

found in the three Carmelite masters of spirituality and its significance and relevance to our times. This is brought out especially in the essay by Donald W. Buggert. Margaret Dorgan approaches Carmelite prayer from the aspect of its Christology, Keith J. Egan from the aspect of solitude, Kieran Kavanaugh and Kevin Culligan from the aspect of modern psychology. Vilma Seelaus looks at the transforming power of prayer as found in the three masters of spirituality and Ernest E. Larkin finds strong similarities between the prayer of Carmel in Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Thérèse of Lisieux and age-old yet modern systems of prayer such as Centering Prayer, Christian Meditation and *Lectio Divina*. The whole is completed by a beautiful vignette by John Welch on Thérèse of Lisieux and the imagery of the eternal shore in her works. As Egan again puts it: "The prayer of Carmel is then rooted in Christ, shaped by the holy scriptures and lived within the church and is oriented to a contemplative stance before God, waiting for God to do God's work so that one may be transformed into union with God in love" (p. 12). By the time we read these papers, we acquire a clear image of the identity of Carmelite prayer for the 21st century and realise how relevant it is for all those who today are thirsting for a deeper spirituality and, in particular, for Carmelite spirituality. Throughout the work, the Carmelite mystics in practical ways are made relevant to our times.

Every Carmelite, religious and lay, as well as all who wish to pray more deeply, should read and digest this book. It is an invitation to a present day understanding of the Carmelite classics. It is also an excellent aid to all those involved in formation work, religious and lay, within the Order.

ANTHONY SCERRI, O.CARM.

This is a book of immense value for all in search of a deeper prayer life. A collection of essays by members and associates of the American Carmelite Forum, it distils into twelve chapters the accumulated wisdom and experience of the eight hundred-year-old Carmelite tradition of prayer. Not surprisingly, the three Carmelite doctors of the church – Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Thérèse of Lisieux – adorn the attractive cover. But other Carmelite figures are also accorded their rightful place as the book unfolds, including Edith Stein, Elizabeth of the Trinity, Titus Brandsma, John of St Samson and Lawrence of the Resurrection.

In 'Carmel: A School of Prayer', Keith Egan, professor of theology at Notre Dame University, introduces the main themes of Carmelite prayer and gives a résumé of some Carmelite classics, recounting their perennial value and their openness to reinterpretation with each succeeding age. This chapter serves as a prelude to the book. It is followed by a splendid exposition of 'The Spirituality of the Psalms'; here, the late renowned Carmelite biblical scholar, Roland Murphy, takes us behind the language, symbols and literary forms of these ancient hymns of praise, faces the problems for the modern mind in trying to pray them, and elucidates the many methods of interpreting them.

In his treatment of 'The Solitude of Carmelite Prayer', Keith Egan explains how the quiet needed to pray in the spirit of Carmel can be faithfully lived out in a variety of different ways by nuns, friars and laypeople alike. 'New Wine: Jesus, Carmelite Prayer, and Postmodernity' by Donald Buggert, theology professor at Washington Theological Union, challenges us to revisit Carmel's mystical tradition in dialogue with the whole context of postmodernism. Also to be commended is the treatment by Ernest Larkin, Carmelite author and lecturer, of 'The Carmelite Tradition and Centering Prayer/Christian Meditation': in the light of reservations sometimes expressed about the use of the mantra, this is a well-balanced exposition of the essential value of these 'new' forms of prayer.

Teresa of Avila insisted on the centrality of Christ in prayer, which is highlighted in the article by author and lecturer Margaret Dorgan, 'Jesus Christ in Carmelite Prayer', along with Teresa's reminder that never, at any time, should we withdraw at prayer from the humanity of Christ; this essay concludes by recalling the bridal tradition of Carmel and prepares us for the later chapter, 'Transformation and Divine Union in the Carmelite Tradition', where Carmelite nun Vilma Seelaus considers more fully the loftier regions of Carmelite prayer, namely spiritual betrothal and spiritual marriage.

