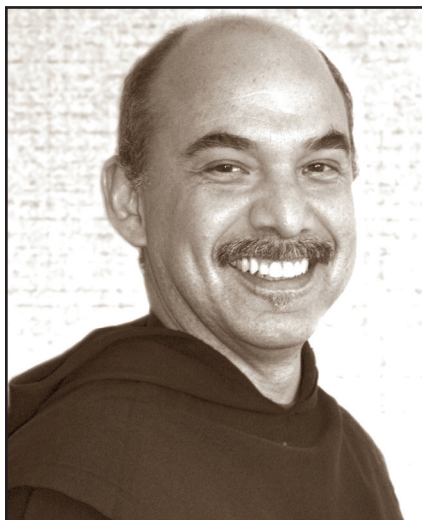


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GENTLE BREEZES —OF CARMEL—



ST. THÉRÈSE PROVINCE OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS
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Alleluia!

My novice master, Fr. Adrian Cooney, OCD, during Easter would always say “We are an Alleluia people!” We novices would nod our heads with wide eyes and wonderment. Was he being dramatic (as only Fr. Adrian could)? Was he being funny by overstating the case (as only Fr. Adrian could)? It is only with several decades’ distance

and much life, learning, and study do I appreciate his fervor at the Resurrection.

We look out of our windows, those who take time to pause, and notice all the different shades of green in the same tree and the variations of green among all of the, shrubs, bushes, plants, and the colors of all of the flowers. The morning chill has begun to feel inviting and invigorating. The ear catches the birds’ different songs as they call to God in their innocent joy. The season stirs us, a newness of life as it reemerges from the death of winter. Whether it’s chocolate bunnies or real bunnies a smile crosses our faces and our hearts; it is the love of and the joy in Life.

We believers see there a reflection of a deeper joy that we carry within us, at times overwhelmed and buried under our own winter of life, whether that winter be a day, a month, or a year, but it’s there nonetheless and a source of hope for a deeper life. In our community’s celebration on the Easter Vigil, this hope is voiced in the Easter Proclamation (*Exsultet*). It is within this song of wonder and joy that the Church asks herself, “*What good would life have been to us, had Christ not come as our Redeemer?*” No matter how beautiful the various shades of colors that surround us are, no matter how cute bunnies can be, no matter how entrancing the song of the bird is—what good would it be if redemption were not possible for us?



We are Easter People!

The newness of the material world as it awakens from its winter death once again should lead us to reflect on the possibility of a New Life in Him, a possibility that He took upon Himself to gain for us. We have the possibility to live as sons and daughters of the Heavenly Father, to live this new way of living in the here and now with its continuation with the Blessed Trinity in the fullness of life to come.

We continue to proclaim the “today” of salvation and the joy of the truth of God’s love for us made manifest in Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord. This “today” is continuously open to us, let us leave our winter behind and enter into the newness of life in Him who conquered death for us.

“Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor, radiant in the brightness of your King! Christ has conquered! Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes forever!”

We desire for you the fullness of Easter hope and joy during this holy season!

In Our Risen Lord,

Fr. Stephen Sánchez, O. C. D.



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The Spirit of the Risen Christ: Mercy and Mission

By Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. [Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." (Jn 20, 19-23)

In his Gospel, St. John presents to us the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, appearing to his disciples after he has triumphed over death and sin through his laying down his life for his friends on the Cross. His resurrection reveals that his Father has accepted his Son's offering for our sins and has raised him to new life, manifesting the glory that was his before the foundation of the world. (Jn 17,5)

In this appearance to his apostles, Jesus manifests that his glory is one of peace, the peace that comes from forgiveness of sins, the peace that the world cannot give. (Jn 14, 27) He joins his gift of the Holy Spirit clearly to the forgiveness of sins. When we celebrate the Church's Sacrament of Reconciliation, we hear this link between the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins proclaimed in the declaration of absolution: *God the Father of Mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins.* The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to communicate to us in the here and now the forgiveness, the mercy, that Jesus won for us through his death and resurrection. This is the Spirit that works through the ministers of reconciliation, the bishops and priests of the Church, successors of the apostles, who have received this gift handed down through the centuries through the ministry of the Church in the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Thus, we can see how appropriate it is that the Church counsels us to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation and Communion during the Easter season -- the season that celebrates the mystery of the Resurrection and concludes with the feast of Pentecost, the mystery of the sending of the Holy Spirit. As we can see in the above passage from St. John's Gospel, the risen Christ's gift of the Holy Spirit is tied to the notion of mission as well, for Jesus says on the same occasion: *As the Father has sent me, so I send you.*

