

Scenes from the Provincial Chapter Meeting



Very Rev. Stephen Sanchez (left) being installed as Provincial by Fr. Luis Castaneda (right), as the friars look on.



Discalced Carmelite Prioresses - Mother Therese Leonard, Sr. Angel Sweeney, Sr. Edith Turpin, Sr. Maria Cruz DeLeon, Sr. Donna Ross.



2017-2020 Provincial Council- Fr. Raul Reyes, Fr. Luis Castaneda, Very Rev. Stephen Sanchez, Fr. Jorge Cabrera, Fr. Bonaventure Sauer.



Provincial Council of the Secular Carmelites - John Stevens, Anna Peterson, Clare Bloodgood, Jo Ann Murphy, and Mary Bellman.

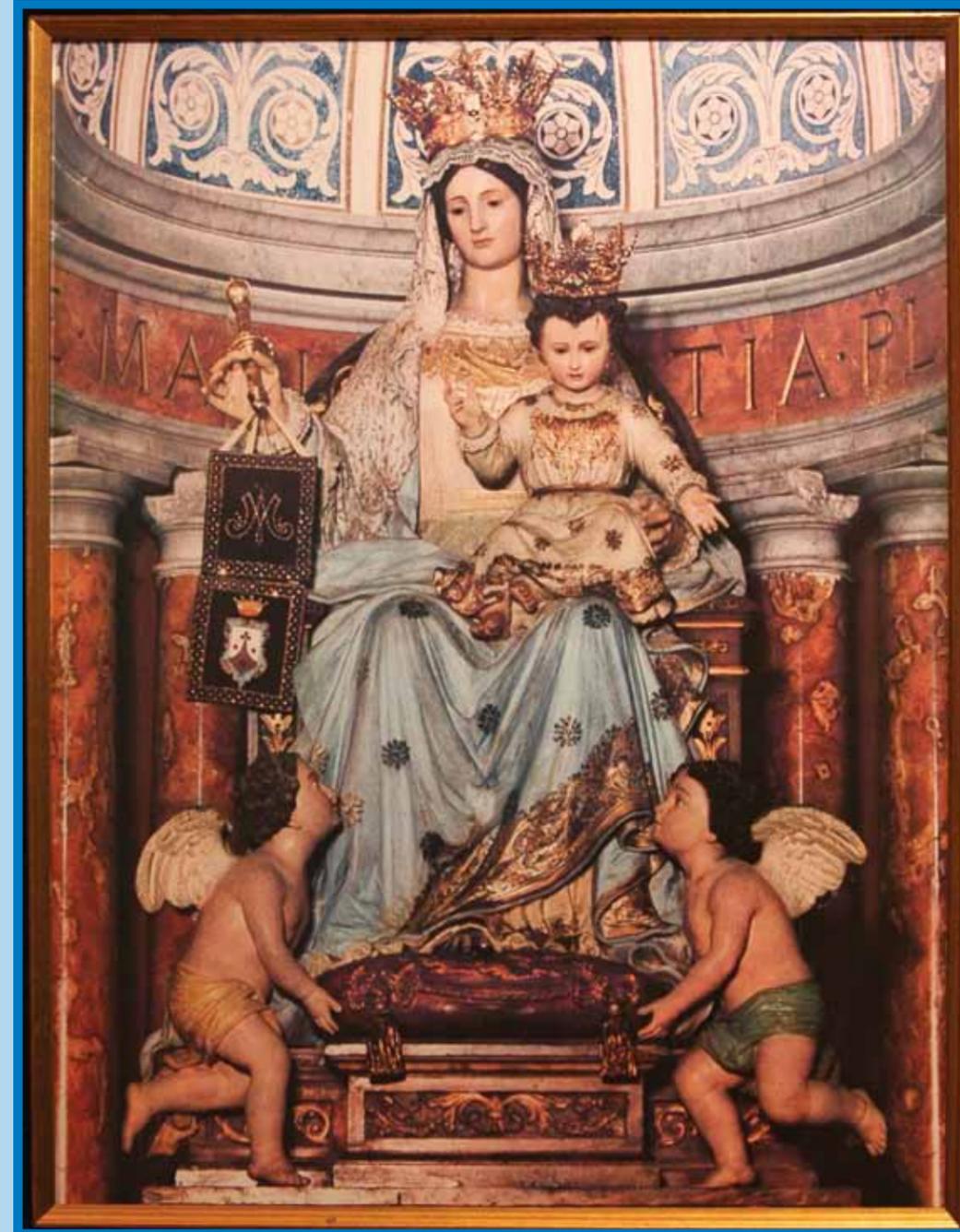
"I will spend my Heaven doing good upon earth." – ST. THÉRÈSE

PLEASE CONSIDER THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS OF OKLAHOMA WHEN MAKING OUT YOUR WILL.

