



“Fire came forth from the Lord’s Presence”

Leviticus 9.24

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

After our experience of a dreary and prolonged winter season, we have now moved into the beginnings of the long anticipated and very much desired summer season. We delightedly anticipate warm weather, light breezes, later sunsets, and above all the many opportunities to interact and communicate with friends, neighbours, family and community more easily than the winter season afforded us.

What a perfect season the Lord has set before us as we continue on our path towards Congress 2018! While all seasons, and all of reality are charged with the glory of God’s Presence, we particularly find the warmth, light and gentleness of summer days an easy path to recollection and interior prayer. It is easy to keep before us the theme of the Congress “Enkindling the Fire Within: Carmelite Spirituality for Today’s World”

Daily meditation in our Interior Castle, and our efforts at attentiveness and interior prayer combined always with God’s grace and love will allow us often to feel the fire that comes forth from the Lord’s Presence deep within the Interior Castle. For is this not our vocation as Secular Carmelites?

This “fire” frequently, if not always, reduces our prayer to silence. Interior prayer without words is silence. However, it is not an empty silence but a very rich silence. It is one that is filled with our God, on “fire” with His Presence.

In the Teresian Carmelite tradition the nature of this prayer is termed by Our Holy Mother St. Teresa, the “prayer of quiet”. Through our own efforts coupled with God’s grace we seek to deepen our awareness of God’s presence in our lives.

This prayer of quiet is not contemplation but on the path to contemplation. In studying the book “The Interior Castle,” we learn that entrance to the 4th mansion where the transition to contemplation begins is not our choice and neither can we demand to enter.

The waiting room outside the 4th mansion is exactly that. We wait as the door only opens from within. Contemplation is a special gift of God given when God chooses and as often as He wills.

St. Teresa, however, teaches us that God is very generous with His gifts, and that there are many souls who enter the 4th mansion. To prepare she encourages us to practice humility, simplicity, and obedience. The prayer of quiet disposes us in faith for this gift of contemplation when and if the Lord wills it for us.

May each of you enjoy the Lord’s presence with ever more awareness and love over the summer months; and know through experience the words of Leviticus 9:24 “Fire came forth from the Lord’s Presence.”

Fraternally,

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