

"The Church is born and lives by the Word of God" (par.17 of The Lineamenta, XII General Assembly)

by Fr. Dominic Borg, O.C.D.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel,

Pope Benedict XVI has declared June 2008 - June 2009 the year of St Paul in celebration of the 2,000th anniversary of the saint's birth. It only takes a few minutes in reading the Letters of Paul to discover how much in love he was with Holy Scripture. One can quote one reference after another unendingly to manifest the truthfulness of this reality.

Indeed, St Paul would have liked to see in his time the fulfillment of the prophesy of the Prophet Amos: "The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will send a hunger into the country, not hunger for bread nor thirst for water, but of hearing the Word of God." (Amos 8.10)

Though we can rightly say that every age, and every generation has experienced to some extent this famine for the Word of God, it is a fact that the hunger is being felt in our time in a special way. We are being directed to draw our attention to this fact, even by the Pope himself. That is why it is not a surprise that this coming October in Rome the Synod of the Bishops is going to meet to study and discuss together the Topic: "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church". The working document has been out for a couple of months, and we, as Carmelites, following in the footsteps of our forefathers and Carmelite Saints, cannot but be enthusiastic about this event that for sure will leave a very positive impact on the life of the Church. To mention just a few, St Teresa, St John of the Cross, St Therese, St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), St Teresa of the Andes, and Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, all of these in their writings have manifested a special love towards Holy Scripture. St Teresa alone, in her writings, has more than 600 references to Holy Scripture. The importance that St John of the Cross, and St Therese give to Holy Scripture, cannot be over emphasized. They have received their nourishment from these Sacred Writings about which St Paul in his letter to Timothy writes: "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3.16-17).

Many are those references both in the Scriptures (Old and New Testament alike), the Doctrine and Documents of the Church, and also in the writings of our Saints, where the emphasis on the importance of Sacred Scripture in our lives is not lacking. However, without doubt one cannot leave out this special reference from St Paul: "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Jesus Christ, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15.4-6).

Dear brothers and sisters in Carmel, Prayer and the Reading of Holy Scripture (especially *Lectio Divina*) go hand in hand. The Carmelite charism to meditate on the Word of God, day and night, and to become a prayer, are for sure our contribution, so that the words of the Prophet Amos will be actualized in our time!

The picture of St Teresa on the front of this issue is an oil painting that Fr Martin Borg has in his room in Malta. He has a very good and clear knowledge about the life and the person of St Teresa, and though

he himself is an artist, he has put down in detail the information that he gathered from different sources, and has asked the famous French painter "Rengee" to paint this picture for him. Thank you, Fr Martin, for sharing with us this detailed picture of Our Holy Mother.

The Congress of the OCDS in October is fast approaching, so please do not leave it to the last moment to book. You are also encouraged to let others know about it, even if they are not members of the OCDS. It is an opportunity for us to evangelize.

We also take this opportunity to CONGRATULATE our new Fr Provincial, Very Rev Fr Alfred Grech, and promise him our prayers and support !!

Our thanks go also to Very Rev Fr Victor Mallia, the out-going Fr Provincial, for all the support and hard work that he has for sure manifested among us. May God reward him and we assure him of our prayers.

Now that Lent is upon us, we continue to prepare ourselves for the GREAT FEAST of Easter, as we strive to open our hearts to God's Word.

In the name of the Secretariat, and Our Province, we wish you all a joyous and Happy Easter full of God's Blessings of Peace.

Happy Easter to ALL of You !!

In Carmel,

Fr. Dominic Borg, OCD