OUR TAX ID # IS: 73-0580271

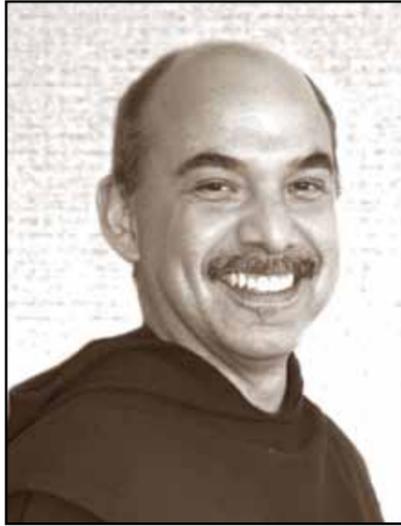
YOUR LEGACY WILL LIVE ON IN OUR MINISTRIES FOR GENERATIONS.

GENTLE BREEZES — OF CARMEL —



*Our
Lady
of
Mount
Carmel*

We Fly to your protection Oh Holy Mother of God!



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We come to the solemn celebration of the Patroness of our Order – Our Lady of Mount Carmel. How did we get here? Long story short: The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was established in 1099 after the First Crusade. Among the many of the Western Crusaders, who came to establish and maintain the Latin Kingdom, were some who vowed to stay and live the rest of their lives in the Holy Land. Some of these crusaders migrated to Mount Carmel where Eastern-rite hermits lived and considered themselves the descendants of the guild of prophets who had followed St. Elijah and Elisha. They would meet for prayers in their chapel dedicated to St. Mary (who the crusaders considered The Lady of the Place, the Lord of the Place being Christ Himself).

This loose community of hermits gathered together under a Rule written for them by St. Albert of Jerusalem (a Canon Regular of the Holy Cross and Patriarch of Jerusalem). This Rule of Life (1207-1214) established the hermits as a religious Order – The Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which Pope Honorius III gave official approval in 1226. After this there were some changes made by the Holy See so that eventually the hermits were made mendicants (begging) friars (1229) and allowed teaching, preaching, spiritual direction and parochial apostolates (1317).

During the Order's growth there were several obstacles that presented them-

selves to the nascent family. The 4th Lateran Council (1215) decreed that there were to be no more religious orders founded and in fact were trying to reduce the number of orders by margining some and suppressing others. This decree put the 'new' Order of Carmel in a tenuous position, along with a multiplicity of other influences that lead to them being eyed with suspicion.

But the two most 'scandalous' things about the Order of Carmel was that (1) they dared to call themselves 'brothers' of Our Lady (and professed a belief in the Immaculate Conception), and (2) they also dared to claim to be descendants of the Prophet Elijah's School (guild) of Prophets!! This would make them the oldest religious order with all the rank, honors and privileges that would come with that title.

The Council of Lyons (1274) sought to implement the limits imposed by the Lateran Council – that the strange Carmelite Order might be gotten rid of by questioning its origins. Two great saints that were in favor of suppressing the Carmelites were St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure, but both died the year of the Council.

Through all of these and many other difficulties the 'brothers of Our Lady' sought and implored her protection. The Order had celebrated with great solemnity the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary with an octave. After being spared by the Council of Lyons, due to Our Lady's intercession, the date that they chose to now celebrate the Patronage of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel was July 17, the date that the Council of Lyon closed. In the 15th Century it was moved to the vespers of this date, the 16th of July, which we still observe to this date.

When we celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, we celebrate the way in which she is honored and vener-



ated within the Order of Carmel.

As stated earlier, we celebrate her Patronage and her Protection of the Order to which we belong and we know in the marrow of our bones that the Order has survived through 800 years of trials and struggles through her protection and patronage.

Being her children we then look to her exemplary life as disciple of Jesus Christ, as model of faith for the pilgrim, but above all as a contemplative

Order, we look to Mary as the model of the perfect contemplative and we strive with all of our might to imitate that contemplative model of 'pondering' all that surrounds us and look for God's design.

In the celebration of the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, we celebrate the fruitfulness of the contemplative life as exemplified in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The life of silence and solitude in Carmel which cultivates a listening heart attuned to the whispering voice of Holy Spirit who urges us on to union with our Groom, Lord and Redeemer. It is a celebration of BEING so that we will be able to be intentional in our DOING.

