

Saint Mary of Mount Carmel and the interior life

The Marian Liturgy of Carmel

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How is Mary venerated and celebrated within Carmel? We wish to offer the liturgical testimony of an ancient family that throughout its history has constantly rethought its spiritual relationship with the Mother of Jesus. It has also done so recently on the occasion of the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council. Hence, we can see the spiritual spirit with which it remembers Mary within the Mystery of Christ. She who means everything within this Order ("Carmel is all of Mary") continues to inspire the journey of those who call themselves her Brothers. May these pages serve to demonstrate such a unique way of venerating Mary within the Church.

Although there is no explicit Marian reference in the text of the Carmelite Rule, we know that the simple gesture of dedicating the first chapel, located in the middle of the cells, to Our Lady, was decisive in marking the Marian character of the Order from its very origins. It was a fact of life, not a rule or legal determination, that naturally gave rise to the Marian devotion of this family. The patronage of the first house on Mount Carmel, next to Elijah's spring, would soon extend to the whole Order, when the first group grew and moved from Palestine to other parts of the East and Europe. These were mutual, reciprocal relationships, in which the continuous protection and favour of the Lady of the place towards the Brothers immediately translated into a service of worship that expressed their dedication, devotion and gratitude, in a word, a liturgical service as the fullest expression of Marian consecration. In these few lines, we have sought to describe the most original elements of Carmelite Marian devotion, which form the basis of its Marian liturgy, inseparable from those early days on Mount Carmel for that group of Latin crusaders who became hermits of the place in the early decades of the 13th century.¹

The current Marian liturgy of Carmel, traditional and new at the same time, has incorporated other values that have been added over time and has been greatly enriched by the latest reform initiative following the Second Vatican Council. It is this liturgy that we wish to analyse here, offering some criteria for interpretation, mainly in relation to the annual event on 16 July, the most important Marian solemnity in the Carmelite calendar².

¹ On Marian devotion in Carmel, see L. SAGGI, *Santa María del Monte Carmelo*, in Various Authors, *Santos del Carmelo*, Madrid, EDE, 1982, pp. 153–189; ILDEFONSO DE LA INMACULADA, *La Virgen de la Contemplación*, Madrid, EDE, 1973 (Logos 15); E. LLAMAS, *La Virgen María en la vida y misión del Carmelo Reformado*, in VV.AA., *María en los Institutos Religiosos* (Madrid 1988) pp.65-87; AA.VV., *María icona delta tenerezza del Padre. Marian Spirituality in the Experience of Carmel* (Palermo 1992) 266 p.; NILO GEAGEA, *Mary, Mother and Queen of Carmel. Devotion to the Virgin in Carmel during the first three centuries of its history* (Burgos 1989).

² Cf. M. DIEGO SÁNCHEZ, *Las fuentes del "Proprium Missarum" OCD*, in *Monte Carmelo* 85 (1977) 209-228; ID., *Hacia una liturgia carmelitana. Theological content of the new "Proprium Missarum" OCD*, in

1. RHYTHMS OF THE MARIAN LITURGY OF CARMEL

To place it in its proper context and within the scope of the Order's most important Marian solemnity, it should not be understood and explained solely in terms of its annual frequency (16 July), in isolation, but within a much broader framework, the liturgical year that we celebrate together with the whole Church. This is a methodological clue that should be taken into account. For Carmelites, 16 July is the central feast of their own liturgical calendar, the "culmination" of their liturgical service and Marian consecration, just as Easter is for our Christian life.

In fact, to the Marian rhythm of the Church (Advent, Christmas, Marian feasts and solemnities), as Carmelites, we add our specific Marian liturgy, which has the following frequency:

- daily, with the "daily memorial" of the Virgin in the Eucharistic Prayer³, and the Marian antiphon after Compline.
- weekly, on the Saturday consecrated to her, spent in her praise, which is concentrated in the Eucharist and Liturgy of Saint Mary on Saturday (when possible)⁴, in more discreet forms when the liturgy does not allow it, and with the solemn singing of the *Salve Regina*, a liturgical act in which, as "brothers," we invoke her from our belonging to her family.
- Annual, since, of the two Marian rhythms mentioned above, the annual solemnity is the culmination, the most significant remembrance that brings us together in thanksgiving and recognition of the Patroness of the Order. This date of 16 July is, therefore, the synthesis of our liturgy, the goal of our Carmelite journey, with Her and together with Her⁵.

2. THE WORD CELEBRATED AND MEDITATED DAY AND NIGHT

Another preliminary methodological detail that should not be forgotten is that this Marian liturgy is not qualified or determined by elements such as hymns, antiphons,

Ephemerides Carmeliticæ 29 (1978) 394-434; ID., *The biblical lectionary of the "Proprium Missarum" OCD*, in *Teresianum* 37 (1986) 441-460; J. CASTELLANO CERVERA, *The Impact of the Marian Doctrine of the Second Vatican Council on the Teresian Carmelite Family*, in *Marianum* 45 (1983) 479-504.

³ Paul VI speaks of it in the encyclical "Marialis Cultus" no. 10: This daily remembrance, because of its place at the centre of the Holy Sacrifice, must be considered a particularly expressive form of the worship that the Church renders to the "Blessed of the Most High".

⁴ Paul VI, in *Marialis Cultus*, no. 9, speaks of it as an ancient and discreet memory, which the flexibility of the current Calendar and the multiplicity of the forms of the Missal make extraordinarily easy and varied.

⁵ 5 That the solemnity of 16 July has this character of being the goal and culmination of the entire Carmelite liturgy, as Easter is for the Christian liturgical year, as evidenced by the detail of the Marian memorial provided for in the Order's Proper for 23 July (St Mary, Mother of Divine Grace), in the form of an 'octave', thus highlighting its centrality and prolonging its remembrance for eight days afterwards, even giving a certain Marian character to the whole month of July.

eucology, prayers, etc., but by the Word of God that is proclaimed, especially by that Gospel reading that conditions the choice and interpretation of the rest of the elements that converge in the celebration. What we are saying here applies both to the Eucharist and to the Liturgy of the Hours for that day, since the latter is practically linked to the former thanks to the antiphons of the Benedictus and the Magnificat.

We believe that there are two Gospel texts that can serve as a catalyst and basis for interpretation for this entire Marian liturgy:

- John 19:25-27, read at the Eucharist of the day, in whose liturgical-Carmelite updating these possible criteria must be taken into account, in addition to those commonly raised by this Gospel passage within any ecclesial celebration:

- a) The Hour of the Cross, as the supreme hour of the Son and the Mother;
- b) Mary's motherhood over Jesus' brothers ("behold your Mother" - "he took her into his home") as the foundation of any other relationship with her; therefore, also that of the Order;
- c) Mary's Motherhood over the brothers of the Order;
- d) Calvary, the mountain of God's presence, of the revelation of his glory, the place of the sacrifice of the Son raised above the world, and the place of the Mother's surrender to her brothers ("behold your son");
- e) "next to the Cross of Jesus" was his Mother.

In this way, such a brief and oft-repeated Gospel, the most traditional and closely linked to this liturgy since it was granted to the Teresian Reform in ancient times⁶, becomes the foundation of Mary's motherhood and patronage over the Carmelites, which has its root and *raison d'être* in the will of Christ; it takes root at the very moment when she is constituted the spiritual Mother of all men and is a development or deepening of that Mystery; it does not depend on other subsequent circumstances in the life of the Order, which at most make this fact of faith explicit and concrete.

But in addition, this Johannine text (implicitly) already evokes in our minds the symbol of the Mount, the key to this Marian title and the motif that will be played out again and again in this liturgy. It provides the necessary biblical, salvific and Christological basis.

- Luke 1:39-56, read as the Gospel of the Vigil Office in the Liturgy of the Hours. This text has now been included for the first time and offers notable advantages in unifying the entire ecclesial prayer of the day from an eminently contemplative

⁶ 6 The historian Jerónimo de San José OCD makes a curious connection between the coat of arms of the Teresian Carmelites and this Gospel: The Reform knew these ends of Heaven, and conforming to them, and embracing this banner as its own trophy, it has placed it on the coat of arms, planted on the summit of Carmel, which is represented on the coat of arms itself. So that the point, which between the two stars, leaving another below in the middle, rose thinning out and remained unfinished, now serving as a pole for the arms of the Cross, ends in it with particular grace, adding mystery and beauty to the ancient coat of arms of Carmel. It also seems that our Holy Mother the Church heeded this divine providence, designating our Reform for the greatest solemnity of the Order, which is that of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, celebrated on 16 July, the Gospel *Stabat autem iuxta Crucem Iesu Mater eius*, which is the Gospel of the Cross, of Jesus and Mary, who are the crown and undertaking of the Reform, as before it this feast had another Gospel without mention of the Cross: published in *Historia del venerable padre Fr. Juan de la Cruz ...* (Madrid 1641) pp.122-123.

perspective. It is the spiritual sensibility of Carmel that reads this Gospel passage with both ancient and new dimensions:

a) Mary went to the "mountain," as if it were the emblematic itinerary of her earthly existence, until she climbed Mount Calvary to offer her Son and receive his last salvific will;

b) she is the Mother of the Kyrios, of the Lord, as Elizabeth recognizes (Lk 1:43), who walks in the midst of Israel, carrying the presence of God's glory in her womb; it is therefore the journey of the ark of the covenant until it is installed in Jerusalem;

c) here and elsewhere in Luke's Gospel we are assured that Mary is a woman of prayer, filled with the Holy Spirit, who needs to express herself in her condition as daughter of God;

d) The Magnificat is Mary's inspired and public prayer, entirely composed of praise and thanksgiving, the Eucharistic Prayer of her life, as a text that captures the fundamental sentiments of an existence dedicated to God;

e) Mary's prayer (Magnificat) is also, with good reason, the prayer of her children and brothers and sisters in the Carmelite family, who draw inspiration from it for their relationship with God;

f) in this Marian prayer we are taught to recognise the primacy of God's gift in us ("The Mighty One has done great things for me") and divine fidelity to his plans of salvation ("as he promised our fathers").

The prayer of Mary, Mother and Sister, thus becomes the spiritual path of Carmel, a theme that will be taken up abundantly in other parts of today's liturgy, but always seen from here, that is, from the very prayerful experience of the Virgin⁷.

With these two Gospel texts, central to today's Marian celebration, the rest of the elements used do nothing more than explain, complete, extend, comment on, and pray what is already contained in them. Without a doubt, they are the focal point of this liturgy and, therefore, the best starting point for interpreting the whole of what has been prepared for this occasion. Therefore, keep in mind this methodological principle, which can help to outline a more organic and unified vision of this entire celebration, which at first glance appears scattered and heterogeneous due to its desire to reflect so many aspects of Carmelite spirituality.

On the other hand, a fundamental liturgical law is confirmed: the Word is the vehicle, the sign of our praise. God speaks to us, and we respond to him with his own Word, the only one worthy of him. This law is also respected in the composition of ecclesial liturgical texts, which echo the proclaimed Word. Hence, the verbal element takes on a special connotation here: the Word of God, the word of the Church and the Word of Carmel come together and merge to form a single Word, a prayer

inspired by the same divine voice and the human voice of centuries of Carmelite prayer tradition. Divine, human and mystical language thus intersect. This explains the variety, quality and literary inspiration of the elements that form part of this Marian liturgy we are analyzing.

⁷ Cf. J. CASTELLANO, *Il Magnificat nell' esperienza spirituale del Carmelo*, in *Mater Ecclesiae*. Rome 13 (1977) 110-119.

3. MOUNT CARMEL: MYSTICAL-LITURGICAL SYMBOL

From the biblical tradition (Sinai - Horeb - Carmel - Zion - Tabor), from the Patristic tradition, from the spiritual tradition itself ("Ascent of Mount Carmel"), the liturgy takes advantage of the most original Marian title (Saint Mary of Mount Carmel) to place it, also from a spiritual perspective, within the celebration itself. Mount Carmel, a fertile mountain linked to the presence of Elijah, would signify all of the following:

- Place of God's presence and glory,
- place of prayer and encounter with God face to face,
- The summit of a spiritual ascent or climb,
- Christ, the summit and goal of spiritual life,
- place of our union with God,
- place of Mary's presence, accompanying her children.

All these levels and possible biblical variants, with clear symbolic meaning, intersect and intertwine in this Marian liturgy. Our sensitivity must know how to take advantage of them and put them together in a coherent interpretation that is not counterproductive. Listing the elements that use the symbol of the mountain, we find the following result:

- Psalms Office readings (23, 45, 86) and respective antiphons.
- OT canticles of the Vigil (Is 2 + 61 + 62).
- Gradual Psalms 2 Vespers (121, 126).
- OT reading at the Eucharist and Office readings (1 Kings 18): Elijah on Mount Carmel.

This is not an arbitrary selection; a careful rereading of the biblical pages has been carried out from the Carmelite tradition itself, thus making this characteristic and, at the same time, interpretative aspect of the Marian title much more present in the liturgy.

In reality, all these elements are brought together in the new collection for the day, where the symbolic use of the mountain is even more explicit, and we could even say that its main meaning is resolved when we ask: 'that we may reach the summit of the mountain of perfection, which is Christ'⁸. The Mountain is Christ, insofar as he is the fullness of divine revelation, of divine presence, glory and power. In a word, the symbol is concentrated and explained at the same time in one person, Jesus, who not only resolves what the symbol implies, but even surpasses it, making clear its incompleteness, because He is the summit, the vein of the mountain and, at the same time, the path and the way that leads to that mountain. In this way, the Marian title is included within the mystical doctrine of Carmel itself, and thus Mary is the most complete and perfect realization of this spiritual message.

⁸ The classic text focuses more on the Marian title of the Order. This witty aside comes from the collection of the ancient feast of Saint Catherine, the philosopher, now disappeared from the Roman calendar and missal, which drew on the tradition that her body had been carried by angels to Mount Sinai. Cf. M. DIEGO SÁNCHEZ, *Hacia una liturgia carmelitana, a.c.*, pp. 423-425.

We can consider these references to Mount Carmel and the symbolic use of it as one of the best achievements of the Order's new liturgy, never used in this way until now.

4. THE WAY OF BEAUTY

This is one of the traditional forms used by the Liturgy, which has now been recovered abundantly to address God (as a sign of his creative passage), but it is also used to speak of Mary, the "full of grace", in the Liturgy⁹. A liturgical book where this form is very present is the "Collection of Marian Masses" published on the occasion of the Marian Holy Year of 1987.

It must be said that this Marian liturgy was already present ("she has the beauty of Lebanon, the beauty of Carmel and Sharon") in the biblical tradition of Carmel, due to its greenery and fertility.

In the case at hand, this beauty resides in the virtues of the Virgin Mary, which are her gala dress and her triumphal costume (short reading from Lauds)¹⁰. But it must be recognized that this presentation, from the perspective of the Old Testament, was already clear in the Order's ancient Marian liturgy.

More specifically, the three antiphons of Lauds (some taken from and others inspired by the New Testament) pursue the same purpose. Mary's virginity is the ultimate demonstration of such beauty¹¹, but also the greeting of the angel Gabriel ("Full of Grace") and of Elizabeth ("Blessed are you among women") are the most complete expression and the clearest reason for Mary's beauty¹², that is, because of her connection to Jesus, her Son, through motherhood and virginity.

While the Church and the Order are no strangers to such aesthetic pursuits, there is a proposal for further involvement in another antiphon and in that response from the responsorial psalm, which in turn comes from an antiphon for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception: "Take us with you, Immaculate Virgin; we will run after the scent of your perfumes" (Ant. 3). The source of inspiration in the Song of Songs (1:3), as well as the possible extension of the reference to the Pauline "the fragrance of Christ" (2 Cor 2:15), further complete the panorama of the believer's sensory perception. The antiphon of the Magnificat of 1 Vespers follows this same line when it asks: "Clothe the family you have chosen with your virtues."

5. MARY, WOMAN OF PRAYER

⁹ MURILLO, El camino de la belleza en Mariología (The Path of Beauty in Mariology), in *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 45 (1995) 193-205.

¹⁰ It has the glory of Lebanon, the beauty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the beauty of our God: Is 35:1-2.

¹¹ Blessed are you, Virgin Mary; you gave birth to the one who created you, and you will remain a virgin forever (Ant. 3).

¹² Rejoice, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women (Ant. 2).

This is a motif that arises from the Carmelite ideal, since in this liturgy the Order seems to be re-reading and interpreting the life and figure of Mary from its own charism and spirituality. In other words, it projects itself onto the Mystery of Mary.

In addition to the Gospel of the Vigil Office (Lk 1:39-56) analyzed above, this idea is very evident in the three antiphons of the Second Vespers: Mary's prayer ("Behold the handmaid of the Lord"), her attitude as a woman of prayer in Nazareth (Mary listened to the Word of God and kept it, meditating on it in her heart) and the life of prayer with the first community of the Risen One awaiting the Holy Spirit (the apostles persevered in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus).

We can say that for the Order she thus lives, penetrates and deepens the Mystery of the Son through prayer. Through prayer she understood the Father's will for her Son and for her maternal mission¹³.

We believe that the previous Carmelite liturgy did not emphasize this particular dimension at all, even though it was so traditional to its spirituality. Finally, thanks to the liturgical renewal of Vatican II, it has filtered into the celebration itself, since it is an evangelical aspect that the Order has always highlighted in a special way.

6. MARY, MODEL OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

Not only as a praying Virgin, the liturgy of this day wants to recall another aspect, that of the believer who faithfully fulfils the Gospel of her Son, Jesus Christ, in whom she also believes and hopes as her only Saviour.

Thus, the Intercessory Prayers at 2 Vespers, a unified piece of ecclesial composition that is entirely new, bases its petitions on the Beatitudes and other words of Christ that his Mother fulfilled in an exact and punctual manner:

- You who proclaimed: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven',
- You, who assured us: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God',
- You, who said: "Blessed are those who believe without having seen,"
- You, who exhorted: "It is necessary to pray without losing heart,"
- You, who said: "I want those you have entrusted to me to be with me where I am" ...

This is a highly original idea, which is also truly innovative and can be considered the most original contribution of our time. It greatly enriches Carmel's liturgical Marian heritage.

And from here, from this execution or fulfilment of her Son's Gospel, she can speak to us with the spiritual authority of the 'Mother', as seems to be indicated by the selection of wisdom texts (biblical books that have always been used in the Marian

¹³ The presence of two other biblical texts on this day, 1 Kings 18 (Elijah praying on Mount Carmel) and Galatians 4:4-7 (born of a woman to give us adoption and to pray as children), can also be seen as a ratification of this dimension of prayer applied to the Virgin. The text from 1 Kings was very traditional in this Carmelite liturgy.

liturgy of the Church) that are reserved for the short readings (Prov 8 + Sir 24) and in which the Wisdom of God, personified in Mary, speaks to us as to children.

- "My children, listen to me: Blessed are those who follow my ways; listen to instruction, do not reject wisdom. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts" (Prov 8:32-34: Terce).

- "I have settled in Zion; in the chosen city I have made my rest; in Jerusalem my power resides. I have taken root in a glorious people, in the portion of the Lord, in his inheritance, and I dwell in the full congregation of the saints" (Cf. Si 24:15-16: Sixth).

- "Like a beautiful vine, I have sprouted; my flowers and fruits are beautiful and abundant. I am the mother of pure love, of fear, of knowledge and of holy hope. In me is all grace of the way and of truth, in me all hope of life and virtue" (Si 24:23-25: Nona).

This would also be an affirmation of a certain Marian spiritual "magisterium" among the members of the Order, who contemplate her as a caring mother who teaches her children to walk in the ways of the spirit, mother and teacher of spiritual life¹⁴.

But the Carmelite-liturgical vision of Mary does not end here.

7. MARY, MODEL OF CARMELITE LIFE

The Virgin Mary is also considered in Carmel as the best model or type of Carmelite life. This was a constant reference in our mystical tradition, but never before has it been filtered through the liturgy or reflected in it as it is now. The three forms of Prayers for the Divine Office of the day take this modality very much into account, especially those of 1 Vespers and Lauds. Best of all, it is proposed in the language of Teresa and John of the Cross:

- The single word of the Father, spoken in eternal silence (Lauds).
- Christ, Spouse of the Church (Lauds).
- Pilgrims in the dark night of faith, let us walk hand in hand with Mary (II Vespers).

These prayers also allude to fundamental elements of our life, such as those from the Carmelite Rule:

- To serve the Virgin and live with her in devotion to Jesus Christ (First Vespers).
- Grant our deceased who served Christ and Mary faithfully (1 Vespers).

In this way, the Rule's service-consecration to Christ (living in devotion to Jesus Christ) is divided into service to Christ and Mary. They also refer to basic aspects of Carmelite life:

- To burn with zeal for the salvation of souls (Elijah) (1 Vespers).
- Living with Mary united in prayer, being one in heart and soul (1 Vespers).
- Listening to and proclaiming the Word (Lauds).
- Life of intimacy with Mary, to reach, with her help, the ineffable experience of Christ's love (Lauds).

¹⁴ This Carmelite thesis seems to have been confirmed in the new liturgical book that emerged as a result of the Marian Holy Year, the new "Collection of Marian Masses", where there is a form under the title "Our Lady of the Interior Life", but which in reality is nothing more than a reworking of the same Carmelite liturgy, with the appropriate adaptations for the whole Church.

- Remain united in prayer (Lauds).
- Teach us to pray with Mary and meditate, like her, on your Word in order to proclaim it to our brothers and sisters (II Vespers).
- Love purity of heart in order to attain divine contemplation (2nd Vespers).

In the context of Carmelite life, well defined in the Rule, she is the perfect model of our consecration to Jesus in Carmel; but her life is also a school and guide that necessarily leads us, the members of the Order, to union with God. It also means that our consecration to Jesus passes through Mary; with her we enter and participate in the Mystery of God.

8. AN IMPORTANT NEW DEVELOPMENT

The antiphon of the Gospel canticle Magnificat at Second Vespers, in its two variants, presents a happy occurrence. It is based on the same antiphons of the great solemnities (Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost) that begin with 'Hodie' and constitute the best commentary on the entire liturgy of the day: Today this saving mystery is actualized. Today, salvation in action provided by the liturgy, is highlighted in this theological-liturgical construction of the text (usually in Second Vespers), when the community has already experienced the liturgical mystery of the feast, the very Today of Jesus Christ: 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing' (Lk 4:21); the "I must stay at your house today" of Zacchaeus (Lk 19:5).

In the case of our principal Marian solemnity, the antiphon in question echoes and actualizes the Today of Christ's testament on the Cross: "Behold your Son"; "Behold your Mother". In other words, the salvific content that the liturgy of the day actualizes for the Order is Marian motherhood over all the brothers of Jesus:

"Today the Virgin Mary was given to us as Mother: Today she gave us proof of her tender compassion. Today Carmel, illuminated by the splendid feast of the sovereign Virgin, overflows with joy" (Antiphon Magnificat 1).

While antiphon 2, while still insisting on Today, is not so much inspired by the readings of the day; it is more familiar in tone in the titles it applies to the Virgin and the Order; it only seems to draw on the traditional detail of the invocation "Star of the Sea" (so dear to St. Bernard) and, as a result, inspired by a text from Vatican II (LG 68), sees her as that sure sign of hope for the People of God and the Carmelite family:

"Today we celebrate the feast of Mary, beautiful Mother of Carmel. Today, the children of her love sing of her mercies. Today, the Star of the Sea shines before her people as a sign of sure hope and consolation" (Antiphon 2 Magnificat).

I consider it a wise decision and a notable enrichment of the Order's eucological heritage to have included these two texts, which are inspired by the most important and best-constructed ecclesial antiphons of the great solemnities of the Lord that mark the liturgical year, thus giving a very specific and concrete salvific content to the most important Marian solemnity in the Carmelite calendar. Thus, this day is not only a thanksgiving for Marian protection over the Order; it is above all a renewal, a remembrance, a memory, an actualization of her motherhood over the brothers of Jesus

and, therefore, also over the brothers of the Order. Because she is the Mother of God, the Mother of all men, she is also the Mother of all members of the Carmelite family.

CONCLUSION

We have sought to bring together the modalities of Carmelite liturgical piety, in which so many elements converge, to the point that this liturgical sphere has become a 'theological place' in which fundamental dimensions of our faith are cultivated. But it does so by re-reading its own tradition and charism in tune with the times of the Church, drawing on both the new and the old from the leafy tree of Carmel.

Although very briefly, we have been able to see that this has been a good application of the liturgical reform of Vatican II, enhancing the traditional, incorporating valid contemporary elements, and opening the field to liturgical creativity.

Spirit, poetry, life, work, apostolate, everything comes together in this liturgical vision of the Virgin Mary by her Order, which feels reflected here in its being and acting. In a word, it is the charism itself made prayer. Therefore, from that request in the collection ("that we may reach the summit of the mountain of perfection that Christ is"), the Virgin Mary assumes and summarizes, fully representing the components and best elements of Carmelite spirituality. Saint Mary of Mount Carmel is a title that for us breaks down into other similar ones, which signify the high points of the mystical tradition itself: from the work of John of the Cross, we can also invoke her as Saint Mary of the Ascent of Mount Carmel, of the Dark Night, of the Spiritual Canticle, of the Pool of Living Love; from Teresa of Jesus, nothing prevents us from also invoking her as Saint Mary of the Way of Perfection, of the Mansions, of the Foundations; and we could even pray to her as Saint Mary of the Story of a Soul (Teresa of Lisieux); Saint Mary of Vedrá or of My Relations with the Church (Francisco Palau); Saint Mary of the Science of the Cross (Edith Stein), and so on... They are like different waters, but they all spring from the same source. From there they arose and there they return as to their natural place.

The Prayer of a Soul in Love by John of the Cross also seems to reflect this connivance between Mary and the Order, for it makes him exclaim: "Mine are the heavens and mine is the earth... and the Mother of God and all things are mine..." Thus, with such freedom and familiarity, Mary is celebrated and prayed to in the Carmelite Order.