



*“The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.”*

Luke 1.49

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The spiritual journey of 2017 that we are invited to undertake by Pope Francis is to place Mary, our Mother, at the heart of our spiritual path not only this year but for the next three years. The Marian tone of these years clearly calls us to deepen our knowledge, understanding, and above all our relationship with Mary, Mother, Queen and Beauty of Mount Carmel.

For Secular Carmelites this invitation to focus our prayer, study, and contemplation of Mary, calls us forth to a personal and communal sense of incredible joy.

Uncovering the many treasures to be found in the life and witness of Mary through study and prayer is the one of many approaches to Mary that resonates most fully with the Teresian Carmelite charism.

Mary, our Constitutions (v) affirms, is the ideal and inspiration for the Secular Carmelite. “She, Mother and Sister, who goes before us in a pilgrimage of faith and in following the Lord Jesus, keeps us company so that we may imitate her life hidden in Christ and committed to the service of others.”

In faithfully entering the Interior Castle for meditation on a daily basis one soon discovers Mary’s company and the room wherein she dwells. Early on, Mary invites one to this room in the first mansion to join her in pondering in one’s heart every word of the Lord. She begins to teach one to *“Do whatever he tells you”*.

As you continue to explore the seven mansions and their many and varied rooms you discover that Mary is not only present in the first mansion, but this dear Mother of Carmelites has rooms in all the seven mansions. In these rooms she shares with you her strength, courage, and wisdom as you accompany her toward the seventh mansion of unconditional love and union with God.

May this gentle and tender Mother of Carmel walk with each of you throughout this coming year! May you be able to install within the depths your heart, in gratitude for your Carmelite vocation, Mary’s words from the Magnificat! *“The Mighty One has done great things for me, and Holy is his Name.”* (Luke 1.49).

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