We celebrate the total receptivity of Mary and seek to imitate her in that totality of self-giving so that we may also be transformed, and it is in that transformation that the entire Church benefits and grows to a fuller maturity in Christ our Head.

May Our Lady, Queen and Beauty of Carmel, intercede for you and obtain for you every grace you need for your journey to Christ our Lord!

In Him,

Fr. Stephen Sánchez, OCD
Provincial



Friars of the St. Therese Province – June 2017

Front Row (L-R): Fr. Jim Curiel, Fr. Luis Gerardo Belmonte, Very Rev. Stephen Sanchez (Provincial), Fr. Sam Anthony Morello, Fr. Raul Reyes, Fr. Henry Bordeaux, Fr. Jorge Cabrera
Second Row (L-R): Alejandro Vidaurre (postulant), Fr. Luis Castañeda, Fr. Marion Joseph Bui, Fr. Jerome Earley, Fr. Jesús Sancho, Fr. Jenaro Delacruz, Fr. Gregory Ross
Back Row (L-R): Fr. John Magdalene Suenram, Fr. Bonaventure Sauer
Missing: Fr. Raphael Kitz, Br. Bernard Joseph O'Neill

Provincial Chapter Meets; Fr. Stephen Sanchez Installed as Provincial Superior

From May 22 through June 2, the St. Therese Province of the Discalced Carmelite Friars held its Provincial Chapter at Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas, Texas. The Chapter is a gathering of all the friars that is held once every three years to promote the spiritual and temporal well-being of the Province, according to the friars' Constitutions. The Chapter elects the Province's leaders for the coming three years, sets goals and priorities, and implements measures to achieve these goals.

During this recent Provincial Chapter, Fr. Stephen Sanchez was installed as Provincial Superior. Fr. Stephen is from San Antonio, Texas. He made his first profession as a Discalced Carmelite Friar in 1984 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1992. Since his ordination, Fr. Stephen has served the Province in our communities of Oklahoma City, Marylake, and, most recently, at Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas. He has also served as Provincial Councilor and as Vicar Provincial.

The Chapter elected four Councilors to assist Fr. Stephen in his ministry as Provincial. Fr. Luis Castañeda was elected First Councilor, or Vicar Provincial. Frs. Jorge Cabrera, Raul Reyes, and Bonaventure Sauer were elected to complete the Council.

The Provincial Chapter also included days of consultation and fellowship with the other "branches" of the Province: the Discalced Carmelite nuns and the Discalced Carmelite Seculars. We hope you enjoy these photos from these days of prayer, fellowship and discernment.

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FOR OUR FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS.

PUBLISHER
FR. STEPHEN SANCHEZ, OCD

EDITOR
FR. GREGORY ROSS, OCD

GRAPHIC DESIGN
SUSAN GARRISON

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION, PLEASE ADDRESS THEM TO:

ST. THÉRÈSE PROVINCE
OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS
824 KENTUCKY AVENUE * SAN ANTONIO * TEXAS * 78201

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Mary in the Teaching of Bl. Marie Eugene of the Child Jesus

By Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD

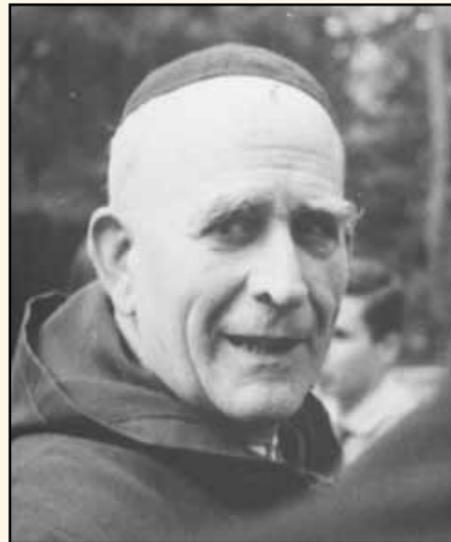
On November 19, 2016, Fr. Marie Eugene of the Child Jesus, OCD, became our newest “Blessed” Discalced Carmelite friar as he was beatified by the Church. Fr. Marie Eugene was born in France in 1894 and passed into eternal life in 1967. He served the Order of Discalced Carmelites in many ways, including as provincial superior, general defensor, and Vicar General of the Order. He also founded the secular institute Notre Dame de Vie, “Our Lady of Life,” for consecrated laity. He was a man of deep prayer and pastoral zeal, especially in the fostering of the spiritual life of the laity.

