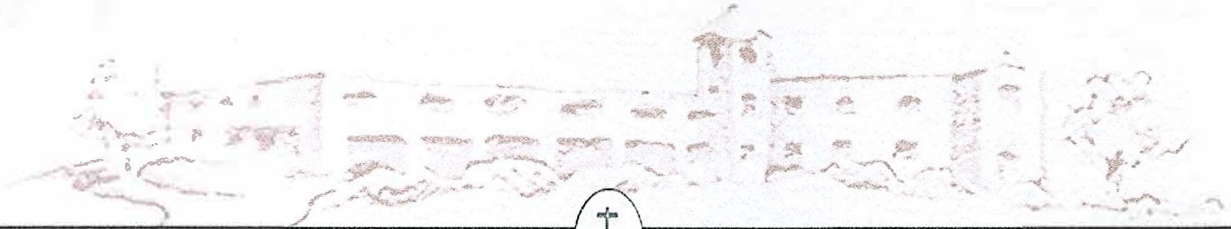


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*A Monastery & Retreat House of The Discalced Carmelite Fathers*

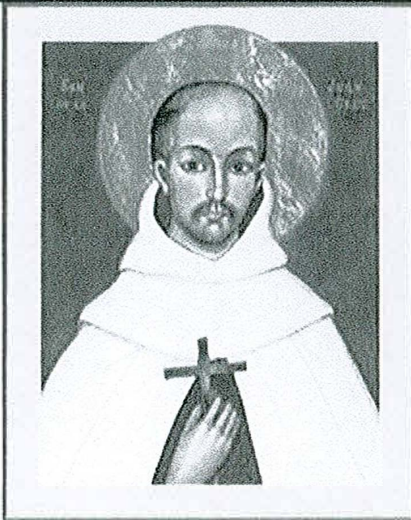
# Mount Carmel Center



Spring 2014

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## St. John of the Cross



John survived a very difficult life of poverty. His father had been disowned for marrying beneath his status thus forcing the family to find ways to earn their living. The father (Gonzalo) fell ill not too long after the birth of the last of the three children (Francisco, Juan, and Luis). The illness completely depleted their meager sources and when Gonzalo died he left the family completely destitute with a young mother (Catalina) seeking ways to feed and defend her young family. The youngest child died also at the age of two of illness or starvation or both.

John's family was formative in his own understanding of what love is genuinely. That is not to say that John had this tremendous understanding before undergoing his own purification; but he already had the seeds of understanding genuine love in his own family history. After the eyes of his soul were purified John had this history of love upon which he could draw and appreciate. John was awed by the kenotic (self-emptying) love of the Logos for us, just as his father was willing to empty himself for the sake of Catalina. He saw the love of God everywhere he turned his eyes. It all spoke of Christ's love for us – the ultimate reason for everything is love.

At Mount Carmel Center, we offer programs cyclically from June to June. Presently, we find ourselves in the middle of the cycle dealing with St. John of the Cross who was born in 1542 in Fontiveros, Spain, died in Ubeda, Spain on December 14, 1591. Because of the import of his teachings he was declared Doctor of the Church 1926, Doctor mysticus (Mystic Doctor).

*continued on page 2*

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*continued from page one*

From 1551-1559, John attended some classes at a school for the poor in Medina del Campo where his family had moved. He served as altar server at Augustinian Monastery of St. Mary Magdalene and volunteered at the Hospital of the Immaculate Conception, a private hospital dedicated to the care of the poor and those suffering from venereal diseases. From 1559-1563, John audited classes at a Jesuit school and then, to everyone's surprise, entered the Carmelite monastery of St. Ann and took the name of John of St. Matthias. He began his studies in Salamanca where he was ordained in July of 1567.

In October of 1567, John traveled to Medina del Campo to celebrate his first Mass and met St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila) – who was finalizing the second foundation of the reform of her nuns. John confided in her that he longed to live a more austere life and was considering joining the Carthusians, a religious order of enclosed monastics. St. Teresa asked him to wait because she was thinking of starting a reform of the friars of the Carmelite Order (as she had done with the Nuns of the Order.)

The rest, as they say, is history.

