

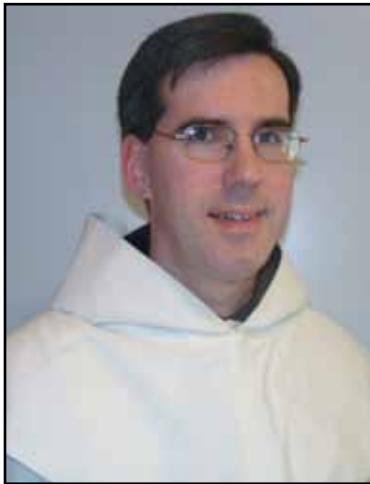
# GENTLE BREEZES — OF CARMEL —

*“I shall get up and go to my father.”*



*“His father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion.” – Luke 15:8-12*

## FROM THE PROVINCIAL · FATHER GREGORY ROSS, OCD



*Yes, I feel it; even though I had on my conscience all the sins that can be committed, I would go, my heart broken with sorrow, and throw myself into Jesus' arms, for I know how much He loves the prodigal child who returns to Him. It is not because God, in His anticipating Mercy, has preserved my soul from mortal sin that I go to Him with confidence and love....*

With these words, St. Thérèse's spiritual autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, comes to its conclusion, the little saint too weak to write any more as she lay dying from tuberculosis in August of 1897. It is with these words that I greet you as we enter once again into this season of Lent.

Lent is a time to return to the Lord, to "get up and go to my father" like the Prodigal Son (cf. Luke 15,18). It is a time to "come to our senses," to turn away from sin or from whatever keeps us from a fully loving relationship with God. It is a time to return to the Father's house, to return to communion with him and with our fellow Christians, assembled together as the People of God, the Church.

So many people ask us Carmelites to pray that one of their loved ones return to the Church. So many have loved ones who no longer practice the Catholic faith, or who have wandered far from Jesus Christ and his Gospel. These situations are a cause of anxiety for many.

I often wonder how many of us, and how many good people who have turned away from God and the Church,

resist returning to God, or resist turning to him more wholeheartedly, out of an unfounded fear of him. By "fear" I do not mean the healthy "fear of God" that Scripture tells us is the "beginning of all wisdom." This "fear of the Lord" is a virtue. It means to approach God with humility, with the utmost respect for his power and goodness as our Creator and Redeemer.

Rather, by "unfounded fear of God" I mean a fear that is based upon a false notion of God, a false image of who he really is. I believe many people are afraid to turn, or return, to God out of fear of being condemned by him, a fear that God will greet them with a stern face and an angry punishment for their sins.

The words of St. Thérèse, our newest Discalced Carmelite Doctor of the Church (along with St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross), provide a remedy for this ungrounded fear. St. Thérèse proclaims to us the good news of God's infinite mercy, the good news that Jesus proclaims to us in the parable of the Prodigal Son. In this parable, the son who has abandoned his father's house, wasting away his inheritance and ending up with the swine, comes to his senses and resolves to return to his father's house. He seems to have hope only of being received by his father as a slave, no longer as a son.

What a surprise he receives upon his return! We learn that while this son was still a long way off, *his father*

*caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.* We then learn that his father refuses to see his son as anything other than his *son*, rejoicing that he has returned, has been found. He makes

his son's return a source of celebration for his whole household. There is no condemnation of the son by his father, no stern face, and no punishment – only rejoicing that *this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.*

This is the merciful Father whom Jesus manifests to us. This is the merciful Father in whom St. Thérèse placed all her faith and hope. This is the merciful Father who stands waiting for us, watching for our return. His heart

is filled with compassion for us and for all those who have wandered from the warmth and goodness of his home and his

*Continued on page 3*



*Lent is a time to return to the Lord, to "get up and go to my father" like the Prodigal Son.*

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St. Thérèse profession photograph, 1890

*Continued from page 2*

household. He longs for all his children to be gathered unto him as one family. He awaits not to condemn, but to save, to redeem, to nourish and to heal us. His joy, as we see from this parable, is to restore us to our place in his family, the place for which he created us, the place that is our own joy and fulfillment.

