



*“Teach me to do your will for you, O Lord are my God.
Let your good spirit guide me in ways that are level and smooth.”*

Psalm 143

October, 2019

As we prepare the final edition of the Carmel-lights for 2019, our thoughts are automatically drawn to reflection on the life of our Holy Mother St Teresa whose feast we celebrate this month on October 15th.

In the changing world of the 16th Century our Holy Mother St Teresa bore “witness” to God’s everlasting love, His unwavering fidelity to His covenant, and to His presence with His people. Is this not the role of the prophet? Is this not the role of the messenger of God to proclaim His love?

The prophetic tradition of Carmel goes all the way back in the Old Testament to the Prophet Elijah who cries out in witness: *“The Lord God lives in whose presence I stand”*. The Prophet Elijah is known to us by his fiery and fierce love of God. Are these not the same characteristics of our Holy Mother St Teresa that we recognize in her life in the 16th Century. St Teresa was on fire with love. She was known for her passionate love and passionate service to the one she called “Lord”.

Our Holy Mother bore within her other signs of the Old Testament prophets. One sign which can surely be a guide and encouragement to us was her “reluctance”. This reluctance was prominent in the lives of many of the Old Testament prophets. So many prophets demonstrated such a strong reluctance to carry God’s message to the people. Yet, in the end the prophet did fulfill the Will of God.

Although our Holy Mother carried the interior conviction that God wanted the establishment of St Joseph’s, she experienced a reluctance within herself to carry out the reform. She clearly expresses this in her “Life”. Let us listen to her own words.

“So efficacious was the vision, and such was the nature of the words Our Lord spoke to me, that I could not possibly doubt that they came from Him. I suffered most keenly, because I saw in part the great anxieties and troubles that the work would cost me, and I was also very happy in the house I was in then; and though I used to speak of this matter in past times, yet it was not with resolution or with any confidence that the thing could ever be done. I saw that I was now in a great strait; and when I saw that I was now entering on a work of great anxiety, I hesitated; but Our Lord spoke of it so often to me, and set before me so many reasons and motives; - I saw too, that such was His will, so I did not dare to do otherwise than put the whole matter before my confessor.” (Life, chapter 32)

The vocation to prophecy has long been considered a charism of the Discalced Carmelite Order under the aspect of “witness”. Although this is so, how often are we also reluctant witnesses in carrying out a particular service as part of our vocation when we are asked by our superiors or community. We too, tend to beg off, run the other way, or like Elijah lie down under the juniper tree and want to die there. But the Lord is persistent, and like with Elijah sends an angel to wake us and encourage us on our way. We are truly blessed if we recognize this angel, and do not hesitate to do the Will of God in our lives as Christians and Teresian Carmelites.

Fraternally,

Gladys McMullin, ocds
President