigilantes (keeping watch in prayers).”

The only explicit reference to meditation in the Formula of Life is the reference to meditating on the law of the Lord God by day and by night in n. 10. This text was not changed in the Rule of 1247. The Vulgate text of Psalm 1:2 is identified by many authors as Albert’s source for “die ac nocte in lege Domini meditantes (meditating on the law of the Lord God by day and by night).” Others also recognise the Vulgate text of Joshua 1:8, “sed meditaberis in eo [i.e. in lege] diebus et noctibus (but you will meditate on it [the law] in the days and in the nights),” as a possible source.

CONTEMPLATION IN THE SURVIVING DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH ALBERT

There are only two documents associated with St Albert of Jerusalem in which an explicit mention of contemplation is found, one dating from 1196 and the other from 1201.

The first text, *Ad superni* (1196), compares the active ministry, prayers and devotion to the special office of Martha, and its contemplation with the office of Mary (see Lk 10:38-42):

“... the office of Martha being the foundation, by means of prayers (*per orationes*), the support of its special devotion, by the more interior [office] of Mary, more securely intent on the contemplation of divine things (*interiori divinorum contemplatione per orationes securius intenti*).”

The second document where an explicit mention of contemplation is found is the Rule for the First and Second Order Humiliati, *Omnis boni* (1201), which Albert helped to draft in 1201. Chapter 1 says that prelates should keep watch always with adroit care that [their] thought is pure, their activity excellent, that they are discrete in silence, profitable in speech, close to each in compassion, absorbed in contemplation above all people (*pre cunctis contemplatione suspensus*), a friend to well-doers through humility, ...

Later in that same chapter, we read:

Again let him be close to each in compassion, absorbed in contemplation above all people (*et pre cunctis contemplatione suspensus*), so that he carries the infirmity of the others in himself both by means of the depths [bowels] of [his] piety and also by means of the same altitude of [his] speculation lest he either, desiring the higher things, despise the infirmities of his neighbours or, conforming himself to the infirmity of his neighbours, he ceases to desire the higher things ...

The implication that, like Mary of Bethany, the prelate should be absorbed in contemplation more than all others while, at the same time, hav-

ing compassion for the infirmities of others and acting as a friend to well-doers, like Martha, corresponds to the distinction between Martha and Mary in the text from 1196 and it may be that Albert and the other members of the papal commission were happy to accept the Humiliati text because it coincided with their own views.

CONTEMPLATION IN THE EARLY CARMELITE TRADITION

There is no explicit reference to contemplation in the Formula of Life (1206-14) and the first explicit reference to contemplation in Carmelite documents is found in Pope Gregory IX's *Ex officii* (1229), which confirmed the Formula of Life:

"To our beloved sons the Prior and hermit brothers of Mount Carmel, health and apostolic blessing. We are bound by the watchfulness our office imposes on us to take great care lest those who have washed their feet when they ascended the mountain (in montem) to pray with the Lord should soil them again by descending from the observation post of contemplation (a contemplationis specula descendendo); and lest, by resuming the earthly possessions they have cast aside, they should don bodily raiment, as it were, which might afford their enemy a hand-hold whereby to throw them down in their struggle with the powers of evil. Hence (Inde), since it is your lot to scale the Lord's observation post with feet washed, so as to remain free for the contemplation of the things of heaven (contemplationi caelestium), and to take up the struggle against the powers of evil, renouncing all the things of earth, we, in our concern for your welfare ..."

On June 8 1245, Pope Innocent IV confirmed Pope Gregory IX's *Ex officii* (1229), reissuing it with the same name, *Ex officii* (1245), and with only minor textual variants that did not change the two references to contemplation. The same Pope's *Devotionis vestrae* (1247) asked, and commanded, European bishops to welcome and assist the Carmelites in establishing houses and it included the following explicit reference to contemplation:

"The assault of the pagans, it is known, has forced our beloved sons the hermit brothers of St Mary's of Mount Carmel, not without great affliction of spirit, to betake themselves to other countries beyond the sea; while their peace of mind, accustomed as they were to enjoying the sweetness of contemplation (*contemplationis dulcedine recreare solitis*), has been not a little disturbed by this change."

Repeating Pope Gregory IX's implicit identification of Mount Carmel as an observation post of contemplation, Pope Innocent IV also refers to the sweetness of contemplation that the Carmelites had become accustomed to on that mountain before they had to move to a very different situation in Western Europe.

Although contemplation was repeatedly recognised as a description of the Carmelite way of life in these papal documents, there is no explicit reference to contemplation in the modified text of Albert's *Formula of Life* that became the Carmelite Rule of 1247.

The earliest extant texts written by the Carmelites themselves in which the term contemplation

(contemplatio) is mentioned explicitly are the Flaming Arrow (*Ignea sagitta*) by Nicholas of France (or of Norbonne), written about 1270, and the Constitutions of 1281.

Nicholas of France was elected prior general at the General Chapter held in Toulouse in 1266 and he resigned from this position in 1271. Protesting against what he described as the “utter passing away” of the Order’s spirit, Nicholas did not recognise this “new order that has appeared in the cities” and he held that the mitigation of the Rule in 1247 to allow Carmelites to make foundations “in solitary places or in sites given to you, suitable and convenient for the observance of your religious life” had been misinterpreted and that foundations in “unsuitable and inconvenient sites should not lead to the introduction of a way of life foreign to our order.” He described the order of Carmel as a mother dealing with her legitimate sons (those who remained faithful to the eremitical ideal) and with her stepsons (the innovators in the Order who supported the move to the cities).

Nicholas describes the Carmelite Order as being distinguished by the “greater sureness” of its “sacred contemplation,” commenting that all wanted to gaze (*contemplari*) on its “ravishing beauty” in comparison to other Orders:

Have you forgotten that you were rightly counted as “gold,” in your former state, for the excellence of your devotion? For just as gold is more precious than other metals, so were you distinguished among all the Orders for the greater sureness of your sacred contemplation (*propter secretioris contemplationis securitatem ampliorem*). Was not

your "colour" then "fine" above all others, radiant with the purest chastity, ruddy with the flush of modesty? Was not your holiness such in the sight of all that all desired to gaze (contemplari) on the ravishing beauty that was yours?

Referring to the texts of the Carmelite Rule, he notes that the first Carmelites strove (at home in their cells, not wandering the streets) "to ponder the law of the Lord and watch at their prayers (in lege Domini meditari et in orationibus vigilare)," not because they were compelled to, but happily, moved by joy of spirit. Nicholas tells the Carmelites that they served both themselves and their neighbours better when they persevered in solitude in their contemplations:

As long as you persevered in solitude in your contemplations, prayers and holy exercises (in solitudine contemplationibus, orationibus ac sanctis operibus), with profit to yourselves, the renown of your holiness, wafted abroad like a perfume, far and wide, over city and town, brought wonderful comfort to all those it reached; and it attracted many, in those days, to the solitude of the desert, edified by its fragrance, and drawn, as though by a cord of tenderness, to repent of their misdeeds.

In other words, it was the contemplations, prayers, and holy exercises of the Carmelites in the solitude of their desert that gained a reputation of holiness for them.

Nicholas was not, as such, opposed to active ministry. He notes that "some of our predecessors," a reference to the monks and hermits of ancient

times, the successors of our Lord and of his Apostles, rather than to earlier Carmelites, had "sometimes ... though rarely" engaged in preaching:

Sometimes, however, though rarely, they came down from their desert, anxious, so as not to fail in what they regarded as their duty, to be of service to their neighbours and sowed broadcast of the grain, threshed out in preaching, that they had so sweetly reaped in solitude with the sickle of contemplation (in solitudine falce contemplationis suaviter messuerant).

Contemplation, in other words, was the means by which the harvest of their solitary lives was reaped and, in order to make the harvest available to others, ancient monks and hermits sometimes threshed the chaff from the grain by preaching and sowed it broadcast so that it might bear fruit among those who heard their preaching. Describing the distinctive characteristics of the Carmelite Order as having been providentially modelled on Mary of Bethany, Nicholas distinguished these characteristics from those Orders that providence had modelled on her sister, Martha:

For the Lord, whose providence is unerring in its dispositions, designedly set some in the desert with Mary, when it was his purpose to array the garden of the Church Militant with a diversity of Orders, and others with Martha in the city. Those endowed with learning, industrious in the study of the Scriptures, and of adequate moral probity, he established in the city, so that they could exercise their zeal in nourishing the people with his word. Those of a simpler cast, however, those with whom he holds secret colloquy (*Simpliciores vero, cum quibus est secreta eius sermocinatio*),

he marked out to be sent into the desert with the Prophet who said: "I have journeyed afar in flight; I fixed my abode in the wilderness. I awaited him who saved me from faintheartedness, and from the tempest" (Ps 54:8-9).

Although Nicholas claimed Mary's "better part" (see Lk 10:42) for the Carmelites, the Lord holding "secret colloquy" with them, he recognised that they were "of a simpler cast" than those whose way of life was providentially modelled on Martha. They would need to be "endowed with learning, industrious in the study of the Scriptures, and of adequate moral probity ... so that they could exercise their zeal in nourishing the people with his word."

For Nicholas, the spousal relationship and conversation between Christ, their heavenly Bridegroom, and his Bride, the "contemplative soul" of each Carmelite, took place in the secrecy of their separate cells. He also refers to "the priceless and incomparable treasure of fragrant contemplation" of which Carmelites are given a glimpse in their cells so that they "might rapidly become totally consumed with a burning desire for it." Thanks to the gift of contemplation, the cell becomes, as it were, a wine cellar in which each Carmelite becomes soberly inebriated with "the wondrous wine of devotion, until they fall asleep on the glorious bed of contemplation."

The second text from the early Carmelite tradition in which there is an explicit reference to contemplation is that of Carmelite Constitutions from the General Chapter held in London in 1281:

"We declare, bearing testimony to the truth, that from the time when the prophets Elijah and Elisha

dwelt devoutly on Mount Carmel, holy Fathers both of the Old and New testament, in holy penitence unceasingly and successfully maintained in a praiseworthy manner in the same place, near the fountain of Elijah, have, as true lovers of heavenly things, frequented the solitude of the same mountain for the sake of contemplation (*eiusdem montis solitudinem pro contemplatione caelestium tamquam veri amatores ... conversati*)."

This explicit identification of contemplation as the goal of the Carmelite Order, and its association with the Old Testament prophets, Elijah and Elisha, is given a certain solemnity by the phrase "bearing testimony to the truth."

CONCLUSIONS

There are various references to prayer, meditation, and contemplation, in the early documents of the Carmelite Order. These terms seem to be used consistently in a way that differentiates the normally oral prayers of petition or confession from meditation on the texts of Scripture and in a way that differentiates contemplation from other activities by drawing a parallel with the distinction between Mary and Martha.

Important is the strong emphasis on contemplation as a distinguishing feature of the Carmelites in papal documents written between the Formula of Life and the Rule and in documents written by Carmelites after, but also possibly before, the Rule was written.

The context of Albert's intertextual reference to the phrase "blessing of the Holy Spirit" (Rule ch. 1) shows, that Albert probably understood this

phrase as describing the gift of contemplative illumination that those who have wrestled long and hard, but successfully, with the God's word, may receive from the Holy Spirit. The identification of contemplation as a characteristic of the Carmelites was not a later imposition, in other words, because Albert's greeting, which is preserved intact in the Carmelite Rule, included an implicit reference to the Spirit's gift of contemplation.

It seems likely that Albert regarded vocal prayers of petition and confession addressed to Jesus, and meditation on the Law of their Lord, as the normative activities of those vassals of Jesus Christ who had chosen this particular formula of life. He seems to have envisaged their meditation on the Law of their Lord as taking the form of a long and arduous wrestling with the Word that, if successful, might gain the blessing of the Holy Spirit in the form of a contemplative enlightenment. Albert probably regarded their prayers, meditation, and contemplative enlightenment, in turn, as equipping the hermit-brothers with the protection that they needed in the spiritual battle that is outlined in numbers 18-21 of the Formula of Life and of the Rule.

From then on there was an ongoing debate in Carmelite Order on how to reconcile activity and contemplation, the eremitical roots and a mendicant lifestyle, without betraying their former ideals. Since that time every reform in the Order's history pretended to revive the contemplative-eremitical ideals and to defend them against the exercise of the active sacred ministry.

This also applies to the Reform of Teresa of Ávila, who wanted to return to the original Rule. However, it

is noteworthy that she assesses the relation between Mary and Martha differently than the New Testament and the old tradition of the Order do.

St. Martha was holy, though we are never told she was a contemplative; would you not be content with resembling this blessed woman who deserved to receive Christ our Lord so often into her home, where she fed and served Him, and where He ate at her table, and even, perhaps, off her own plate ? If she had always been enraptured like the Magdalene there would have been no one to offer food to this divine Guest. Imagine, then, that this community is the house of St. Martha where there must be different kinds of people. Let not the nun who is called to the active life murmur at others who are absorbed in contemplation, for she knows our Lord will defend them; as a rule, they themselves are silent, for the 'better part' makes them oblivious of themselves and of all else. Remember that some one must cook the food, and think yourself favoured by being allowed to serve with Martha. Reflect that true humility consists in being willing and ready to do what our Lord asks of us. (Way of perfection XVII,4)

"Believe me, both Martha and Mary must entertain our Lord and keep Him as their Guest, nor must they be so inhospitable as to offer Him no food." (Inner Castle VI/4/17)

"... this is the reason of the spiritual marriage whose children are always good works."

This is not new. Meister Eckhart already explained in his Sermon 28:

"When she [Mary] [still] sat at the feet of our Lord, she [still] was not Mary: she was, of course, Mary in name but [still] not in her being because she was [still] sitting there in joy and sweetness but had just

begun to be schooled and to learn about life. But Martha was very steadfast in her being. ... Again, some people hope to reach a point where they are free of works. [However,] I say this cannot be. After the disciples had received the Holy Ghost, they began to do good works. And so, when Mary sat at the feet of our Lord, she was [still] learning, for she had just gone to school to learn how to live. But later on, when Christ had gone to heaven and she received the Holy Ghost, she began to serve: she travelled overseas and preached and taught, acting as a servant and washer-woman to the disciples."

So Martha is the one who has returned from contemplation to action. It is a point that Mary still has to reach. It is good that she is still listening, but she cannot continue in this way forever.

Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi also formulated an original interpretation of Jesus' meeting with Martha and Mary (Lk 10,38-42): "I see that the sisters do not stand still, but move constantly in this lovely meadow. It is the place between the heart and the wound in the side of the crucified Christ. They are not always to stay in His heart, the hidden and secret nuptial chamber of the soul of the bride, nor always to stay in the wound in His side, but in between. For they are not always to do as Mary did, nor always as Martha, nor even to be content with only one perfection or to enjoy God within themselves. But they are to help to lead many, many souls to God, so that He may be loved and enjoyed by many. After they have spent sufficient time in the secret nuptial chamber of the heart, they should hurry to show themselves at the small opening of the side wound to call the many souls who stray. They should do this with an encouraging and loving desire for the salvation of their souls."

Mary Magdalene pleads for a balance between contemplation and action, understanding action primarily as salvation of the soul.

She uses an interesting image, that is, the image of showing herself at the opening of the wound in Christ's side to make converts.

The wound in the side of Jesus stands for evidence of Jesus' death, evidence that he really died, died for us, for the salvation of our souls. Therefore, the Church and the sacraments spring from the wound in Jesus' side, as it symbolizes the act of salvation performed by God.

Mary Magdalene explains that, based on a devout confidence that he or she is already saved and taking part in Christ, a contemplative looks at the world and sees it from Christ's perspective. Seeing how many people still need salvation, he or she cannot remain indifferent. Therefore action is a naturally result of the experience of contemplation and the close relationship with Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer.

REFORM OF TOURAINE

The Carmelites of Tours were unanimously in favour of the Carmel's contemplative ideal and – in keeping with their time – identified contemplative life with internal prayer, which is why they eagerly integrated its methodical practice into their daily schedule. The systematic pursuit of this tendency, however, was bound to threaten the apostolate and the entire traditional framework of Carmelite life. Consequently, it was not the concept or the purpose of Carmel that was being questioned, namely its contemplative vocation, but the problem of how to reconcile apostolate and action in a

proper fashion. The point at issue was how to integrate all those elements into a fruitful concept of monastic life, a meaningful daily routine conducive to initiating a spiritual development process in the sense of an ever closer relationship with God, and to guiding and supporting this process in such a way as to lead to its goal of a reunion with God.¹

The “Reigles et statuts” of 1612 and the “Exercitia Conventualia” of 1615 expressly refer to the 10th chapter of the Carmel Rule prescribing that “die ac nocte in lege Domini meditantes et in orationibus vigilantes”. Thibault emphasised:

“Although the popes granted the Carmelites certain exceptions to their Rule ... they never admitted any moderation when it came to meditating day and night on the Law of the Lord which is the essence of our holy order’s spirit.”²

“The most important thing ... is to keep continuously empty for God”, Jean de Saint-Samson wrote and he continued, “... in perfect purity of the spirit and the body, in a living, current and continuous presence of God. ... The spirit of our order is based on this state.”³

However, whenever discussing this ideal, the members of the group of Tours much more than previously affirmed the personal and inwardly directed character of a life lived in the presence of God. With reference to the order’s ideal, the “Rei-

¹ Cf. JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 190.

² Quoted from: JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 190 (translated by the author).

³ Quoted from: JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 191 (translated by the author).

gles et statuts" prescribe: "...that among us a permanent seclusion and inner activity be observed", whereas the "Exercitia" explicitly state that, "the most essential part of our institute is ... the continuous meditation of God and keeping oneself constantly in His presence." Thibault made it quite clear that it was "the internal prayer and the inwardly directed life that are the essence of the true spirit of the Carmel".⁴

Dominique de Saint-Albert, a disciple of Jean de Saint-Samson and later on novice master himself affirmed in his "Exercitatio spiritualis"⁵ that observance did not simply consist in heeding the external vows and rules, in complying punctually with the exercise of the nightly and daily officium and other things, nor in merely keeping to the rigid outward discipline, "but, above all, in constantly striving for holy prayer and meditation"⁶. Elsewhere he wrote: "We have to make prayer the essence of our lives"⁷.

This evaluation of the internal prayer is ultimately reflected by the way the chapters of the Constitutions of 1646 are subdivided compared to the edition dating from 1626. In the Constitutions of 1646, the three chapters dedicated to the vows are followed by "De Officio Divino, seu oratione vocali" as chapter 13 and by "De Oratione Mentali" as chapter 14. The fact that these two chapters

⁴ Quoted from: JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 191 (translated by the author).

⁵ Full title: "*Exercitatio spiritualis fratrum tom novitiorum quam professorum in nostro Carmeli Rhedonensis novitiatu degentium*" (cf. BRENNINGER J., *Dominicus a S. Alberto: Opuscula*, 23).

⁶ Cf. BRENNINGER J., *Dominicus a S. Alberto: Opuscula*, 24 (translated by the author).

⁷ DOMINIQUE DE SAINT-ALBERT, *Traité de l'oraison mental*, in: BRENNINGER J., *Dominicus a Sancto Alberto*, 297 Note 8 (translated by the author).

are included immediately after a description of the vows is indicative of the importance the reformers of Tours attached to the life of prayer. The appendix to the title of chapter 13, "*seu oratione vocali*", was probably added with the intention of conceding a similar importance to the personal prayer as to the "*Officium divinum*".

The first paragraph of chapter 14 can be regarded as a declaration of the principles of the Reform of Tours:

"1. It should be deeply engraved in our hearts that the prayer be the soul of the religious or the priest and that they themselves will also deprivation, whenever prayer is neglected. As long as prayer is performed dutifully the soul will live. This is consequently valid for our holy Order, and we bear witness that the primary and most important part of our vocation consists in prayer and contemplation."

"Thus the holiness of the Carmelite caring of the soul and reformation must be deeply engraved in the souls. Everyone should constantly think and speak of everything pertaining to this with the utmost deference and with the admonition that being obedient to God be the best part of a Carmelite."⁸

DAILY SCHEDULE

In the monastery a truly contemplative atmosphere had to be created and observed. This is why the reformers kept to the traditional daily schedule as far as possible.

