

way. I am still me, though I try not to be so self-centred, but more people centred. I love God's wisdom, and truth has set me free. I have found faith, hope and above all love, love and more love. Best of all I have a friend in Jesus, a sure foundation.

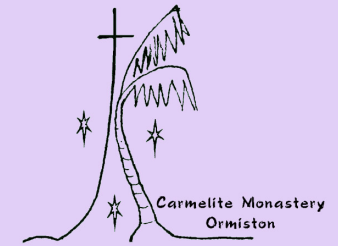
The YCG is one of the groups I associate with in order to know Jesus and to open my eyes and ears to my purpose in life. I like reading St Therese ('The Little Flower') especially when she speaks about the little things. It is the small things we do for Christ that put a smile on God's face. Everything we do, big or small, we can offer to God. Every now and then I read the 'Spiritual Canticle' of St John of the Cross. My favourite stanza is no 28: 'Now I occupy my soul and all my energy in his service; I no longer tend the herd, nor have I any other work now that my every act is love.' I love being the Bride.

I cannot imagine a life without Jesus, and I am so happy that on that day in 1990, I was so preoccupied as to have walked into the wrong bookshop. Now I see it as Jesus gently leading me in by the elbow. This is only one of many wonderful adventures stories I have shared with you. Every day is a surprise and filled with wonder and most of all, love. I must admit sometimes I am fearful, angry, jealous, hurt, scared, but I know I can share that with Jesus who loves me unconditionally. We never have to go far to seek Jesus, he is inside of us and all we have to do is to quieten ourselves and listen. You know, all things are possible through God and He is one awesome guy and I love Him.



The Young Carmelite Group meets at 'Avila' in the grounds of our Monastery about four times a year. If you'd like more info, please contact us.

SEEDS OF CARMEL



Soundings from the Carmelite Monastery, Ormiston for
YOUNG ADULTS

Issue 9

September 2004

'If only you knew Jesus a little better, prayer wouldn't bore you!' Elizabeth of the Trinity had been almost a year in Carmel when she wrote this to a 15 year old friend. It was an impassioned plea from one who was captivated by God and had given her life to him. How often does one hear today that Mass is boring, that the Church is irrelevant....? If only people could meet the real Jesus, their lives would be changed, and the world would be different! In sharing with you some aspects of the spirituality of our Carmelite sister, we hope you will find inspiration in Elizabeth's relaxed and natural relationship with God and with others. For her, God was Father, Son and Spirit, each uniquely known and loved in the depths of her own being. This drew her into a profound recollection, and at the same time attracted her to other people, in whom she also recognised the presence of her 'Three'.



Elizabeth before entering Carmel

As a contemplative community, prayer is our priority. By constantly trying to know Jesus better, our prayer becomes more life-giving, not only for ourselves, but for the whole Church. By our love and concern for those we live with, we become a sign of communion in a fractured world. By more consciously opening our hearts to all people, we are helping to further the reign of God. These are the seeds which the Spirit blows to destinations unknown to us, but which somewhere find fertile soil in which they can grow. In this way we are privileged to do our part in the 'Jesus, Communion, Mission' vision of our Archdiocese.

All issues of 'Seeds of Carmel' are posted on our Carmelite website
www.carmelite.com/nuns/ormiston
We welcome your questions, comments or suggestions.

Sister Cecilia, Carmelite Monastery, 287 Wellington St., Ormiston. Qld. 4160.
Ph. (07) 3286 1401 Email: carmston@powerup.com.au

Themes.....

Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity

Several saints in our Carmelite calendar were young people in their twenties. One of these, Elizabeth Catez, was born in France in 1880, entered Carmel in her home town of Dijon at the age of 21, and died of Addison's disease in 1906.

Vivacious and sometimes boisterous as a child, Sabeth worked hard to control her fiery temper. A talented musician, she had many friends, dressed smartly, played tennis, loved to travel, and enjoyed a busy social life. In the midst of all this, she lived with God 'as with a friend from whom she could not be separated.' Her awareness of the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, her 'Three' living in her inmost being was phenomenal. She felt God 'so alive' within her. 'It seems to me that nothing can distract us from him,' she wrote, 'if we are acting solely for him, and remain always in his presence.'

Drawn more and more by Jesus' love, Elizabeth realised that the life of intimacy with him which she desired would be satisfied in Carmel: 'He hollows out deep chasms in my soul, chasms which he alone can fill'. 'A Carmelite,' she wrote, 'is one who has looked upon the Crucified, who has seen him offering himself to his Father, and recollecting herself beneath this great vision... she has understood the ardent love of his soul and desired to give herself as he did.'

