

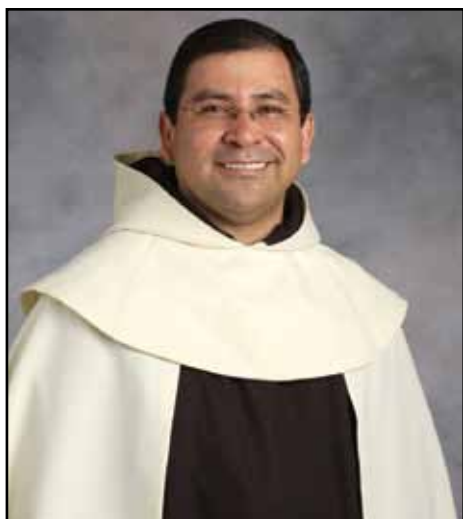
SUMMER 2014
VOL. 7 NO. 2

GENTLE BREEZES OF CARMEL



*The friars of the St. Thérèse Province after the Mass of Holy Spirit.
May 2014*

*Let us learn from St. Teresa of Jesus:
She loved our Blessed Mother of Mount Carmel*



Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ! This is the first Newsletter that we publish for this new triennium. It is an honor for me to be able to greet you again as the Provincial of the Oklahoma Province of St. Thérèse. This is a new beginning for me and all the friars in the Province, as well as for all the people who work with us. Moreover, this new start is an opportunity to keep growing in grace, in our relationship with our Lord Jesus and with each other in the Province, as well as an opportunity to do things better. We know that there is always room for improvement: thus, let us begin with hope and trust in God. I believe the best way to commence is by Thanking God for all his blessings to our Province in the last triennium, while at the same time asking for His wisdom and guidance for the next three years.

Our Lady is her inspiration, teacher, protector, intercessor, and over all her loving Mother.

We continue with the different activities and celebrations in the Order and in the Province for the Centenary of our Holy Mother St. Teresa of Jesus' birth. For this reason, I ask our Heavenly Father to help me and the Province to be like our Holy Mother St. Teresa, spiritual and faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Church and devoted to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. St. Teresa of Jesus was influenced by different people in her life. Without a doubt, she was influenced by our Blessed Mother or better said; our Lady helped her in all stages of her life and, of course, on her

way to holiness. St. Teresa was very devoted to the Virgin Mary, a mature devotion that helped her grow in sanctity. What I mean is that the Blessed Virgin Mary helped St. Teresa in her relationship with our Lord Jesus and with her sisters.

You can see in all her writings how much she speaks of our Lady and that her devotion is not a superficial one. Our Lady is her inspiration, teacher, protector, intercessor, and over all her loving Mother. From the Virgin Mary, St. Teresa learned how to be with Our Lord in sorrow at the foot of the Cross and in joy at the resurrection. From Our Blessed Mother, St. Teresa learned how to endure sufferings and wait for the joys of the resurrection. St. Teresa understood the great love of our Lady for her Son that she asked our Blessed Mother to help her to love Him with the same understanding and faithfulness. St. Teresa received many blessings by intercession of the Blessed Virgin; all those special graces we can see and feel in her spiritual writings. They are a special inheritance for all who want to walk in a life of grace. The good relationship between St. Teresa and our Blessed Mother of Mount Carmel is quite obvious. Hence, we Carmelites should ask for the same graces in order to be able to love our Lord the way our Lady and St. Teresa love Him.

This month of July and especially during the novena and Feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel, we should ask our Heavenly Father to help us to love His Son and to help us to be always faithful to him. Moreover, during this important month for us as Carmelites, we ought to thank our God for all His blessings and goodness to us, to our family and friends. If we want to follow the steps of St. Teresa, we need to ask our Blessed Mother to be with us and to help us to love, to thank, to be faithful and to trust in God's

love, in Jesus' grace and in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

May our Blessed Mother of Mount Carmel bless you and plead for your needs. Remember, you and your family will be present in our prayers during the novena of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Moreover, I will offer your intentions in the celebration of Holy Mass during this month.

In Christ and Carmel,

Fr. Luis Joaquin Castañeda, O. C. D.



"I will spend my Heaven doing good upon earth."
– ST. THÉRÈSE

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Mary, Undoer of Knots

By Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD

Throughout the history of Christianity, the Blessed Virgin Mary has been given many different titles by the Church. In the 5th Century, the Council of Ephesus declared her to be “Mother of God.” This title was the Church’s way of defending the truth of Jesus’ divinity. Mary’s son, the Council taught, was true God and true Man from the very moment of his conception by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. Hence, Mary can be called not just Mother of Christ, the Anointed One, but also Mother of God.

In the early 13th Century, the first hermits on Mt. Carmel in the Holy Land built a chapel in the midst of their dwelling places and dedicated it to Mary. Hence, they began to refer to her as the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel. Mary would come to be spoken of by Carmelites as “Queen Beauty of Carmel” and “Flower of Carmel,” among her other titles. The Carmelites saw the brown scapular that formed part of their religious habit as a sign of Mary’s special patronage and protection of the Order. Sometimes Mary is referred to as Our Lady of the Brown Scapular

In our own day, especially since the

election of Pope Francis in 2013, another title for Mary is growing in popularity: Mary Undoer of Knots. While serving as the Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the then-Cardinal Bergoglio promoted this devotion to Mary among the faithful, and continues to do so as Pope.