As St. Thérèse writes, ‘*How GOOD is the Lord, His MERCY endures forever!*’ (Ps 117,1) *It seems to me that if all creatures had received the same graces I received, God would be feared by none but would be loved to the point of folly; and through love, not through fear, no one would ever consent to cause him any pain.*

This Lent, St. Thérèse urges us to turn again to God “with confidence and love.” She inspires us, also, to commend confidently to God all those for whom we pray. And she also offers us an example of how we too are called to have the same attitude towards others that the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son had towards his younger son, looking upon all with compassion, longing for all to return safely to the Father’s house, and leading them beyond fear to a trust in God’s freely given mercy.

Of course, no one can turn to God unless he first gives them the grace to do so. As we read in the Scriptures, in Lamentations 5:21: *Lead us back to you, O LORD, that we may be restored.* But, as the parable of the Prodigal Son assures us, as well as such other parables of Jesus as that of the shepherd seeking out the lost sheep, assure us, our

merciful God does indeed desire to restore all of his children to his household.

Let us enter into this season of Lent in this Gospel spirit of hopeful confidence that Jesus inspired in St. Thérèse by his merciful love. Please be assured that the Discalced Carmelite Friars of the Southern Province keep you and all your loved ones in our prayers. May our heavenly Father, whose goodness and mercy exceed all that we can hope for or imagine, give you and all your loved ones the grace of finding yourselves in his household, at peace with him and with all of his children.



# The Discalced Carmelite Order—a Religious Family

By Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD

We all know there is a difference between a fundamental truth and the way it is grasped by the mind, expressed in words, and lived out in actions. For example, there is the one truth of our faith in the resurrection of Jesus, yet Christians of different times and places have thought about it and written and spoken about it and put their faith in the resurrection into practice in a great variety of ways. Something similar can be said of Carmelite Spirituality. There is the one spirituality in Carmel. Yet we understand it and try to make it our own and let it shape our hearts and works and lives not all in the same way. There are a variety of ways of being a Carmelite.

In the Discalced Carmelite Order, where all share in the same spirituality by belonging to the same religious family, there are three different vocations or ways of living out this spirituality and membership in the Order. There are the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, who are called to the practice of contemplative prayer within the setting of a cloistered community. There are the Discalced Carmelite Friars, who are also called to the practice of contemplative prayer, but within the setting of a life of ordained or other ministry. And there are the Discalced Carmelite Seculars, who too are called to the practice of contemplative prayer, only within the setting of a secular life in the world involving work, home, and perhaps marriage and family. All three together—Nuns, Friars, and Seculars—comprise the one Discalced Carmelite Order, sharing in the one spirituality. All are equally Carmelite, not one more than the other. They are just different ways of being part of the Order and of living out its spirituality.

One thing that does dis-

tinguish the Friars within the Order as a whole is their pastoral responsibility for both the Nuns and the Seculars. In other words, it is part of what it means to be a Discalced Carmelite Friar to give spiritual and pastoral assistance to



Friars and Seculars gathered for a meeting in Oklahoma City, June 2005.

the Nuns and the Seculars. Here is how the *Constitutions* of the Friars—our official legislation—puts it (n.103): *In accordance with our Holy Mother St. Teresa's express wish, [the Friars'] apostolic mission in the Church obliges us to be available for the spiritual guidance and formation of the nuns of the Order... We have a similar fraternal duty towards the members of the Secular Order.*

Let me speak further, then, about this ministry of the Friars specifically to the Seculars, a ministry which is nothing less than the fulfillment of our “fraternal duty” to them.

Worldwide the Seculars outnumber the Friars about 10 to 1. In the United States, though, where Secular Carmelites are quite numerous, the ratio is even greater. In our Province of St. Therese, it is 40 to 1. Seculars belong to local chapters or communities that meet regularly for study, prayer, and fellowship. There are 39 such communities throughout our province—ranging from Sioux City and Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to McAllen, Texas, along the central states of the US, and from Amarillo and Lubbock, Texas to Savannah, Georgia, along the southern states. By comparison, there are only six houses of Friars in the province—one in Oklahoma, three in Texas, one in Louisiana, and one in Arkansas. Thus, the Seculars, being much more numerous, are also present over a much greater area than the Friars.

