



The vocation to the Teresian Carmel is a commitment to “live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ”, “pondering the Lord’s law, day and night and keeping watch in prayer.”
(Constitutions 17)

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

This month of October, **2017**, calls us forth to honour our dear Mother Mary as we continue to celebrate the Centenary of her apparitions at Fatima especially on October 13, the date of her final appearance to the children of Fatima. We dedicate this final edition of the Carmel-Lights for 2017 to Mary, Queen and Beauty of Mount Carmel.

It is Mary who we asked to accompany us as we journey for the next year towards our triennial Congress in October of 2018. It is Mary who will teach us enkindle the fire within our hearts through the study and incorporation of our Carmelite Spirituality into our lives in the world today.

Growth in the Secular Carmelite life is not simply a matter of changing ourselves in some way, but a matter of awareness and depth in our spiritual lives. Outwardly nothing may appear to be different but inwardly we are growing. This is our work as Secular Carmelites “meditating day and night on the law of the Lord”. We ponder His Word and keep watch in prayer as Mary did keeping aglow the fire of love in our hearts.

Mary is teacher and guide in the life of the Secular Carmelite in today’s world. The life of genuine contemplation began at the foot of the cross **in Mary**, when she just stood there and looked on. All she could do was watch and see. She was helpless to ease His suffering. Being helpless but aware of Christ’s suffering in humanity today is demanded of us in our vocation as Secular Carmelites.

The agonies of our time are seen and expressed in the wars, conflicts, and divisions we experience through race, creeds, cultures, beliefs and values. Those seeking our help through our prayers suffer in body, soul, and spirit. Most often we can only be an attentive presence sharing with Mary a sense of helplessness to alleviate the suffering. It is Mary who has taught us that in this total helplessness we feel when we can only watch, sharing the suffering that we see in our hearts and souls, **in ourselves** that we begin to understand true contemplation.

May we journey with Mary this year towards Congress 2018 by deepening our relationship and understanding of Mary’s role in enkindling the fire of love in each of us. It is by standing, watching, and seeing Christ’s suffering in humanity today at the foot of the cross with Mary that we will grow and fulfill our secular Carmelite vocation of prayer and contemplation.

Fraternally,

Gladys McMullin, ocds
President