



“The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.”

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

Dear Sisters and Brothers

“Joy”, if you think about it from the perspective of the Gospel, is not simply or only a way of witnessing to Gospel living. It is that but it is much more than that.

“Joy” is a form of ministry. It is a way of evangelizing. Through your “joy” you are proclaiming what you believe in, and doing so in such a way that you offer others the opportunity to participate in your joy.

It is interesting that most Secular members I have spoken to about evangelization feel somewhat uneasy with the idea that their baptism and Secular Carmelite vocation calls them to be evangelists in the world today. Did not the Lord Himself say to the apostles in the scriptures; “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation.” Mk 16.15

Gosh, you may say, how do I do that as a Secular Carmelite? Certainly joy, from a spiritual point of view, is a very concrete way to help the Kingdom of God come about in our world. Each of us can do this by living fully the Teresian vision of our vocation to the Secular Carmelite life with the greatest joy.

If we are excited about our Teresian Carmelite life, our joy can be felt and experienced by others. Is not evangelization the creation of a community of love and joy in this world? We, by living faithfully our lives as Secular Carmelites, proclaim that the Kingdom is here now. We announce this by our very lives of joy and love.

This is evangelization that every one of us can proclaim and participate in every day. If you do this with great courage and faithfulness you’re doing exactly what we are called to do by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. In his Exhortation he says “I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy.”

As we continue our spiritual journey towards the Congress we have a most wonderful witness to the way of joyful evangelization to emulate in our dear Father Dominic, ocd. He proclaims daily that joy is good for the spiritual journey as he endures the suffering of a critical illness with great courage and peace. He witnesses daily that resilience is “joy” in the worst of times.

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