From these simple statistics two conclusions can quickly be drawn:

(1) We Friars need to focus our ministry to the Seculars upon what is essential in assisting them to live out their vocation as

## Spirituality

### Three Different Vocations to the Discalced Carmelite Order

1. **Discalced Carmelite Nuns:** called to the practice of contemplative prayer in the setting of a cloistered community.
2. **Discalced Carmelite Friars:** called to the practice of contemplative prayer within the setting of a life of ordained and other ministries.
3. **Discalced Carmelite Seculars:** called to the practice of contemplative prayer within the setting of a secular life in the world involving work, home, and perhaps marriage and family.



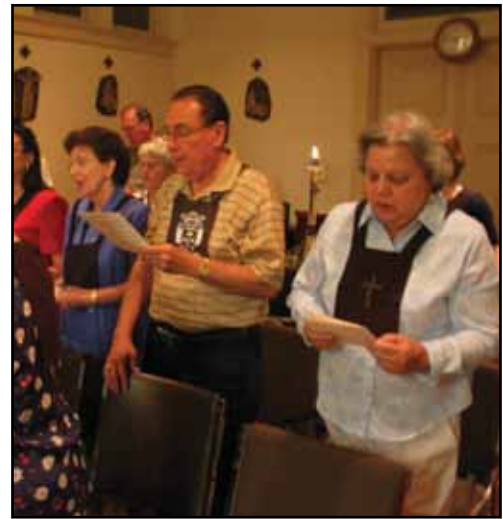
**Fr. John Michael and Fr. John Magdalene with the Seculars of Little Rock, AR.**

Seculars, leaving many things to the Seculars themselves when it comes to administration and general oversight. This fact is a good thing and undoubtedly the way it ought to be. As members of the Discalced Carmelite Order, Seculars are responsible for their own vocation. We Friars are here to assist them especially in their study of Carmelite spirituality. We are also to provide brotherly, pastoral counsel and encouragement when difficulties or uncertainties arise, as they inevitably will whenever human beings come together in a common spiritual purpose and so struggle to remain vital and faithful to that purpose in this world.



**Mark Calvert and Anita Gouge, Seculars of the Knoxville, TN, community.**

(2) The presence of the Discalced Carmelite Order in the Church and in the world lies primarily with the Seculars, at least here in the United States. They are more numerous and more widely spread than the Friars. Thus, they are the ones through whom the Order can most effectively and fully share Carmelite spirituality and its teachings about contemplative prayer with other Catholics and other Christians and indeed with anyone whom the Spirit may move to seek a deeper relationship with God through prayer. Thus, we Friars need to work with the Seculars in assisting them in their own work of making Carmelite spirituality better known to others. They have the fullest, widest presence and so the greatest potential for bringing our spirituality to a waiting



**Seculars gather for prayer in the chapel of our student house, New Orleans, LA.**

world. How we Friars might better assist, guide, and inspire them in this work is a question which we Friars need to raise for ourselves and in collaboration with the Seculars in ever more creative ways.

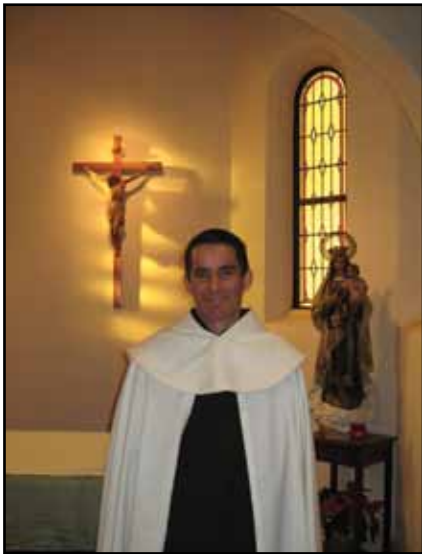
Fulfilling our fraternal duty to the Seculars of the Order is an important part of who we are as Discalced Carmelite Friars. We have been called to let the spirituality of Carmel shape us not just as individuals and communities of Friars. We must share that spirituality with others if our vocation is to be vital and authentic. To do that we need look no further than the Seculars of our Discalced Carmelite Order, who in their own way support us as brothers within the same religious family.

