

GENTLE BREEZES

SUMMER 2021

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OF CARMEL



*One can imagine St. Joseph
using these words to describe
Mary, his spouse:*

*"Who can find a woman of worth?
Far beyond jewels is her value."*

ST. THÉRÈSE PROVINCE OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS

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BROTHERS & SISTERS,

Summer is here! It brings with it many important celebrations for the various communities in our Semi-Province. After the successful spring celebrations of the Sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation in our parishes, the time came to prepare for our yearly meeting, the Provincial Assembly. Of course, in preparing for these different celebrations, and especially for our Assembly, questions about how and whether to gather were raised. As we still need to be cautious about COVID-19, for a moment we thought it may be better to have a virtual Assembly. However, taking into consideration that we are a small group and most of us have been vaccinated, we decided to meet in person at Mount Carmel Center in Dallas. Moreover, we elected to keep in place the main safety norms, social distancing, sanitizing hands, etc. Thanks be to God, our meetings went well. No one got sick as at last year's Provincial Chapter.

Our meetings focused on our process of revitalizing our communities. Together with the whole of the Order we are studying what it means to be a Discalced Carmelite today. This study helps us to review the important aspects of our Carmelite Vocation. We spoke about apostolic discernment and reviewed the different apostolates of our 4 communities and beyond. Considering the present reality of our Semi-Province and reviewing our human resources is essential to planning for and improving our future. With the work we do, and with God's grace, we can have a present that will build a fruitful future.

In the midst of our conversation about the future of our communities, we were given the invitation to live in hope. Sometimes when we speak about our future we can be a little discouraged. We are an aging province and we do not have many brothers in formation. Speaking about our limitations and about the things we don't have, one can lose hope. We know that hope should be in an important place in our lives as Carmelites, but also as Christians.

Through the theological virtue of hope we aspire to heaven, to the Kingdom of God, trusting in the promise of Christ. The hope that is based in the relationship with Christ is the true hope that helps a person seek, not only temporal happiness, but the happiness that lasts forever. We need to find hope in the realities of our current situation. We need to rediscover what is positive in ourselves and in others. Indeed, it is through our relationships with others, supporting and caring for others, that we find a basis for hope that is rooted in truth. If we lose hope in our lives, we become like the salt that lost its taste. If that happens, we are losing our Christian vocation: The call to

be holy and to help others to be holy, encouraging each other to fullness and growth.

An important event that has given us hope about the future of our Semi-Province took place at the end of our Assembly meetings: On Friday June 11th, on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Br. Vladimir Guadalupe of Sts. Louis and Zelig made his first profession of Vows. It was a very intimate celebration, just us, two friars from the Washington Province, and his parents, brothers, and a good friend of his came to celebrate with us.

We recently marked the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. This is a very special and bountiful celebration in the life of the Carmelites. Our Lady is the model that St. Teresa asks us to imitate in our Carmelite vocation, the archetype of virtues, prayer, and Christian life, but over all, she is our mother. She is always there, helping us to understand her son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our personal relationship with Christ most changes the meaning of our life. Life in Christ brings us an active hope that is transformative, that is lived in good works and the fruit of charity, loving others as God loves us. Let us live in hope by living in charity. Let us place our hope in the good works that we can do for each other with God's help. Let us place our hope in the will of God and, in this way, make sure that what we will is what God wills for us.

May the good Lord bless you and may you accept the invitation to live always in hope!

Fr. Luis Castañeda, OCD



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On the Cover:

Unknown. Wedding of Mary
and Joseph, late 17th century.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY: SPOUSE OF ST. JOSEPH

Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD

In reflections upon the life and vocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is most often her roles as Mother of God, Mother of the Church, her immaculate conception, or her relationship with Jesus that figure most prominently. This year of St. Joseph, however, provides an opportunity to reflect upon the life and vocation of Mary as spouse of St. Joseph.

The vocation to be a wife to St. Joseph forms an essential part of God's plan for Mary. Let us look at several texts from Scripture and from our Carmelite saints that we can apply to Mary as we reflect upon her role as spouse.

First of all, in imagining Mary as wife to St. Joseph among the people of Israel, the following passage from the book of Proverbs comes to mind. One can imagine St. Joseph using these words to describe Mary, his spouse:

Who can find a woman of worth? Far beyond jewels is her value. Her husband trusts her judgment;

[...] She reaches out her hands to the poor and extends her arms to the needy. [...] She opens her mouth in wisdom; kindly instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband, too, praises her: "Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all." Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Acclaim her for the work of her hands, and let her deeds praise her at the city gates. (Prov 31: 10-11,20,6-31).