⁸ ManKonst 60f.

The acts of the Congregation published in 1619 extended the time for joint internal prayer to two hours per day. One hour of prayer in the morning that could be subdivided into two half hours, one half after the morning prayer, and the other half at 6.00 a.m. The second hour was scheduled for the time after the vespers. And all those friars who because of some commitment did not find the time to pray were expected to make up for lost prayer time within two to three hours.⁹

The Constitutions of 1646, after all, prescribed that all the friars came together for contemplation in the choir or any other appropriate place twice every day.

The Divine Office should be read in a “lowered and moderate” voice and sung in a “solemn tone”. With a few exceptions, singing is reduced in favour of recitation in order to save time for the internal prayer.¹⁰

The reformed constitutions tightened the rules according to which no one could be excluded from the Divine Office, whilst reading religious books was not permitted during this period.¹¹ The foundation of new convents was prohibited if this implied a commitment to take part in the Divine Office and the Mass outside the monastery.¹²

All time-related elements were simply integrated into the daily schedule and, not unexpectedly,

⁹ Cf. ANTOINE-MARIE DE LA PRÉSENTATION, *La Réforme de Touraine*, 194.

¹⁰ Cf. JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 212; the Discalced also adopted this, cf. TERESA VON AVILA, *Satzungen*, in: ALKHOFFER A., VI., 219.

¹¹ Cf. Konst. 1646 I-13-2 and I-13-17.

¹² Cf. Konst. 1646 I-13-28.

a marked priority was given to the personal internal prayer.¹³

In addition to communal contemplation taking place twice every day, time-related elements such as searching one's conscience three times every day¹⁴, a 10-day retreat every year¹⁵ and renewal of vows after the prayer lasting 40 hours were introduced¹⁶.

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

In order to ensure a contemplative atmosphere in the monastery, the group of Tours attached great value to the practice of silence and solitude. And here again the reformers of Tours could refer to traditional rules that had shaped the Carmel.

The "Reigles et statuts" as well as the "Exercitia Conventualia" underlined the importance of silence in monastic life.¹⁷ External silence was an essential part of the rules, but, as the spiritual authors commented, it was only a means, not an end in itself. For a Carmelite, the goal was to attain inner silence through external, as Jean de Saint-Samson explained:

"With the power of reason and the active will, true inner silence suppresses and controls the flow of the unrestrained and excessive animal passions of primitive man, submitting all those impulses to reason."¹⁸

¹³ Cf. JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 194.

¹⁴ *Exercitia Conventualia* Kap. 4, No. 2; Konst. 1646 I-14-9.

¹⁵ Konst. 1646 I-14-8, which can be traced back to Jesuit influences, cf. I.1.2.8.

¹⁶ Konst. 1646 I-14-10. This prayer lasting 40 hours and the renewal of vows indicate the start of the reform in Rennes (cf. above Kap. I.2.1.4.).

¹⁷ *Exercitia Conventualia* Kap. 10.

¹⁸ Quoted from: JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 194 (translated by the author).

In this silence, the soul may ultimately reach a close relationship with God. Silence and solitude form a unity. It was, above all, solitude that was important to the reformers of Tours, since they saw themselves as spiritual heirs of the ancient hermits of Mount Carmel. Like them they wanted to live in solitude. This is why Thibault gave the novices the following advice:

“The novice’s solitude is bound to evoke in him a desire for the life of our Holy Fathers of Carmel and for deserts of Thebes. The permission granted by the Pope to leave the cells, if only for works of charity, will fill the hearts of the Carmelites with a continuous desire for living in seclusion in their cells, so as to contemplate the Law of the Lord by day and by night.”¹⁹

In comparison with the Constitutions of 1626, the Constitutions of 1646 take account of this in that they do not extend the period of silence established by the Rule between the compline until the prime of the following day. Instead they introduce the rule that speaking has to be brief and low even where it is not explicitly prohibited and there is good reason for it.²⁰ Furthermore, much emphasis is laid on doing manual labour in silence²¹. At table conversation after the reading is forbidden.²²

A separate chapter is dedicated to abiding in the cell, which is referred to as “locus sanctus”²³. Nov-

¹⁹ Quoted from: JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 195 (translated by the author).

²⁰ Konst. 1646 I-15-3 and I-15-4 and I-15-7.

²¹ Konst. 1646 I-15-5.

²² Konst. 1646 I-16-13. and I-16-17.

²³ Konst. 1646 I-17-1.

ices should spend much time in the cell, look after it and keep it clean.

THE APOSTOLATE

Concerning the above-mentioned features of monastic life, the reformers of Tours were in agreement. There was, however, some controversy over the question of the importance of the apostolate.

There were two opposing fractions within the group. One fraction, represented mainly by Thibault, considered the apostolate to be an integral, if certainly not the most important part of Carmelite life. The other fraction, chiefly Jean de Saint-Samson and his followers, regarded active life as absolutely insignificant. The fact that the Carmelites had become mendicants actively taking part in the apostolate in towns was, in the opinion of these friars, disastrous for the order. They regarded the eremitical origin as the most important point of reference in the Order's history.²⁴

"A superior must not urge the friars to engage in activities, except in case of necessity; he must rather encourage them to love loneliness and seclusion and support all those who feel thus inclined... A superior who gives priority to a secondary matter destroys and ruins everything."²⁵

This does not mean that Jean de Saint-Samson wanted to exclude every form of the apostolate from the reform, but rather that the apostolate

²⁴ Cf. JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 196.

²⁵ Jean de Saint Samson, quoted from: BRENNINGER J., *Ioannes a S. Samson*, 41, notes (33) and (34) (translated by the author).

had to be given less importance, since all activity threatened the inner loneliness and the close relationship with God, which remains the essence of Carmel. The same concern motivated him to devise a variety of rules for conversation and recreational periods and to denigrate science, the dangers of which he never tired to emphasise.²⁶

Thibault and his followers had quite a different attitude. Thibault's life was overflowing with activity. He continuously preached to the people, visited his disciples, gave catechism lessons and travelled widely in his capacity as a reformer of the Carmelites and other monks.²⁷ This attitude was shared by many other members of the group of Tours, who considered the apostolate to be an indispensable component of Carmelite life. Thibault's attention therefore focussed on studying and other activities right from the start.²⁸

An interesting aspect in this context was the reform to the Constitution of 1646, according to which the prior was supposed to make the friars visit a prison or a hospital for the sake of Christian charity.²⁹

Another concession to the apostolate allowed confessors or preachers who were unable to hold their meditations at the scheduled times to postpone them.³⁰

²⁶ Cf. BRENNINGER J., *Ioannes a S. Samsone*, 43-52.

²⁷ Cf. TIMOTHEUS A PRAESENTATIONE B.M.V., *Vita*, 54-56.

²⁸ Cf. TIMOTHEUS A PRAESENTATIONE B.M.V., *Vita*, 57-61 and 65f.; BOUCHE-REAU S.-M., *La Réforme*, 373-375.

²⁹ Cf. Konst. 1646 I-19-21.

³⁰ Cf. Konst. 1646 I-14-3.

The two tendencies had a strong influence on each other. Those who understood the apostolate as an indispensable activity were by no means blind to the underlying dangers. They tried to avoid them, not by refraining from the apostolate as much as possible the way Jean de Saint-Samson had demanded, but rather by trying to integrate such activities into the contemplative atmosphere.³¹

WALKING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND ASPIRATIVE PRAYER

Above all, two forms of prayer shaped the spirituality of the Reform of Tours, namely “walking in the presence of God” and the “aspirative prayer”. None of these two prayer forms was invented by the group of Tours, they both had a long tradition. A characteristic feature of the reformers’ project, however, was the emphasis laid on these two forms of prayer. The reformers even conferred to them the rank of methodical exercises in which all friars were instructed from the very beginning of their monastic life.³²

Both spiritual tendencies within the group of the reformers described before were in agreement as to the importance of these exercises. This conviction was something like the lowest common denominator in spiritual terms that the diverging fractions continued to share.

In his instructions for his fellow-religious and novices Thibault explained:

31 Cf. JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 197.

32 Cf. JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 197.

"No religious man will ever be able to benefit from the Carmelite's spirituality unless he tenderly and wholeheartedly loves the spiritual life and the inner dialogue with God through the dutiful exercise of His divine presence in himself and in others..."³³ Hughes de Saint-François, his biographer, wrote: "He (Thibault) teaches them (the novices) that the only way to retain the radiant image of God within themselves is through dialogue with Him in internal prayer and through dutifully walking in His holy presence. This capacity is brought about by loving aspirations and inflamed by the fire of love."³⁴

In his "Exertitatio spiritualis" Dominique de Saint-Albert gave a detailed description of the two exercises. On the subject of "walking in the presence of God" he wrote:

"It is therefore universally acknowledged that, in order to accomplish true prayer and the perfect inner dialogue, the earthly soul, already purged from all desires, must exercise itself in the loving, effective and everlasting presence of God. This goal cannot be attained in any other way, neither by reading a lot books, nor by deliberate orientation of the senses and high-flying speculations."³⁵

ioJean de Saint-Samson defined the "aspirative prayer" as follows:

³³ Quoted from: JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 198 (translated by the author).

³⁴ Quoted from: JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 198 (translated by the author).

³⁵ Quoted from: BRENNINGER J., *Dominicus a S. Alberto: Opuscula*, 34 (translated by the author).

"Aspiration is not merely a loving dialogue, even though this may be good exercise which helps to generate the aspiration that precedes the exercise. It is an ardent and loving uplift of the heart and the spirit that inspires the soul, by transcending itself and the creation, to closely unite with God in the liveliness of its loving expression. This expression, thus made essential, transcends all sensual, rational, intellectual and comprehensible love. The soul accomplishes the union with God through the impact of the divine spirit and its power. This is not an arduous process, but a sudden transformation of the spirit in God."³⁶

The aspirative prayer gradually develops its full scope along the way to enlightenment; it is an excellent means to attain the union with God, the contemplative life, because it helps to further strengthen and purify love. This is why the aspirative prayer is an integral part of the Carmelites' spirituality who have to become familiar with it right from the beginning of the novitiate.³⁷

Finally, the theory and method of these two forms of praying were explained in some detail in the fourth volume of the "Directoires des Novices" under the heading of 'Méthode claire et facile pour bien faire Oraison Mentale et pour s'exercer avec fruit en la Présence de Dieu'. The novices were supposed to systematically learn the practise of constant prayer and expected to be able to

³⁶ Quoted from: JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 199 (translated by the author).

³⁷ Cf. JANSSEN C., *Jean de Saint-Samson*, 206-209, and *Directorium Carmelitanum vitae spiritualis*, Cap. IV, 453-486.

preserve this attitude, even if they had to pursue activities outside the monastery.

To the reformers of Tours these forms of praying were an ideal way of harmoniously reconciling the apostolate and contemplation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Observance of tradition and adaptation to the demands of the time, return to the origins and integration of contemporary were all among the objectives of the Reform of Tours. Hence the creativity of the group of Tours does not lie so much in devising new forms, but rather in elaborating on old Carmelite forms against the background of contemporary requirements and developments and through the successful integration of modern forms into the traditional spirituality of Carmel. The reformers strove to create a contemplative atmosphere within the convent and to safeguard its observance during active commitment in the apostolate. This produced different tendencies in the course of history, especially concerning legislation. The methodological approach of the reformers was very pragmatic and empirical, i.e. forms were tested and, depending on the experiences made, kept to, changed or dropped. Therefore, Marc de la Nativité was able to write in the Avant-propos to the third volume of his "Directoire des Novices": "Although these practices described here may seem insignificant, they have been conscientiously applied in our reformation for 50 years."³⁸

³⁸ MARC DE LA NATIVITÉ, «*La vie reguliere ... Faisant troisieme traitte de la conduite spirituelle des novices*», Paris 1651, quoted from: JANSSEN P.W., *Origines*, 200f (translated by the author).

The **Carmelite Directory of spiritual life**, which was published in the English translation in 1952 (originally in Latin: *Directorium Carmelitanum vitae spiritualis*, Rome 1940), is describing in the tradition of the Reform the difference between meditation and contemplation:

156. MEDITATION AND ITS PARTS

I. Meditation is the attentive consideration of some subject in order that we may better perceive divine truth and our own duties, elicit holy affections, advance in the spiritual life and be more closely united to God. ...

(c) We speak here, however, of methodical or discursive meditation. In this sort of prayer, the individual considers the proposed subject in a certain definite order and goes over each point thoroughly. In this it differs from contemplation which in an instant and, as it were, at a glance, sees everything that is hidden in the mystery or other pious topic.

(d) Although we have insisted upon the necessity of mental prayer, we have not equally asserted the necessity of a determined method. Indeed, there are many different methods of making a meditation. As the religious progresses in prayer, he will form his own method as experience dictates. Nevertheless, in the beginning it is essential to have some set method, lest mere caprice be followed and the time of prayer be wasted.

(e) To avoid this last pitfall we shall explain here the method which came into use among us after

the Reform of Touraine. The characteristic of this method is that it allots greater time for the affections and hence prepares the way for contemplation itself. For as Father Michael of St. Augustine says, "It should be recognized that meditation is merely the way to contemplation" (Inst. Myst. 1, tr. 4, c. 16).

(f) According to this method, meditation has three parts. Each part corresponds to one of the three faculties of the soul that enter into prayer. First the matter must be assembled and presented to the intellect as the object on which it is to occupy itself in thought. This pertains to the memory. Secondly, we consider, dwell upon and digest the matter. This pertains to the intellect. Finally, we resolve by our will to carry out in practice the obligations we have learned. Thus, the memory suggests, the intellect meditates and is enlightened, the will is filled with holy affections, good desires and resolutions concerning the practice of virtue.

Due preparation must, of course, precede all these steps.³⁹

What becomes very clear here, and what is also decisive for the present understanding, is that contemplation is a goal that Carmelites hope to achieve, but which cannot be produced by a specific method. The method serves the preparation, the opening for the experience of contemplation, which is a gift and remains a gift and cannot be produced. A contemplative attitude includes working at this opening of oneself and

³⁹ *The Carmelite Directory of the Spiritual Life*, Chicago 1951, 370-373.

one's life for the experience, but not describing the actual experience.

Our spirituality has also been influenced by Guigos II (+ 1193), who in his *Scala Claustralium* (The Ladder of Monks) or *Scala Paradisi* (The Ladder of Paradise) states that spiritual life, or rather *lectio divina*, consists of *lectio*, *meditatio*, *oratio* and contemplation. The first three stages require human activity and practice and prepare for the gift of contemplation. In this final stage, the human being is the receiver and God the sole actor.

The **Constitutions** from 1995 have in Chapter II, The Charism of the Order, the following headings: 1. The contemplative dimension of our life, 2. Fraternity, 3. Service in the midst of the people, 4. Elijah and Mary our inspirations, 5. The Carmelite Family.

The contemplative dimension was seen as part of the Charism such as Fraternity etc.

Taking serious the development of the last decades especially the Ratio, in the draft for the new Constitutions we changed one heading and the fundamental concept of Chapter II.

The contemplative dimension is not part of the charism, it is the fundamental attitude, the most important approach to live our charism.

The first heading is now changed into "Prayer" instead of "The contemplative dimension of our life."

Important changes of the text are:

14. Carmelites live their life of allegiance to Christ through a commitment to seek the face of the living God in a contemplative attitude exer-

cised in a life of prayer, fraternity and service in the midst of the people.⁴⁰ The orientation towards contemplation is not merely one of the elements of our charism, which is formed by prayer, fraternity and service; it is the dynamic element which unifies them. These values must be lived beyond any cultural differences.⁴¹

15. The spiritual tradition of the Order has stressed that these three fundamental elements of the charism are not distinct and unrelated values, but closely interwoven. They are held together by the ancient value of contemplation.

...

This process of detachment which leads to union with God - the ultimate goal of all human growth - is found in our spirituality in the expressions "purity of heart" ("*puritas cordis*") and "total availability to God ("*vacare Deo*"). These indicate a total openness to God and a gradual self-emptying.

Through this process, when we come to see reality with God's eyes, our attitude towards the world is transformed according to his love, and the contemplation of the loving presence of God will be seen in our lives of fraternity and of service.

16. Seeking the face of the living God in a contemplative attitude has shaped the Carmelite life from the very beginning. This is clearly reflected in the Rule,

⁴⁰ RIVC, 2013, 4.

⁴¹ RIVC, 2013, 50.

which describes a community of brothers, totally dedicated to a prayerful attention to the Word,⁴² celebrating and praising the Lord with zeal.⁴³

...

Through living like Christ, in solidarity with the events and the hopes of the human race,⁴⁴ Carmelites will be able to make appropriate decisions to be open to the transformation of life, making it conform more closely to the will of the Father. Moreover, for the good of the Church, Our openness to contemplation will encourage those who feel called to an eremetical life. As a contemplative fraternity, we seek the face of God and we serve the Church in the world or possibly in eremetical solitude.

17. The tradition of the Order has always interpreted the Rule and the founding charism as expressions of the contemplative dimension of life, and the great spiritual teachers of the Carmelite Family have always returned to this contemplative vocation. Contemplation also has a Gospel and an ecclesial value.

Contemplation begins when we entrust ourselves to God, in whatever way he chooses to approach us; it is an attitude of openness to God, whose presence we discover in all things.

Thus, contemplation is the inner journey of Carmelites, arising out of the free initiative of God, who touches and transforms us, leading us towards unity of love with him, raising us up so that

⁴² *Rule*, 10.

⁴³ *Rule*, 11.

⁴⁴ GS 1.

we may enjoy this gratuitous love and live in his loving presence.

It is a transforming experience of the overpowering love of God. This love empties us of our limited and imperfect human ways of thinking, loving, and behaving, transforming them into divine ways.

These changes will make the understanding of contemplation very clear and consistent with the Carmelite tradition.

This draft also provides texts that are suitable for *lectio divina*, for meditation, for one is still presented with the usual challenge of translating this general description into the concrete, cultural, social, ecclesial, pastoral and personal reality in a creative way. Still, irrespective of situation and place, it will only be a preparation, an opening of oneself for the gift of contemplation.

"ABILITY TO GIVE LOVE AND GIVE OF ONESELF"

3 NOVEMBER 2016

QUINN CONNERS, O.CARM.

The ability to give love and give of oneself is an adult skill. In the psychological world and in particular the study of human development, that ability is seen as an important and necessary part of human growth and maturation whether one is married, single or a consecrated celibate. The individuals who are called to religious life as Carmelites are expected to be able to grow in their ability to give love and give of oneself, and our formation programs are intended to be environments in which that ability is developed, encouraged, and evaluated. It is part of the discernment process in determining whether they believe and we formators believe they are called to solemn vows and to service in the Church.

My approach to this topic relies heavily on the psychological sciences, especially the study of human development. While relying primarily on psychology, it is my firm conviction that such insight into human development is key to growing in "the contemplative dimensions of one's life," which is, of course, the theme of our program these two weeks. We cannot grow in holiness if we are not building our spirituality on a solid human

formation and growth. To borrow from a book published in the 1950's, *Holiness is Wholeness*.¹

Two of our most important Carmelite spiritual writers were convinced of this. Teresa of Avila wrote: "The biggest problem in the spiritual life is a lack of self-knowledge." (Way of Perfection, p.) Theresa's self-knowledge was astounding. She was no fool about her own shortcomings as well as her gifts, both of which she brought to her relationship with God. John of the Cross wrote: "The first and chief benefit that this dry and dark night of contemplation causes is the knowledge of self and of one's own misery... the benefits... flow from self-knowledge as their fount." (The Dark Night, I, 12, 2) He clearly brought his experience of life whether in or out of prison to the Lord with an honesty that is compelling. These two were extraordinary writers who described the path of the soul that has offered incredible help to people across continents, centuries, and cultures. They knew that the key to experience ever deepening intimacy with God occurred when people were able to be deeply honest with themselves and with God.

Pope John Paul II wrote in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*,² #43 that "The whole work of [priestly]formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation." Pope Francis echoes that same concern in *Amoris Laetitia*³ (#203) published just this year when he made the following observation: "There is a need to ensure

¹ JOSEF GOLDBRUNNER (1955), New York: Pantheon.