If you wish to learn more about Secular Carmelites, you can visit the website of our Province at [www.carmelitesok.org](http://www.carmelitesok.org). There you will find a link to a webpage specifically about Secular Carmelites. At the bottom of that page, you can also find a link which will take you to a website designed and managed specifically for the Seculars of our Province.

Let me conclude this article with this statement taken from our provincial website. It nicely describes the work of the Friars in ministering to the Seculars.

*The Discalced Carmelite Friars of the Oklahoma Province of St. Therese collaborate with the Secular Carmelites of our province. We serve as spiritual assistants to the communities of Secular Carmelites that are located in the cities where we have communities of friars. We also offer spiritual formation to the Secular Carmelites by leading days of recollection and retreats, as well as by offering individual spiritual direction.*

## *Br. Juan Guillermo Quintana Lopez Makes First Profession*



**Br. Juan Guillermo Quintana, OCD**

On January 1, 2010, on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, our Brother Juan Guillermo Quintana Lopez of the Merciful Jesus made his first profession of vows as a Discalced Carmelite Friar. The Mass of Profession was celebrated at the Centro Guadalupano at Little Flower Parish in Oklahoma City, with Fr. Gregory Ross, O.C.D., Provincial,

receiving Brother's vows and serving as principal celebrant of the Eucharist.

Br. Juan Guillermo began his novitiate year on December 31, 2009. The year of novitiate is a time of intense training in our Discalced Carmelite way of life. It is a time of prayer, discernment, study of the spirituality of our saints, as well as study of our Rule and Constitutions, which spell out the way of life we are to follow as Discalced Carmelite Friars. Novices are guided through this year of training by a "Novice Master," a role fulfilled for Br. Juan by Fr. Luís Joaquín Castañeda, O.C.D.

At the end of this year of novitiate, novices profess the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience for a period of one year. They renew this profession each year until they make their "solemn vows," that is, their lifetime commitment to God as a Discalced Carmelite Friar.

By his profession of the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Br. Juan Guillermo expresses his will to "attain to perfect charity and give eternal glory to the most Holy Trinity ... by the grace of the Holy Spirit and the help of the Mother of God, by constant prayer and apostolic activity in the service of our mother the Church."

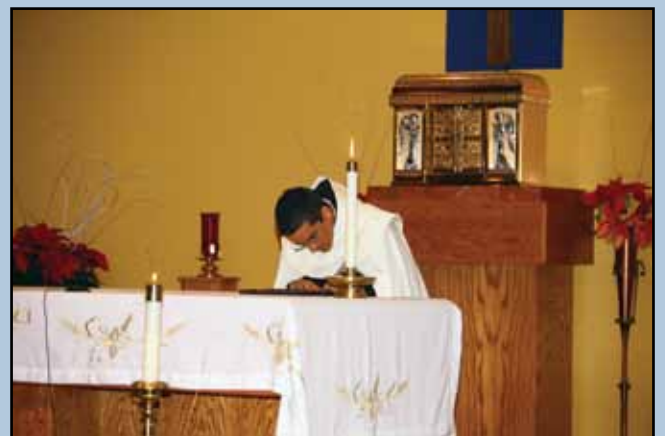
Br. Juan Guillermo is from Celaya, Mexico, and is 34 years old. He is now a member of the community of the St. John of the Cross House of Studies in New Orleans, where he has resumed his studies at Notre Dame Seminary. Please keep him in your prayers, and know that you are in his!



