

**Ave Crux, Spes Unica (Hail Cross, Our only Hope!)**  
**by Fr. Dominic Borg, OCD**

In the hymn that Venantius Fortunatus (A. D. 530-609) wrote in honour of the Holy Cross "Vexilla regis prodeunt", we read in verse six: "O Crux ave, spes unica.". We find these exact words, with no less power and zeal, in the heart and on the lips of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein.) In the writings of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross we encounter the words: "One thing I should tell you: when I entered (Carmel), I had already chosen the religious name I wanted, and received it exactly as I had asked for it. "Of the Cross" ... I know a little more now than I did then what it means to be betrothed to the Lord in the sign of the Cross. But, it's not something that can ever be understood. It is a mystery."

Pope Benedict XVI, in his Encyclical letter: "Deus Caritas Est" (God is Love) tells us: "St. John also offers a kind of summary of the christian life; "We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us" (#1).

Our Carmelite Saints, two of which are skillfully presented to us in this issue of Carmel Lights: Edith Stein and St. Theresa of the Andes, teach us how to embrace the Cross and manifest our love to our neighbour through it. Both Fr. Pius and MaryLou Paculaba have brought out clearly in their talks what our Pope has told us: "the summary of the christian life is to know and believe in the love God has for us." (Deus Caritas Est #1)

Dear OCDS members,

many of you recall the words of our Fr. Provincial, Fr. Vicor Mallia, who in the last Congress reminded us about the centenary of the death of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity. Our next issue of Carmel Lights will be dedicated to her and we intend to produce a special issue. There is a mine of literature on her on the internet. You are encouraged to read her life, works and extensive literature about her. Her love for the Word of God is very obvious, especially for St. Paul's Letters. The influence of the words of St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, which are nicely projected on the cover of this issue, have left on Elizabeth Catez (Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity) such an impact of how she used the expression "Laudem Gloriam" as her new name. Her new name appears in thirteen (13) of her letters and she even dared to use it as a "signature" in seven letters and five poems: (Letters: 260, 298, 306, 310, 332, 335 - Poems: 99, 105, 106, 108, 118)

This issue is the last one before Lent: a time of prayer, penance, repentance and preparation for the great feast of Easter. One way that we can prepare ourselves during this "high season" is to meditate on the powerful message of our Pope for the Season of Lent. The first biblical quote in His message states: "Jesus, at the sight of the crowds, was moved with pity" (Mt 9.36). Jesus is still teaching us and guiding us with His words! The Pope, quoting Dante Alighieri, entrusted our journey of Lent to "Mary, the living fount of hope". Such an expression is very close to the heart of every Carmelite.

I cannot conclude this short message without congratulating Sr. Teresa Magdalene, OCD on her Solemn Profession. In the name of the OCDS we all wish her the grace of perseverance!

May this Lenten journey, under the protection of Mary our Mother, prepare us to enter into the Victorious and Joyful Feast of the Paschal Mystery!

Happy Easter to all of you, and your families!

"They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem and Jesus was walking ahead of them: they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again." (Mark 10.32-34)

Yours In Carmel,

Fr. Dominic Borg, OCD