During her five years as a Carmelite, Sr. Elizabeth of the Trinity - this was her new Religious name - found her 'heaven on earth'. She continued to deepen her relationship with God, penetrating with the intuitive gaze of the contemplative the riches of scripture, especially the letters St. Paul. In writing to her family and friends she shared her joy in her vocation, and encouraged her correspondents to cultivate the same interiority, whatever their occupations.

Elizabeth's prayer led her to give herself so completely to Christ, that she longed to be transformed into him, that he might live again on earth through her. As the illness which would claim her young life manifested itself, she showed how real her desires were. She suffered acutely as her body wasted away, but always with love and in union with Jesus. Her last words were: 'I am going to light, to love, to life.' She was 26.



YCG Brisbane

The Brisbane Young Carmelite Group started in October 2001. At that time, Rachel, an accountant, had been a Catholic only six months. Since then, she has been to almost every meeting.

My name is Rachel Leung and Sister Moira has asked me to write and share my spiritual journey. Some of you may be reading 'Seeds of Carmel' and wondering, 'What is this Brisbane Young Carmelite Group on about?' Well, hopefully I will be able to dispel some fears and maybe it might light a small flame of desire in your heart to come and see for yourself. We will welcome you with open arms. As I write this, I think back to all the lovely faces; some of us are still studying, some are currently working. We come from various occupations and that brings together different skilled people, all with a desire to know the one God who loved us before we were even knitted together in our mother's womb.

I'll tell you about my life before Jesus came into my heart. At first all was well and very routine. I knew Jesus was a great guy and knew off by heart all the wonderful stories about him; and basically I knew what was right and wrong, but it all centred on my family and me, and our happiness. I did not feel fulfilled. I felt empty inside and I had no firm foundation to fall back on. I was not satisfied because nothing was enough to fill the void. My idea then was to study hard and have a good career, eventually settle down and have my own family; always do good to those around us, and death was the end.

I remember not long after I started searching for meaning I was in the city purchasing textbooks for the semester, and somehow I walked into the wrong bookshop. I walked into the Bible Society and not the American bookshop, which was next door. Not wanting to be thought of as a silly goose I started to browse around, and from that day God had me hook, line and sinker. And what a catch it was! Till this day I have not stopped talking about Him, reading about Him, being at the table with Him, and most of all praying. Why? Because I found love in that bookshop that day, and God's living message. I did study hard and got the career I wanted and many friends to share my



Praying with.....

Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity

We've taken here some short extracts from Elizabeth's letters, which are full of intimate details about her prayer, and a wealth of encouragement for anyone wanting to learn how to pray.

I will give you my secret: think of this God who lives in you, whose temple you are; it is St. Paul who says this, we can believe him. Little by little the soul gets used to living in his sweet company, she understands that she carries within herself a little heaven where the God of love has fixed his dwelling. So it is like a divine atmosphere in which she breathes..... The Trinity, that's where we live, our home, the father's house from which we should never depart.... If you got to know him a little, prayer wouldn't bore you any more; to me it seems to be rest, relaxation. We come quite simply to the One we love, stay close to him like a little child in the arms of its mother, and we let our heart go.

My whole practice is to enter within, and lose myself in those who are there! ... It is so simple. The Divine Adorer is within us, so we have his prayer; let us offer it, commune with it, and pray with his soul..... no need of beautiful thoughts but simply an outpouring of the heart.... your eyes in his eyes..... Oh, how the good Lord loves you; if you could see the tenderness with which he looks on you! an immensity of love that flows over us in all directions...

Offer him everything that wounds your heart, confide all to him, think that day and night you have in your soul someone who never leaves you alone.... I am silent, I listen to him... it is so good to hear everything from him, and then I love him..... In this intimate heart to heart the whole soul flows into God, whilst God flows into the soul to transform it into himself.....

You might like to take some time now to ponder in silence the first part of Elizabeth's beautiful 'Prayer to the Trinity':

O my God, Trinity whom I adore, help me to forget myself entirely, that I may be rooted in you, as changeless and calm as if my soul were already in eternity. May nothing ever disturb my peace, or draw me away from you, O my unchanging One, but may each minute carry me further into the depths of your Mystery. Give peace to my soul; make it your heaven, your beloved home, and your resting place. May I never leave you there alone, but be totally present, totally awake in my faith, totally adoring, and totally surrendered to your creative action.

