



CARMELITE CONNECTIONS

Newsletter of the
Discalced Carmelite Friars
California-Arizona Province
Spring 2012

Featured Article

Experience the journey and
jubilation as Fr. Juan Elias
Medina enters into priesthood.

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Welcome to the New Edition of the Carmelite Connections



After a two-year hiatus we are pleased to resume publication of this newsletter. Through its pages we share the important moments of our lives: our most sacred celebrations; our moments of loss; our family heritage; and our life's work. Most importantly, we take this moment to extend our deepest affection and appreciation for your friendship and support. May the Lord bestow His abundant blessings upon you and those you love.

Recently, as I was speaking to one of our friars, he said:

"The goodness of God will bless us beyond anything we can imagine."

Reflecting on this comment, and looking at my own life, I believe that is about as fine a way to summarize how God deals with us as I can conceive. Not only does it speak of the truth of God's ways of treating us as individuals, but also communally within our Province.



Deacon Bro. Raymond Bueno stands with fellow deacons during the liturgy of the Eucharist.

By Very Rev. Matthew Williams, O.C.D.



Since we last published the Carmelite Connections, three of our brother friars were called to their Eternal Glory. Fr. Ailbe Doolan, O.C.D. died in San Jose, CA on April 18, 2010; Fr. Reginald McSweeney O.C.D. died in Oakville, CA on June 1, 2010; and Brother Boniface Sheerer died in Redlands, CA on July 22, 2010. In these three servants of the Lord, the goodness of God has blessed us beyond anything we could have imagined! Through their combined 180 years of professed life, the Lord has placed an indelible seal of grace and blessing upon our Carmelite community and on those with whom we work and pray.

Our province is blessed to serve 15 monasteries of Discalced Carmelite Nuns and two active communities of Discalced

"The goodness of God will bless us beyond anything we can imagine."

Carmelite Sisters. In this edition of Carmelite Connections, Fr. Adam Gregory Gonzales, O.C.D. pens an introduction to these communities. Keep watch for more in-depth articles about our sisters in the Carmelite tradition from Fr. Adam in future editions of the Carmelite Connections.



Fr. Juan Elias Medina prays with a guest after his ordination ceremony.

Lastly, Fr. Donald Kinney, O.C.D. introduces in this issue the recent release of A Call to a Deeper Love, a compilation of letters written by Blessed Zélie and Louis Martin, parents of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Fr. Kinney writes, "In our society when Christian family life is so assailed, the joys and sorrows of the Martin family are good for us to know. They can help us follow Bl. Zélie and Louis' example to look up to Heaven with trust and to realize that God is also sanctifying our families through the trials we are going through today."

As we approach the Lenten season, we remember to invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Mount Carmel on your lives, that your faith may be strengthened, and that we all may join our Lord in His passion through prayer, fasting and almsgiving; that we might fully share in the Gory of the Lord in the days that follow.

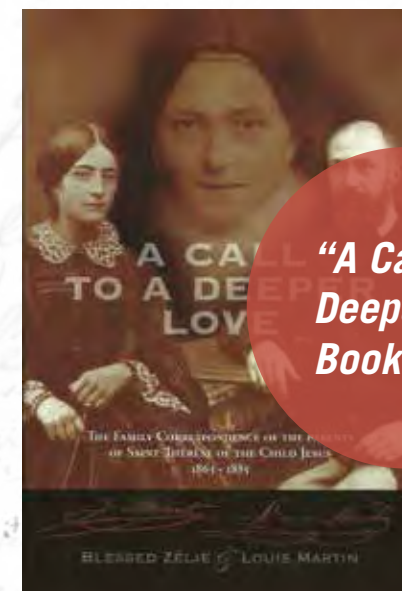


Guests celebrate with Fr. Juan at a reception following his First Mass.



A Major Event

The letters of Blessed Zélie and Louis Martin, parents of St. Thérèse, have recently been published in English. A Call to a Deeper Love: The Family Correspondence of the Parents of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus (1863-1885) is now available through Alba House and at El Carmelo gift shop too! This is a remarkable book of the letters of two remarkable people. It is a major event for the many friends of St. Thérèse who have looked forward to this translation. It will surely also be a major event in Catholic family circles everywhere.



“A Call to Deeper Love” Book Cover

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Most of us know of the parents of Saint Therese, Bl. Louis and Zélie Martin. Their great claim to fame is their ninth and youngest daughter, whom the world knows as St. Thérèse. However, they were beatified together as a married couple in 2008, not because of their “super-star” daughter, but because of their magnificent virtue and powerful intercession in their own right. This new book of their letters in English will help these new stars to shine even brighter.

By Fr. Donald Kinney, O.C.D.

Zélie (1831-1877) and Louis (1823-1894) were married at midnight on July 13, 1858 in Alençon, France. They were married for 19 years. In 13 years they had 9 children, but only five survived, the youngest of whom was St. Thérèse. Zélie's letters begin in 1863 and continue on until just twelve days before she died in 1877. 218 of her letters have come down to us. Others were lost, most notably a collection written to her oldest daughter, Marie, to prepare her for her First Holy Communion. A maid used them to light a fire.

Louis left most letter-writing to his wife: Only 16 of his own letters have come to us, most written to his daughters several years after Zélie had died, after the family had moved to Lisieux and while he was away on pilgrimage. It would have been a joy to receive a letter from Zélie or Louis Martin. Zélie was lively, witty, and spontaneous. Louis was quieter, but also generous and warm. Louis worked as a watch maker, and Zélie was a lace maker: both “contemplative” occupations which require attentiveness, patience, and love of detail. These are qualities they brought to raising their children. We see it too in the care with which they wrote their letters.



Louis and Zélie Martin

Zélie and Louis' deep faith in God and persevering prayer helped them through the anguish of losing four of their nine children, with the other five girls each coming close to death in infancy or childhood. Zélie vividly describes her deep love for her children, her exhausting work, the family's economic reversals, and even the invasion of their town by Prussian soldiers in the war of 1871. In good times and bad, in sickness and in health, until Zélie's death at age 46, this couple put God first in their lives. They raised their daughters to be saints. With so many loses, they learned early on to keep their sights on Heaven, where the family would one day be reunited.

“Magnificent virtue and powerful intercession in their own right. This new book of their letters in English will help these new stars to shine even brighter.”

exceptionally fine work, even searching in French dictionaries of the Martin's day to search for just the right word. Her translation reads like an original. Now she is translating the new 680-page biography of St. Thérèse by Bishop Guy Gaucher, the world authority on her. This book will also eventually be published by Alba House.

This book is co-translated by Ann Hess and Dr. Fran Renda, both of New York City. Ann has done

Dr. Fran Renda is a psychologist in New York. She is a close friend of Bishop Gaucher and the Carmelite nuns in Lisieux, and she was of invaluable assistance when the relics of St. Thérèse visited the United States in 1999-2000. Dr. Renda has added her own “Introduction to the English Language Edition” and “The Historical, Social, and Religious Background on 19th Century France in the Time of the Martin Family”. These sections give fascinating new insights into the experience of Louis and Zélie. Dr. Renda has also expanded the footnotes of the French edition to give more background to the letters.

Zélie died of breast cancer at the age of 46, leaving Louis with five daughters under the age of 18. Louis died of arteriosclerosis with symptoms of severe dementia at the age of 71. Cancer and dementia are trials which many of our families have to face. In our society when Christian family life is so assailed, the joys and sorrows of the Martin family are good for us to know. They can help us follow Bl. Zélie and Louis' example to look up to Heaven with trust and to realize that God is also sanctifying our families through the trials we are going through today. In one of Bl. Louis' letters when he is far from home and missing his family, he writes, “Soon we'll have the intimate happiness of the family, and it's this beauty that brings us closer to Him.” (CF 229)

Priestly Ordination of Fr. Juan Elias Medina O.C.D.