² POPE JOHN PAUL II (1992), Liberia Editrice Vaticana, #43.

³ POPE FRANCIS (2016), Liberia Editrice Vaticana, #203.

that the formation process can enable them [seminarians] to attain the maturity and psychological balance needed for their future ministry."

So, our work as formators is to help our formandi in initial formation and formation for service to develop their "ability to give love and give of oneself" as foundational in their own human, pastoral and spiritual growth. Such a goal is not a pious, vague hope. The ability to give love and give of oneself is made up of specific skills that our formandi can develop and that we can assist them in developing. These skills can also be ways by which we help them and the Provincial leadership evaluate and assess their readiness for advancement to the novitiate, simple profession, solemn profession and Orders if that is part of their vocation. These skills are also connected, of course, to their ability to offer service to God's people with integrity and freedom, which is what we will talk about in my second presentation next week.

Let me say from the outset that this particular work in the formation process is a reflection of work done in the "cell" and in the "chapel," to pick up the theme of this conference. It is the work of both personal reflection done by the individual in formation. But it is also the work of receiving "feedback" from his formators and from his peers. It is information or knowledge about himself that surfaces in the context of the formation program and community living.

Agenda for this presentation:

1. ROLE OF THE FORMATOR
2. INTIMACY AND SKILLS FOR DOING INTIMACY
3. BLOCKS FOR DOING INTIMACY

I: THE ROLE OF THE FORMATOR

Let me begin by talking about the role of the formator in helping formandi develop the ability to give love and give of oneself by discussing the role of the formator. That role is very thoroughly described in the *Ratio Institutionis Vitae Carmelitanae* (RIVC), the third edition of which was published in 2013 under the title: *Carmelite Formation: A Journey of Transformation*.⁴ As formators, we are asked by the provincial to assume the complex role of accompanier, counselor, mentor, supervisor⁵ to these individuals who come to Carmel in response to a desire for God.

Our challenge as formators is to create an atmosphere of safety so that these formandi can speak to us about who they are and how they are called to Carmel and to grow in that self-knowledge, how they can give love and give of themselves. Such an atmosphere of safety is created by several factors:

1. **Confidentiality:** knowing and creating the boundaries of confidentiality, i.e., who has access to the information someone in formation shares with you. It means that the individuals in formation know the limits ahead of time and who has access to that information, ultimately the provincial. It means that the formators are able to respect the limits of confidentiality in the work that they do. Formators do not share any information they have from their formandi with any individuals who are not

⁴ Rome: General Curia of the Carmelite Order, 2013.

⁵ CASEY, MICHAEL, OCSO. *The Art of Winning Souls: Pastoral Care of Novices*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press (2012), p. 40.

approved to hold such information. As a formator, do I know who is authorized to receive that information?

2. **Non-Judgmental Approach:** We listen to the life stories of these individuals in formation, the strengths and weakness of their family dynamics, their experience of maturing as sexual persons and whether they have the capacity to live their sexuality as consecrated celibates, their understanding of authority and the vow of obedience, their commitment to poverty and to the poor, etc. We listen to their stories in a non-judgmental way, whether those stories include anxiety about family members, interpersonal conflicts, a sudden onset of sexual energy, loneliness, concerns about health, difficulties with studies, etc. To be non-judgmental means to listen with compassion and understanding without criticizing. It does not mean that we listen uncritically in terms of their suitability for entry to the novitiate or simple profession, solemn profession or ordained ministry, but it does mean that they feel safe with us to talk about their issues. Good news and bad news must be received with equal acceptance, otherwise the whole truth of the person will never be told.
3. **Formator's Self-Knowledge.** We too must be on this journey of self-knowledge. We need to be doing our "work" on ourselves. So we need to have a degree of alertness about what is happening in

our lives and have appropriate support and counsel with that whether it be with our spiritual director or therapist or peers. Such self-knowledge includes our own issues around sexuality, loneliness, deaths of family and friends, absence of full-time ministry, etc. We need to be aware of how to get those needs met appropriately, which means that they are not taken care of with our formandi. So we need to be vigilant about not playing favorites, not isolating or not spending too much time on the computer or whatever we might do to not be fully available to our people in formation or to avoid the challenges in our own life story.

- a. Especially in the beginning, it is important for formators to have some form of supervision to help them see how their work is affecting them and how to maintain their own sense of self while continually emptying themselves in order to serve others better.⁶

II: INTIMACY AND SKILLS FOR DOING INTIMACY

What skills in this area of giving love and giving of self do we look for in our formandi? What behaviors do we want to see? I will present skills for the development of skills of self-knowledge, comprised of several other skills. From a human development perspective we're talking about the

⁶ CASEY, p. 46.

ability to do intimacy as one of the stages of human development identified by Erik Erikson, the famous developmental psychologist.

First, intimacy is the condition of knowing and being known at the level of our essential selves. Ask yourself: Does anyone know me at this level? Do I know anyone at this level?

Erik Erikson describes intimacy this way: "Intimacy involves a cluster of personal strengths that support our efforts to draw close to one another. Intimacy is the capacity to:

- Commit yourself to particular individuals (not humanity in general)
- In relationships that last over time
- And to meet accompanying demands for change
- In ways that do not compromise your personal integrity."

Think about your relationships both in community and outside of your community in light of these characteristics. Think about your formandi and their capacity to manifest these characteristics. You can observe it in the ways they do friendships within the community, outside of community, and ultimately how they connect with the Carmelite community.

What happens over time, of course, is that the commitment to the friendships forces us to grow up, challenging us where we are stuck in old but familiar self-images and patterns of self-centeredness. Are they open to those challenges in the formation process? Intimacy brings us face-to-face with those shadow parts of ourselves that we tend to deny and project onto others. Two con-

temporary spiritual writers put it this way: "When intimacy is accompanied by love, it can become a crucible for our wholeness, stirring up what needs to be integrated and holding us in love as we meet those parts of ourselves which we have feared and hated."⁷

Before talking about skills for intimacy, let me make two observations. First, contemporary psychologists like Erik Erikson, George Vaillant, and others talk about stages or tasks that each of us as adults must master, must accomplish, if we have to achieve maturity and fulfillment in our lives. One of those tasks is the experience of intimacy. It is achieved in different ways in different cultures, but it is a necessity for each of us, regardless of whether we marry or not.

Secondly, "Intimacy is the hallmark of the Christian life...As Christians we are called to experience ourselves as the beloved of God and to embrace others just as we ourselves have been so intimately embraced by God...We meet and reveal God, the God who is lover, only through one another."⁸ The primary way that we grow in intimacy with God is to use the skills we develop in our relationships of intimacy with women and men. We bring those skills into our relationship with God, and God shapes those skills in ways that will effect our friendships with those with whom we are intimate.

So, let us talk about more specific skills for doing intimacy. I would propose two skills for doing intimacy: Self-Disclosure & Self-Awareness

⁷ WILKIE AU & NOREEN CANNON. Υγγινγς οφ τηε Ηεαρτ. (1995).

⁸ AU & CANNON (1995).

The first skill for being able to do intimacy is the ability to self-disclose. Can your people in formation let others know about their experiences, their thoughts, and their feelings. To self-disclose I have to have the capacity to be able to do two other skills: The ability to listen and the ability to assert oneself.

The ability to listen requires that an individual be able to listen to himself and whatever is going on inside of him in the present moment in his life and in his time with you. Does he demonstrate the ability to talk about events in his life, relationships he has with family and with community members, his experience of the novitiate, doing academic studies, pastoral experiences and the feelings that he has about these experiences in his life? To be able to listen to himself means that he has the capacity to put aside the defensiveness he might feel about specific situations, including himself, and to talk with you in an open and non-defensive way.

The second part of this skill of listening includes being able to listen to feedback from other people, including you as the formator. Is he able to listen to feedback that may challenge his perception of himself and his behavior as others observe him? Most of us experience a certain amount of defensiveness and are inclined to defend ourselves, particularly if it is a painful situation or he is embarrassed about it or it is threatening to him because it has happened before and a pattern is emerging.

The second skill related to the skill of self-disclosure is the ability to assert. Can your formandi claim their own experience and put it forth in an open way? Assertiveness is a skill that is between 'aggressiveness,' focusing only on himself regard-

less of the feedback, and the opposite, the inability to put oneself forward. The latter can look more pious or like a false kind of humility. In order to grow as a human being and as an adult, it is vital that our formandi be able to present themselves in an honest and clear way.

The second set of skills for doing intimacy is the ability to be self-aware. This self-awareness is developed by moving in two directions:

1. Awareness of the many movements within in yourself in the present
2. A recovery of the influential forces in your past.

First, being more comfortable with yourself is achieved by paying attention to yourself and what happens inside of yourself in the present – whether it is done through noting one's day dreams, one's night dreams, surprising surges of apprehensions or anger or sadness or fear or joy. It is also important that your formandi can grow in talking appropriately their sexual feelings and awarenesses. When did I have sexual feelings? Was I attracted to a woman or man? What were the circumstances? What were the feelings? What did I do with them? Why am I often angrier with this person than with others? What is this fear about? These become important sources of self-knowledge that lead to self-intimacy and the ultimately also impact my spirituality and relationship with God.

Second, becoming more comfortable with your past is also important. It influences your present feelings and behaviors. Coming to grips with one's past –both the helpful and hurtful parts in you –

is very important. This is obviously connected to knowing one's psychosexual story and working with it: Looking at your experience of being active sexually, of sexual abuse, of no sexual experience, how influential shame and guilt are in you, etc. It can be used as a great resource for growth and re-working issues that can lead to increased interior freedom. It can also help you discern what boundaries they want to set in what circumstances and with what specific people or groups. Don Browning says that such comfort with the past is a sign of maturity in the person.

Assuming I am growing in my ability to be intimate with myself, the challenge is to be intimate with others, to be giving of oneself. Effective communication is critical here. I have to be able to communicate with others about who I am and what I am experiencing in a variety of different settings. The following are some skills that help deepen intimacy. They are some skills that are needed to communicate with another person in effective and intimate ways:

- Recognizing and expressing feelings
- Verbalizing thoughts and feelings clearly
- Reflecting accurately on one's behavior
- Listening and being attentive
- Self-disclosing appropriately
- Managing conflict effectively
- Ability to give and receive honest feedback
- Ability to give and receive emotional support
- Ability to set boundaries for self and with others
- Skills for assertiveness and reconciliation

It is important to see these as skills... skills that can be developed if we don't have them or improved on if we do have them. Think about the friendships of your formandi and evaluate to what extent these skills are present. Do you see them operative in their community relationships? If they are having a difficulty in a particular friendship right now, you might use these to see if you can pinpoint what the problem is for him: e.g., not expressing his feelings, not being honest about his behavior and its impact on others, not self-disclosing, etc.

So, some typical characteristics of intimacy include:

- Openness (what you see is what you get)
- Trust (always some fear/anxiety involved, but a basic confidence)
- Authenticity (being real)
- Exposure of vulnerability (involves exposing my weakness too)
- Boundaries respected (don't force myself on others)
- Does not attempt to change or control the other.
- Mutuality (will not always be the case; depends on the situation)

A question to ask him is: With whom is he intimate? With whom are those characteristics present in his life? Who are his intimate friends?

Let me say something about transparency with others, including formators, peers, in ministry, and with God. Transparency obviously has to do with the skill of self-disclosure. The level of transparency will vary depending on who one

is self-disclosing with. The level of transparency will be deeper with peers and with God than it will be in ministry. In ministry settings, the focus is on the person being ministered to, not himself. With formators, my experience is that formandi need to be open and honest with their formator about information he needs in his responsibility of evaluating them. Their comfort in doing that will vary depending on their comfort with and trust of the formator. There is no mutuality there because of two different roles.

Third, develop a variety of relationships that meet your different needs. Expecting that your religious community is going to meet all your needs for intimacy is unrealistic, just as a married person's needs for intimacy can't all be met by their spouse. The spouse is primary, but there are other sources for it. So look for a diversity of people (men, women, younger, older, religious, married, single, etc.).

III. WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES TO DOING INTIMACY?

First, let's talk about the challenges. I will focus on two of them in the context of their initial formation time, but they are not limited to that time. They will be part of their experience after they finish initial formation.

First, loneliness. Loneliness is a part of life, not just religious life. I'm sure you experienced loneliness before you joined the Carmelites. It may have been part of your motivation, seeing the loneliness as a hunger for God, as something only God could satisfy. And then you discovered that the loneliness followed you into the community.

So, it is part of life. Loneliness occurs in marriages as well as in religious life.

If loneliness is part of anyone's life, what does it tell us? What information does loneliness give us about ourselves and situations we experience?

First, loneliness is 'revelatory.'⁹

- An experience that evokes feelings. (anger, longing, sadness, fear, etc.)
- An experience that reveals our needs. (to be known, respected, etc.)
- An experience that reveals our shadow. (parts of ourselves we don't like)

Second, loneliness reveals our needs.

- Discovering our needs cuts through the illusion of self-sufficiency and reveals our dependence and vulnerability.
- Honestly acknowledging our needs in whatever circumstances and realities we are experiencing is essential in order for us to make responsible choices.
- Becoming aware of our needs does not mean acting on them inappropriately. (w/ alcohol or drugs, w/ someone else, w/ the Internet, etc.)
- Our primary needs are for:
 - Safety
 - Power
 - Goodness

⁹ The following material on loneliness is adapted from material received from Ray Dlugos, OSA, Ph.D., at an international gathering of Augustinian formators, Rome, Italy, July 2004.

Jesus himself was not immune from loneliness. His experience of being tempted in the desert had to do with the loneliness he was experiencing as he felt his call to do his Father's will. The three temptations he experience were essentially toward:

- Excessive self-sufficiency
- Entitlement
- Grandiosity

Do those sound familiar? We are all subject to those temptations over and over in our lives as religious and priests. We give up a lot, and loneliness seems to still be a part of our lives. So, we want to compensate when we experience that loneliness.

The challenge for us is to see that there is life, there is grace in the experience of loneliness. To choose life, to choose the grace in the loneliness is to struggle with:

- Acceptance vs. denial (that I have this anger, etc., this shadow side)
- Distraction vs. self-awareness (face into this part of myself and what it represents)
- Isolation vs. connectedness (to choose to connect with others in humility)

So how do your formandi handle the loneliness that is a part of life? Do they flee from it? Do they acknowledge it? Do they criticize the local community or the province for not living up to their expectations regarding community?

A second challenge to intimacy is cross-cultural living. This is double-sided. To talk about cross-cultural living is to include the challenge of

living in another culture, which so many do who come to the USA from other countries or go to the novitiate in Salamanca or from Timor to Australia. It's the language, the food, the customs, the creature comforts, the availability and sometimes the excess of so many things (food at the supermarkets, clothing, cars, electronic gadgetry, etc.)

I don't want to underplay the impact of this experience. But what I think might be more helpful to focus on is the second aspect of the cross-cultural living challenge: living in a cross-cultural community in a formation house.

Working with cultural differences in terms of doing intimacy can be very challenging. There can be differences between as well as within cultures in terms of:

- in the level of **self-disclosure** one is comfortable with,
- **physical touch, physical closeness and distance** when talking,
- **eye contact** when communicating,

Negotiating these differences in order to experience different levels of intimacy within a religious communities can be a challenge. This is true not only for people from different cultures – Hispanic, Asian, African, e.g. – but for people whose family of origin taught them differently than you even though you might have been born and raised in the USA.

Are your formandi learning to negotiate cultural differences when they are present? What I want to establish here is the importance of recognizing how cultural differences can challenge us in a religious community in terms of meeting our need for intimacy.

A third obstacle in doing intimacy can be the presence of unintegrated psychosexual issues in one's life. Unintegrated means that part of their history includes some significant psychosexual trauma/experience that they haven't dealt with. It can be:

- **Sexual abuse**, which can range from 'fondling' to rape. Signs of 'unintegrated' include difficulty trusting, self-esteem issues, feelings of guilty, shame, anxiety, depression, difficulty living comfortably with one's own sexuality in a celibate setting.
- **Emotional or physical abuse**, which can range from lack of emotional support to constant put-downs and insults, from corporal punishment to being beaten up. Signs of the result of this kind of abuse include difficulty connecting with emotions and expressing them; difficulty being present to self, others, God; getting into inappropriate sexual situations in search of emotional comfort.

If you think about the characteristics of intimacy we mentioned earlier, then you can imagine how difficult it is for individuals who have experienced this kind of abuse and have not gotten help to look at it realistically to enter fully into relationships. If that is part of their history and haven't really gotten some help with it, it is important to encourage them to do so. It clearly has a negative impact on their relationship with themselves, with others, and with God. Intimacy will not be present for them.

In conclusion, let me just say that intimacy in our lives is a developmental task that ends up being a

great gift for us as individuals and as ministers in the church. Doing intimacy is a challenge. There will always be some rough patches. Intimate relationships always bring out our shadow sides. We get annoyed. We get scared when someone gets close. But, we also know that when we ride those rough patches through we experience a sense of acceptance, gratitude, peace, and deeper energy that impacts all of our relationships, including our relationship with God. My guess is that you can identify some older members of your community or province whom you see as men capable of deep intimacy and holiness. You can also identify those who for whatever reasons have not experienced that deep intimacy. As formators part of our responsibility is to help our formandi to see that the choice is theirs. Whatever their history, they can grow in their ability to give love and give of oneself. Our formation programs and its formators hopefully offer them the hope and the challenge of this adult task so that Carmel will continue to be a source of love, holiness, and service to God's people.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. At this stage of your experience of religious life and living the vows, describe your experiences of intimacy.
2. What has been your experience of the challenges and obstacles in doing intimacy in your life as a religious?
3. What has been your experience as a formator in addressing some of the issues involved with intimacy, giving love and giving self?

**"THE CAPACITY FOR RESPONSIBLE CARE
AND STEWARDSHIP,
EXPRESSED IN 'SERVICE IN THE MIDST
OF THE PEOPLE'."**

QUINN CONNERS, O.CARM.

Yesterday we talked about the "ability to give love and give of oneself". This topic is one way of describing the ability to do intimacy, to connect to oneself and to others in an authentic and respectful way. Such connections are important for our formandi, for individuals who are seeking God in Carmel where they are called to a contemplative lifestyle, marked by prayer, community and service.

The topic for today's presentation is the "The Capacity for Responsible Care and Stewardship, Expressed in 'Service in the Midst of the People'." Pope Francis, in an address to the bishops of Brazil in July, 2013, spoke about that capacity to the bishops in their leadership role that I believe also applies to anyone, like our formandi, who are called to leadership in the Church. This is what he said:

"We need a Church unafraid of going forth into their night. We need a Church capable of meeting them on their way. We need a Church capable of entering into their conversation. We need

a Church able to dialogue with those disciples who, having left Jerusalem behind, are wandering aimlessly, alone, with their own disappointment. ... From this point of view, we need a Church capable of walking at people's side, of doing more than simply listening to them; a Church which accompanies them on their journey; a Church able to make sense of the "night" contained in the flight of so many of our brothers and sisters from Jerusalem; a Church which realizes that the reasons why people leave also contain reasons why they can eventually return. But we need to know how to interpret, with courage, the larger picture. Jesus warmed the hearts of the disciples of Emmaus."

What Pope Francis is providing for us in this statement is a kind of "job description" for ministers in the Church, not just bishops called to leadership, but also for our formandi, individuals called to leadership that offers care and stewardship "in the midst of the people." What I would like to do in this presentation is to cover two areas. First, I would like to offer a perspective from a human development point of view that will help us to understand this call to leadership as an important area of development as adults. Secondly, I would like to describe a series of skills that are needed if our formandi are to discern their call to Carmel, including our responsibility to evaluate them as they discern with us their call to solemn profession and public ministry in the Church. Those skills will be directly related to what Pope Francis was talking about in terms of being able to enter into dialogue with others, listening, accom-

panying others in an empathic way by helping them “make sense of the ‘night’ they experience.

I: ERIKSON’S DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY

Over the past forty years, Erik Erikson’s developmental theory has helped us understand the process of initial and ongoing formation in religious life. A key to Erikson’s theory is the concept of the crisis, an experience of disharmony or disequilibrium in a person’s life, which leads to the successful or unsuccessful resolution of a particular stage of development. His theory helps us to understand how such crises occur during the time of formation and how useful – indeed, critical – they can be in the formation process. Let me give you some of the theory and then focus on its application to religious life and initial formation.