**Mass of First Profession, Centro Guadalupano, Little Flower Parish, Oklahoma City.**



**Br. Juan professes his vows before Fr. Provincial.**



**Making it official: Br. Juan signs his vows at the altar.**

# The Self-less Will

By Michael Montoya, Development Director

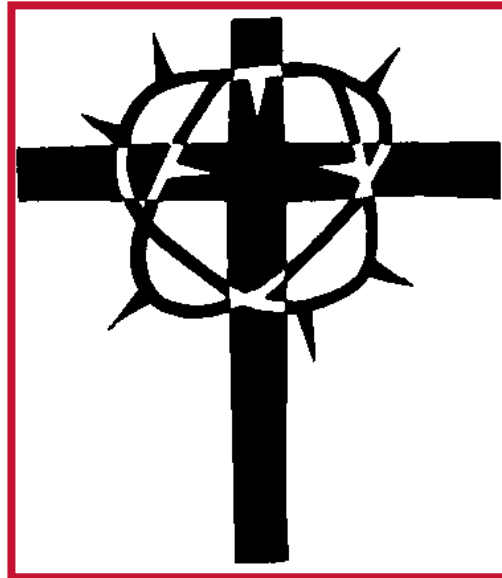
From the Development Office of the Southern Province of the Discalced Carmelite Friars I wish you a blessed and Happy New Year and thank you for your patronage and partnership. With a new year come new opportunities for change and further opportunities to deepen our relationship with Jesus and his holy Church. It is an honor to be able to begin our publication year and our year with you by exploring the teachings and graces that this season of Lent can offer us. Customarily the season of Lent is associated with acts of self-denial and other traditional practices which allow us to restore our friendship with God. However, while these practices are good and do serve as a way to restore our relationship with God our Father, their meaning is applicable beyond the 40 days of Lent. Like all relationships and partnerships, our acts and practices must reach into the remaining 325 days of the year.

The pillars of this Lenten season are Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. Saint Peter Chrysologos wrote in the 5<sup>th</sup> century:

“Prayer, mercy, and fasting: These three are one, and they give life to each other. Fasting is the soul of prayer; mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. Let no one try to separate them; they cannot be separated. If you have only one of them or not all together, you have nothing. So if you

pray, fast; if fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others.

When you fast, see the fasting of others. If you hope for mercy, show mercy. If you look for kindness, show kindness. If you want to receive, give.”



What better way is there to exercise the virtues of our free will and “let our light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and give glory to the Father,” than by serving, giving, and being the active constant presence of Christ’s church in the world. If this Holy season of Lent can rest on one idea, it is the selflessness of both God our Father and Jesus his Son. Saint John writes in his Gospel, “God so loved the world that he gave

his only son, so that all who believe in him might not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus gave the ultimate sacrifice of his own life to save us all. It is our duty to strive to replicate this idea of selflessness, not satisfy our own ego, for the betterment of the world. Pope Benedict XVI wrote in his 2008 Lenten message, “In giving, we offer something material, a sign of the greater gift that we can impart to others through the announcement and witness of Christ, in whose name is found true life.”

This is our promise to you. The Development Office of the Southern Province of the Discalced Carmelites is here not only to serve the needs of our Friars who serve the spiritual needs of others every day, but for you and your prayer needs. We are here to listen, work, and share with you. During this season of Lent, and throughout the 2010 year, I pray that I have the opportunity to hear from you and am able to serve you. Thank you very much for your sharing. May God Bless.

*“I will spend my Heaven doing good upon earth.”*

— ST. THERESE

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## Conversion in the Life of St. Teresa of Jesus

In 2015 the Order of Discalced Carmelites will be celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of St. Teresa of Jesus, the great reformer of the Carmelite Order. St. Teresa was born in Avila, Spain, in 1515. Hence, she is often referred to as St. Teresa of Avila. In preparation for the observance of this anniversary, the entire Order of Discalced Carmelites will spend the coming five years in studying anew the works of this great saint and in promoting her teaching. St. Teresa was the first woman named a Doctor of the Church and is presented to us by the Church especially as a teacher of prayer and the spiritual life.

St. Teresa entered the Carmelite Monastery of the Incarnation in Avila at the age of 21. She later suffered a long illness, which at one point brought her to death's door, and which left her unable to walk for a while. She attributed her eventual recuperation to the intercession of St. Joseph.

