

---

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

# Mount Carmel Center



Spring 2015

---



## Celebrating St. Teresa of Avila: A Gift to the Universal Church



The Order of Discalced Carmelites is celebrating the 500th anniversary (5th Centenary) of the birth of St. Teresa of Jesus (1515-2015).

In order to focus our attention on St. Teresa and come to a deeper understanding of 'who' Teresa of Jesus is, we will be examining four aspects of her life and teaching in our newsletter over the coming year: 1) consecrated religious (nun); 2) reformer; 3) mystic; and 4) Doctor of the Church. Of course these will be in general terms and with broad strokes given the limited space.

### Consecrated Religious

Within the believing community there are different approaches to living out our discipleship in the Lord, different 'ways of life' to which we prayerfully feel that God is calling us. We call this 'way of living' our discipleship our 'vocation' which comes from the

**1515:** Teresa of Jesus (aka Teresa of Avila) was born in Castilian city of Avila, Spain on March 28. She was born Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda y Ahumada to Don Alonso Sánchez de Cepeda and Don Alonso's second wife, Doña Beatriz de Ahumada.

**1536:** She entered the Carmelite Monastery of the Incarnation.

**1562:** Teresa founds the first monastery of the reform, San José de Avila.

**1582:** Teresa dies in October at the age of 67.

**1614:** Beatified by Pope Paul V.

**1622:** Canonized by Pope Gregory XV.

**1970:** Declared first woman Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI.

*continued on page 2*

---



Latin ‘vocate’ – ‘to call.’ All vocations (single life; married life; religious/priesthood) are calls to service of the larger community, the Church, but each in a particular manner. The discernment of serving the larger community through a consecrated life of religious observance is the one that Teresa de Ahumada made in Spain in the 16th century.



My fondness for good books was my salvation. Reading the *Letters of St. Jerome* so encouraged me that I decided to tell my father about my decision to take the habit.

—Life, 3, 7

The consecrated life, deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ the Lord, is a gift of God the Father to his Church through the Holy Spirit. By the profession of the evangelical counsels the characteristic features of Jesus – the chaste, poor and obedient one – are made constantly ‘visible’ in the midst of the world and the eyes of the faithful are directed toward the mystery of the Kingdom of God already at work in history, even as it awaits the full realization in heaven.

—Apostolic Exhortation,  
*Vita Consecrata*, 1

Within an hour, He gave me such joy to be in that state [religious life], that it has never been lacking to this day, and God changed the dryness of my soul into the greatest tenderness...When I remember this, there is nothing that I would not undertake, however difficult...for I discovered that if I was determined to do it...God rewards the soul even in this life.”

—Life, 4, 2

—St. Teresa of Avila



### What is the purpose of religious life?

Religious life is the consecration [consecrate - to set apart for a divine purpose] and gift of one’s ‘self. It is a manner of life that lives the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience – the evangelical counsels that every Christian is called to observe – in a more radical way: to have no personal property or possession so as to imitate the radical poverty of Christ who had ‘nowhere to lay his head’; to sacrifice the life of raising a family and embracing a virginal life in the imitation of the virginal life of Christ so as to better focus on the living and preaching of the gospel; obedience in sacrifice of the ‘selfish-will’ and to imitate the example of Christ who only sought to be obedient to His Father and the Father’s Will.

It is through the gift of self to the community, by being of service to the community that one becomes a gift to the Universal Church, the Universal Community.

There are many ways of living a consecrated life – but Teresa chose to respond in a particular way; the way of a consecrated virgin, living in community and under papal enclosure. The life of a consecrated virgin takes for her example the Blessed Virgin Mary who was consecrated by the Holy Spirit for her role in the plan of salvation for humanity.

The Carmelite nuns live in cloistered (enclosed) monasteries and follow a completely contemplative life. It is a life dedicated to prayer in imitation of Christ who would many times go off in search of solitude to pray. Their continuous life of prayer is a life of intercession for the salvation of the world. The Carmelite nun in particular intercedes for priests who find themselves in need of prayer to be able to preach the Gospel of Jesus amidst the trials and temptations in the world.

Today the Discalced Carmelite nuns, who number close to 12,000, are the largest female cloistered Order in the Church.



Due to the loss of the sacred in the world this type of total commitment to God for others is lacking vocations. As with most religious orders, there are certain communities who must make decisions about their future viability.

What will the Church do without religious vocations?

In this year of celebration of St. Teresa of Jesus, patroness of those in religious orders, please pray fervently for vocations to consecrated life, especially for vocations to the contemplative or the cloistered life.

In Him,

*Fr. Stephen Sanchez, O.C.D.*

Fr. Stephen Sanchez, O.C.D.



For the unabridged article, please visit our website [www.mountcarmelcenter.org](http://www.mountcarmelcenter.org).

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS



In honor of the 500th anniversary of Saint Teresa of Avila's birth, the Discalced Carmelite Seculars of Dallas are offering a showing of the miniseries on her life.

The miniseries, which will be shown at Mount Carmel Center, will be spread out over three consecutive Saturdays.

Part 1 on February 21st | Part 2 on February 28th | Part 3 on March 7th

The program will run from 9:30 am - 12:00pm each Saturday. There will be a coffee break at each presentation and on the final Saturday lunch will be provided. The film is a Spanish production with English subtitles.

Suggested donation for the entire program is \$50.00. Questions or to RSVP: [ocds.dallas@gmail.com](mailto:ocds.dallas@gmail.com)

# Mount Carmel Center



Mount Carmel Center  
4600 West Davis  
Dallas, Texas 75211

Phone: 214-331-6224

Fax: 214-330-0844

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

*"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."*

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAL POSTAGE  
PAID  
DALLAS, TEXAS  
PERMIT NO. 7271

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## RENOVATION INFORMATION

The small apartment building behind the Monastery is currently undergoing some serious renovations to make it usable as a guest house for the friars' families. Over the years, the building has served various purposes. Originally the upstairs apartment housed the Nuns who cooked for the Friars and students when Mount Carmel Center was a minor Seminary back in the 1950's. The downstairs was the garage. In later years the downstairs was converted into a second apartment space.

In the more recent past, our cook and secretary used the two apartments, but that has not been the case for several years now and the building has been in need of major repairs for some time.

Thanks to the generosity of our volunteers and workers, much has been done to improve the building. A new sewer line has been installed and once the project is complete, each apartment will have a new bathroom, kitchen, and flooring. The downstairs has experienced the most dramatic change with the creation of a whole new floor plan!