Erikson proposes that the people experience eight steps of growth in the development of their personality over the course of their life span. These steps occur within the context of personal crises. In *Identity, You, and Crisis*, he writes:

Each successive step, then, is a potential crisis because of a radical change in perspective. Crisis is used here in a developmental sense to connote not a threat or catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential, and therefore, the ontogenetic source of generational strength and maladjustment.¹

¹ Meeting with the Bishops of Brazil, Address of Pope Francis, 28 July 2013.

ERICKSON, E. *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*. New York, New York: W.W. Norton, 1968.

With this description Erikson suggests that crises are resolved in a mixed way—that is, the personality emerges from the crisis with both strong and vulnerable areas. Erikson has also emphasized the very important influence of social and cognitive factors on personality development, which Daniel Levinson has explored in terms of “life structure,” the complex of relationships that shape a person’s development.

Erikson’s comments on the important role of crises at various stages of human development are supported by the research of Levinson and Hans Selye. Levinson, whose research had initially been conducted exclusively with men, found that a great majority of men experience a moderate to severe degree of tumult as they make transitions from one chronological stage of development to another.²

The degree of tumult may be related to the chronological age of the men as they enter religious life, for example. In the Northern hemisphere, many religious communities, including our own provinces, are often receiving men who have had more extensive life experience in terms of work and relationships, and so the transition to religious life may be more challenging for them than perhaps for younger, more typically aged *formandi*.

Selye’s research³ on the strains of adaptation to change indicates that distress, rather than stress, is damaging to the human organism. This research suggests that some degree of stress (disequilibri-

² LEVINSON, D. *The Seasons of a Man’s Life*. New York, New York: Knopf, 1978.

³ SEYLE, H. *Stress Without Distress*. New York, New York: New American Library, 1974.

um, conflict, disorganization, crisis) is a necessary prerequisite for progress to the next stage of personal development. So, it is to be expected to some degree to expect some kind of stress, disequilibrium, crisis, etc., when someone goes through initial formation. It is normal and not necessarily a sign that they do not have a vocation.

Surveys of Erikson's theory⁴ have shown its applicability to people in initial and ongoing formation. Indeed, individuals go through these stages in any life structure, including the one we know as religious life. In light of Levinson's and Seyle's research, it would seem that crises that occur during initial formation serve as normal, important, and useful moments in individuals' personal development, as well as in their incorporation into the life of a religious community.

II: ADULT DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

The three of Erikson's stages most commonly associated with the bulk of adult life – late teens to mid-life – are identity formation, intimacy, and generativity. The issues and crises associated with these stages are intertwined and continue to emerge in various forms throughout the adult life cycle. Erikson contends that although one aspect (identify, for example) is predominant during a given period, all the other aspects are also present, and a certain degree of developmental work goes on in conjunction with the predominant work.

⁴ STEFFES, J. "A Model Program for Individual Initial Formation of Apostolic Religious Women." *Review for Religious*, 39 (1980), 678-698.

TICKERHOOF, B. "Reflections on Religious Formation." *Review for Religious*, 36 (1977), 57-69.

This perspective suggests that despite the ages of the people in initial formation, whether they are younger or have more life experience, they are dealing with one or another of these stages and the attendant crises.

As we know, post-novitiate formation usually requires a period of three to five years. During this time of first vows, individuals experience community life and ministry. This important period can include academic, pastoral, communal, and personal experiences that provide the context or life structure within which the individuals will continue their growth and development as well as their discernment. At the conclusion of this period, the individuals and the community determine whether a final commitment will be made. Thus, these years are crucial for both parties: the individual and the community, whether it is the province, commissariat, or delegation. The crises that occur provide valuable information about both the content of the individuals' lives and their process (i.e., the way they handle those issues). Equally important during crises are the community and the formational personnel. Their responses to both the content and the process of the individuals are important factors for the formandi to consider as they ponder a final commitment with the Order.

Now let me briefly review this theory of human development and the value of the crises contained in each in terms of three stages of adult development – identity, intimacy, and generativity – in the context of structure of religious life. What I will focus on is the renegotiation of these adult tasks during initial formation and how some of it might

occur. I encourage you to be thinking of examples of formandi you have worked with or are working with now or perhaps in your own experience of initial formation where some of these issues did in fact have to be re-worked.

The first of these crises is the "identity crisis." The identity crisis usually occurs in the teens and early twenties. However, it is often re-negotiated when an individual makes a career choice, such as the decision to enter religious life. For some it is a more serious renegotiation than for others. For example, it can surface in the academic setting of studying theology. The identity of formandi whose life structure before entering religious life was a traditional Catholic one can be significantly shaken by the theological shift they may experience through contemporary theology studies. Their whole sense of themselves and how they fit into the world can be overturned as their assumptions about God, the Church, and the world are responsibly reexamined as part of their intellectual preparation for ministry. They may become angry, fearful, hostile, rigid, or disoriented. They may question their vocation, their past training, the leadership in their province or seminary or formation program, or their fellow students. Their task is to develop a new sense of self in the new life structure or to return to the old one.

The second adult crisis is "intimacy." The intimacy crisis for formandi, which is the developmental stage we talked about yesterday, can occur in a number of different ways when they enter religious life. The most obvious is the experience of trying to relate to men or women in non-genital ways. The drive for emotional closeness (intima-

cy), for a deeper sharing of self with another, is a normal human drive. What newcomers to religious life must learn is how to experience that drive in a healthy way yet as a consecrated celibate, publicly committed to not engaging in genital behavior.

Learning to do intimacy this way can often be a difficult but rewarding experience. Individuals often fall in love with another religious or someone they meet in ministry, and they resolve the relationship in various ways. Some discover that they can be intimate with another within the context of the vows whereas others discover that they want an exclusive relationship and leave religious life. People who have had difficulty with intimacy before entering religious life often find that the problem resurfaces during initial formation. A crisis in intimacy can evidence itself in a number of ways. Some individuals become withdrawn and develop a rigid, formal way of relating to others. Others avoid intimacy through abuse of alcohol, using pornography, overeating, over investment in work, or drug abuse. Another indicator of difficulty with intimacy is a promiscuousness, either genital or emotional. I've worked with some newly ordained priests who had been acting out genitally while still in initial formation, either through using prostitutes, cruising for sex in bars or public parks, or meeting people online. Emotional promiscuity shows up in the development of lots of "friends" the person in formation collects in parishes or at school. The level of intimacy is quite superficial.

The third adult, developmental task according to Erikson's theory is generativity. This task has

to do with issues of caring for others, using one's power for greater responsibility in the world, and developing a deeper interiority. Admittedly, this crisis occurs less frequently during initial formation than does the crisis of identity formation or intimacy, but when it does occur it often presents opportunities for growth as well as vocational discernment.

The crisis of generativity in initial formation is commonly precipitated by some difficulty in ministry during initial formation. Some may exhibit an indifference to the needs of others, insisting that "community" takes precedence over all other concerns. Others may experience conflict with individuals on the staff of a parish or school. On the one hand, they may exhibit a misuse of their power by assuming over-control and a sense of entitlement as the "religious" member of a team or project. On the other hand, they may under-use their power by remaining passive or overly dependent on others, exercising no leadership skills. Others may experience a failure, such as a lack of success as a teacher or hospital chaplain, raising questions in their minds or the formation team's mind as to whether they are called to a life of service as a public minister in the Church.

Some may have difficulty or demonstrate resistance to developing a contemplative attitude about themselves in a couple of ways. First, they may have difficulty in maintaining a regular personal prayer life, as they get involved in ministry or in studies. They get too absorbed by the demands of ministry and have difficulty with developing a deeper interior life, marked by regular communal and personal prayer, spiritual direction, etc. Sec-

ond, they may demonstrate an inability to reflect on their experience in ministry or in community. This inability would show up in difficulty taking in feedback about their behavior from others, including formation directors or lay people they might be serving or with whom they work. They rigidly hold on to their own perceptions and demonstrate a lack of flexibility in considering other viewpoints that might lead to their growth as pastoral leaders.

The ability of the formandi to care for others, the resolve to some degree this crisis/task of generativity is clearly related to the service dimension of our charism. It is in many ways connected to the person's ability and desire to focus on the other person, whether that person is someone we are ministering to or living with in community. Fundamental to that ability to focus on the other is the skill of being able to set myself aside long enough to hear the other person, whether that person is a patient or family member in a hospital room, a student in a classroom or counseling office, or someone in spiritual direction or in front of the church after Sunday Eucharist.

This ability is a set of skills that come naturally to some people, but can also be taught and developed by individuals, if they are open to developing them, within the context of a formation program. These skills connect to the core of the generativity task we all have to resolve, especially as religious. They can also be used to evaluate an individual as to his fitness for religious life and service in the Church. Let's take a look at these skills as measures of one's ability to offer "Responsible Care" both in ministry but also in community life.

III: SKILLS FOR OFFERING 'RESPONSIBLE CARE'

Let me begin by asking a question? What are some general qualities of someone who offers "responsible care" to others whether it is in a ministry setting or in community life?

First, we look to see if the person in formation is "other-directed." Their focus as ministers in the Church needs to be on other people. Successfully resolving the crises of identity and intimacy in the context of religious life means that they are increasingly comfortable with their identity as religious in the church and increasingly comfortable with being able to meet their needs for intimacy in non-genital ways. If these crises are resolved, then there is a natural interest that turns outward toward others. They have less concern about their own needs and want to spontaneously share their gifts and talents with others. Thus, they are "other-directed."

Second, we look to see if the formandi do not have the desire or need to "protect themselves." They are sufficiently comfortable with their strengths, but they are also comfortable with their weaknesses. As a result they do not get defensive when they make mistakes and accept responsibility for their behavior. They demonstrate a level of ease with themselves. In doing so, their weaknesses or "shadow side", to use a Carl Jung term, does not get in the way of their connecting with others.

Third, we look to see if the formandi genuinely desire to imagine the experience of the other. The word often used to describe this skill is "empathy." Are they sufficiently self-aware to put themselves aside and connect with the felt experience

of the other person? Can they communicate to another person that they do sense what the other is experiencing – their pain, their sadness, their joy, their anger or their fear? To be able to do this in a genuine way presumes that the formandi are getting their own needs met elsewhere and that their purpose here is to connect with the person or persons in ministry in a genuinely empathic way.

Finally, we look to see if the formandi act in a way that reflects his desire to genuinely understand the other person's experience **and not to critique it.** Even in the Sacrament of Reconciliation we are not in the business of critiquing others. We are there to genuinely be available to dialogue, to listen, to help them "make sense of the night," to use the words of Pope Francis' address to the bishops in Rio.

With these goals in mind, let me describe very specific listening skills that demonstrate the capacity for responsible care of our formandi. They are skills that we can help our formandi to develop and deepen as they move through our formation programs. While the focus of this presentation is more on the service dimension of our charism, we can be looking for these same skills in terms of how they behave in the formation community.

Here are the skills. I will describe each one and try to give some examples, but let me list them first:

1. Attending
2. Paraphrasing
3. Clarifying
4. Perception Checking
5. Summarizing
6. Primary Empathy

7. Advanced Empathy

I realize that for some of you this may be too elementary, but I do think it provides some very specific skills we expect from our formandi who are preparing for a life of ministry as well as prayer and community. Do they have these skills in relating to people to whom they are ministering or with whom they are ministering? So, for some of you this might be information that you already have. Use it then as a review for yourself. For some of you it might be new information with which you can evaluate your formandi. I might also add that these are skills with which you might evaluate yourself in terms of how well you use these skills in your work as a formator, pastoral person or spiritual director.

I also realize that these skills may have a cultural bias, i.e., they represent a northern or western hemisphere set of values. For people from other cultures some of these skills may seem quite strange or inappropriate. It will be important for you to differentiate what these particular skills communicate to others and how the “responsible care” you are offering to someone might be interpreted.

So with these caveats, let’s talk about a set of skills that can help our formandi to exercise “responsible care” of others.

The first skill is the skill of “Attending.” If I am going to care for a person with whom I am working, then it is important to be physically present to them. Attending to another person can be communicated in three ways:

1. **Eye contact:** Do I look directly at the person?
This is not a fixed gaze, but there is more looking at the person directly than looking away, or closing one's eyes, or staring away from the person all the time. I realize that in some cultures, looking at a person, particularly someone older than yourself, can be seen as disrespectful, so it is important to be culturally appropriate. Nevertheless, looking directly at the person is an important way of physically communicating that you are present to them and their concerns. If they are there in a pastoral role as priest or brother, then it may be more appropriate culturally to look directly at the person.
2. **Posture:** Am I facing the person directly so that they know I am interested in what they have to say? Or, are my arms folded? Am I doing something at my desk as they are talking? Am I checking my mobile phone for texts or emails?
3. **Gesture:** Is there an appropriate use of one's hands? Is the person relaxed as they sit with the person?

Here is another way to measure whether the person has an "attending" presence to the other person. The acronym is: S.O.L.E.R.

- **Squarely** face the person.
- **Open** your posture.
- **Lean** toward the person
- **Eye** contact maintained.
- **Relax** while attending.

The second skill is "paraphrasing." Paraphrasing is restating a message from someone, but stat-

ing it usually with fewer words. Where possible, the goal is to try to get more to the point. So, in evaluating your formandi, do you think that he understands the other person's basic thoughts and feelings? Does he demonstrate that skill? Here are two examples:

1. **Speaker:** I just don't understand; one minute she tells me to do this, and the next minute to do that.

Formandus: She really confuses you.

2. **Speaker:** I really think he is a very nice guy. He's thoughtful, sensitive, and kind. He is enjoyable to be with.

Formandus: You like and appreciate him, then.

The third skill is "clarifying." Clarifying is the process of bringing vague material into sharper focus. There are four purposes or goals to the skill of clarifying. First, the formandi may try to untangle unclear or wrong interpretation of what he is hearing. Second, he may try to get more information in order to understand what the person is saying. Third, he may try to help the speaker see other points of view as his or her thinking may be closed to other possible ways of thinking about the issue. Fourth, he may try to identify what was said. Here are a couple of examples of what this skill of clarifying could look like:

Formandus: I'm confused. Let me try to state what I think you were trying to say.

Or

Formandus: You've said so much. Let me see if I've got it all.

In evaluating your formandi for this skill, you are trying to determine if he has the ability to understand another person and help them to clarify what they are thinking and communicating.

The fourth skill is "Perception Checking." "Perception checking" is simply asking the speaker for verification of your perceptions. We all take in information from others through our own understanding. We need to check out with the other person that we are understanding it the way they do. The goals or purposes of "perception checking" is to give feedback to the other person based on what they said and to receive feedback from the person that we accurately heard what they said. A second goal for "perception checking" is to verify the assumptions you made as you listened to them. We often automatically make assumptions about what the other person is saying. It is important for us to verify that our assumptions are correct. Here is an example of "perception checking:"

Formandus: "Let me see if I'm understanding you. You said that you love everyone in the community and that they are very important to you. At the same time you don't like being with them. Is that what you are saying?"

When we do this, we are trying to check our perception of what the person is saying, regardless of whether we agree with them or not. We are trying to understand their perception. Do your formandi have the ability to check their perceptions?

The fifth skill is "summarizing." "Summarizing" is pulling together, organizing, and integrating the major aspects of the conversation or dialogue

one is having with another, whether that person is in a ministerial situation or community living situation. This skill involves paying attention to two things: 1) various themes, and 2) the emotional overtones as the person speaks. We are trying to connect ideas and the feelings of the person as they talk about them. "Summarizing" is trying put those key ideas and feelings into broad statements without adding new ideas. We may add new ideas later, but here the idea is to let the other person know that the formandus understands the other's ideas and feelings.

"Summarizing" has three purposes. First, it is meant to give a sense of movement and accomplishment in the exchange. The formandus has grasped the basic ideas and lets the other person know that. Second, with the "summarizing" the formandus establishes an agreed-upon basis for further discussion. Finally, "summarizing" pulls together the major ideas, facts, and feelings. In doing this, the other person feels heard both intellectually, but also emotionally. Here are some examples of what "summarizing" could look like:

Fkormandus: A number of good points have been made about how to proceed for this community project. Let's take a few minutes to go over them and write them on the board.

Formandus: You've presented a lot of ideas here. If I understand you correctly, they essentially come down to two concerns that you feel very strongly about.

Formandus: The three major points of your story are...and you seem both sad and angry about what happened.

“Summarizing” communicates to the person that you do understand their thoughts and feelings. Some formandi are better at this than others, but it is still an important skill to develop for ministerial effectiveness and community living.

The sixth skill is “primary empathy.” “Primary empathy” is the skill of reflecting two things back to the person: the content of what they have said and the feelings associated with the content. The focus of empathy is the communication in particular of the emotional sense of what they have said. It is important to get both correct. Sometimes the speaker may not be aware of their emotions or feelings associated with the content, and both are important data.

There are two purposes or goals in communicating empathy. First, the formandi want to show that they understand the person’s experience. Their experience is not limited only to the content of what they are saying. Their feelings also give the formandi information about the person because sometimes the feelings might contradict or be in opposition to the content. It is important to help the person connect with that reality, which leads to the second goal. The second goal is to allow the speaker to evaluate his/her feelings after hearing them expressed by someone else. When we reflect back both the content and the feelings in an accurate way, the speaker may connect with that reality in a deeper way. Basically, the skill of empathy would be expressed this way: You feel (*state feeling*) because (*state content*). Let me give some examples.

- 1) Speaker: I just don’t know how I am going to get all this work done before Evening

Prayer especially since I don't understand what the purpose of the project is.

Formandi: You are feeling frustrated and stuck...You are feeling frustrated and stuck with a project you don't understand and so you're worried that you won't figure it out before Evening Prayer tonight.

2) Formandi: I am wondering if you're feeling some fear about this...you're especially scared of losing a friendship if things don't get better.

3) Formandi: It sounds like it is upsetting for you when you haven't been able to tell your side of the story.

The final skill is "advanced empathy." Advanced empathy is reflecting back to the speaker the content and feeling associated with what they have said, but at a deeper level. The purpose of this is to try to get an understanding of what may be deeper feelings associated with what they are experiencing. Again, oftentimes the speaker is not fully aware of their feelings, and the formandi is there to help them get in touch with what may be deeper feelings associated with the experience. Here are a couple of examples:

Formandi: I get the sense that you are really angry about what was said, but I am wondering if you also feel a little hurt by what happened.

Formandi: You said that you feel more confident about talking to other parishioners about this, but I wonder if you also still feel a bit scared.

What often happens with advanced empathy is helping the other person to be aware of more than

one feeling, some of which can be contradictory: anger and fear, anger and love, relief and sadness, joy and sadness. Individuals often see some of these feelings as contradictory and so push away from acknowledging them. Yet, in fact, they are experiencing them. When we reflect those multiple feelings back to them, it helps them to more fully acknowledge their experience and to know and feel that they are understood. As a result, they then begin to determine how to more fully respond to it by problem-solving, talking to the person they had a conflict with, simply letting it be, etc.

Hopefully, these specific skills can be used to evaluate our formandi on their ability to exercise responsible care for others. Those others include both the people they work with in ministry, but also the people they live with – their Carmelite brothers. Responsible care is another term to describe the “service” dimension of our Carmelite charism. Key to responsible care is the ability to listen to others. That ability to listen is summarized in a number of specific skills such as attending, paraphrasing, clarifying, perception checking, summarizing, and empathizing.

How you evaluate them for these skills will vary. I would suggest that we have two main arenas in which to make observations and to give feedback to our formandi: ministry and community living. It is worth considering to create an opportunity to teach them these skills. Sometimes these skills might be taught in a pastoral course where they are studying theology or as part of a CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) course they take at a hospital. If that is not the case, then it would be a matter

of making sure they are taught some time during their formation either in the novitiate or post-novitiate. These are skills that can be learned. Some people are gifted in their ability to listen attentively and well to others. Others do not have these skills by nature, but they can be taught and practiced. I believe that they are essential skills to effective and responsible care of the people entrusted to us.

If they are taught these skills, then we can make and/or get observations about their ability to use those skills. We can make observations about how they interact with other community members, including their formators and other solemnly professed. How well do they listen? How well do they check their perceptions? Can they accurately summarize a conversation they have with a brother, an older friar, or someone employed by the community? Do they not only summarize the content of a conversation, but can they accurately empathize with what the other person is feeling?

Another source of observations can be individuals who might supervise them in a pastoral setting. Supervision of the ministry of our formandi is a very important source of how they offer responsible care to the People of God. As we evaluate them throughout their initial formation time, it is important to give them feedback based on data that we receive from people they minister to and with. Supervisors, individuals who are more experienced in ministry and who are observing them as they do ministry, can be an important source of information for the growth of our formandi. If some of our formandi do not have some of these listening skills, then getting feedback in the process of their time in formation can help them to develop these

skills and/or to deepen them. If there is resistance to the feedback or a real difficulty in developing the skills, then it is helpful information for their own discernment of a call to service as well as for our discernment of their vocation.

IV: CONCLUSION

As mentioned at the beginning, our development as adult human beings has an organic quality to it. Renegotiating these adult stages of identity, intimacy, and generativity (responsible care) in religious life in initial formation gives us the opportunity to discern that our identity includes a call to live in obedience to Jesus Christ, imitating his poverty and deep reliance on his Abba for everything, and loving in an inclusive and wide-ranging way.

Successful negotiation of each of these adult stages within Carmelite life will be done most successfully with ongoing feedback from formators, peers, and others so that the specific areas of growth can be addressed in a systematic way. Essential to this discernment is to do it within a contemplative framework. Bringing these experiences to God in contemplative prayer is essential. Learning to pray with the feelings associated with the experience of claiming who I am (identity), being able to negotiate the challenges of chaste intimacy, and growing in living one's life in more generous, other-centered and caring ways is critical to the individual formandi and to the province, commissariat, or delegation.

Authentic service means listening to people at the deeper level suggested by Pope Francis, to enter into the "night" that so many people expe-

rience. We have to be willing to go there with ourselves and with them. It means that we can use these “listening skills” in our prayer as well, to listen to God speak to us of his love and mercy, his compassion and challenge. The contemplative dimension of our charism is a great gift to us and to the people we service. It is a lifelong challenge to grow in it.



**WITH OTHER EYES
ACCOMPANYING FORMANDI
IN A MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY
THAT GROWS THROUGH CONTEMPLATION**

DESIDERIO GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, O.CARM.

Our eyes tend to look at things separately, making distinctions¹. The “Noemi Association”, founded in France in 1991, helps children that have multiple disabilities. It produced a video with the title, “Let us look at difference through the eyes of a child”². One of the conclusions of the experiment was that children, in a way that is spontaneous and natural, unlike adults, when they look at something, tend to unify what they see, eliminating boundaries. Hugo de S. Victor (12th century) in the middle ages, was able to say: *“The human person is born with three eyes: corporal, rational and contemplative. In time, moving away from paradise, the corporal eye was weakened, the rational eye was disturbed, and the contemplative eye was left blind.”*³ Contemplation, in his view, is a journey of return to the “garden of Eden” in order to recover the spiritual child. It is a journey to our deep centre, in the course of which we re-educate our three eyes, the corporal eye to see, the rational eye to understand and the contemplative eye to love.

¹ RAUB, J.J, *Who told you that you are naked? Freedom from Judgement, Guilt and Fear of Punishment* (St. Paul's Publishing, London 2000).

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WB9UvjnYO90>

³ *De archa Noe moralis II*, 12 (PL 176, 643 D - 644 A).

The contemplative gaze shortens distances and breaks through divisions. A solid formation for contemplation, the heart of the Carmelite charism, is the surest foundation for the opening of our tradition to interculturality. (cfr. RIVC 51)⁴. The Carmelite charism is a journeyer, in its journey through history, enriching itself as it goes, and at the same time enriching the lands that it visits. (cf. RIVC 50).

1.- "To journey" is not the same as "to change location". The literature of the 19th century, especially the German romanticism, developed the literary genre known as travel books, that made a very clear distinction between "*Journeying*" and "*Changing location*". Today both concepts are used interchangeably, but they are not the same. There are people who move from one place to another. They might even spend the whole day on the move, and there may be kilometres between one place and the next, but curiously they do not "journey". The journey implies "interaction" and "encounter" with a difference of reality, that may be surprising. Every journey into another culture is formative and educative, since it has an impact on what is hidden within us. To live in an intercultural community implies "impact" from the outset. There has to be education for

⁴ GITTINS, A J. CSSp., *Living Mission Interculturally. Faith, Culture and the Renewal of Praxis* (Liturgical Press; Minnesota 2015). Today we prefer to talk about interculturality (relationship of cultures) a rather than multiculturalism (the sum of cultures). Cf. LG 17; GS 58; AG 9. Inculturation, in simple terms, is the transmission of the Christian message through the language of the local culture. The bibliography on this topic is extensive. The International Meeting of Formation Directors of our Order, the 24th of July, to the 5th of August, Nairobi, 2016, had this as its theme.

encounter, with the idea that our suitcase is always ready. If I do not allow myself to be touched by the places, times, people or cultures that I meet, there is no journey, there is only tourism. A "resort" and spiritual enjoyment is one thing. It mostly has to do with our likes, ideas and criteria (self-centred, even though they may appear to be spiritual). The contemplative journey is something quite different. It always takes us out of our comfort zone and out of our spiritual mediocrity. Carmel does not speak only one tongue. The well known saying of Bishop Casaldáliga, might fit here, *"The Word speaks only in dialect!"* In the initial formation stage, living in an community of mixed culture allows a person to become aware that Carmel is a pilgrim with many accents.

2.-*The journey is unpredictable.* A journey is much more than a careful plan of action. On Monday we will be in Jakarta, Tuesday in Malang, Wednesday in Bali.....! Now I know Indonesia. Of course! What about the other 15997 islands of the country? You haven't even begun to see it! You followed all the instructions of the travel agent but you have not journeyed. There is really no journey where there is not the unexpected or the surprise. In the land of the calculator, it is never easy to journey, because of wanting to have everything planned: what I will eat, who I will be with, where I will go, what time I will go to bed, who will send me the letter of invitation so I can get a visa the journey has always to be open, always allowing space for what might be new or unexpected, what might force a change of plans, what might be a surprise

because it was not expectedThere is no greater package of surprises than going to live in a country different to your own, or living with someone from a different culture. The contemplative journey, just like the impact of culture, is an occasion for getting to know myself better, seeing how I react in new and challenging situations. I am able to see in those situations my ability to be open, to discern, to adapt (cf. RIVC 19), my strengths and virtues, as well as my weaknesses, manias and neurosis.

A community of mixed cultures will teach you how to have a good “swing”, a good girth that will allow you to dance to the sound of many different rhythms. As Prof. Donna Orsuto observed when she spoke at our General Chapter in 2011, “In order for anything to survive, flexibility is a necessity”⁵. The skyscrapers of Tokyo or of San Francisco are good examples of adaptation and stability. Most of us would think that the way to build edifices like these would be with strong and solid materials, with large quantities of concrete and steel. The Japanese have shown that rigid buildings are the first to fall, while the ones that can bend and sway and hold their balance are the ones that come back to their original position and remain standing.⁶ Excessive rigidity and control kill the contemplative journey. There has always to be education for flexibility. I would go even further and say that the sign of spiritual maturity

⁵ BUCKLEY, M., “The Charism of Religious Life”, in *Review for religious* (1986) 659.

⁶ CASEY, M., *A Guide to Living in the Truth. Saint Benedict's Teaching on Humility* (Saint Bede's Publications; Petersham, MA 1999) 53-54.

is that the person, without any fuss, is open to a change of plan.

3.- *The journey is an encounter with diversity.* The journey has value if in it there is an encounter with what is different. When everything is IKEA, Coca-Cola, McDonalds, Intimissimi, the same shops, the same brands, the same shopping centres, the world loses something of its richness. If all the world is the same, why should I spend 18 hours on a plane to get to Indonesia? The cloning of cultures is awful. It would make travelling superfluous, if what I am going to find here in Malang is the same as what I have in Nairobi. The Holy Spirit is the maker of this gastronomic, social, anthropological, cosmological, theological cocktail that we call "culture" (a concept that does not have only one meaning, and is difficult to define (cf. GS 53). It is certain that diversity enriches. If I am always locked up in my own chicken coop, surrounded by my own, because they give me security, then I never journey. Journey, just like the mystical experience, implies *extasis* (going out of oneself). There are people who travel "in their own fish tank" because the encounter with other waters would frighten them. Everyone in his own fish tank carries his own securities and his own culture: the Italian with his pasta, the Indonesian with his kinds of chilli, the Spaniard with his tortilla, the Dutchman with his Stroopwafels, the Kenyan ... the Chapati.... A community of mixed cultures helps to form people for diversity, it broadens their vision, and in a special way, following the example of Jesus, who emptied himself, even to accepting death (Phil 2,8) , it helps people to avoid any sense of superiority or of

mocking the other. There is a page in the book, *The Little Prince*, that speaks to us in this respect. The Little Prince, when he is travelling through space, notices that on another planet there is a garden of beautiful roses (Chap. 21), and he thought his rose was the only rose. By visiting another place and seeing what was there he saw the relative value of his own rose. A community of mixed cultures will help you to see the relative value of your pasta, or your chilli or your Stroopwafels ... The contemplative journey is open to diversity and to interculturality.

4.- *The journey is slow* The contemplative journey, just like every process of inculturation, is slow. (*Redemptoris Missio* 52), it has its costs, and it is not easily accomplished. To know, and to experience, are activities that sometimes do not go well with speed. That is one of the keys to the notion of pilgrimage (eg. Santiago de Compostela, the Holy Land). The famous Danish writer and poet, Hans Ch. Anderson, in the 19th century, did not like travelling by train, because he said that with its speed it did not allow him to enjoy the countryside. In our case, perhaps it is the opposite that occurs, when we are allergic to what is slow. Work, productivity, effectiveness, all seem to displace us from our centre. The mystical journey and cultural penetration have to be achieved with bare feet. There is a difference between going to Santiago de Compostela by motorway and going there on foot, going down pathways, passing a spring, or a hermitage, and meeting people If we go by the motorway, we know beforehand what to expect: filling stations, and all of them same. If I go on foot, maybe I will meet God, or myself, or the woman of my life The aroma of

contemplation can only be enjoyed when our foot is not on the accelerator.

When a person is travelling, and has the ability to stop and ponder, you then realise what we miss by speeding. When an internet site is slow, look how our nerves react. When an older person, with a vocation, arrives at our door, what is the first temptation? Move quickly so that he can get through quickly! Get through quickly, Why? The opposite perhaps should be the case: the older, the slower. We go around the world, with our zapper in hand. The instantaneous nature of emails has become a passion. Initial formation, in itself, whether in an intercultural community or otherwise, is slow, because contemplation is a process that has no end. God is God and God reveals God in the slowness of his eternity⁷. Contemplation is a long-distance gaze that still does not lose proximity⁸. Slowness makes it easier to pay attention, which, as the thinker, Simone Weil, used to say, is one of the great virtues of life, and something to be recovered in formation. The interior journey does not allow me to multiply verbs.... If I am painting, I am painting; If I am eating, I am eating; If I am reading, I am reading and I do not read when I am eating or when I am "whatsapping" or when I am

5.- *The journey puts you in crisis*: Journeys change you, to the extent that when you return home, you question everything and you do not recognise yourself. That other culture that you encoun-

⁷ BYUNG-CHUL HAN, *El aroma del tiempo. Un ensayo filosófico sobre el arte de demorarse* (Herder; Barcelona 2015) 112-113.

⁸ ADORNO, T.W., *Mínima moralía. Reflexiones desde la vida dañada* (Taurus; Madrid 1998) 88.

tered interrogates you. Now what you do does not seem all that normal. "Who am I?" "Why do I live and act like I do?" The journey, if it is a serious one, puts our opinions and points of view and most of all, our lifestyle, in crisis. On the journey, what I have seen has remained imprinted on the retina of the spirit, and along with the one whose life I shared, has left a deep impression on me. The journey is a risky process that may well "reset" the identity of the person.

At the end of the journey, no one can guarantee that on returning home, they will be the same as they were at the beginning. If you know what you will be thinking after you have gone "there", then there was no journey. You find yourself exposed to observations that before you would never have thought of. From the person that you might least expect, even though he has the accent of a foreigner, a hefty crisis can come. A novice from another country, and from a Church of the reform, once said, "In the Catholic Church, sometimes you have got lost in rites, in formulas and a host of little rules, thereby neglecting the most essential". And we asked him, "What is most essential?" He answered, "What has to do with the Spirit". He went on, "We all know very well that religious should be at the service of what is spiritual, but we all know that it is not always like that. You read a theology book, and it would never give you the desire to pray. You listen to a moral sermon, and it would never give you the desire to be a better person. You go to Mass, and it is hard to experience the joy of the resurrection. In other words, the present regard for spirituality is built

upon a loss of regard for religion. In circumstances such as these, Carmel has a lot to offer." The "novice from another country" had an opinion which helped us in the discernment.

True contemplation helps to overcome simplistic generalisations about other people. An intercultural community helps us to deconstruct ideas and prejudices. "You know the way Orientals are!" "You know the way Latin Americans are ...! An intercultural community is a craftsman's studio in which we are re-created, a place with lots of little bodies, who form the body of Christ". It is in this way that the promise of messianic times will be fulfilled, when the wolf lives with the lamb and the panther lies down with the kid ... and no one will do any harm to anyone else ... because the land will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord." (Is 11,1-9). H.G. Gadamer was on solid ground when in relation to this passage, he wrote, "*To come into contact with another is to draw back a curtain. When it is drawn back you begin to see what you never saw before, reality*". Interculturality is the place of dialogue and discernment.

Conclusion: Bilbo, in J.R.R. Tolkien's Hobbit, from the beginning, refused the invitation to make a journey. He was far too comfortable to let them upset him with adventures. In the end, he took up the challenge. However, the day to day regime began to weigh on him and he got tired of having to adapt, and to learn, and to get to know new cultures. He decided to go home and withdraw from the world of adventure, as he sang: "The feet that followed the wandering ways, return in the end to the distant home. The eyes ... in the end will look at green pastures". The temptation is, to weaken in our resolve, to go backwards, to abandon the journey, by again looking for our security in our own culture.

1.- *Inculturate the charism: from multiculture to interculture*: Pope Francis in his meeting with the USG in 2013⁹, invited religious to inculturate their charism. *"Fidelity to the charism does not mean to be enclosed as if in a bottle of distilled water, never to be contaminated from outside."* A charism, properly understood, needs to "lived, in a given time, and given place and in different people", it needs to be understood from a cultural standpoint. In fact, "Carmelite communities today are often a mixture of cultures, nationalities and age groups. This globalization requires that we be well rooted in our Carmelite culture, so that we can be flexible in embracing difference and have an international vision of the world" (RIVC 50) To live in an intercultural community always implies "rethinking our way of thinking". Radical conversion (metanoia) does not mean playing with feeling guilty because things did not work out well, but rather, that "we learn to think anew" so that something really can change. Fr. Fernando Millan, in various places where he has spoken, has often used the image of "translation" as a way of understanding inculturation. In the art of translation one must have a good knowledge of the language from which and the language into which the translation is made. *In addition, there has to be deep respect for the message that is being translated. Something similar happens in an intercultural community: we have to know the culture in which we move and the one to which we are directed, all the time aware that culture is already part of the message and it is from there that we can be enriched*

⁹ GITTINS, A.J., o.c., 24.

2.-Interculturality: called to build our home. The philosopher, Marc Augé coined the phrase, "non-places"¹⁰ According to him "a place" in order to be called a "place" has to offer "the possibility of an identity, the capacity for relationship and an historical background". As a counterpoint Augé will define a "non-place" as "that space that does not offer any identity, nor a capacity for relationship, nor an historical memory". Postmodernity is an untiring factory of "non-places". Transit lounges, that we see everyday in our airports, train stations or in the metro or in our drive-ins (services where without getting out of our cars we can have supper, a restaurant, get money out of a cash machine, or watch a film), all at the same time. There is no need to be romantic: there is no such thing as a perfect community. Indeed, people who live under the same roof feel and that they are isolated and not part of any common project, because they live in a place of transit, will eventually abandon it. The saying goes, that a "house is not a home". An intercultural community bonded to Jesus Christ, should aspire to form an ecosystem in which people not only live but flourish.¹¹ To have an identity and a history will not be enough – in the opinion of Marc Augé – to establish a "place". There has also to be a capacity for relationship. Fr. Anthony Scerri (Councillor General for Asia, Africa and Australia from 1995 to 2007, and a great promoter of Carmelite missions) use to say on certain occasions, in talking about how slow the process of inculturation is, that in Sumatra, only after many years of listening and paying attention, living and learning much from the people, he sat down one evening on the terrazza of the house where he lived and said I feel at home.¹²

¹⁰ Cf. AUGÉ, M., *Non-lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (Seuil; Paris 1992)

¹¹ Cf. RADCLIFFE, T., *El manantial de la esperanza* (Ed. S. Esteban; Salamanca 1998) 181.

¹² MILLÁN ROMERAL, F., "Inculturation of the Carmelite Charism in emerging Regions", in *Carmel in the World L* (2011) 221.

3.- *Inculturality and the dignity of calling the other a brother or a sister.* The organisation Amnesty International put out a video that showed the humanitarian and intercultural crisis that is affecting Europe, in the face of the waves of refugees that are coming from the Near East. It pointed out that the solution to this crisis, intercultural and humanitarian, is also in peoples' eyes. Love has eyes. In fact, that is what is written on the video, "*Four minutes of visual contact does more to reach the people than any other thing.*" (Arthur Aron)¹³.

A Rabbi once asked his disciples, "When do you know that the dawn has arrived?" One of them said, "When you can see the difference between a white thread and a black thread." "No" said the master. "When you can see the shadow of a tree on the horizon" said another. "No" said the master. "When, then?" they asked the master. "When you look at the face of a stranger and see your brother or your sister, then you know the dawn has arrived, for until that happens it will always be night." A part of our mission is not only to discover the dignity of our difference but also to celebrate it. "We have to walk with one another, united in our difference: there is no other way that will unite us,¹⁴ - in the words of Pope Francis. It is the way marked out by Jesus Christ: he has made of two peoples one and broken down the barriers that separated them" (Ef 2, 14). *It is not easy for us to believe, but we are all needy people in the face*

¹³ ARON, A., Look Beyond Borders: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7XhrXUoD6U>.

¹⁴ SPADARO, A., "Entrevista al Papa Francisco", in *L'Osservatore Romano*, XLV, n. 39 (2333), 27 September, 2013.

of God. I believe that one of the most difficult things in this world is to learn that we are needy people. To let ourselves be helped, to depend on others, demands a spiritual level much higher than that of simply helping. If to help others is a good thing, it is even better to be converted into opportunities for others to help us. To say that "we are brothers" is the great intercultural project, that reminds us that we are sons and daughters of God, and God is our Father.



**WE ARE GOING TO BUILD
OURSELVES A CITY (Gn 11,3)
ACCOMPANYING FORMANDI,
GROWING IN CONTEMPLATION,
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE INFLUENCE
OF TECHNOLOGY**

DESIDERIO GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, O.CARM

*"Come, let us build ourselves a city
and a tower with its top in the heavens." (Gn 11,4)*

The Church wishes to be present, and to make use of new technologies. Indeed, the appreciation of the social digital networks, in recent church documents, has been very positive¹. One of the most frequently produced images is that of Pope Benedict XVI, on the 3rd of December 2012, seated in front of a computer, as he "tweeted". What he was doing was a sign that science and technology, theology and spirituality – as C.S. Lewis once said, in his *Mere Christianity* - are neither antagonistic towards one another nor mutually exclusively. Paul VI declared that he would feel "guilty before God" if he neglected to use the communications media for evangelisation.² St. John Paul II

¹ PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS, *The Church and the Internet: Ethics in the Internet: Church and Communication*, September 2015.

² *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 45.

defined the communications media as “the first aereopagus of the modern age”³.

1.- *The scent of lemons*. It is striking that Jonah Lynch gave the title “The Scent of Lemons” to his book about technology and human relationships in the Facebook era.⁴ *What have lemons got to do with technology?* The author warns: “A recently picked lemon has a rough skin. The more the tree is cared for, the rougher the skin. If you press it a little a scented oil comes out and straightaway the skin seems smoother. Then you get the juice, that goes very well on your cutlets, and you oysters, in your Summer drinks and your hot tea! “Touch, smell, taste”. Three of the five senses cannot not be activated by digital technology. Aristotle affirmed in his tract, *De anima* that there are five exterior senses⁵. If we are to believe his classification, then we do not have access to three-fifths of reality.⁶ That’s 60%! The language of contemplation has many nuances, and it is so infinite that we need all the senses to express it. The language of love needs both personal and corporal communication. “What has been from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen ... and touched with our own hands concerning the Word of life” (1Jn 1,1-3).

³ *Redemptoris Missio*, 37.

⁴ LYNCH, J., *The Scent of Lemons. Technology and Relationships in the Age of Facebook*, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 2012.

⁵ *De anima* 2, 5.6.7-11. Los cc. 7-11 are chapters that study in sequence and respectively each one of the five senses.

⁶ Today, on the other hand, neuroscience, cognitive psychology and the philosophy of perception speak of more than twenty senses, such as the sense of pain, the sense of heat, the sense of balance etc.

2. - *Technology is not neutral.* Technology has been seen as an instrument for people to use. Nonetheless – as experts tell us – it is not neutral.⁷ In what way? we might think that “only the user uses technology”. That’s not entirely certain: “technology also uses the user”. That is to say, every kind of technology has an impact on the person that uses it. That is not just a simple philosophical opinion. It is beyond proof that the repetition of an activity leads to substantial changes – not superficial – in our brain. Up to not many years ago it was believed that the brain continued to mature until it had reached its maximum and then it stopped. Today, however, neurosciences testify that it is not like that. There is always something new and something changing in the brain. Habits, repeated exercises, constantly change our neuronal structures, eliminating and creating connections between them. What we think, see, read and do repeatedly, shapes what we are. What we are shapes our spiritual life. Let’s give an example to illustrate this idea.

What would happen if our students were born digital, fast and multitasking? What influence would it have on their spiritual life if they had learned to read through digital means and if they had spent hours and hours reading tens of websites every day? We are talking in the present, not in the conditional. Some of our formandi are already experiencing serious difficulty in keeping their mind focused on just one thing, especially

⁷ LYNCH, J., BORRAS, M.K., *Technology and the New Evangelization: Criteria for Discernment* (Catholic Information Service; Washington 2012)

9. DOIGGE, N., *The Brain that Changes Itself* (Penguin 2007).

when it comes to reading the breviary, reading the psalms, or reading the Bible, doing *lectio divina*. The eye does not go with the rhythm of the biblical text, where you are to savour each word. Their eyes, they say, jump from line to line in the search for *keywords*, using up words in order to store up information. They have to stop now and then so that half the biblical text won't be missed along the way. Their technological habits have rewired their brain, to the point that it has changed their way of reading. It is not only because the device that they use to is different, but because there brain reads differently. This is an important topic.⁸ Technology shapes our brain. Our brain conditions our way of approaching a biblical text and a spiritual classic.⁹

3. -*Contemplation: space, time, relationship*. God, "when he created humankind, established a relationship of love with the human, in space and in time".¹⁰ In this very simple theological statement, W. Pannenberg summarised the three categories that technology has tried to conquer: space, time and relationship. Sometimes I wonder, Behind this desire to conquer, is there nothing else oth-

⁸ A topic that is given a lot of attention today is the close relationship that exists between neurosciences, information technology and spirituality. Cf. NOGUÉS, R., *Neurociencia, espiritualidades y religiones* (Sal Terrae; Santander 2016). In this same year, the Comillas Pontifical University organised a symposium the object of which was to study the impact that these disciplines have on the understanding of human nature and their repercussions in the works of religion and spirituality. *Símpoio Internacional. Naturaleza humana 2.0. Web, antropotecnia, naturalización de la espiritualidad* (11-13 February, 2016).

⁹ CARR, N., *The Shallows. What the Internet is Doing to our Brains* (Norton 2010).

¹⁰ PANNENBERG, W., *Teología sistemática II* (UPCO; Madrid 1996) 91.

er than the desire to be useful? What is certain is that nearly all our candidates have a cell phone, a computer, an email account, they use the internet and they communicate via Skype; they use a watch, they have all travelled by car and by air. They shop on Amazon. They all know who SIRI is. Some even have his selfie pole. They are super connected. This technological world has its direct effects and side effects in the lives of our communities and in our leaning towards contemplation.

3.1.- *Space and gadgets*: When my parents still worked, there was a distinction between the work-place and the home. Everyone knew that even if you knew the telephone number of your employee, you would never disturb him, except in a case of grave necessity. Today, it happens quite often that anywhere and at any time, the employee will check his voice mail, answer the phone (even when he is on holidays) and write emails from his Blackberry. Now there is no clear distinction between work space and home space. A mobile is not tied to any one physical place. The idea is not so strong, that if I call a mobile, I may be disturbing the person at the other end. The limitations that heretofore space imposed, are now decided only by the will of the individual. That's what decides whether to turn off the mobile or to leave it on. That is the reason why during the consecration of the Mass a mobile can go off. A friar friend of mine, with a very good sense of humour, once said to me, "Nowadays in the Eucharist there are two real presences that are always there, Jesus and the sound of a mobile." "Who has not heard the deafening sound of a mobile,

and then seen the owner take it out and answer! It gets worse when in a loud voice you hear the person say, with everybody around, "Yes, yes, the sermon has ended just now. The preacher went on and on". That is why we had to install a frequency blocker in the church, so we would not hear any more either the phone or its owner. That is the way it goes: Long live the gadget!

Jonah Lynch, an expert in this area, pointed out recently: "On the same screen I can see the Pope celebrating the Way of the Cross on Good Friday, an entertaining comedy, or a display of pornography."¹¹ "These are three experiences that if we were to have them in reality, they would happen in three very different places (a theatre, a church, a brothel). Well, technology has made it such that the three moments can exist side by side in the one space: the screen in a room in our own home. Television has formed a very complex relationship with reality. When we have the TV zapper in our hands, and Sky with 550 channels on the TV, we have the possibility to choose what world we want to live in. That reinforces the idea that the world is not something that is given, but rather something that you can choose according to what you might like to feel. We have moved from being pilgrims to being tourists, wandering here and there. Our gadgets give the name "screen" to that common space that brings together many different places (theatre, church, brothel ...). There is no contemplative spirit that does not love the "here" of real space.

¹¹ LYNCH, J., O.C., 90.

3.2.- *Time and gadgets*: Technology is attempting to master time. The instantaneousness of electric light, the efficiency of a watch, have transformed the world. Something as simple as electricity, has not only modified the biological rhythms of human beings, it has also revolutionised the world of work. You can read and work by night, by just turning on the light. The powerful film *Modern Times* by Charlie Chaplin (1936) offers some profound reflection on this. The instantaneousness, associated with many of our technological advances (telegraphy, telephone, email, credit cards, shopping on-line, television Twitter ... etc.) has turned out to be an advantage for us. A watch does many things for us. It helps us to organise our agenda efficiently and it helps us to know when we are to sleep, work, eat, pray etc. Instantaneousness and efficiency have their counterpart, however: they take away the element of flexibility from a contemplative life, and the idea of staying where we are. In "Mount Carmel", the residence the Carmelites run in Madrid, I remember an elderly lady who said to me, "Father, with all these technical advances we are getting old without aging and for some dying, different to what people may think, in some cases can be very difficult". There really is no contemplative spirit that does not love the "now" of real time.

3.3.- *Relationship and gadgets*: The desire for affection lies deep in the human condition.¹² The desire for relationship and communication, that

¹² KEATING, T., *La condición humana. Contemplación y cambio* (DDB; Bilbao 2001) 14-15. 31.

is in the human heart, is the reason for the explosion of social networks. We desire to be appreciated and loved. To love and be loved. The false-ego will strive to satisfy itself by also using new technologies. And in looking for affection I may pretend to be the person I am not. The Facebook profile, sometimes, is an exercise in exhibitionism. The person does not portray what he is, but more what "he would like to be". Once, someone whom I know, went on a journey. When he came back, we asked him, how things went. He said the journey was awful and that he had never been so bored. Who would say such thing? In the photos he had from the trip, it did not seem that way, quite the opposite! Smiles, great fun, posturing, pretending to be exceedingly happy! The gadget society is more concerned with appearances than with empathising with others.

The networks, at other times, make being anonymous attractive, and that means that they encourage people to cross the boundaries that physical presence normally helps to respect (pornography, cyber-bullying, grooming¹³, etc.). We can hear the same question that was asked of Adam and Eve: Where are you? Why are you hiding? (Gn 3,8-9). Formation for contemplation should help to create safe spaces in our houses and to make proper use of the net (cf. RIVC 130) "by excluding all that sullies the beauty of the intimacy of human sexuality, or anything that exploits the weak and defenceless"¹⁴.

¹³ Grooming = adult behaviour that is aimed at getting control over a minor, diminishing inhibitions in order to be able to abuse the child. It is often the motivation behind the production of pornography.

¹⁴ BENEDICTO XVI, "New technologies, new relationships. Promoting a culture of respect, dialogue and friendship. May 24 2009:

When the desire for virtual connectedness becomes obsessive, the result is that the person becomes isolated and pathologies that were not there before begin to appear. An example might be, nomophobia (the irrational fear of leaving the house without the mobile phone or of being without a charged battery). In some places including some restaurants, they warn you about the mobile phone, and encourage you to think about relationship. In the *Maestro-piero Pizzeria*, in the centre of Madrid, they have a sign that says, "We have no Wifi. Please, talk to one another. Be people"

Conclusion: Everything is happening very quickly: Big Data, Smart-Watch, Instagram, technoadiction, etc. New questions emerge, never heard before: Is it right to hunt pokémon in the Holocaust Museum in Washington or while attending a funeral?¹⁵ Pope Francis, on the 1th of November, 2015, warned that electronic gadgets have their darker side: a family, that does not have conversation while it is eating because the TV is on, or everyone is on a mobile or with a gadget, is not a very family kind of family but more an automatic kind of family, I would say".¹⁶ That is to say, there are challenges. The internet is only an adolescent that continues to grow more and more. For some, in fact, it is no longer a means of communication. It has become in itself a cultural setting that is shaping a new kind of anthropology and a new society.¹⁷

¹⁵ Newspaper, *El Mundo*, July 13, 2016.

¹⁶ POPE FRANCIS, General Audience, November 11 2015.

¹⁷ SPADARO, A., "La fe en el ambiente digital", en *Razón y fe* 1379 (septiembre 2013) 171; *Pensar el cristianismo en tiempos de la red* (Hedder; Barcelona 2014).

1.- *Contemplation and the evangelisation of the senses.* The Chinese Empire, they say, was believed to be unconquerable. No one could cross the Great Wall. That was until one day a Mongol warrior arrived, the man named Gengis Khan (1162-1227), a man feared for his genius and tactics in battle, who said: All we have to do is corrupt one of the guards on the Great Wall, and the Chinese Empire will fall at our feet". That is what happened, and crossing the Great Wall of China was a relatively simple matter. Beijing, the Great City, was invaded, in 1215. John of the Cross, another strategist, of the spirit, that is, also pointed out that the senses are the guards that protect the great doors to the Great Empire of our interiority. All it takes is for the doors of the senses (the thresholds) be corrupted, and "the city", (our soul) will be invaded. Technology, with all its good points and advantages, (that no one would deny, as we have seen) at times can turn into an ingenious conqueror intent on colonising our deepest centre. It takes time to discover what the senses can do and how they work, because, like everything that has to do with what is human, they are prone to ambiguity and subject to deception.¹⁸ We reach heavenly realities through our senses, with the help of discernment, and before that, faith. Contemplative activity, in an increasingly technological world, demands the evangelisation of our senses. We have to learn to see, hear, touch, smell and taste, in the style of Jesus.

¹⁸ JOHN OF THE CROSS, "All the things that I might hear, see, smell, taste or touch, must not be held in the memory as in an archive, but rather I should let them go and forget them." (3 Ascent 2,14).

2.- *Silence and fasting from technology.* Clearly, we cannot go back to the caves with the Cromañón (Anderthal) man. It is certainly not a question of closing ourselves off to gadgets, not at all. Discernment teaches us to be free. Silence is not the mere absence of noise, but rather the absence of the ego. One of the great problems in formation is dispersion, and distraction. Fasting is not the long-term solution, it is only a pedagogical tool that educates our *conscience and our attention*. Some spiritual writers talk about fasting from technology, as a pedagogical tool, that can help us reorder our lives, around what we consider to be most important: the contemplative life and the growth of good human relations. When we voluntarily limit the use of something, we learn more to depend on God. Fasting gives us greater freedom and sounder judgement. It does not take away anything that is essential. It does not mean that we treat as immoral a great part of the instruments of the world of work. Silence raises questions that help us to discern the advisability or not of using the technological means at our disposal. There are three very simple questions: 1) What does this gadget offer me, and what problems does it solve? 2) Am I interested in what it offers?, Do I in fact have to resolve that problem? 3) Could it lead to other new problems later on? Our Rule tells to remain alone in our cell (Rule 10) What is our cell like? Lets take a look. Is it a kind of Silicon Valley (the epicentre of the technological industry)? Does it invite us to immerse ourselves in the silence of a solitary hiding place?¹⁹ Silence and fasting from technology

¹⁹ *Institutio Primorum Monachorum*, 1, 5.

might help in recovering the spirituality of the cell and our contemplative capacity.

3.- *"Who is my neighbour, in this new digital world?* The Christian concept of the human person holds that every man and woman is unique, unrepeatable and infinite. It is important always to remember that contact with the virtual can never and should never take the place of direct human contact, in every aspect of our lives.²⁰ A contemplative attitude gets us back to reality, and makes of us prophets of hope. Contemplation has to pass through the computer monitor and go out into the street. A possible spiritual journey might be, From *homo sapiens* to *homo digitalis*, and from *homo digitalis* to real and Christian *homo*.

"Rachel was dying of cancer. The nurses could do nothing to relieve her pain. Their powerlessness to do anything for her made them feel bad and so they kept away from her. When Fr. Vincent heard about what was happening he went into her room and closed the door. He went down on his knees, close to her. She cried out, "My God, Why?" He cried out, "Lord, she is crying to you, listen to her". He touched her, and took her hand. The woman did not expect that. Somebody was praying with her. In an instant she changed her cry from, "My God, Why?" to, "My God, I offer you everything". Paediatricians tell us that in the birth of a child, touch is the first sense to be awakened. A child that is just born neither sees nor hears and what quiets the child most of all is its contact with its mother. Fr. Vincent's hands, touch-

²⁰ *Verbum Domini* 8.

ing Rachel were like the hands of Christ, setting all humanity, represented in Adam and Eve. free. This is the disconcerting love of Christ, his love that is personal to each one, expressed through his body, which is the Church. In the last moments of life, desperation turns unto a cry of hope. When I am praying I find great help in looking at the 16th century tableau in the sanctuary in our chapel in the novitiate that depicts the words that are in the Creed, "and he descended into hell". The contemplative looks at but also touches humanity, and that is the logic of the incarnation.

The mystics, and this may seem hard to believe, first experienced in a spiritual way, in their heart, what later science would demonstrate, with empirical reasoning, in the laboratory. Einstein believed that the objective of science was to "discover the plans of God". New technologies, in fact, are the gateways to truth and faith, opening up new spaces and times for evangelisation. We are called to make the love of God known, everywhere; *Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news of salvation (Mk 16,15)* This is the positive and likeable face of the technological society. We should never be naive. The temptations of the Tower of Babel are always present: to put more trust in our bricks and mortar (in the use of human means) that in the power of God's action.



**THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF VOCATION
PROMOTION AND ITS PRACTICE
IN THE PROVINCE OF THE MOST PURE
HEART OF MARY
(USA, CANADA, MEXICO, PERU, EL SAL-
VADOR)**

DARYL MORESCO, O.CARM.

I would like to begin this presentation today by inviting you into a moment of quiet contemplation, an encounter, with a few simple words from our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

YOUR CALLING

"In calling you God says to you: 'You are important to me, I love you, I am counting on you'. Jesus says this to each one of us! Joy is born from that! The joy of the moment in which Jesus looked at me. Understanding and hearing this is the secret of our joy. Feeling loved by God, feeling that for him we are not numbers but people; and we know that it is he who is calling us." (Rejoice! 4)

Pope Francis calls us to pause at that opening scene he calls: 'The joy of the moment when Jesus looked at me' Take few moments to ponder your calling in the silence of your heart. (Pause)

Recall "the joy of that moment when Jesus looked at you and called you. Where were you? Experience it again knowing that it is "the secret of your

joy". Feel its intensity. Know that it is God who is calling. Given thanks to God. (Silent Prayer)

God is indeed the mysterious subject of an act of calling.

I hope these words will resonate within you throughout this presentation.

The topic for this presentation is: The Theological Basis of Vocation Promotion and Its Practice in the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary (USA, Canada, Mexico, Peru, El Salvador).

It is a twofold:

1. The Theological Basis of Vocation Promotion, and
2. Its Practice in the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary

INTRODUCTION

Everyone one of us here, every Carmelite in fact, is responsible for promoting vocations to Order. I'm the Director of Vocations for the PCM province and I'm also the Director of Pre-Novitiate Formation. There's in another Carmelite who in the USA who is also a Vocations Director and who also a member of the provincial council. This is my tenth year as a Formation Director and my fifth year as the Director of Vocations for the PCM Province. For some, maybe many of us, having two or more ministries is probably not that unusual, particularly, if you are vocation promoter. I say this just to remind all of us of our reality today.

From the beginning, I would like to underline four dimensions of a vocation that I will be touching on. They are that a vocation is essentially

- 1) an invitation
- 2) a call
- 3) a loving and free response
- 4) a generous commitment within the Church

These four dimensions, simply stated, lay the foundation for this presentation.

1. Biblical & Theological Basis for Vocation Promotion

As vocation promoters, we are charged with the responsibility to attract interest in the Order, to promote the charism of the Order and to draw others to our way of life and ministry. It's what we do. We are doing this all the time. I would like to call this "casting the net". I truly believe this ministry we do was established by Jesus Christ with his apostles is handed on to us today. This is first and foremost the biblical foundation for this presentation

CASTING THE NET

In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, walking by the sea of Galilee, Jesus encountered Simon and Andrew fishing. They were fishermen, and they were casting a net (Matthew 4:18) or casting their nets (Mark 1: 16) into the sea. To the two of them, Jesus said, "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men." In Mark it is written that they left their nets and followed him; in Matthew's Gospel, it is said that they followed him "at once."

In John's Gospel, the Risen Christ asks the apostles to: "Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something." They cast it, and they were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish. Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn" (John 21: 1-14)

In Luke's account, which I want to focus on today, is where we find a much more detailed Gospel account of the call of Simon the fisherman, and this incredible catch of fish. Here Jesus instructs Simon and the other apostles, James and John, to "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." I believe these words give us a profound understanding of the work we do.

Take in these words slowly and ponder them in your heart.

"Put out into the deep" "Lower your nets"

These words give so much meaning and purpose to the work of promoting vocations.

We know what happened when they listened to the Lord. "They caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing." Jesus reassured them: "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men (and women)," and they followed him (Luke 5: 1-11).

"Casting the Net," appears in all the Gospels. On one level, Jesus is promising and providing fish for the fishermen. On another level he is promising and providing vocations for his church. And he calls us, as he did Peter, Andrew, James and John, to assist in that mission. Jesus lays the foundation for our ministry.

"Put out into the deep" is what really catches my attention in Luke's Gospel account. These words speak to the absolute 'mystery' of the work we do. We want young men and women to experience the depth of who we are, of the lives we profess and live daily, our prayer and our communal life. They want to know about the service we give to the Church and to see the reality of our prayerful, contemplative lives. They want to know how we deal with our struggles and fears and face the uncertainties. They want to know how we truly follow Jesus, the Risen Christ, today.

