



Carmelite News

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Praying for Haiti

So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:13)

We have seen the images on TV, on the front page, on the Internet. Of course, we have all seen them – Haiti – the images of despair, of tragedy piled upon tragedy in that land so very close to us, yet not. But those are not the only images we have seen, are they? For all the horror, the pain, there have been signs and extraordinary evocative images of love – the kind of love Paul addresses in his Hymn of Love in First Corinthians. This familiar passage has been so poignantly before us these last months. The Hymn of Love is divided into three parts: the superiority of love; its works, and its lasting quality – but the hymn grows in volume and takes on the rhythm of a sacred heartbeat as we gaze on images of rescuers ceaselessly laboring to free Haitians buried beneath tons of rubble, of husbands or wives who “know” their beloved spouse is still among the living even weeks after the quake, of doctors and nurses who hold their patients close when the aftershocks threaten, of the injured children who hear the cries of other children and turn to care for them before receiving care themselves.

And we are all there, aren't we? All in Haiti, as our collective prayer hits the currents, and we have the opportunity to love as God loves – to be active as heart-bearers even if we cannot be stretcher-bearers. We are all standing side-by-side with our brothers and sisters as they make their tent cities into sanctuaries, and rise like us to praise our God.

As this newsletter went to press, we received news of the devastating earthquake in Chile. May our love and prayer on the currents also embrace the suffering Chilean people in their pain and loss.

The Discipline of Generosity

How are you doing with the Carmelite fast? In our last newsletter, we invited our readers to join us in this commitment, which Carmelites around the world undertake from September 14 until Easter Sunday. Now Lent has arrived, asking for even more profound conversion and reflection through the traditional disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Almsgiving brings a new dimension to the prayer and fasting already at work in the Carmelite fast. How can this practice, what some have called “the discipline of generosity,” bring our Carmelite fast to its fullest completion in the remaining days of Lent?

Just as the discipline of fasting means more than just decreasing food consumption, so almsgiving extends beyond the giving of money. As Carmelites we give attention to how we can express this broader understanding of almsgiving, which everyone can practice regardless of means. The non-material dimensions are challenging because they demand much of one's selfhood and offer little immediate gratification. In this way, almsgiving is a kind of “unfulfillment” that is the positive side of fasting: how do I live my daily life so as to transform my possessive selfhood.

One expression of this “almsgiving of self” is a readiness to defer or even abandon my plans for the day so as to

surrender wholeheartedly to what God places in my path. As Edith Stein reminds us, “what did not lie in my plans lay in God's plan.” Can I be attentive, sufficiently detached from my own agenda, that I can hear the subtle urgings and prompts of the Holy Spirit? This degree of generosity demands a deep and personal engagement with the needs of others.

The discipline of generosity can also ask me to forego my claim of control over what I own. Tangibly, this can mean not clinging to my possessions but holding them in trust, as a steward, for whatever God may ask. Harder still, I may be asked to offer my creativity and intellect, my “work,” without insisting on attribution or praise. Can I remain still and peaceful when “my idea” is appropriated and brought to fulfillment without reference to me, without the satisfaction of receiving credit or affirmation? Thérèse

Please share Holy Week with us.

We warmly invite you to our Holy Week services, offering a beautiful, intensive and deep experience of the mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection. Your presence will contribute greatly to the liturgical celebration of these sacred days. We hope you can be with us. Please see the calendar box (other side) for times.

of Lisieux describes this stance as “the grace of not being attached to the goods of the mind and heart.” It is also part of “working in silence,” from our Carmelite rule as interpreted by Kees Waaijman, a contemporary Carmelite scholar from the Netherlands. To work in silence is not primarily about working without audible noise. It is to “turn off the applause machine,” to work with intentionality without needing evident, creditable results. This challenge is dramatically counter-cultural for our era. To work in the present but not for the present; to work for a future beyond my own time, whose fulfillment I may never see: this is radical generosity indeed.

Almsgiving means that I make my contribution even if no return comes – and so brings us back to prayer, for seldom does one know, see, or directly experience the effects of prayer for others. The practice of prayer does not offer the immediate fulfillment of active hands-on ministry, where I am able to see the results of my work. And so prayer for others is a kind of almsgiving too. As with our prayer for Haiti and for the Chile earthquake victims, we offer it and trust in its fulfillment without the evidence of our eyes and the satisfaction of our feelings.

The discipline of generosity calls us to a true and profound self-surrender, which can scrape away our innermost barriers to God and others. Almsgiving, prayer and fasting lead us along the path of wisdom, in prophetic openness to and for others. Ultimately, almsgiving in its fullest sense can help end the polarization that occurs when I stake out my own territory and my own definition of success. This is how we can become the very change our society most needs, a powerful movement toward reconciliation.

*Remember, the Carmelite fast ends on Easter Sunday.
Celebrate with joy!*

🌿 Calendar 🌿

**Praying the Passion Thursday March 25
7 p.m.**

Video Divina of the Passion Narrative
in preparation for Holy Week

Holy Week/Easter liturgies:

Palm Sunday	March 28	
Eucharist	9:00 am	Brian McDermott, SJ
Vespers	5:00 pm	
Holy Thursday	April 1	
Tenebrae	8:00 am	
Eucharist	5:30 pm	Brian McDermott, SJ
Good Friday	April 2	
Tenebrae	8:00 am	
Liturgy	3:00 pm	
Holy Saturday	April 3	
Tenebrae	8:00 am	
Vespers	4:30 pm	
Easter Vigil	9:00 pm	
Easter Sunday	April 4	
Eucharist	11:00 am	John Donahue, SJ
Vespers	4:30 pm	



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