This title of Mary actually has its roots in the early history of the Church. In the 2nd Century, St. Irenaeus of Lyons, a bishop and teacher who was very influential in the development of Christian theology, wrote of Mary: The knot of Eve’s disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin, Eve, had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith.

What a beautiful image for the effect of Mary’s “Yes” in the history of salvation! Through faith and surrender to God’s word, Mary made a space in our world for the Son of God, who was made Son of Mary as well by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is he, of course, the new Adam, who undid the knot of sin and death, and freed us all by his own death and resurrection. But in his divine plan, he desired to allow Mary, and each member of his Mystical Body the Church, to participate in his work.

The image of Mary Undoer of Knots that is commonly seen today (and which you can see on this page) has its origins in an early 18th Century painting that hangs in a chapel in Fribourg, Switzerland. Mary is pictured in this painting as undoing knots in a long white ribbon, symbolizing especially her intercession in resolving problems in marriages and families. Addictions, depression, anxiety – any difficulty which seems to hold a person bound without hope and which affects their relationship with others – can all be viewed as knots to entrust to the loving hands of the one whom Jesus gave to us to be our Mother.

Pope Francis, as a young Jesuit priest, studied in Fribourg, became familiar with this image of Mary



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Undoer of Knots, and brought copies of it back with him to Argentina. He promoted devotion to Mary under this title, to the point that in Argentina and Brazil, this devotion is quite well known.

Since his elevation to the Holy See, Pope Francis’ devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary under this title has influenced many more of the faithful throughout the world to turn to the Blessed Mother to intercede for them in their marriages, family conflicts and any other seemingly unresolvable problem. The image of Mary Undoer of Knots is beginning to be seen more commonly. This poetic image for the resolution of difficult situations is resonating in the hearts of Christians everywhere.

Throughout the history of the Carmelite Order, the friars and nuns have experienced Our Lady’s powerful intercession in very difficult, even hopeless, situations. May you, too, experience the motherly help of Mary, who by her faith and self-surrender undid the knot of Eve’s disobedience. May she intercede for you with her divine Son, that you may experience his loving providence in your life as well.

O Virgin Mary, faithful Mother
who never refuses to come to the aid
of your children;

Mother whose hands never cease to help,
because they are moved by the loving kindness
that exists in your Immaculate Heart,
cast your eyes of compassion upon me,
and see the snarl of knots that exists in my life.

You know all the pains and sorrows
caused by these tangled knots.

Mary, my Mother, I entrust to your
loving hands the entire ribbon of my life.

In your hands, there is no knot
that cannot be undone.

Most holy Mother, pray for divine assistance
to come to my aid.

Take this knot (mention need)
into your maternal hands this day.

I beg you to undo it for the glory of God,
once for all, in the name
of your Divine Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

2014 PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

From May 26 – June 6, 2014, the Discalced Carmelite friars of the Oklahoma Province of St. Thérèse held their Provincial Chapter. The Chapter is like a “mini-congress” that is held every three years. During these two weeks the friars elect their leaders, pass legislation regarding various aspects of their religious life and ministry, and set goals for the coming three years. During the Chapter, the friars also received their ministry assignments for the next three years.

The Chapter opened on the evening of Monday, May 26th, with Fr. Luis Joaquín Castañeda being installed as Provincial Superior for the 2014-2017 triennium. Fr. Luis is serving his second term in this role, having been re-elected by the friars this past March.

After a day of recollection on Tuesday, May 27th, the friars celebrated a Mass of the Holy Spirit, invoking the Paraclete’s blessing and guidance upon the Chapter. That evening, the friars elected four councilors to assist the Provincial in leading the Province. The friars that will be serving as the Provincial Council during the 2014-2017 triennium are: Fr. Stephen Sanchez, Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, Fr. Ralph Reyes, and Fr. Jorge Cabrera.

Over the course of the next two weeks the friars undertook the work of the Chapter, also enjoying this graced time of community and fellowship. They were joined one day by the Provincial Council of the Secular Carmelites, lay members of the Carmelite Order. On another day, the prioresses of six monasteries of Carmelite nuns of the Province participated in the Chapter, updating the friars on their communities. These two days served as an impetus to the friars to be renewed in their ministry to both the Carmelite nuns and Seculars.

A highlight of the Chapter was a Mass celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first Carmelite friars’ arrival in Oklahoma. The friars were joined for this Mass by many members of the Carmelite family. The Mass was followed by a reception.

For more photos and information regarding the Chapter, you can visit Fr. Jorge’s blog on our Provincial website at: <http://carmelitefriarsocd.com/blog/blog.php>



A visit from the Provincial Council of the Secular Carmelites.



At the Mass Celebrating 100 years of the Carmelite Friars’ presence in Oklahoma.



Socializing after the Centenary Mass.



The friars during a session of Chapter deliberations Frs. Marion, Sam, John, Bonaventure and Stephen.



The friars hear from the Carmelite nuns during the Chapter.