"Casting the net" is what we have do, and it has to go deep. It is our ministry and Jesus is faithful to his promise today in the church, just as he was faithful when he taught his apostles. The net is cast wide and it must go deep in order to catch the fish and sometimes we have to go to unexpected places to do it.

Our efforts to promote vocations must reach deep into the hearts of the young who hunger and thirst for spiritual nourishment, who want to find deeper meaning in their lives and who want to give themselves wholeheartedly to 'something'. They feel called to something more. Helping them to articulate and give expression to their deepest desire is challenging. Finding ways in our ministry to journey with them is a challenge for each one of us. If we are to have a future full of hope then grounding or anchoring our trust in Jesus and his promise that he will provide an abundant catch is crucial. I'll be saying more about this.

Let us turn briefly to *Vita Consecrata* which deepens the theological basis for our ministry as vocation promoters.

The Consecrated Life, deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ the Lord, is a gift of God the Father to his Church through the Holy Spirit. By the profession of the evangelical counsels *the characteristic features of Jesus* — the chaste, poor and obedient one — *are made* constantly “visible” *in the midst of the world* and the eyes of the faithful are directed towards the mystery of the Kingdom of God already at work in history, even as it awaits its full realization in heaven. (VC 1, 1996)

These opening words of *Vita Consecrata* give us a richness and a depth meaning to our own vocation in the Church and, in so doing, reinforce the theological basis for our work as vocation promoters.

Being “deeply rooted in Christ”, we are transformed into his image and likeness and make “visible the mysteries of the kingdom”. Making “visible” this mystery that our lives as Carmelites, as religious proclaim everyday is a daily challenge.

Are we visible enough in the world? Are we visible enough to young people? I’m not simply referring to the wearing of the habit. Being courageous enough to witness to our life with “an undivided heart” makes a difference. Sharing our communal life of prayer will help young people see our reality. Inviting them to experience our fraternity and witness our joyfulness will make this reality ‘visible’. This and ‘seeing’ other aspects of our life will hopefully challenge them to go deeper and to ask: is this where God is calling me to commit my life?

Turning to our own Carmelite documents to further this theological basis for promoting vocations

– Carmelite Formation: A Journey of Transformation says it so well. In his letter inaugurating the latest edition of the RIVC, our Prior General, Fr Fernando says, “The *Ratio Institutionis* continues to be one of our most significant documents of the post-conciliar period.” With that said, let us carefully consider how it speaks to us about the nature and purpose of vocation ministry:

The calling to religious life in the Carmelite Order, like every vocation, is God’s gift; in practical terms, however, it is recognized through various human mediations. Vocations are usually born through contact with one of our religious, with our lifestyle or with one of our activities, or, occasionally, simply through exposure to our classic spiritual writings.

Our love for the Spirit’s gift of Carmel to the Church moves us to share it with others. We must therefore be attentive to the signs of the Carmelite charism in others and have the courage to put before them a specific proposal.

The main objective of the vocations ministry is to help others discover the gift which they carry within themselves, and respond to it by choosing the particular lifestyle which corresponds to it. The function of the ministry is, therefore, to accompany individuals on their journey of spiritual growth and to assist them in the task of discernment. (74)

These words highlight and give a very clear basis and focus for the work we do as vocation promoters. Our work, our ministry is DISCERNMENT. We discern with a candidate this movement of

the Spirit, this movement of God in a person's life. Discerning with them the stirrings of their heart, the desire they have to commit their life to God. This is the divine task that each of us, all of us, is asked to do, whether we are a vocation promoter or not, and to do it with great joyfulness and generosity of spirit. Discerning the signs that a person is being called to Carmel is an awesome responsibility and a humbling act. It is profound and rich in every way imaginable. In his final words to us in our Rule, St Albert says:

I have written these things briefly to you establishing a way of life for you, according to which you are to conduct yourselves. If anyone does more, the Lord himself, when he comes again, will repay him. You are, however, to use discretion, which is the moderator of virtue.

RULE OF ST ALBERT 24 [Epil., xxi]

We are vocation promoters and we accompany those who are discerning with us who feel a longing and a desire to live *in obsequio Jesu Christi* - in allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Every vocation story, every vocation journey is an encounter. In the Province of Most Pure Heart of Mary (PCM) discernment is the process we accompany a candidate through prayerful listening and dialogue to sift and sort through the questions that are stirring up this desire to commit one's life to the Lord..

This is very sacred work we do as vocation ministers and formation directors. I say "sacred" for we are standing on holy ground, the holy ground of the lives of the men and women we enter in this

process of discernment with. Like God's challenge to Moses in Exodus, "take off your shoes, Moses, for the ground you are standing on is holy." It is with the same reverence, profound commitment and deep sense of trust that we do this work, that we journey with these discerners. And in all likelihood, with the same wonder and fear that Moses felt when he approached the burning bush. (Ex 3:1-6)

2. PRACTICE IN THE MOST PURE HEART OF MARY PROVINCE

Our vocation promotion is very extensive in the province. Since we are a very large province, geographically speaking, it includes the USA, Canada, Peru, Mexico and El Salvador. Our outreach is largely through our websites - Carmelites.net and Carmelitas.org. We are fast becoming a bi-lingual province – English and Spanish! The internet is just one of the places where promote vocations. Our presence on Social Media is an extremely valuable for reaching enquirers, making initial contacts with young men and women who are discerning their vocation specifically to the Order.

Threefold purpose to our Vocation Promotion outreach:

1. To promote the spirituality of Carmel and the life of the Order and province. We have a large volume of information that we feed through the website

2. To offer vocational discernment opportunities to people who are searching and who enquire with us
3. To provide contact information and enable an interested person to make their first contact with the vocation team

Through Facebook, twitter, instagram, youtube and podcasts we reach out to a huge audience across the USA and beyond, including the Philippines, India, Africa and Great Britain. We refer these enquirers back to their own countries with contact information from the Status Ordinis which we hope is up-to-date.

Our websites - Carmelites.net and Carmelitas.org - have just recently been rebuilt to reflect the changing nature of social media. It is a more dynamic platform, not cluttered with text and pictures and easy to navigate. With one click you locate information, scroll easily and see pictures at a quick glance.

We have a large membership that follows us daily especially through the Daily Disconnect and God's Garden because these are very accessible, fresh, easy to access, very attractive and informative.

While the internet offers an valuable and consistent approach to the work of promoting vocations in the PCM province, it is by no means our only approach.

In addition to putting a lot of time and effort into social media, there are many other approaches that we use to promote vocations.

We still maintain a certain amount of printed material in the form of posters that we send to our communities and ministry sites. We also take this information with us to exhibitions and conferences.

We have created vocation intercessions cards and prayer discernment cards, as well as Mary and Elijah bookmarks, *Lectio Divina* cards. We have pens, lanyards and books promoting our charism, history, the PCM province such as *Seasons of the Heart*, *At the Fountain of Elijah*, *Foundation Stones*, *The Carmelite Way*, *Desert Springs in the City* just to mention a few.

Vocation Discernment Retreats twice a year bring together young men who have spent time in the discernment process and may be ready to make the decision to enter the application process. Personal visits to each candidate provide an opportunity to meet an enquirer on familiar ground. It helps to get further insight into the candidates world.

Attending vocation fairs, exhibitions, school vocation awareness days, parish days and retreats with young people are valuable opportunities for spreading word about the Carmelites. Staying in touch with an enquirer through regular phone calls an emails can be time-consuming but nevertheless an important connection.

We even attended World Youth Day in Krakow this year and hosted a vocation booth for the purpose of promoting vocation awareness. Wouldn't it be great for the Order to host a booth at the next WYD in Panama. We met many young people from all around the world who were excited to see us, meet us talk to us and to receive a Carmelite pin or a prayer card, even a scapular.

Ultimately, we hope all these efforts encourage young adults to contact us so that we can begin to build personal contact and discern with them.

Vocation Promotion is huge in our Province. Our two vocation directors are assisted by some of the

friars in formation who help to keep us up-to-date on the internet and who also provide ideas and a fresh look on the website and in our print media. They are Generation Xers and Millenials so they know what young people respond to when they visit us.

Some of our young friars in formation write blogs, some are artists and do amazing work. We have musicians who have created beautiful meditations. There are creative writers and thinkers and others who are happy to write a reflection, share their vocation story and those who like to take pictures of events, locally and internationally.

Over the years, we have consistently and persistently kept inviting our young friars to join us in the work of promoting vocations. Their presence on the internet is a real encouragement for anyone who maybe considering entering the discernment process. We take them with us to as many events as possible around the country. Young people are attracted by their presence and have many questions for them.

Does all this actually reap a harvest of vocations? Yes and No!

We receive many enquirers a year through our own website and through one or two vocation placement websites. By far the most successful of these sources are the enquirers who contact us through our own website. With the more generic websites there is very little or ongoing follow-up from enquirers. What this tells us is that some form of personal contact makes a difference!

In trying to identify what works well and what doesn't work, can be problematic if we don't recognize that ultimately it is the work of the Holy

Spirit. We have to trust that we are co-operating with the Holy Spirit in all our efforts.

We frequently ask our brothers in the province: who have you invited to discern a religious vocation? Who have you identified as a possible vocation prospect in your ministry site – parish, school retreat center or youth group? How are you engaging and inviting young people to be active in your ministry?

Our most successful vocation efforts have been when one of our brothers has invited a young man to consider a vocation to Carmel and has offered to walk with him. Recently, a Carmelite invited a young man to a vocation discernment retreat and within a few months he was in the application process. We have at least three men in formation who were invited to discern their vocation before they even met with a vocation director. This is the kind of effort we encourage and support around the province.

All of us find ourselves in many and various places and situations in our communities and in our ministries. Are we able to recognize the gift of a vocation in any of the young men we meet? Are we able to recognize the stirrings of the Holy Spirit in their lives? Have we ever invited someone to consider the possibility of a religious vocation, of finding their home in Carmel? We'll never know if we never ask.

Of the many enquiries we receive throughout the year, generally, we find that those who "know" us from our ministries, especially parishes and schools, are more likely to move forward in the discernment process to the point of entry into the Order.

To develop a consistent, enthusiastic and generous approach to vocation promotion in the Province is critical if we are to have a future. One of our older Carmelite friars who has retired but still works full time, always greets the young men with information – “you are my future”. These young friars enjoy this and, I believe, take to heart these words. He gives them something to think about!

Those who don't know us personally or through our ministries are most likely not to follow-up or stay connected after the initial contact. They often have a very different understanding of our charism and who we are. It's very likely that they have a more Teresian or Discalced understanding of the charism from their reading of Teresa of Interior Castle or the Way of Perfection, the Ascent of Mount Carmel or the Story of a Soul. Their more monastic structure appeals, with its heavy emphasis on hours of prayer, silence and solitude and not too much interest or understanding of ministry.

Our emphasis on the Marian and Elian influence in our spirituality is one of our attractions for young people. Of particular interest to young people is the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. At WYD faces lit up when they saw the brown scapular and immediately recognized it as part of our Marian devotion..

What is clear for many of those who enquire with us is that they are deeply interested in the contemplative life. They hear about it, they read about it and they have many questions about it. How do we share this experience with them? How do we talk to them about this from our concrete, lived experience?

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI expressed it most beautifully when he said: "Carmel teaches the Church how to pray..." and Pope Francis reiterated it when he met in his letter to the Prior General and the General Chapter in September, 2013. These words speak volumes to our rich heritage of spirituality and the contemplative dimension of our lives.

Listening to the tough questions that discerners are asking us and to respond honestly and humbly can be uncomfortable. Challenging them to think beyond the world of their own religious experience can be risky for them. Knowing how to dialogue with them, to pray with them and to help them encounter the living God in their journey is surely a privilege.

These are critical moments in the discernment process which can often raise more questions than you and I are prepared to answer. Millennials come from a very different cultural context than what we grew up in. We can take none of this for granted. It requires a boldness, an energy and a deep humility on our part and the recognition that we cannot do it alone and only by grace of God is it truly possible. This is not our work this is God's work and we are "stewards of the mysteries of God" for we are truly walking on holy ground, the holy ground of the lives of young men and women who come to us with their discernment questions.

A 2009 study conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) for the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) will provide light in this ministry of "casting the net." One part of the study that I believe speaks to

us clearly is the question of what attracts young people today to religious life - the "net" if you will - as well as the particular manner of "casting the net."

WHAT ATTRACTS THE YOUNG

what attracts young adults to consider religious life today? The NRVC-CARA study's findings on the attraction to religious life, revealed that new members (defined as those who have entered since 1993). Do you recognize any of these? It may only be applicable to new members in the USA.

a sense of call and a desire for prayer and spiritual growth

the example of its members, and especially by their sense of joy, their down to earth nature, and their commitment and zeal

ministry less important than spirituality, prayer, community and lifestyle

more committed to the church and fidelity to the church.

influenced by its practice regarding a religious habit - visible.

first encounter - where its members served (men)

common prayer attracted and continues to sustain them

daily Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, the church's liturgy, Eucharistic Adoration, Marian devotions, and other devotional practices.

community life is the most influential factor in their decision, then prayer life

want to live, work and pray with other members

prefer large communities (8 or more) and then mid-sized communities (4-7)

These insights can help us “cast the net wider or deeper.” We want to be successful fishers of men and women for the Lord.

Recall the Lord in the Gospel of Luke; he told those who had been night-fishing to cast their nets again in the morning. They listened, and they were blessed. To those in John’s Gospel who had been casting their nets in one direction, he said, “Cast your nets over the starboard side of the boat.” They listened, even though it might have been against their better judgment. And they were blessed.

Do we need too change direction with our vocation promotion? Do we need to cast the net on the other side in order to catch an abundance of vocations?

To conclude with the words of one our young friars in article he wrote:

(Pope Francis) urges us first to rediscover the joy of the gospel. “If we think that things are not going to change, we need to recall that Jesus Christ has triumphed over sin and death and is now almighty” (*Evangelii*, sec. 275). May we believe it! May we follow the Pope’s example and rejoice in the impossible lives for which we were chosen! May the joy of the gospel transform our vows into an attractive evangelical witness for the sake of the church and the whole world! (Horizon, 2015, Spring)

CONCLUSION

In Mary the Church is all who journey together: in the love of those who go out to the most fragile; in the hope of those who know that they will be

accompanied in their going out and in the faith of those who have a special gift to share. In Mary each one of us, driven by the wind of the Spirit, fulfills our own vocation to move out!

Star of the new evangelisation,
help us to bear radiant
witness to communion,
service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of the world.
Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,
Pray for us.
Amen. Alleluia!

RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF VOCATION MINISTRY

IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE PHILIPPINE EXPERIENCE

IRVIN MANGMANG, O.CARM.

I. INTRODUCTION

A JOYFUL AND HOPEFUL GREETING FROM THE PHILIPPINES AND ASIA!

I am grateful for the invitation extended to us by Fr. Benny Phang, O.Carm., to participate in this august gathering. It is my honor as a young Carmelite to join you in reflecting and working to promote religious and priestly vocation in our respected areas, situations, and contexts. My humble task for this (morning/afternoon/evening) is to share and reflect on our experiences in the Philippines in the ministry of vocation, as we nurture, promote, and recruit young people to become Carmelites in the future. My presentation shall be divided in four parts: First, I will share a working and operational definition of what vocation is; Second, I will sketch in broad strokes the Situation of Vocation in the Philippine context; Third, I will share our Vocation Ministry in the Philippines; and lastly, I will offer a reflection – a response to rise above the challenges of vocation promotion in the 21st Century.

II. WHAT IS VOCATION?

A working and operational definition of vocation is necessary for us to be 'on the same boat', at least for this presentation. Such is not a comprehensive and the final word on vocation. It is only a humble description of how we have experienced vocation ministry in the Philippines.

Vocation, I believe, is primarily ecclesial. It is associated with the whole community of believers, the disciples of Jesus. Vocation fundamentally belongs to the Church. It is the faithful who is called to make 'God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.' And every member of the Church discerns his or her respective vocation within the Church.

What does this tell us? Vocation Ministry is not primarily centered and focused on a particular candidate. The focus is on the Church as a whole. The Church as a community of believers must clearly discern its vocation and must show life in the changing and varying context. The Church listens, reads, and responds to the signs of the times. Through this, the members of the Church will be able to discern for their own vocation within the church.

(Now, let us look into our ecclesial communities, how discerning are they? How animated are they? The response from these questions will give us a hint on the quality and intensity of response we draw from the people.)

Vocation is an interplay involving the one who calls, the one who is called, and the sense of purpose. It is God who initiates the calling, the individual who discerns the calling, and the mission entailed by the calling. It is noticeable that the Vo-

cation Director is not part of the fundamental dynamics of vocation. However, since the one who is calling and the mission entailed by the calling is not evidently seen, it is the task of the Vocation Director to help the candidate see deeply in a different light, the one who is calling him and the mission that accompanies the calling. Hence, Vocation Directors are also spiritual guides and companions in the sphere of vocation ministry. Listening to the interior life of the candidate, and understanding their concerns and issues are the sacred duties of every vocation minister.

Further, Vocation is not a noun. It is a verb. It is always in action, continuously in process, constantly renewed. It is a CALLING not a CALL. Why? It is because our calling is based on a particular time, context, and worldview. As we begin to master our context, new challenges are arising that require us to move and not be static. We are always in the land of perpetual departures. Hence, we cannot be a religious of the 21st Century and yet live in the 15th Century. We are called in our time. We are called in our particular context and situation.

(I remember what Fr. Peter Kramer, O.Carm. used to tell us every time we would ask him about his Carmelite life. He would tell us the same thing, "I am not yet a Carmelite. I am still striving to be a Carmelite." And that was said when he was in his late 80s. Hence, what is essential in this process, is our willingness to strive, to be there "although not yet").

Essential to vocation is the faith reality. Without faith, discernment is not possible. Only in faith can we nurture vocation. One can only hear the

calling if faith is present. It is through faith that one is able *to hear* God's invitation 'to live a particular lifestyle in accord with His will... the most basic call of all, the most sacred level of vocation ...the summon God gives us to love Him by loving one another. (Padovano, 1993)

If vocation is essentially hearing, hence, it is important to ask, "What kind of hearers do we have in the 21st century? Do the faithful of our times especially young people have the ability and willingness to hear the calling? Is the calling getting across? Is God's calling like the seed that fell on rich soil and grows or is it among the thorns and dies?"

Aside from being a Vocation Director, I also take charge of our Youth Center, a boarding house for college students studying in the city. One of the things that I noticed among our students is the reduced span of time in listening. In the past, listening to a lecture from one to three hours is just normal. However, for the young men and women of today or the so-called 'millennials,' listening to a 15-minute talk seems impossible. It is said that the listening capacity among the youth only expands to 10 minutes. Right after 10 minutes, they begin to feel uneasy, become less focused, and find ways to entertain themselves. Now, if our youth have the difficulty to hear and listen for 10 minutes, how much more if the hearing and listening is forever? Vocation is forever a calling.

Seemingly, the span of time in listening is reduced but that does not eliminate the fact that they still do hear and listen. It just tells us that we must deliver our message within that timeframe, in a concise, precise, packed, and dense manner.

Also, it is equally interesting to know what they usually hear and listen to. What makes them sit up and pay attention? What stirs their interest? To find the initial response to these questions will certainly add energy and life to our vocation ministry. Perhaps, if we will be able to change our disposition, mindset, approaches, and even our language, they will listen more and actively engage in dialogue.

III. PHILIPPINE CONTEXT OF VOCATION

The Church document *Ecclesia in Asia* shows how the plan of God is fulfilled on Asian soil. The human face of God was born, raised, lived, died, and resurrected in Asia. Jesus is indeed Asian. However, it is sad to note that it is in Asia that Jesus is least known. Despite the enormous population in Asia, Christianity remains very much a minor religion in the continent. And more than half of Christians in Asia are found in the Philippines.

As a young continent, Asia poses a challenge to the 'proclaimers of the Good News' to evangelize the Church whose majority of its faithful are youth and eventually will be the future of the Church in Asia. (Pedragosa, 1998) While the Gospel does not change, the challenge is to proclaim the good news in a fast changing world.