The Holy Spirit is very much associated with the mission of Jesus in the Gospels. Jesus is conceived by the power of the

Holy Spirit. The Spirit descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove at his baptism in the Jordan, when the heavens open and the Father declares Jesus to be his Beloved Son. The Church has traditionally held that at his Baptism, Jesus was anointed in his humanity, empowered in his humanity by the Holy Spirit to fulfill the public mission for which he was sent by his Father. It is the Spirit who leads him to the desert to fast, pray and be tempted. In his first public preaching in the synagogue, he cites the passage from Isaiah declaring: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor."* (Lk 4,18) He has been anointed by the Spirit to fulfill his mission as the Word Incarnate, the Father's definitive word of mercy to his children.

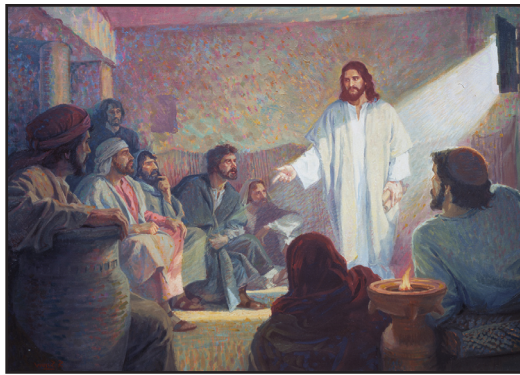
The gift of the Spirit who communicates the mercy of God to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation is also the Spirit that sends us to be ministers of mercy, to forgive others as we have been forgiven. Not all are called to be sacramental ministers of mercy as ordained priests are, but all Christians are called to be witnesses to the

mercy of the Risen Christ in word and in deed.

When we are baptized, we are united with Christ. We die with him, we rise with him, we are given a share in his sonship, a share in his life. We are also baptized into his mission. He is the one Redeemer of the World, but as the Second Vatican Council declares in its Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, just as his one unique priesthood is shared by all the baptized, so is his goodness communicated in many ways through the members of his Mystical Body, the Church. His mission is unique as the one Redeemer, the one through whom all mercy comes into the world, but this uniqueness does not prevent him from sharing this mission with all the members of his Body, the Church (see *Lumen Gentium* 62). In Baptism we receive the Spirit of sonship, but also the Spirit of mission.

In the sacrament of Confirmation, also usually ministered during the Easter season, we are confirmed in this Spirit of Mission. The Risen Christ, who was anointed by the Spirit for his mission on earth, anoints us with this same Spirit to enable us to participate in a unique way in his mission during our life on earth.

Spirit of mercy and of mission – one gift given to the Church from the very beginning by her Divine Head, the Risen Christ. May he renew his gift of peace to you this Easter, may the Spirit help you to come to recognize and accept the gift of the Divine Mercy in your life, and may this Spirit help you to fulfill the mission of mercy entrusted to all the disciples of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord.





Fr. Jorge Cabrera celebrates Mass for retreatants in Mt. Carmel Center's large chapel.

Since its founding in 1950, Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas has served the Church in several ways. It began as a high school seminary for the Discalced Carmelite friars. Since the seminary's closing in 1972, the property has served as a house of formation for Carmelite students of theology and, most recently, as a center of spirituality. It also serves as the residence of our friars who minister to St. Mary of Carmel parish in west Dallas.

In November of 2018, Fr. Jorge Cabrera was named superior of Mt. Carmel Center. Under his leadership, the center is experiencing a resurgence in its spiritual programs and is building new relationships with the parishes in the area. Here are a few photos from a Lenten retreat at Mt. Carmel Center for parishioners of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Dallas, led by the friars.



Fr. Jim Curiel offers a spiritual conference to retreatants.



Retreatants enjoy a meal in Mt. Carmel Center's refectory.