*“It may very well be
because of that holy
water that I stand here
in front of you today,”*



(L-R) Bp. Thomas Daly confers the sacrament of Holy Orders upon Bro. Juan Elias Medina -Bro. Medina lies prostrate before the altar-A joy-filled Deacon Juan Medina anticipates the ordination rite-Frs. Robert Barcelos and Christopher La Rocca at prayer during the ordination liturgy.



at the conclusion of the ordination liturgy,. He related a story of a time in the very parish of St. Athanasius when he was about nine years old. He became very thirsty during Midnight Mass and went to the restroom to get water from the tap. To his disappointment, the restrooms were locked! Very thirsty and desperate for a drink, he didn't know what to do. Just then he spotted the holy water font. He took the holy water to quench his thirst! “It may very well be because of that holy water that I stand here in front of you today,” exclaimed Fr. Juan.

P Praised be Jesus Christ! On the morning of October 22, 2011 Brother Juan Elias Medina, O.C.D. was ordained to the holy priesthood by the Most Reverend Thomas A. Daly, Auxiliary Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Jose.

Held in Fr. Juan's childhood parish church of St. Athanasius in Mountain View, California, the ordination liturgy was concelebrated by the Very Rev. Matthew Williams, O.C.D., Provincial Superior of the California-Arizona Province of Discalced Carmelite Friars, as well as over 20 Carmelite Friars.

Prostrating in prayerful humility, Brother Juan Elias Medina presented himself to Bishop Daly for the conference of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Bishop Daly anointed Bro. Juan's hands with Holy Chrism oil. He then placed his hands on Bro. Juan's head praying the consecratory prayer asking God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and His gifts proper to the ministry of the His holy priesthood.

The heart of the liturgical celebration was clearly experienced in Bro. Juan's disposition and the manner of his reception of the sacred seal of the ministerial priesthood. Upon introduction to the gathered community by Bishop Daly, Father Juan Elias Medina was visibly moved by the experience of the moment. Fr. Juan offered comments of thanksgiving in both English and Spanish



Fr. Juan Medina, Bishop Thomas Daly, and members of the Medina family pose for pictures after the ordination ceremony.

It was a moving moment for all present as each ordained priest, individually, placed hands on (now) Fr. Medina's head offering him in prayer to our Lord.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

It is with great joy that I receive my ordination to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Truly, I believe this is an expression of God's mercy for me. I realize that I would not be at this sacred moment without the love and support of so many people. Though the calling comes from God, my response has been supported and sustained by these loved ones.

I have journeyed a little over nine years in Carmel. My journey has brought me from California, Oregon, Italy, Egypt, Spain, the Holy Land, and back to the United States of America – namely Oregon and finally my present home, Arizona. I have been blessed to meet and share life with so many Carmelites.

It is in the context of this Carmelite vocation that I respond to the vocation of the priesthood. Without doubt, I am called to be a Carmelite and a priest. Both are equally important in my vocation. I began to experience this reality as a deacon, living my Carmelite vocation in the midst of Santa Cruz Parish in Tucson, Arizona. My community there consists of Fr. Thomas Reeves (my Superior and brother), and Fr. Thomas Ko ller (on temporary loan!). Many people have been mistaking Fr. Thomas Reeves for me and vice versa. We all get quite a laugh when this happens.

I am overwhelmed to have received the gift of this sacred vocation and I look with joyful anticipation to serving the people of God as a priest. I particularly look forward to administering the Sacrament of Reconciliation, to which I feel a strong calling.

I ask for prayers that I may generously and faithfully respond to the merciful gift of the vocation to the priesthood as a Discalced Carmelite.

Praised be Jesus Christ,
Fr. Juan Elias Medina, O.C.D.

Carmelite Spirituality, Carmelite Tradition

The Discalced Carmelite Friars of the California-Arizona Province are pleased to announce the establishment of our first “in-house” Development Office.

We would like to welcome Richard Mercado and Molly Widdicombe to our community. We are excited to have these new resources to oversee development programs and fund raising. Under the direct supervision of the Provincial Superior, the Development staff is available to answer your questions regarding giving opportunities and to facilitate communication between prospective donors and the Province.



Richard Mercado



Molly Widdicombe

Today

Holy Mother, St. Teresa of Jesus founded 12 convents in just 13 months! Now, as then, the work of prayer, presence, evangelization and pastoral care are of utmost importance. Today's Discalced Carmelite Friars carry on the work handed on to them by St. Teresa of Avila, St John of the Cross and many less known holy men and women of the Carmelite tradition. Join in the Carmelite work with an annual gift to the Discalced Carmelite Friars of the Western Province.

Tomorrow

The men who are called to serve us as priests and brothers bring to the Church a bounty of talents and skills. Their lives are devoted fully and selflessly to proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and ministering His love to all. Answering the Call is a dedicated campaign to:

- 1) *secure the House of Studies by retiring the construction loan debt.*
- 2) *provide for the Immediate Educational needs of Novices and Friars for the next several years; and*
- 3) *establish an Educational Endowment with a minimum of \$1 million. Contact Rich Mercado today to help ensure that the time honored Carmelite spirituality and tradition are available for the generations of tomorrow!*

Forever

St. Joseph, foster father of Our Savior and spouse of His Virgin Mother, is honored on March 19th as the patron of the Catholic Church. According to Pope Benedict XVI, “the general opinion of the learned is that the Fathers of Carmel were the first to import from the East into the West the laudable practice of giving the fullest cultus to St. Joseph”. It is under his patronage that the Discalced Carmelite Friars of the California-Arizona Province engage in their Mission of prayer, presence, evangelization and pastoral care. So too, under his patronage the Friars establish their Legacy Society for the continuity of mission for generations to come. Become a member of the St. Joseph Legacy Society by including the Friars as a beneficiary of your Will, Trust, Retirement plan, or Life insurance policy.

Contact Rich Mercado today to learn how!

OCDFriars@gmail.com
909.771.8322

“Today’s Discalced Carmelite Friars carry on the work handed on to them by St. Teresa of Avila, St John of the Cross and many less known holy men and women of the Carmelite tradition.

Discalced Carmelite Nuns

We remain eternally indebted



In the Foundations, Our Holy Mother, St. Teresa, writes, “Since we spent some days before establishing enclosure...there was an opportunity to teach Fray [Saint] John of the Cross about our way of life so that he would have a clear understanding of everything whether it concerned mortification or the style of both our community life and the recreation we have together.”

Since the beginning of the reform, St. Teresa had it in mind that there would be reformed Carmelite Friars who would be available to serve her Nuns as Chaplains, Spiritual Directors, Retreat Directors, and Confessors. The Friars were to be their brothers, but they were not to be cloistered - so as to be available to minister to their spiritual needs and those of the Church.

In the California-Arizona Province, the Friars have long exemplified this relationship as envisioned by Saint Teresa. However, if you ask any Friar in the Province, he will assure you that we receive much more from the Nuns than we could possibly give. In fact, the Friars of our Province are in eternal debt to the Carmel of Saint Teresa (Alhambra) for our first foundation in California. It was in 1924, at the request of the Nuns that we were given the new parish to be named for Blessed Therese of the Child Jesus (not yet canonized), just a few blocks north on Alhambra Road from the Carmel of Saint Teresa. The Fathers of St. Therese Church have ministered to the Nuns spiritual needs ever since.

There are fifteen Carmelite Monasteries of Nuns within the geographical boundaries of our Province (Seattle, WA, Eugene, OR, Reno, NV, Salt Lake City, UT, Littleton, CO, Georgetown, CA, Santa Fe, NM, Las Cruces, NM, Kaneohe, HI, San Rafael, CA, San Francisco, CA, Santa Clara, CA, Carmel by the Sea, CA, Alhambra, CA; and San Diego, CA.)

In addition to our contemplative Carmelite Nuns, there are two active communities of Carmelite Sisters within the boundaries of our Province. The Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart with their Motherhouse in Alhambra, CA, and the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus with a foundation in La Mesa, CA. These two communities are affiliated with our Discalced Carmelite Order and share our spiritual heritage and charism, while maintaining their own administration and government. Although called active Carmelites, they both maintain a strong contemplative aspect of their lives.