On November 28, 1568, Antonio de Jesús, Juan de Cristo and Juan de la Cruz (formerly of St. Matthias) inaugurated the first monastery of the Discalced Carmelite Friars in Duruelo, Spain. Because of his own family's history, John of the Cross knew that genuine love demands complete dedication and works most especially in our response to the Ultimate Love that calls to us. He addressed the reason there are so few souls who achieve perfection in The Living Flame of Love:

*“He would rather want all to be perfect, but He finds few vessels that will endure so lofty and sublime a work. Since he tries them in little things and finds them so weak that they immediately flee from work, unwilling to be subject to the least discomfort and mortification, it follows that, not finding them strong and faithful in that little [Mt. 25:21.23], in which He favored them by beginning to hew and polish them, He realizes that they will be much less strong in these greater trials.”*

—Living Flame of Love 2, 27

Let us be encouraged by the committed love of the Father made Flesh for us in Jesus Christ and courageously move forward to become reflections of that Perfect Love of Christ for all. Let us endure the lofty and sublime work by which we are hewn and polished.

Yours in Christ,



Fr. Stephen Sanchez, O.C.D.



*If you enjoyed reading this abbreviated version of Father's article please visit our website: [www.mountcarmelcenter.org](http://www.mountcarmelcenter.org) for the complete text.*



## Provincial Election and Chapter

In May of this year (2014) we, the Discalced Carmelites of the Southern Province will be coming to the end of the current three-year administrative period (triennium). I addressed this cyclical event in our winter newsletter of 2011 in order to address some of the concerns and speculations that were occurring at that time. This cyclical event is part of the life of most religious but especially of those belonging to the Mendicant Orders. The purpose being that no one possesses an 'office' of administration for life. The wisdom of the Spirit in these matters is that the Order is continuously open to the Breath of the Spirit by being open to new perspectives and styles of administration as we have clearly seen in the recent example of our Holy Father Pope Francis I. We have already begun the process of election of our Provincial through a consultative ballot; we will have one more consultative ballot in February then begin the process of casting election ballots.

The Provincial, whether he is a newly elected candidate or a re-elected servant, will then gather around him four other friars to serve as his Council. During the Provincial Chapter (May 25 – June 7) the Provincial with his Council serves as the Personnel Board of the Province and then begins the difficult task of examining the needs of the different areas in which we serve and the friars that can serve in these areas of need.

We all ask of you to pray for us during this time of deliberation and discernment that we may be able to discern God's Will for us and that we be able to serve Him courageously to advance His Kingdom and the cultivation of 'Good Friends of Christ.'

## Unabated Noise to Continue!

### *A South Lecture Hall Follow up*



This past Christmas we sent out an appeal for the renovation of our south lecture hall which has been in need of repair for some time. This is the room we use for all of our conferences. The loud AC units make it difficult to hear the person speaking and the windows, which are over 60 years old, do a poor job of insulating against the noise and temperature outside. Our plan is to put in double pane windows and replace the old AC units with new, more quiet and energy efficient units.

While we are most grateful for those who were able to contribute, the result was far less than our goal. The amount raised from the appeal was \$7,415. The total project will cost \$40,000. The Center is contributing \$20,000– bringing the total to \$27,415 – leaving us short by \$12,585. We realize Christmas is a time with many responsibilities and obligations and there may not have been time for our appeal. Or perhaps our letter was lost in the clutter of Christmas mail. We hope you will consider our need and help as you are able. As always, you are assured of our prayers – and thanks.

#### **I'D LIKE TO HELP THE FRIARS WITH MY DONATION OF:**

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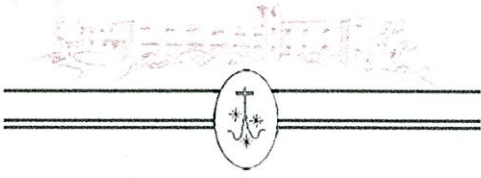
You may also give via credit card on our website:

**[www.mountcarmelcenter.org](http://www.mountcarmelcenter.org)**

There is a "Just Give" button on the homepage that will walk you through the steps.

***God bless you!***

# Mount Carmel Center



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*"Let nothing disturb you ~ Nothing frighten you ~ All things are passing ~ God never changes ~ With patience you attain all things ~ Who possesses God wants nothing ~ God alone suffices."*

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## First Guests Enjoy Renovated Dormitory. More are welcome!



*Left to right:*

Chris Wood, Mary Kay Daniels, and Kathryn Ney, Councilors, Barbara Tinervia, Administrator, Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD, Provincial Delegate, and Dorothy Mansen, President



Recently we hosted our first small group in our renovated small dormitory. The Oklahoma Province OCDS Provincial Council held their annual meeting here in January. Their stay was a great success. We are so thankful to everyone who made this project possible. The completed dorm has 6 furnished rooms with a total of 8 beds plus a seating area, shower and bathroom. This renovation enables us to give each retreatant a quiet space of their own. We are also able to have more than just one private retreat at a time. We are truly blessed to be able to offer this opportunity.