

Part IV

Mary, Mother of God & the Carmel

Having placed some of the modalities within our landscape, let's look at the picture briefly through the eyes of St. Teresa:

At the age of 13 after her mother died, she prayed, Life 1,7:

"In my affliction I went to an image of our Lady and begged her with many tears to be a mother to me".

At the conclusion of the foundation of St Joseph's, her first Discalced community, Teresa wrote

"As for me, it was like being in glory to see the Blessed Sacrament reserved.... and to have completed a work which I understood was for the service of the Lord and in honor of the habit of his glorious Mother"(Life 36,6).

"We keep the Rule of Our Lady of Carmel ... please God all will be for his glory and praise and that of the glorious Virgin Mary, whose habit we wear"(Life 36;26,28).

As a result of this she saw Christ who thanked her for *"what she had done for his Mother"*, and she saw the Virgin *"in great glory, wearing a white mantle with which she seemed to enfold us all"(Life 36,24).*

In the Interior Castle she writes

"All of us who wear this holy habit of Carmel are called to prayer and contemplation. This call explains our origin; we are descendants of men who felt this call, of these holy fathers of Mount Carmel "(Mansions V: 1:2).

And in a letter to nuns of Seville

"And so my daughters all belong to the Virgin and are sisters and should seek to love one another greatly"

At the age of 56 as Prioress of the Incarnation she placed a statue of Mary in the position of honor in the choir, the position reserved for the Lady of the Place. Teresa was aware of the privileges of the Holy Scapular. She wrote of the death of a Carmelite Friar Diego Matías, who for some time had been confessor at the Incarnation: *"I understood that having been a friar who was very faithful to his profession, he had profited by the Bulls of the Order so as not to enter purgatory" (Life 38, 31).*

How can this spiritual picture, illuminated by our saints, guide us in our daily lives, in this, the 21st century?

A fundamental realization is this: to be an authentic Christian, a true disciple and witness of Our Lord, we must be like Mary; we should commit to know her better, daily, and imitate her devotion and her virtues.

While giving life to Teresian Carmelite spirituality, Mary's presence also shapes its apostolate. As a result, the Secular Carmelite is committed to knowing Mary better, daily, through the Gospel to communicate to others an authentic Marian devotion leading to imitating her virtues.

She is always with us to show us the way, lead us and pray for us. The Blessed Mother inspires us in Carmel "to testify how the Christian faith is the only fully valid response.....to the problems and hopes that life poses to every person and society". We are called like her to "stand before the world as a witness to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus and a symbol of the living God". How do we do this? - By means of a life of prayer, of service to

evangelization and the vibrant example of a Christian and Carmelite community.

We can summarize:

Mary is to Carmel what the soul is to the body, and the Blessed Mother shows us that this is how Carmelites should be to the world: what the soul is to the body.

And from St. Teresa's Interior Castle:

"Imitate Our Lady and consider how great she must be and what a good thing it is that we have her for our Patroness (IC III, 1,3)

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the person who was closest in life to Jesus Christ, she is the one who directs us most surely to him, saying to all what she said to the servants at the wedding at Cana, **"Do whatever he tells you."**