Gathering of New Carmelites in the Region



In late June Srs. Marie Tania and Colette joined eight other NCMs (New Carmelite Members) from around Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea at the Friars' Retreat Centre at Varroville. The occasion was a meeting organised by the Association of Carmels in our region for formators and those in formation - or who have recently completed their formation. Our Sr. Theresa Margaret attended as a formator. Under the capable facilitation of Sr Joan Smith RSM, the participants explored various issues concerning the training of new candidates to the Discalced Carmelite life. This included topics such as Models of Formation, Carmelite Spirituality, Culture and Its Impact on Formation, and Commitment. Having the newer sisters and brothers involved was integral to the process of the meeting, since they were able to give a first-hand account of their experiences, and what aspects were found to be helpful or otherwise.

The gathering of these newer Carmelites was a momentous occasion in another way also. Due to the nature of enclosure, and the fact that our Monasteries (of nuns) are each autonomous and therefore responsible for forming their own candidates, this was the first opportunity most had of meeting their peers in Carmel. While we have always understood ourselves to be closely linked as brothers and sisters in the same family founded by St Teresa, coming together like this made the bonds real and highlighted the common charism which is our heritage.

RUTH - OUR NEW POSTULANT



Readers may remember me from an earlier issue where I went into some detail about my experience as a 'live-in' during March 2003. Eventually I discerned that God was calling me to this Carmel and so I entered in April this year. Almost 4 1/2 months later, I am slowly coming to adjust myself to my new life here in community and to the daily rhythm of prayer and work. God, in his love and generosity, has given me every possible support and has put to use my talents in ways I would never have imagined! I am grateful for your continuing prayers as I walk with Jesus and learn to listen to his call here in Carmel.

A Refugee Welcomed

The plight of refugees and assylum seekers being held indefinitely in detention centres touches the heart of every Carmelite, called to intercede before the Lord for all victims of injustice. For our Hungarian Sister Matilda it resonates with particular insistence.



I was born in Budapest. Eighteen months later in December 1944, just hours before the communists arrived, we crossed Lake Balaton in a leaking boat which Dad managed to paddle with a single oar. We had only two small cases with us as we fled Hungary, and my parents were aware that divine intervention accompanied us.

For five years we moved from place to place in Bavaria. My brother was born there. (Two of our sisters had already died during infancy in those

difficult years.) Mum had to punish me so that I'd eat my meals, yet said that in her heart she could not blame me, the food was so awful. It was only years later that I wondered what Mum and Dad ate. I surely received the best available. The severe winters were a great hardship for them.

Our situation was fairly difficult when we began a new life here in Australia and two more girls completed our family. We lived in an adapted garage. One day after school I ran in to Mum telling her that Jesus had been a refugee too! Fortunately I didn't experience the harsh treatment some other ethnic groups received. Still, small children can be cruel at times. When we finally moved into a proper house, Mum turned to Dad - After 12 years of temporary dwellings she had one heartfelt plea: 'Now let us never move again.' Before long I was attending daily Mass at Auchenflower Carmel, just 10 minutes away, never dreaming I would one day enter there.

My desire to help people originally made me want to be a nurse, and I was going to work my way around our wonderful country travelling in a campervan. After all, apart from a cultural heritage, we have just about everything that overseas could offer. However the Lord upset my adventurous plans..... He called me to Carmel.

I had understood by then that people's needs were more complex than merely physical ones. Through prayer and reflection I realised that Carmel did not thwart

my desires to help, but actually fulfilled them. Of myself I could reach out only to a limited number of persons and could not penetrate to the ultimate causes of distress. But God could - if I opened myself to the creative Love longing to be allowed into our world to heal and transform.

The difficult years of poverty and loneliness I'd been through turned out to be a blessing, preparing me for the solitude of Carmel where 'God alone suffices.' While I don't limit my prayer intentions to refugees, I can naturally identify with their plight - whether they are on the move, in camps/detention centres, or struggling to build a new future. It hurts me as an Australian to see that they are not welcomed today as generously as our family was over 50 years ago. It's like an incurable wound, despite the many who do take newcomers to their heart and work for their interests. Yet the truth is that the dividing line between acceptance and rejection does not run through a population, but through my own heart. My personal efforts to be welcoming in my attitudes, thoughts and actions are not unimportant. I may be unaware of the consequences, but we are all linked to each other and affect each other - God's inclusive love can become operative through us.

As a child I had been thrilled to know Jesus was a refugee, and now in the mystery of our common union in him, I can be in solidarity with today's refugees when I meet lesser versions of their experiences: disappointment, hurt, poverty, rejection, helplessness, bewilderment, not belonging, vulnerability, indignity.... the list seems endless. I trust that Jesus can multiply my small offerings to nourish and support countless others.



O my beloved Christ.... immerse me in yourself... through all darkness, all emptiness, all powerlessness, I want to keep my eyes always on you and live beneath your great light

Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity