

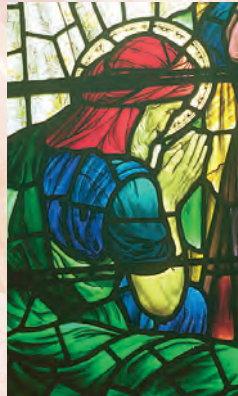
Lay Carmelites

For further information

Lay Carmel

LAY CARMELITES

- Are ordinary people responding to an extraordinary love.
- Seek and serve Jesus Christ in the everyday circumstances of their lives.
- Embrace Mary, Elijah, and the saints of the Carmelite Family as models of holiness.
- Find support and community in an international family.
- Follow an ancient path for today's pilgrim.



PRAYER OF THE CARMELITE FAMILY

Tender-hearted God,
Renew the gift of the Holy Spirit within the Carmelite Family, as we seek to live following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Teach us, like Mary, to contemplate your wisdom. Fill us, like Elijah, with zeal for your glory. Inspire us, like Simon Stock, to ponder your will in times of change. Like Teresa, John, Thérèse and Titus, may we always live in your

presence, and make us prophets of your kingdom.

May our lives of prayer, community and service be a sign to the world that God lives, in whose presence we stand.

This grace we ask in Jesus' name.
Amen.



Carmelites believe that humanity's yearning for meaning in life can only be satisfied by an experience of God.

Come and share that experience with us!

For more information about Carmelite spirituality for lay people, please contact:

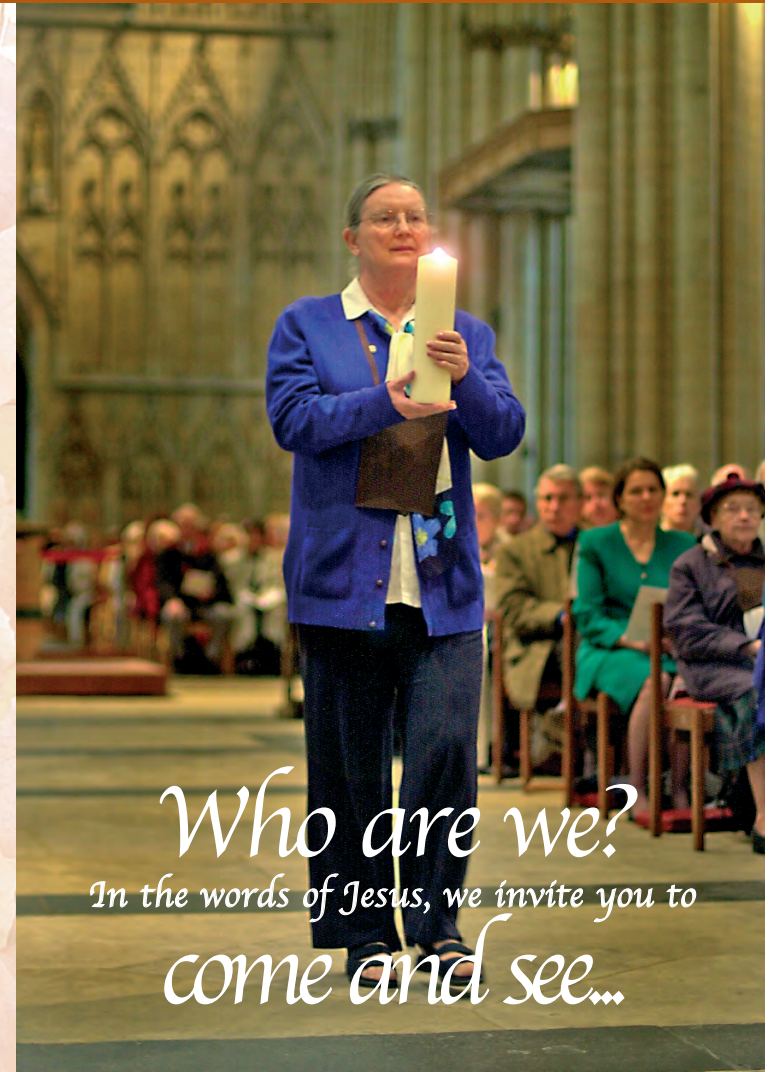
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Information about Carmel and its way of life is also available online at:

www.carmelite.org
www.laycarmel.org
www.carmeliteforum.org
www.cibi.ie

"Carmel... where prayer becomes life and life flourishes in prayer!"

