

CELTIC CARMELITE WISDOM SPIRITUALITY-PART ONE

The Celtic Carmelites of Christ the Pantocrator Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Mission and Monastic Community are not associated with any other either Celtic, Carmelite, or Celtic Carmelite Order. We are an autonomous, independent community in the Celtic Carmelite Orthodox Old Catholic Wisdom tradition.

The Celtic Carmelite Wisdom way is a journey of the heart, moving ever closer to a deeper relationship with the living God. This involves moving away from all of those things in our lives which interfere with our relationship with God.

Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality is open to anyone who experiences a call from the Holy Spirit to follow this way of life.

Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality is a way of following Jesus and walking the path of the Gospel of Jesus in everyday life.

Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality is characterized by an intense desire for an actual relationship with God, a desire to experience God in each moment of our lives.

Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality is centered on prayer, a loving friendship with God, and contemplation as the free gifts of God.

In essence, Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality is focused on a person's relationship with Jesus.

Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality teaches that authentic prayer and contemplation promote growth in our spiritual journey. They also lead to growth in our response to the Gospel commandment to love God and to love our neighbor.

Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality requires that God be at the center of our heart and life. Once God is at the center of our heart, all of the other areas of our life fall into place. It is like discovering either "the pearl of great price" or "the treasure hidden in a field." (Matthew 13: 44-45).

Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality is essentially about prayer. Prayer is not trying to shape God's will to ours. Actually, prayer is just the opposite. It is surrendering our will to God's will.

CELTIC CARMELITE WISDOM SPIRITUALITY (CONT.)

To be transformed by God is one of the great emphases of Celtic Carmelite prayer. It is responding to the words of St. Paul in Romans 12:2 - “Don’t copy the customs and behaviors of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.” (NLT)

For Celtic Carmelites, the heart is the “inner room,” where Jesus invites His disciples to pray. “But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly. Then your Father, Who knows all secrets, will reward you.” (Matthew 6:6; NLT).

Prayer and transformation require extended periods of time alone with our Heavenly Father, following the pattern which Jesus used during His journey here on earth.

Prayer also requires certain conditions: silence, solitude, and withdrawal into the quietness of the heart.

Before we can share with others any teaching about God or about prayer, we need to experience a prolonged and silent communing with God ourselves, resting in His Love, in the depths of our heart.

To return from times of silence and prayer is to return to the world with a heightened awareness of one’s mission and call, to share with others the fruits of a deep personal encounter with God in prayer.

Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality is all about the fire of the Holy Spirit, Who sets our own spirit on fire.

The prophet Elijah and the Blessed Virgin Mary hold places of significance in Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality.

Elijah holds a very special place for us, as Celtic Carmelites, as “the great contemplative.” He described his own relationship with God as follows: “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, in Whose presence I stand.” (I Kings 17:1; 18:15).

CELTIC CARMELITE WISDOM SPIRITUALITY (CONT.)

On a regular basis, God called Elijah to periods of time alone with Him. From these times alone with God, Elijah would return to “the world” to carry out God’s instructions.

The Blessed Virgin Mary may be called “the Gospel woman of prayer.” Today, Celtic Carmelites see themselves as the brothers and sisters of Mary. This relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary is an invitation open to each person who wants to embrace Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality.

It is very helpful to remember some of the words of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the Holy Gospel of St. Luke, we read these words: “Mary responded, ‘I am the Lord’s servant, and I am willing to accept whatever He wants. May everything you have said come true.’” (Luke 1:38, NLT).

In the Holy Gospel of St. John, we read these words: “But His mother told the servants, ‘Do whatever He tells you.’” (John 2:5, NLT).

These words of Mary speak loudly to any of us who want to follow Jesus.

Anyone who wishes to be on the Christian pilgrimage of life will benefit from doing so with Mary as a friend and companion; with a Bible in his/her hand; and with a heart open to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

To read the Word of God in the spirit of the Celtic Carmelites is to pray over that Word with the heart of Mary. It is to put on the characteristics of Mary’s inner life, knowing that she, more than anyone else, listened to and welcomed the Word of God.

Mary is a living witness to the quiet workings of God’s Grace within her as she responds to the challenge of His Word.

There do not seem to be any barriers when Mary listens to the Word of God. There must be none for us either. We need to be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit, as we read the Word of God.

CELTIC CARMELITE WISDOM SPIRITUALITY (CONT.)

Mary is at ease when the angel tells her not to be afraid. She is aware that she is the object of God's special love. This awareness of God's love for us must also be present for us as we pray.

We must stand before God "just as we are." In the same way, Mary said to the angel, "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord." (Luke 1:38). We too stand, just as we are, before "a God Whose Mercy is from age to age." (Luke 1:50).

Mary comes before God, knowing that "He Who is Almighty has done – and still does – great things for her." We too must start with that same attitude of trust as we base our lives on the Truth of God's Word.

Mary listened to Jesus, and He listened to her. That is what reading the Holy Scriptures in the Spirit of the Celtic Carmelites should mean for all of us – a perfect dialogue of Love, in relationship with Jesus.

Our lives need to be based upon "The Summary of the Law", which is contained in the following two passages.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your heart." (Deuteronomy 6:5).

"I command you to love each other in the same way that I love you." (John 15:12).

These two commands represent the Summary of the Law (according to Jesus) and are the essence of Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality.