



# Carmelite News

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## Ewige Profess

Monika Bies will make her "ewige profess" (German for "solemn profession") on Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at our liturgy anticipating St. Teresa of Avila's feast. Below she shares her perspective as this joyful day approaches.

*Sound does not exist by itself, but has a permanent, constant and unavoidable relation with silence.\**

I was deeply touched by this profound insight on sound and silence as it was invoked by Father Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD, in his lecture at this year's Carmelite Forum. Looking back on my time in Carmel, I see that I have been living into the relationship of these two qualities. Silence and sound have alternated, and just as in music, each has had at times a positive meaning for me and at other times a more negative side.

I hold many examples of this interplay of sound and silence close to my heart. I think of moments filled with beautiful music, moments of sound and experience I cherished and treasured. There were the first roses blossoming from plants I had nurtured with loving attention in our monastery garden – the first roses I had ever tended. But far more importantly, in my relationship with God, I clearly remember different occasions when a reading proclaimed in chapel by one of our sisters came to me in a new way, and suddenly lifted off a weight of desolation from my spirit – God speaking in human words.

At other times, I longed for the silent music that John of the Cross describes in his *Spiritual Canticle*, as my own disquiet and the sorrows of those we hold in prayer seemed to overshadow everything that was in me. In these moments, inner silence seemed lost, and I would try in vain to gain back my equilibrium. And even when the quiet for which I longed arrived, it was at times an awkward and uncomfortable silence, interrupted only occasionally, and even then by music not harmonious and consoling but dissonant. I felt that I could not recall the melody that I had once followed and loved so much, and wondered if I would ever hear its tune again.

But these patterns of sound and silence were -- and are -- drawing me forward to a point that I can best describe by borrowing from Rilke, with poetic license:

\*"In the Beginning Was Sound," by Daniel Barenboim, Conductor (BBC Reith Lectures 2006)

*Now I try to love the dissonance itself as if it were my favorite tune, and I do not search for a harmony that could not be given to me now, because I would not be able to live it. Maybe I can learn to live the dissonance now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, I will gradually, without even noticing it, live my way into the harmony.*

In the meantime, until I can hear that harmony, I am deeply touched that God has brought me to this place in my life. Words cannot describe how much I am looking forward to saying "yes" forever, and living ever more fully into this truth: *Sound does not exist by itself, but has a permanent, constant and unavoidable relation with silence.*

## EarthPrayer II: Robert Russell

Friday November 9, 7:30 p.m.

Renowned scientist/theologian Dr. Robert J. Russell will give a special public lecture at Baltimore Carmel on Friday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. As Director of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences at Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union, Dr. Russell has committed his life to promoting creative mutual interaction between religion and science. His most recent work addresses scientific cosmology and predictions about earth's far future in dialogue with the Christian concepts of eschatology and bodily resurrection. His lecture, *Humanity and the Cosmos: Eschatological Companions into the New Creation*, will bring together many themes of this year's EarthPrayer, in particular humanity's "place in the cosmos." He will address three pervasive attitudes towards nature and their parallels regarding technology. By re-examining the role of nature in the Christian creation tradition, Dr. Russell will suggest a new model for the human relation to nature, taking into account evolution and the centrality of Christ in God's redemption of all creation. As he moves our focus on "place" outward to the wondrous cosmological plane, his lecture promises the brightness of eschatological hope, and a scientific perspective on the meaning of a new creation. Admission to the lecture is free, and all are warmly welcome to attend. We want a full chapel!

## Agnes Ahn To Make First Profession

Nearly 5 years have passed since Agnes Kyungee

Ahn boarded a plane in her native South Korea bound for America, with the dream of Carmel burning in her heart. Her journey was suffused with courage, risk, and a profound, abiding trust in God. Agnes could not foresee exactly how her deepest desire – a life of contemplation – would ever be fulfilled. Her searching travels took her first to Charlotte, North Carolina, where a warm, loving and vibrant Korean Catholic community welcomed her. They have been a very important part of her journey, a sustaining presence of prayer and support. Agnes eventually found her way to Baltimore, taking up an extraordinarily effective apostolic ministry with the Korean community in this area while studying pastoral counseling. But the call of Carmel would not be silenced. On September 9, 2007, radiant with joy, deep peace and gratitude, Agnes Kyungee of Jesus pronounced her first vows as a Carmelite Nun. It was a wondrously luminous moment in the midst of a beautiful and moving Sunday Mass, witnessed with joy by our regular congregation and Agnes' many friends. She is the first Asian woman to profess vows in our community in its 217 year history.

In these last two years, Agnes has given color and contour to her novitiate through a "determined determination" to enter deeply into her Carmelite identity, particularly as it engages her own spiritual and cultural heritage. At a recent meeting of our Carmelite Association, she spoke of the enriching and challenging meeting points of culture and faith, revealing the inner crafting of an imaginative synthesis between contemplation and traditional Korean values. Invoking the Korean aesthetic of artistic expression, Agnes described a delicate balance between fullness and void, sound and silence, presence and absence, whether in painting, music or dance. That she has internalized and integrated this quietly philosophical perspective is evidenced in many ways, but perhaps most concretely

through her flower arrangements for the chapel. They are an extraordinary blend of form, color and line that emphasizes the meaning of empty space as much as the graceful grandeur of each individual flower, all brought together in integral composition.

Agnes now hopes to live more deeply into the service of her sisters and our wider community, sharing her giftedness and passion, and embodying the love of Jesus. For her profession gospel, she chose the Beatitudes, which she understands as a practical statement of Jesus' mission and of the radical call to be a friend of Jesus (and hence of others) by participating in his work. Spiritual friendship in this characteristically Teresian sense is of the most vital importance for Agnes; she feels energized and ready for this work as she continues to live into silence and solitude balanced by a rich community life – another example of holding absence and presence in mysterious accord.

Agnes' prayer includes an intention for missionaries, for indeed she herself is a missionary in a foreign land, bearing good news and the bright light of hope to all who encounter her. We ask you to share our joy that Agnes has decided to make this significant commitment, and for your continuing prayer as she deepens her journey toward the mountain of God.

#### 🌸 Calendar 🌸

**Sunday, September 30, Thérèse of Lisieux**

*Lauds 8:15 am, Mass 9 am, Solemn Vespers 5 pm*

**Sunday, October 14, Teresa of Avila & Solemn Vows**

*Lauds 8:15 am, Mass 9 am, Solemn Vespers 5 pm*

**Friday, November 9, Lecture, Robert Russell 7:30 pm**

**Thursday, November 22, Thanksgiving Day Mass 9 am**

**Friday - Monday, February 15-18, 2008, Come & See:**

Single women age 18-35 are invited to spend a weekend with us, living, praying and working, to try out life in