Bl. Marie Eugene’s life was very much influenced by St. Therese of the Child Jesus. As a soldier in World War I, he experienced the intercession and protection of Therese, who was at that time not yet canonized, but already well known in France and around the world. Of her, he once declared: *Yes, I have understood mercy. St. Therese sensed its gentleness, I sense its power.*

As a Carmelite, Bl. Marie Eugene was also a true son of the Blessed Virgin Mary and encouraged others to be the same. He exhorted the members of Notre Dame de Vie: *My children must be sons of the Spirit and the Virgin Mary.*

Bl. Marie Eugene is probably best known for his great synthesis of Carmelite spirituality, the two-volume work, *I Want to See God/I Am a Daughter of the Church*. In this work, Bl. Marie Eugene traces the development of the spiritual life from its beginnings all the way to its fulfillment in the “spiritual marriage” described by St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross.

In this great work, the newly beatified Carmelite offers profound insights into the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the spiritual life. He speaks of her role in general, but particularly of her special role in the “dark night of the spirit,” that stage in the spiritual life in which the



Blessed Marie Eugene

soul is plunged into a purifying suffering. This suffering serves as a preparation for the person’s transformation and union with Christ in the spiritual marriage.

Bl. Marie Eugene writes: *God has closely united Jesus and Mary for the realization of His designs of mercy (I Am a Daughter of the Church: Christian Classics, Inc., Westminster, MD, 1953, p. 445). As mother of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, Mary is to be in God’s plan the collaborator in all the divine fruitfulness. Everywhere that the divine paternity is to act, it will be through the maternity of the Virgin Mother. Thus Mary accompanies Jesus in His redemptive work, and the Holy Spirit in His work of building up the mystical body. She is Mother wherever Jesus is Savior, as well as wherever the Holy Spirit is giver of grace to souls and to the Church. (Ibid., p. 448).*

Just as Jesus showed himself to be Savior preeminently upon the Cross, so it is at the Cross that Mary is preeminently shown to be Mother, entrusted to us by Christ himself. Bl. Marie Eugene states: *The hour of trial was to disclose how generous, profound, and absolute was her communion with her Son in His mission. She is present on Calvary. Her attitude*

tells how her heart had become enlarged to the dimensions of the whole mystical body of Christ. With God the Father, for love of the world she gives her only Son. [...] Mary is truly the Mother of all those who have faith in Christ. (Ibid., p. 450).

Bl. Marie Eugene goes on to assert that just as Mary was present to Jesus in his darkest hour, so she is present to the Church and to each one of us in our darkest hour. Mary was present to Jesus to support him as he realized the divine plan entrusted to him by his Father for the salvation of the world. She is likewise present to us as God works out his saving plan in each of us, especially when we find ourselves united to Jesus in times of suffering. *The maternity of the Virgin shines out most brightly in the shadows of evening or the darkness of the night [...] On Calvary, when hatred triumphs and seems to have destroyed everything of the person, the work, and the reputation of Christ Jesus, Mary is standing at the foot of the Cross. By her presence there and her attitude she affirms her strength, her mission, and the triumph of her maternity (Ibid., p. 454-455).*

Mary did not interfere in Jesus’ work of redemption upon his Cross, nor did she add to it. She supported him and united herself to him in spirit, fulfilling the role God gave her of participating in his Son’s redemptive mission. Similarly, in the lives of the faithful Mary’s intercession does not necessarily remove the suffering that a person is going through, for this suffering may be the means that God

is using to purify and to bring a person to a fuller union with himself in faith, hope and love. Nevertheless, she does show herself to be present as a supportive and loving mother. She brings calm and light in the midst of bewilderment and darkness, of-

