

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

By Sr. Jeanne Fallon, CSJ

Origins of the Carmelite Order

About 800 years ago (AD 1200) the Carmelite Order began with a group of lay hermits on Mount Carmel in the Holy Land. The hermits had individual cells surrounding a chapel. Their life was based on solitude, silence, praying the psalms, and receiving the Eucharist when possible.

In time, it became necessary for them to migrate to various countries in Western Europe and their way of life changed from eremitic (as hermits) to cenobitic (living in community). They each had individual cells in a dormitory, ate meals together, and chanted the Divine Office together. The Carmelite friars became known as mendicants (begging for alms) like the Dominicans and Franciscans. They prepared themselves to do the ministries of preaching, teaching, and pastoral work. Even though their way of life had changed drastically, the Carmelite friars always kept alive the beloved memory of their eremitic beginnings: the prophet Elijah had been the model for the early hermits. By the 14th century the Carmelite Order considered Elijah as a living

archetype – they had no known human founder like the Dominicans or the Franciscans. They also considered their order was founded to honor Mary because the original chapel around which the first lay hermits situated their cells was dedicated to Mary. When the hermits migrated from Mount Carmel, the Carmelite friars called themselves "Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel." They wore a brown scapular as a sign of their dedication to Mary. Our Lady of Mount Carmel's feast day is celebrated today, July 16.



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Saints of the Carmelite Family

St. Teresa of Jesus of Avila 1515-1582

St. John of the Cross 1542-1591

16 Carmelite Martyrs of Compiègne 1794

St. Therese of Lisieux 1873-1897

St. Elizabeth of the Trinity 1880-1906

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) 1891-1942

St. Titus Brandsma (Friar of the Ancient Observance) 1881-1942

For Prayer

O Blessed Virgin Mary, you carried the Son of the eternal Father.

*"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my savior."*

O Blessed Virgin Mary, you carried the Son of the eternal Father.

*"For he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name."*

O Blessed Virgin Mary, you carried the Son of the eternal Father.

*"He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit."*

O Blessed Virgin Mary, you carried the Son of the eternal Father.

*"He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty."*

O Blessed Virgin Mary, you carried the Son of the eternal Father.

*"He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever."*

PRAYERS BASED ON LUKE 1:46-55

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