Pope John Paul II



*Who are we?
In the words of Jesus, we invite you to
come and see...*



The British Province of the
Carmelite Third Order (Secular)

What is Carmel?



Carmelite spirituality is one of the ancient traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. The "Carmelite Family" developed from twelfth-century hermits living a contemplative existence on Mount Carmel in Palestine, inspired by the prophet Elijah and the Virgin Mary, and following a Rule given to them by Saint Albert of Jerusalem.

Carmelites follow

Saint Albert's call to live *in allegiance to Jesus Christ* by forming praying communities at the service of all God's people.

Carmelites first settled in Britain in 1242, becoming an international order of friars five years later. Nuns, sisters and lay (unordained) people have always played a major part in the life of 'Carmel'. Since the Middle Ages ordinary women and men have responded to an extraordinary vocation (personal call) from God to live as members of the Carmelite 'Third' or 'Secular' Order. These lay Carmelites are full members of the Carmelite Order, living out their vocation in their homes, parishes, and workplaces.

Becoming a lay Carmelite is possible for any Catholic Christian (including Diocesan clergy) aged over 18, male or female, single or in a committed relationship, who is looking to deepen their baptismal call to follow Jesus Christ and who discerns that the Holy Spirit calls them to Carmel. Non-Catholics are very welcome to attend our community meetings.

Carmelite Spirituality

Lay Carmelites immerse themselves in the living spiritual tradition of the Carmelite Family. Carmel's spirituality is focused entirely on Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Carmelites take inspiration from Elijah the prophet of Mount Carmel, and Mary the mother of Jesus.

Like Mary and Elijah, Carmelites seek to be attentive to the will and to the Word of God, especially in prayerful meditation, in silence, and in reading the Bible. Contemplation (being open to the presence and action of God) is at the heart of the Carmelite calling. By *pondering the law of the Lord day and night* as St. Albert states, Carmelites build up a mature relationship of friendship with God, and are sent out into the world to love their neighbours as themselves. This is done through acts of service and solidarity, particularly through a commitment to justice for the poor, peace in the world, and upholding the integrity of creation.

Over centuries of development and reform, Carmelites have trod a sure path for today's pilgrim, seeking meaning in life in good times and in bad. Carmel has produced some of the greatest Christian saints, poets, mystics, and philosophers, such as Teresa of Jesus (of Avila), John of the Cross, and Thérèse of Lisieux (all three of them 'Doctors of the Church'). In the twentieth century, the Carmelite Family bore witness to the Christian Gospel in the martyrdoms of Titus Brandsma, Edith Stein, and Isidore Bakanja.



Carmelite Third Order in Britain

Carmel's heritage and spirituality inspire thousands of people in Britain today, and around the world. In both the Carmelite Order and its sister Order of Discalced Carmelites, men and women of all ages and backgrounds dedicate themselves to living in allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Some members of the Carmelite Family live out this commitment as 'religious' brothers or sisters, but most Carmelites in Britain follow the *Rule of Saint Albert* as lay people. Increasingly members of the Carmelite Family in Britain are sharing the responsibilities of collaborative ministry in the Church, and evangelisation in the world.

The Third Order of Carmelites (T.O.C.) is the largest association within Lay Carmel in England, Scotland, and Wales, with over a thousand members. These Carmelites come together in various communities or chapters across the 'Province' of Britain. At their meetings (normally held monthly), Carmelites share:

- Prayer (Divine Office and *Lectio Divina* Bible meditation)
- A programme of formation in the Carmelite tradition
- Social time and mutual support in a community
- Encounters with other members of the Carmelite Family
- Invitations to be of service to the local church and society

Communities maintain contact with those who cannot attend meetings (due to distance or ill-health). A programme of national events, retreats, pilgrimages, workshops and study-days is also offered to members and enquirers.

Other groups exist within Lay Carmel for specific vocations, such as The Leaven Secular Institute and the Donum Dei Missionary Workers (for single women).