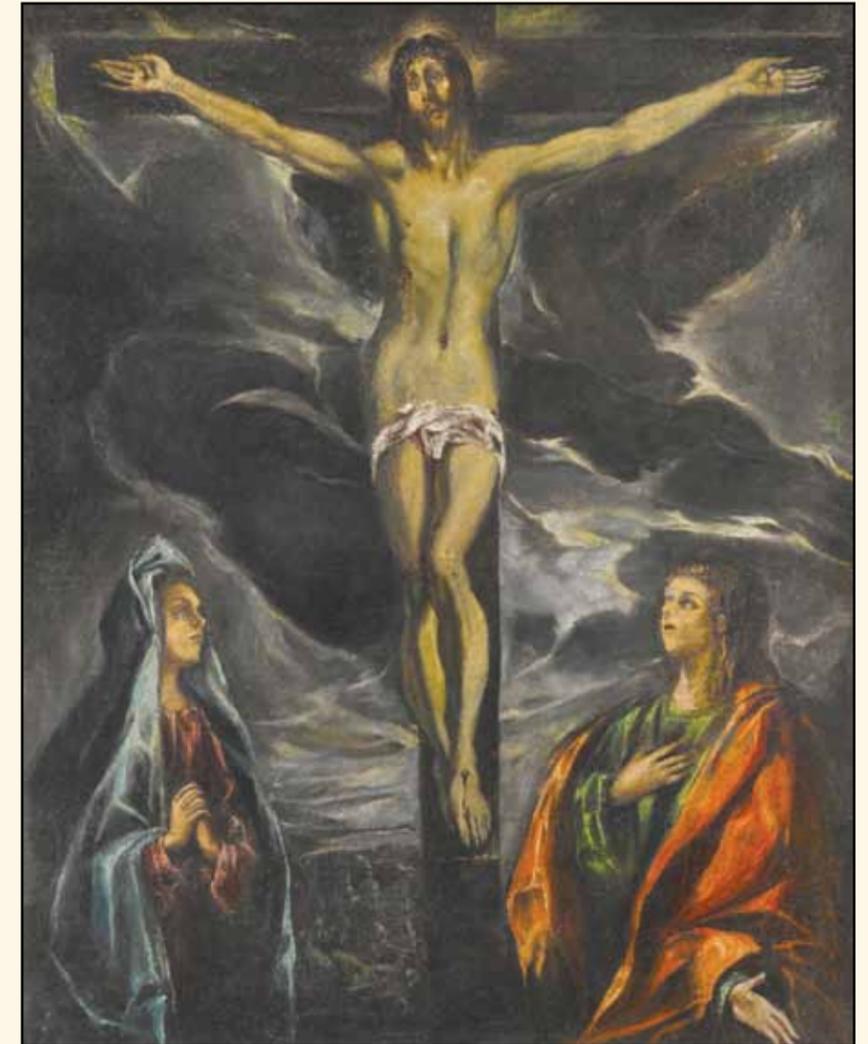
fering encouragement to her children as God accomplishes his work in them.

About the brown scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, our newly beatified brother states: *If we enter into the interior domain of souls, we find the same trusting appeal to her intercession, and the same efficacious help of Mary in the most tragic hours. The wearing of the scapular of Mount Carmel and the Marian promise that is attached to it stress this truth so often experienced that it has become a commonplace, namely, that sincere confidence in Mary, asserted by a practice or a prayer, assures to the sinner the grace of final perseverance. While reason seems to rise up against such an assurance, the experience of souls frequently gives moving proof of it (Ibid., p. 456).*

This presence of Mary in times of darkness was evident in the life of St. Therese, whom Bl. Marie Eugene offers as an example of this truth. He refers to the young saint’s “trial of faith,” during which her soul was as though shrouded in a thick cloud that shut out all light from heaven. Even during this profound interior darkness, Therese could declare: *No, the Blessed Virgin will never be hidden from me, for I love her too much for that to happen.* St. Therese experienced Mary, as so many have, as the Help of Christians.

Bl. Marie Eugene also presents the following words of St. Therese as an

example of the Blessed Mother’s role as intercessor during times of darkness. He cites the following passage from the Little Flower’s *Last Conversations*: *I should like to have a beautiful death just to give you pleasure. I have asked this of the Blessed Virgin. To ask something of the Blessed Virgin is not the same as to ask something of the good God. She knows well what to do with my little desires, and it is for her to decide*



The image of Mary standing at the foot of the Cross is present to Carmelites around the world as we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on July 16 each year.

whether to ask for them or not.... After all, it is up to her not to force the good God to hear me, but to leave all to His Will. These words of the saint demonstrate how close she was with the Blessed Mother, confidently entrusting to Mary all her prayers and desires, including her greatest desire that all her prayers would be in line with Jesus’ own prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: *Not my will but yours be done (Lk 22, 42).*

The image of Mary standing at the foot of the Cross is present to Carmelites

around the world as we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on July 16 each year. The Gospel for the Mass of that day is the passage from John’s Gospel in which we hear Jesus proclaim from his Cross: *Behold, your mother (Jn 19, 27).* Along with Bl. Marie Eugene and St. Therese, may you discover the presence of Mary as Mother in your life. Especially in times of darkness, may Mary offer you light and encouragement. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, pray for us!