As a young religious, St. Teresa was graced with a deep prayer life, as well as many extraordinary experiences in prayer. Yet, in her heart, she realized that she had not given herself completely to God, whom she knew had been so good to her. She realized she needed to undergo a full conversion. In her own words, she states: *On the one hand, God was calling me; on the other hand, I was following the world. All the things of God made me happy; those of the world held me bound.* She also explains that this interior conflict later took on the following trait: *Neither did I enjoy God nor did I find happiness in the world. When I was experiencing the enjoyments of the world, I felt sorrow when I recalled what I owed to God. When I was with God, my attachments to the world disturbed me. This is a war so troublesome that I don't know how I was able to suffer it even a month, much less for so many years.*

Nevertheless, by the grace of God, and through perseverance in her struggles, St. Teresa finally received the strength to give herself wholeheartedly to God. She acted upon this determination day by day, step by step. The saint credits her perseverance in prayer as being indispensable in this process of conversion.

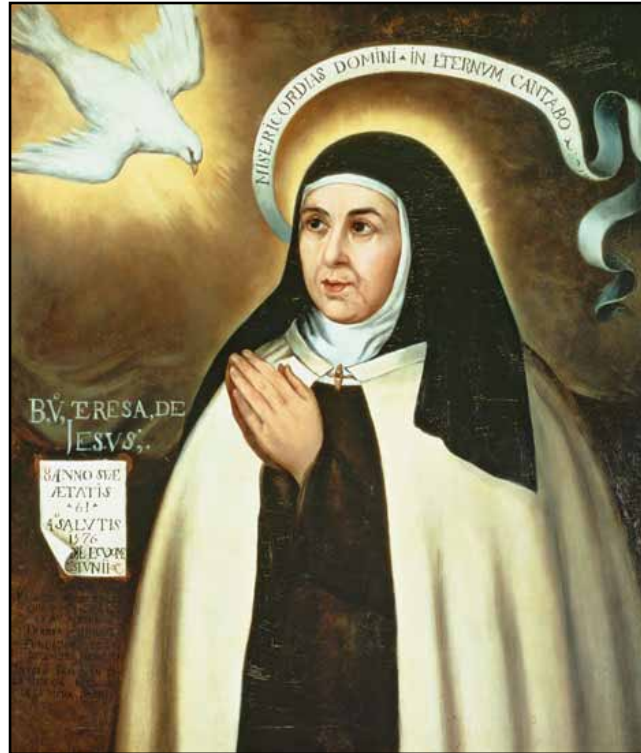
Above all, however, she praises the mercy of God who was faithful to her, and who guided her through this interior conflict to a state of close friendship with himself. She praises him thus: *Oh, what a good friend You make, my Lord! How You proceed by favoring and enduring. You wait for the others to adapt to Your nature, and in the meanwhile You put up with theirs! You*

*take into account, my Lord, the times when they love You, and in one instant of repentance You forget their offences.* She also declares: *May God be blessed forever, He who waited for me for so long!*

St. Teresa was graced with a profound experience of God's mercy. She experienced God's patience with her, a God who waited for her to turn completely to him. She came to be filled with gratitude to Jesus Christ, who gave his life on the Cross to win forgiveness for her sins. It was this gratitude that finally moved her to resolve to follow Christ wholeheartedly.

This resolve, along with many special graces from the Lord, moved her to found the Monastery of San José in Avila, the first monastery of the Discalced Carmelites. ("Discalced" literally means "unshod," or "barefoot," and was a symbol of religious reform in Spain during the time of St. Teresa.) Before her death in 1582, St. Teresa had founded 15 new monasteries of Discalced Carmelite Nuns and, with St. John of the Cross, began the Discalced Carmelite Friars.

St. Teresa said that she would spend her heaven "Forever singing the mercies of the Lord." May her experience of God's mercy inspire in us a similar trust in God's goodness and patience, as well as a gratitude that moves us to resolve to follow Jesus Christ more closely as we observe this season of Lent.



### Mission Statement

*The Discalced Carmelite Friars are a community of priests and religious brothers serving the Church through a life of contemplative prayer. In our apostolic work, we also strive to foster growth in the spiritual life, helping men and women to grow in friendship with God and with neighbor.*