In considering the spousal relationship between Mary and Joseph in the light of the New Testament, we can turn our attention to the words St. Paul addressed to husbands and wives: *Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. [...] In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband. (Eph 5: 21,33)*

Certainly Mary and Joseph lived in this humble subordination to one another. "Out of reverence for Christ" takes on a unique meaning when one applies it to Mary and Joseph, since they actually lived with the Christ Child as his parents! We see them united in seeking him when he disappeared from their sight for three days, and mutually puzzled by his words to them when they found him in the temple. With what reverence they must have carried out their vocations as mother and foster father, united in their mission in providing for and raising Jesus as he "grew in grace and wisdom before God and man" and was obedient to them in their home in Nazareth (cf Luke 2:39-52). One can imagine Mary's respect for Joseph in seeing his loving, self-sacrificing care for her and her son, and Joseph's love for Mary, his wife "far beyond jewels in her value"!

St. Thérèse, in her poem *Why I love You, O Mary*, includes sev-



The Flight into Egypt—Detail (1904) Raffaello Sorbi

eral stanzas which touch upon the relationship between Mary and St. Joseph, her spouse. First of all, St. Thérèse reflects on how Mary acted when she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit while she was betrothed to Joseph:

*When good Saint Joseph did not know of the miracle
That you wanted to hide in your humility,
You let him cry close by the Tabernacle
Veiling the Savior's divine beauty!.....
Oh, Mary! How I love your eloquent silence!
For me it is a sweet, melodious concert
That speaks to me of the greatness and power
Of a soul that looks only to Heaven for help.....*

In another stanza, she reflects on the flight into Egypt:

*O Queen of martyrs, till the evening of your life
That sorrowful sword will pierce your heart.
Already you must leave your native land
To flee a king's jealous fury.
Jesus sleeps in peace under the folds of your veil.
Joseph comes begging you to leave at once,
And at once your obedience is revealed.
You leave without delay or reasoning.*


In these verses, St. Thérèse recognizes the virtues of humility, trust, and mutual subordination between spouses. It is God who provides the spouses the grace and wisdom they need to live their married vocations. And the mutual subordination of which St. Paul will later write is seen in Mary's obedience to Joseph, as well as in Joseph, "begging" his wife to leave at once.

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PROVINCE UPDATE

Much has happened since our last edition of *Gentle Breezes*. In June of 2021 the friars all gathered at Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas for our annual assembly.

Part of our Assembly included virtual meetings with Project Control, Douglas Architects, and Parish Property Management. The two first groups are helping us plan for the future renovation of the Little Flower Basilica and Monastery in San Antonio. Parish Property Management is helping us to plan for the future of our Semi-Province by evaluating our houses.

The conclusion of the Assembly was a joyous occasion as Br. Vladimir Guadalupe of Sts. Louis and Zelig made his first profession of Vows. Br. Vladimir is now residing in community in San Antonio where he will continue his formation.



Br. Vladimir's First Profession of Vows (June 11, 2021)



The Carmelite Friars, June 2021

SPOUSE OF ST. JOSEPH

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Another saint, Pope St. John Paul II, also shares some reflections on the Blessed Virgin Mary and her spousal relationship in his Encyclical on St. Joseph, *Redemptoris Custos*. He writes:

Looking at the gospel texts of both Matthew and Luke, one can also say that Joseph is the first to share in the faith of the Mother of God and that in doing so he supports his spouse in the faith of the divine annunciation. He is also the first to be placed by God on the path of Mary's "pilgrimage of faith." It is a path along which - especially at the time of Calvary and Pentecost - Mary will precede in a perfect way. (Redemptoris Custos, 5).

He goes on to say:

Addressing Joseph through the words of the angel, God speaks to him as the husband of the Virgin of Nazareth. What took place in her through the power of the Holy Spirit also confirmed in a special way the marriage bond which already existed between Joseph and Mary. God's messenger was clear in what he said to Joseph: "Do not fear to take Mary your wife into your home." Hence, what had taken place earlier, namely, Joseph's marriage to Mary, happened in accord with God's will and was meant to endure. In her divine motherhood Mary had to continue to live as "a virgin, the wife of her husband" (cf. Lk 1:27). (Redemptoris Custos, 18)

In these passages, one sees how Pope St. John Paul II portrays Joseph and Mary as supporting one another in their pilgrimage of faith and as confirmed in their vocation to marriage as part of God's plan of salvation, not only for them but for all of us.

May the loving relationship between the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph be a light for all of us, and an inspiration for married couples everywhere.

Oh, Blessed Virgin Mary, spouse of St. Joseph, pray for us!

FLOS CARMELI

Flos Carmeli, vitis florigera, splendor caeli, virgo puerpera singularis.

Mater mitis sed viri nescia Carmelitis da privilegia Stella Maris

Radix Jesse germinans flosculum nos ad esse tecum in saeculum patiaris.

Inter spinas quae crescis liliu serva puras mentes fragilium tutelaris.

Armatura fortis pugnantium furunt bella tende praesidium scapularis.

Per incerta prudens consilium per adversa iuge solatium largiaris.

Mater dulcis Carmeli domina, plebem tuam reple laetitia qua bearis.

Paradisi clavis et ianua, fac nos duci quo, Mater, gloria coronaris.

Amen.