But the book does not leave us isolated on the heights. In 'Contemplation and the Stream of Consciousness', the difficulty of distractions in prayer is squarely faced by Kieran Kavanaugh, translator of the works of John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila; this is a delicate handling of the problem, drawing on the fruits of recent psychological research. The problem of depression is dealt with in 'The Dark Night and Depression'; the wise and experienced director and counsellor, Kevin Culligan, handles this sensitive topic with great ability. Invaluable is his practical advice for discerning at what point professional help may become necessary.

No book on Carmelite prayer would be complete without special reference to Thérèse of Lisieux and Edith Stein. In 'Thérèse and the Eternal Shore', John Welch, author of *The Carmelite Way*, alerts us to the saint's imagery of the spiritual life as a ship sailing on stormy waters towards an everlasting harbour – in significant contrast to the 'inner journey' in the writings of Teresa and John. Images will, of course, vary from one Carmelite writer to another, but they are all at one in the underlying truth that prayer plunges us into the paschal mystery: a radical dying to selfishness and a joyful rising to a more intense and transforming love.

Edith Stein's contribution to the Carmelite tradition of prayer is outlined in 'Passion in the Carmelite Tradition: Edith Stein'; importantly, the Carmelite Constance FitzGerald credits her with extending the mystical life of Carmel beyond the confines of the cloister into the horrors of Auschwitz, and exhorts us not to minimise the radicality of this saint's challenge in breaking the traditionally perceived boundaries of the Carmelite nun.

Hopefully, this brief summary should whet the appetite for a careful reading of, and prayerful reflection on, the book's many treasures. However,

I could not help regretting the absence of a chapter on Mary as woman of prayer within the Carmelite tradition – a lacuna in what is otherwise a remarkable book.

JAMES MCCAFFREY, O.C.D.

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FELIP RIBOT, *The Ten Books on the Way of Life and Great Deeds of the Carmelites (including The Book of the First Monks)*, edited and translated by Richard Copsey, O.Carm., *Early Carmelite Spirituality* 1. 2005, pp. xx, 187. Edizioni Carmelitane, Via Sforza Pallavicini 10, 00193, Roma, Italia (ISBN 88-7288-076-9).

Felip Ribot's *Ten Books on the Way of Life and Great Deeds of the Carmelites* is a key-text for understanding the development of Carmelite spirituality and identity, though it is not nearly as well known as it deserves because of the lack of a reliable printed edition or anything other than small sections in translation. Paul Chandler's doctoral thesis, which edits Books I-VII, is still unpublished, so one is dependent for a Latin text on manuscripts or the two sixteenth-century editions, both of which are unreliable. A few short passages have been edited by modern scholars. Modern translations have tended to be confined to the first few chapters and are in any case not widely available.

The Ten Books are better known as *The Book (or Institution) of the First Monks*, the title of the first and longest of the texts supposedly edited by Ribot. It is a matter of scholarly debate how many of his early Carmelite documents are genuine, though most accept the text of the Rule given by Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem. The early chapters have long been valued as a spiritual 'classic'. They offer Elijah as a model of the 'prophet-hermit', with a sustained meditation on his life, illustrating both the discipline and the rewards of contemplation. However there is much to be valued also in the historical chapters, even if much of their history is legendary, for they give us an invaluable insight into the mind of the fourteenth-century friar and are not different in kind from other late medieval histories. We need *The Ten Books* also because of their impact on later Carmelites. They had a significant influence on Teresa of Avila, who read it in a Spanish translation, and her reforms may be understood as a response to Ribot's account of the life of the earliest Carmelite hermits.

Father Copsey comments that he has chosen 'English words which give the sense of Ribot's ideas, rather than attempting to slavishly follow his exact choice of Latin terms' (p. xviii), which is surely prudent. Nevertheless it is a very close translation and more often than not follows the basic sentence structure of the Latin. The style is formal, the idiom slightly old fashioned.