Eternal Rest

*Requiem æternam dona eis Domine;
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Requiescant in pace.
Amen.*



*The California-Arizona Province is privileged
to have had such men as our confreres.*



In the Two Thousand and Tenth Year of our Lord, three outstanding Carmelite Friars of the California-Arizona Province were called to their eternal rest.

Fr. Ailbe Doolan, O.C.D. died in San Jose, CA on April 18, 2010; Fr. Reginald McSweeney, O.C.D. died in Oakville, CA on June 1, 2010; and Brother Boniface Sheerer, O.C.D. died in Redlands, CA on July 22, 2010.

*“Wherever that man went
he went gratefully.”*

God of mercy, look kindly on Your servants who have set down the burden of their years. As they served You faithfully throughout their lives, may You give them the fullness of Your peace and joy. We give thanks for their long lives now caught up in Your eternal love. We make our prayer in the Name of Jesus, Who is our risen Lord now and forever. Amen



Fr. Ailbe (Seamus) Doolan, O.C.D.
of the Child Jesus
June 18, 1928 – April 18, 2010

Fr. Ailbe aged 81 was born in Cork, Ireland. A brilliant student, he got the highest GPA in the history of his high school. He was also an award winning Irish dancer. After seminary studies, he attended University of Dublin where he graduated with highest honors in Latin and Greek. Soon afterwards he came to California and ministered in Oakville, CA; Tucson, AZ; and especially in San Jose, CA. A gentle, refined person he had a quiet lasting influence on all he met. A marvelous storyteller he was greatly loved by the novices, students, and his many friends. He was esteemed by his fellow priests in the dioceses in which served and he kept them in his heart and in his prayers. In his later years he carried the heavy cross of ill health, yet he was ever peaceful, cheerful and grateful. His very presence in the Novitiate house was a grace for all who lived with him. It could be said of him as it was of Oedipus “wherever that man went he went gratefully.”



Fr. John Reginald McSweeney, O.C.D.
of the Queen of Carmel
March 7, 1926 – June 1, 2010

Fr. Reginald McSweeney aged 84 was also born in Cork, Ireland. After studies in Castlemartyr and St. Mary's Dublin he got his licentiate in Theology in the Carmelite College in Rome. With further studies at the Gregorian University in Rome, he was awarded a licentiate in sacred history. He returned to Dublin and taught history. Later he was a missionary in the Philippines and California. A great community man he was elected Prior of almost every house to which he was assigned. He was also Provincial Superior of the whole Anglo-Irish Province. A born teacher, he could make the past come alive. His classes on sacred scripture, church and Carmelite history were well attended and appreciated. Someone described him as “a lovely man” because he had the gift of friendship and hospitality and he was remembered affectionately in all the places where he had lived.



Bro. Boniface (Frederick) Sheerer, O.C.D.
of St. Gertrude
September 25, 1920 - July 22, 2010

Brother Boniface Sheerer, aged 89 was born in Philadelphia, USA. At one stage all of his nine brothers and sisters were either Carmelite or Dominican religious. He entered the Carmelite Order in Holy Hill, Wisconsin. Later he transferred to Redlands, California where, for 56 years, he lived until his death in July 2010. He worked hard and contributed mightily to the success of El Carmelo Retreat House. He is remembered as a hardworking, friendly, encouraging, and devout religious. Through his work with the youth, especially as a baseball coach, he influenced generations of young people who respected and honored him. Without preaching, but by his example and common sense, he was the heart of the retreat ministry. Retreatants recognized his unselfishness, dedication, cheerful spirit and no-frills holiness. He is greatly missed.



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Thank you!

We pray in gratitude for your generous gifts and the sacrifices you make to support our Carmelite community. In all that we do, we want the world to know the love of Jesus Christ. We ask you to continue to pray with us for God's blessings as we give life to the Carmelite traditions.

Cover Photo
Joseph Moran

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Discalced Carmelite Friars

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