

Gal Einai
by Fr. Dominic Borg, OCD

One of the few places where we encounter these two words is Psalm 119.18: "Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law (Torah)".

Dear brothers and sisters in Carmel,

The year 2006 is quickly coming to an end, and a New Year is approaching! But, before we close the door upon the year 2006, there are a few things that we ought to take into consideration. One of them is the expression: Gal Einai. Yes, these two words should perhaps find a permanent place in our hearts, and be found more often on our lips. Taking into consideration the beautiful prayer that these two Hebrew words introduce; the setting that they found in this longest chapter of the Bible, we are struck with awe at this powerful prayer: " Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."

If what has been said is exciting indeed, then what is more exciting is the fact that Psalm 119.18 is the only place in the Old Testament where we find such a petition addressed to the Lord with reference to the petitioner! The other references where we have in the Old Testament an equivalent of this expression, are: 1 Kings 8.29; 2 Chronicles 6.40; 2 Chronicles 7.15; Nehemiah 1.6; and Daniel 9.18. In these five references, the petitioner asks God to open HIS eyes. Please do go and read these five texts, and scrutinize them. However, one cannot bypass the text from Daniel 9.18, a prayer that every Canadian Carmelite ought to utter on behalf of our Country:

"Incline your ear, O my God, and hear. Open your eyes and look at our desolation and the city that bears your name. We do not present our supplication before you on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of your great mercies." (Daniel 9.18)

The three months ahead of us are going to keep us busy; and if we stay awake, as Our Lord told us to do, and we also listen to the admonition of St Paul: "Awake O sleeper", then you can rest assured that we are going to have many opportunities where we can get enriched and be fed spiritually. Ahead of us are the Feasts of St Therese, St Teresa Our Mother, St John of the Cross, Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, Advent, and after all these, Christmas will find us ready to present our "cave" where Jesus wants to be born: Yes Born In Us !

Among the treasures that we find in the Rule of St Benedict, we find these insights: "The monk should keep his tongue from talking; he should preserve silence... he should not be ready and quick to laughter ... for as it written: The wise man becomes known for his few words!" The same message on the importance of silence is found in Our Rule, The Rule of St Albert: "The Apostle would have us keep silence, for in silence he tells us to work" (2 Thessalonians 3.12). As the Prophet also makes known to us: Silence is the way to foster holiness (Isaiah 32.17). Elsewhere he says: Your strength will lie in silence and hope (Isaiah 30.15). In speaking about silence, St Therese, in her Last Conversation, writes: "Take silence for example, what good it does to the soul, what failures in charity it prevents, and so many other troubles of so many kinds".

St Teresa of Jesus, Our Mother, comes to meet us with the advice not to rush in prayer: "You do much more by saying one word of the Our Father from time to time than rushing through it many times." (W.P. Ch 31.11).

As regard words of admonition which St John of the Cross presents in front of us, one cannot, and should not overlook the advice which he gives in the Precautions: "Let, then, the first precaution be that, without the command of obedience, you never take upon yourself any work - apart from the obligations of your state - however good and full of charity it may seem... if you do not observe this precaution in little things as well as big, you will be unable to avoid the devil's deceiving you to a small or great degree, no matter how right you think you are." (The Precautions # 11).

Though the feast of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity comes before that of St. John of the Cross, yet I find it helpful to quote her last. The reason is obvious after we hear her speaking about her Mission in Heaven. Towards the end of her life, Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity called herself quite often by the name that she

desired to be called by in Heaven *Laudem Gloriam*. (praise of glory). In one of her letters she says: "I think that in Heaven my Mission will be to draw souls by helping them to go out of themselves in order to cling to God by a wholly simple and loving movement, and to keep them in this great silence within which it will allow God to communicate Himself to them and to transform them into Himself." It is through and in this GREAT SILENCE that Blessed Elizabeth mentions that "the Word became flesh" and dwelt among us and in us !

Christmas is without doubt the Feast of Joy, Silence, and Adoration. The way Mary said Her Yes in the Silence, the same way in the Silence of the night, the Savior was born! It is no wonder that the word S I L E N T has the same letters of L I S T E N. When we learn how to listen to the Word of God in a silent prayerful way, we too experience the profound JOY which on Christmas we announce to others: Joy to the World!

The last time I was talking to Our Rev Fr Provincial, Fr Victor Mallia, he asked me to communicate to each one of you his Best Wishes and Blessings. We too reciprocate ours, and wish him and all the Members of the Maltese Province, OCD, God's Blessings and God's PEACE which is the Vessel that contains all God's Blessings.

In Retrospect, I stand in awe at the amount of work that has been done with God's grace! Thank God the Second edition of the Formation Manual is in print. The Manual "Our Journey towards the Promises and Beyond" another tool in the hands of those who are responsible for formation and those who are in the process of formation itself, is in the process of being handed on in instalments.

A new format of the Ritual is also being printed, and by the time this issue of Carmel Lights reaches your hands, it will be out. There are quite a group of members all over Canada who are involved in the production of these important and helpful tools for the benefit of all. Starting from the Secretariat, those who are typing and re-typing these whole books and booklets, those who review and correct the drafts and making sure to pick up the misprints or other imperfections, all those OCDS members who are working hard behind the scenes, I sincerely thank all of you, and at the same time congratulate you for your hard work and dedication. Any financial support towards the publication of these books and booklets is greatly appreciated.

May I take this opportunity to welcome all the new members of the OCDS and may all the Carmelite Saints (Feast Day November 14th), continue to guide all of us along the path that leads to PEACE.

The Apostle Paul admonishes us: "Let love be genuine..." (Romans 12.9), and Hans Urs Von Balthasar says: "Nothing is as free as love, apart from love, all so-called freedom is no freedom at all." Yes dear Brothers and sisters in Carmel, LOVE ought to be our Rule; and may we bear in mind the famous saying of Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "He who loves Community, destroys Community; he who loves his brother/sister builds up Community!"

Keeping focused on the Feast of Love, let us make sure that the stars and lights we see on Christmas Day continue to remind us that though the Magi were intellectuals, students of the stars and seekers of truth, it took the learned sages somewhat longer than the unlearned shepherds to find their way to Bethlehem; but ... they got there in the end.

In the name of the Friars, Fr. Provincial, Fr. Henry, Fr. Pius, Fr. Manny, and Fr. Martin, I wish all of you, OCDS members, and our OCD Sisters at Uxbridge, God's Blessings of PEACE:

"May the Lord give strength to his people!
May the Lord bless his people with peace!"
(Psalm 29.11)

Wishing all of you and yours
A Happy Christmas
enriched with the Blessing of Peace!

Fr. Dominic, OCD

Beauty cannot be touched.

It cannot be described or explained.

The more we uncover Beauty, the more it eludes us.

*Beauty is where the world makes a window for the
light of the Infinite to shine in !*