Also, Asia, as a multi-religious continent, is home to the major religions of the world: Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. (Pedragosa, 1998) The major religions in this continent play a strong influence on the people's culture and ways of life. Hence, the way to engagement and encounter in Asia is through dialogue with cultures, religions, and the poor.

As part of Asia, the Philippines shares the concerns and challenges of the continent. In addition, the emergent change as the world shifted to the 21st Century affects not only the country but as well as the ministry of vocation in the Philippines. While it is a fact that the Philippines is dominantly Catholic, the country also experiences a level of decline in terms of young men and women joining religious life.

The Directors of Vocations in the Philippines (DVP) - Cebu Chapter, identified some concerns and issues in vocation ministry. The seeming decline in young peoples' attraction and enthusiasm, they say, is due the pervading consumerism and materialism in the world today. However, I believe that the waning of interest in religious and priestly life is also a reflection of the kind of the Church we have become. It now seems to be a Church that is caught up in its own interest and concerns, drowning the voice of God, and leaving the members cold to respond to His calling (*Evangelium Gaudium*, 2013).

Seemingly, our age is pre-occupied with the desire to have good jobs, high salaries, and owning properties and businesses. A research survey conducted by the University of San Carlos in Cebu in 2015 reveals that most *millennials* today tend to be entrepreneurial. Owning a business is an important indicator of their success. What seems to serve as their motivation for the future is the fulfillment of their personal desires. There is a tendency to be self-absorbed, self-referential, and self-concerned which certainly are enemies of joy, which the Gospel brings (*Evangelium Gaudium*, 2013). The young people tend to be pre-occupied with themselves

and are engaging less and less with others especially those who are in need.

In my conversations with the young, some shared with me that they could spend hours and hours on social media, tinkering with their gadgets, and strolling in malls but not in Church activities. Seemingly, Church involvement is less interesting, boring, if not a waste of time. As a result, none of these young men and women has ever considered becoming a religious or priest. It never crossed their mind.

The scandals and abuses in the Church have also affected the religious and priestly interest among the young. A young candidate told me that he became less interested in religious life because he no longer knows who are the authentic religious and priests, and those who are FAKE. Every religious and priest becomes doubtful. Credibility is indeed tested and put into scrutiny. For the young does not only hear—they also see. As visual learners, they know whether what was preached is mirrored in the interior and exterior life of the religious and priest.

These and more appear to cause religious and priestly vocation to die a natural death, but more alarming than the concern for recruitment is the kind of Church we have presently become. Do we, as members of the Church, continuously reflect our ecclesial vocation or have we become tired of renewing and responding to the changing times? A tired Church loses its sense of mission. A tired Church is deprived of the Joy that the Gospel brings.

How then, as Carmelites in the Philippines, do we respond to the growing tiredness among the

young and the Church in general? We do not have the answers. We turn to Jesus for a meaningful and relevant response.

VI. VOCATION MINISTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Journey to the Peripheries

John 4 accounts the meeting of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. The chapter starts with Jesus going to a town in Samaria named Sychar. Jesus is on a journey to the margins. In his proclamation of the Good News, Jesus does not content himself to remain in the center of Jerusalem. He goes to the peripheries so that those who are marginalized will be able to hear and listen to the Good News. The Gospel has no boundaries. God's invitation is for all. It has no limits. Jesus even crosses the territory of the 'enemy' so that they too, may hear the good news.

Growth Mindset. To cross boundaries, one needs not only courage but also a growing mindset. Such is essential to the Vocation Ministry. Such mindset allows the minister to see that even in an unfamiliar and unheard-of territory and situations, opportunities are possible. As I journey with the young in discerning their calling, I find it essential to set aside first our prejudices and biases. Such includes expectations, personal beliefs, labels, and even standards. It is a fundamental recognition of the gift of person and the Giver who has sent the person. While undeniably, there is the desire to recruit for the best, perfect, and holiest candidate, however, such is next to impossible. Our vocation ministry is not primarily directed to the best, perfect, and righteous but for those who are con-

sciously (even unconsciously) searching for God in their weaknesses and limitations but *have the willingness to be transformed in our formation, in the Carmelite Way*. This was Jesus' template when he invited the apostles to join him in mission.

(I remember, the Archbishop of Lingayen, Socrates Villegas, once said to a group of formators, "If we apply the standards we are using for our formands to ourselves, I am sure that none of us will be ordained as priests.")

Crossing Borders. *As Jesus crosses borders, He also crosses milieu and environment. From a Jewish context and worldview to the Samaritan setting and perspective, such a crossing of boundaries tells us that even in the most unfamiliar and challenging terrain, Jesus is aware of the opportunities and perhaps treasures that await Him there.*

I am still young and perhaps I still look young. But every time I talk with our students in our Youth Center, I cannot anymore understand some of their language.

Let us have an exercise. Do you know the meaning of the following:

YOLO – You Only Live Once

SMH – Shook My Head

ICYMI – In Case You Missed It

IMHO – In My Honest Opinion

IDK – I Don't Know

Selfie - A photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media.

Now, if I want to meaningfully dialogue with them, I should have the willingness to cross these boundaries. It is a crossing not just of space, but even time. It is a crossing that invites not just for the young to listen to the voice of God but also for us, ministers of vocation, to listen with empathy and compassion to them although, unheard-of and unfamiliar, but filled with possibilities and opportunities. It is through this that we are able to grasp and have a sensing of their worldview. Our RIVC recognizes aptly this reality. It says, "... the world we live in must be a challenge for us because it is a world rich in **possibility and opportunity**, in a state of constant growth and evolution – but it is also a world full of contradictions." (RIVC, 2015)

As ministers of vocation, we need to take advantage of promoting vocation with the young in their context, in the world that they have learned to live in and walk with. Such certainly poses a challenge for us for it requires us to leave our comfort zones and go to the unfamiliar territory of the young, so that we may be able to see the world as they sees it. Such is the beginning of a truly meaningful conversation with the young, *encountering them personally so that they may personally encounter God.*

Journeying with the Carmelite Community. The journey of the aspiring young together with the vocation minister is not single-handedly done but is situated in the community of believers. The Philippine Formational Manual stresses that the designed program to help the aspiring young discern their vocation happens in the local Carmelite community with which are in close contact. The

encounter with the Carmelite Community hopefully prepares them for entry into the postulancy/pre-novitiate stage. These dynamics require collaboration with the respective Carmelite communities.

Part of the vocation ministry is the continuous discernment of the local community's vocation as they respond to God's calling through prayer, fraternal life, and acts of service. In this sense, *all members of the Carmelite community are vocation ministers*. Their lives lived in the community and missions become a meaningful way of nurturing the vocations of the aspiring young. And through *a clear communal vocation*, the aspirant is enabled to discern for his own calling.

In addition to this, a Pre-Postulancy Program is designed for the aspiring young. For two months, they are integrated with the other aspirants that come from different places. It will serve as an initial experience of community life and the introduction to the Carmelite Order. Such intends to answer their formation needs and expectations. The Vocation Director facilitates this short program.

In the Philippines, the National Vocation Animation Team (NVAT) is composed of the local communities' vocation ministers. All Carmelite communities have local vocation ministers. They are coordinated, mediated, and headed by the National Vocation Director. The local vocation ministers see to it that aspirants who will integrate in the community will be given a program for accompaniment, discernment, counseling, spiritual direction, and opportunity to interact with the community to help them make decisions in their life.

The Formation Manual reminds every vocation minister to help young people discover the gifts which they carry within themselves and accompany individuals on their journey of spiritual growth and to assist them in the task of discernment. Vocation Ministers do not only give the aspiring young set of programs but must lend a listening heart to their hopes and dreams in life.

Furthermore, the local vocation ministers engage with the Carmelite ministries in the area. In the case of parish ministry, they help to promote Carmelite vocation through coordination with Parish Youth Organizations and Carmel Youth Groups. The Parish Priest or Parochial Vicar takes the opportunity in their homilies and talks to share with the young the Carmelite vocation and how it (Carmelite vocation) can be a meaningful path of life.

In our school ministry, local vocation ministers coordinate with school heads and chaplains to promote Carmelite vocation among the young. *Although the Carmelite Charism is integrated in the School Curricula*, vocation ministers take part in the schools' liturgical and spiritual activities such as masses, recollections, retreats, and Youth Festival to share and give witness to the Carmelite way of life.

Part of the vocation ministry is to go to schools and 'waste time' with students. I noticed that they were very eager to ask some basic questions about life. I consider this as an entry point to encourage them to discern and ask them to consider their life choices after they finish their academic degree.

In the level of the Diocese, the vocation ministers actively participate during the Vocation Month. In the months of October, November or Decem-

ber, various Dioceses organize youth gatherings to promote vocations among the high school and college students including the young professionals. These gatherings are meaningful ways of promoting our Carmelite vocation among the students. Ministers share with them about the Order's charism and spirituality and the young are given the opportunity to give reactions, questions, and clarifications.

In the Archdiocese of Cebu, the Vocation Jamboree is organized once a year. High school students as well as college students and young professionals are invited to participate in an overnight Vocation Jamboree. The entire archdiocese together with the religious congregations actively participates. Priests and religious including the Archbishop share their vocation stories to the young.

B. Sitting Down by the Well

Returning to the Story of the Woman at the Well, Jesus arrived at the well of Sychar. He was tired and so he sat at Jacob's well to take rest. Then, the woman came to draw water from the well. It is interesting to note that before the woman came, Jesus was already there first. He was seemingly waiting for someone to come. Jesus can personally draw water from the well but He chose to wait. He patiently sat on the well with the hope that someone will come to draw water from the well. True enough, a Samaritan Woman came to the well. Perhaps, Jesus was aware that the well is a not just a source of water but a spiritual space where Samaritans come to be nourished.

In the 21st century, the young people go to a lot of wells. They visit and perhaps stay in these wells hoping that they can find purpose and meaning in life. The important question is: As ministers of vocation, do we know these wells? Do we visit these wells? Do we wait patiently like Jesus to encounter young people searching for purpose and meaning in life?

What are the wells of the young in the 21st Century? There are many wells. The Internet is one. The young are said to be digital natives. Technology is part of their DNA so is the use of the internet. They are netizens: citizens of the world wide web. The young are present 100 percent in the internet. But are we present in the internet? Have we brought our vocation ministry in the internet so that we can be present together with the young? It is not enough to have a website, Facebook account, among others. The demand is to make our presence felt in the net, to be virtually available in the web, waiting for young people to come to the well. In my experience, most of our Postulants/Pre-Novices were able to encounter the Carmelite Order in the Philippines through Facebook. Through this application, we are able to get connected (despite distance and location), make updates and follow ups, and interact virtually with each other.

The homes of the aspiring young are also wells of rich and molding experiences. As the head of the Vocation Ministry Team, I visit and stay in the homes/families of aspiring young. The purpose is not to investigate like a FBI. The young aspirant is not a criminal; he is a future Carmelite. The goal is to draw from the well of family experiences: their joys,

dreams, struggles, and hopes. These experience influence directly or indirectly the desire of the aspiring young to join the religious life. The family as the first school of human values (Amoris Laetitia, 2015) serves as the foundation for religious vocation.

Circle of Friends is also a potent well. As 'chosen, appointed, and extended' family members, friends know certain aspects which perhaps immediate family members are not aware of. I invite their friends to come, not to recruit them, but to see how they interact with each other. With their friends, it makes them comfortable and at home visiting our youth centers, convents, and monasteries.

Recommendation letters, I believe, are also wells from wells of experience. For young professionals, recommendations from previous workplaces will give us a background of his successes and challenges, strengths and weaknesses, priorities and values. This is also same as true with young aspirants with previous experience in religious communities and seminaries. It will allow us to meaningfully and effectively accompany the aspiring young in their discerning their calling.

C. Asking for Drink

As the Samaritan draws waters from the well, Jesus said, "Will you give me a drink?" Such a request is surprising. The request comes from a Jew and he is no ordinary Jew. He is Jesus the Son of God. What does this tell us? Jesus recognizes that in her lowliness, in her simplicity, perhaps in her tiredness and weariness, she can give something valuable. Such generous giving becomes her purpose and mission.

To make the aspiring young aware of what they contribute to the life of the Church, generates in them a sense of *purpose*, a sense of *mission*. Despite being young, with their strengths and weaknesses, they are able to respond to God's calling, with grit (firmness of character and indomitable spirit) and resiliency (ability to be docile and bounce back in life). Part of the encounter of the aspiring young with the Carmelite community is the opportunity to have a glimpse of our various ministries. We give them a space to move and have a feel of our mission areas. We allow them to encounter the people whom we serve, especially the poor, deprived, oppressed, marginalized, and abused. As the aspiring young encounters them, a sense of mission is stirred in them, for in truth, they have encountered the mercy of God in these experiences and they respond to God's mercy by choosing to embrace the religious life. God's mercy becomes the ground of their religious calling. As it is said, "Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of Her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness She makes present to believers; nothing in Her preaching and in Her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church's very credibility is seen in how She shows merciful and compassionate love. The Church "has an endless desire to show mercy." (Misericordiae Vultus, 2015)

D. Drinking the Living Water

Jesus tells the Samaritan woman, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become

in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." And the Samaritan woman, wanting to have water that gives life, asks, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." There is now a reversal of roles. The Samaritan Woman who at the outset is suppose to give water to Jesus is now the one asking for the Living Water. This request follows after Jesus' effort to make the woman aware of what she can give. And aware of what she can give, the Samaritan woman goes direct to the source of mercy and love. Directly connected to Jesus, she will never get thirsty. She will not run of water. With this, she will be able to do and give more. The Evangelized is now the evangelizer.

When the aspiring young have a sense of purpose and mission, he begins to dare and overcome his doubts. He becomes willing to drink the water that comes from Jesus. With a sense of mission, he is called, "to act, to love, to serve, to walk – to be a light for others and a sign of hope" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 2015).

Part of the 'drinking of the water' is the willingness and grit of the aspiring young 1) To integrate with the local community; 2) To adjust and live in the community; 3) To be sensitive to his needs and the needs of his brothers; and 4) To be able to further engage in academic life.

Our Formation Manual outlines some indicators of the candidate's willingness and readiness to embrace religious life: 1. A certain degree of human maturity; 2. A living relationship with Jesus

as the Lord of their lives; 3. A definite ecclesial and social awareness; 3. and a Carmelite vocation.

To put a visual representation, here is a diagram of our vocation ministry in the Philippines



V. RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF VOCATION MINISTRY

Faced with the challenges of consumerism, materialism, technology, pragmatism, functionalism, and more, how shall we rise to the challenge of Vocation Ministry in the 21st century? Let us find encouragement in the words of Pope Francis, "From the standpoint of the Christian life as a whole, the vocation to the consecrated life is, despite its renunciations and trials, and indeed because of them, a path of light over which the Redeemer keeps constant watch: **"Rise and have no fear."** These words of Jesus are important and I would like to invite each one of us to allow ourselves to hear Jesus say directly to us this evening: **"Rise, and have no fear... and religious people, wake up the world"** (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 2015).

To rise above our fears requires a lot of listening to the young people. It is a kind of listening that will move us to embrace their hopes, dreams, grief, and anxiety to become our own. It is only through them that we can accompany them and teach again the new ways of faith, allowing them to believe once more.

In a world where the light of faith flickers, the demand *to be role models of faith* is intensified and deepened. Faith is restored to the young people when ministers of vocation and religious people are *faithful to our vocations*. Such faithfulness will exude the joyful fidelity that young people have been longing to witness. Young people will be able to renew their faith when they are able to see a Church whose life is Her faith and her faith is Her life. Such faith will teach us to be a *merciful, humble, truthful, just, and prayerful* Church. And despite all the scandals that wound and pain the Church, God's love and mercy still abounds. These wounds become possibilities and opportunities for the young to experience *grace in the midst of brokenness*.

Lastly, be not afraid if the results do not meet our expectations (if we are not able to meet the target number). This is the Mission of Jesus. We are only sharers in His mission. Let us have faith in the Jesus that He will complete the work that He has begun.

Thank you very much.



FINAL STATEMENT OF CARMELITE FORMATORS AND VOCATION PROMOTERS

Batu – Indonesia 30-12 November 2016
Walk With us: “Growing in the Contemplative
Dimensions of One’s Life”
(RIVC#10)

We, the Carmelite Formators and Vocation Promoters gathered in Batu, Indonesia, for a series of presentations, discussions and guided practices in the areas of formation and vocation promotion in the context of a deepening appreciation of our contemplative tradition in Carmel. We were enriched by the following presenters; Berthold Anton Pareira O.Carm., Michael Plattig O.Carm., Quinn Connors O.Carm., Daryl Moresco O.Carm., Irvin Mangmang O.Carm, Desiderio Garcia Martinez O.Carm and last but not least Fernando Mil-lan Romeral O.Carm.

During these two weeks we were reminded of a God who is continually speaking to humanity and who is patiently waiting for a response. Our Carmelite history is a living reminder of men and women who have sought God in silence and in the scriptures. Their journey transformed them and offers us the same transformation through our own deepening experience of God’s love.

We were further reminded of the value of reading and listening to the Word of God in order to encounter God. We were challenged that listening is an act of love and that the Carmelite is the person who has fallen in love with God. This contemplative witness and example of the formator

and vocation promoter must bring light, rather than darkness, to those in formation. Our call to a contemplative life must make us see as God sees and love as God loves. As formators and vocation promoters we must be more practical than theoretical, and not be people who spend much time talking about prayer but never actually praying.

During the Pilgrimage of Hope in 2010, Pope Benedict XVI said "Carmel teaches us how to pray". Various presentations highlighted for us the historical background of contemplation in the Order.

We formators and vocation promoters must put contemplation into action, thus making it more than a theory. From the very beginning of the history of our Order, this contemplative attitude which is the heart of our Carmelite life has inspired our actions and our identity.

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus we encounter the unexpected presence of Christ in the lives of others, as well as in the Scriptures and in the breaking of bread. Therefore Carmelite vocation promotion ministry flows from taking to heart our Carmelite charism, which implies a deep relationship with the Risen Christ.

Carmelite vocation work is deeply rooted in the words of Jesus, "Put out into the deep"... "Lower your nets" (Luke 5:1-11). We believe that every Carmelite is responsible for promoting Carmelite life and vocations in the Order. As such, the main objective of a Carmelite vocation promoter should be to help others discover the gift of God which they carry within themselves.

As Carmelites, the primary end of formation is to form candidates in our Carmelite way of life, so

that they may discover, assimilate and deepen that in which Carmelite identity consists. As formators we strive to make formation communities places of love and self-development that will facilitate a candidate in this journey of transformation. Formation for ministry, initial and on-going, requires of each of us the ability to give love and to give of oneself and with that, the capacity for responsible care and stewardship 'in the midst of the people'.

We agree to create places where those we journey with can hear the voice of God and respond. We affirm the necessity of building prayerful, fraternal and prophetic communities and the need for formation and on-going formation for formators and vocation promoters.

We agree that modern forms of communication can be truly beneficial to those in formation but safeguards needs to be established in order that healthy human and divine interactions and relationships are not harmed.

We also agree that open lines of communication within the Order and our Provinces are essential for our formation and vocation promotion. This needs to be developed and reviewed regularly.

At the present moment the Order finds itself in a time of rapid globalization with modern society increasingly offering results with little or no waiting. The danger presented with this culture is that humanity is becoming like a 'tourist', that is, not being touched by what is around them and expecting rapid results. For us the journey implies interaction and encounter with the different aspects of reality. Every journey into another culture is formative and educative since, it has an impact on what is hidden within us.

There are many positive results from the Orders' concern in regard to the formation process, as Fr. Fernando Millan, O.Carm., the Prior General, shared his convictions and challenges dealing with formation. It has generated interest in other topics of interest and issues. It has also presented the challenge that formation is an attitude not of set period of life. It is a recognition that we need help in our growth as Carmelites and so are open not closed to the richness of the Spirit.

Formation has to be such a priority that those called to this ministry are themselves properly formed and prepared. We live in a creative tension between idealism and realism; and between unity and diversity. However, as Pope Francis said, "Let us not allow this person or problem to steal our joy." For us as Carmelite formators and vocation promoters who listen and love to the words of God we pray that joy will always be alive within us.