

Within the Chapel are several other interesting inscriptions. Carved along the arch that frames the sanctuary is another phrase taken from the Mass of Our Lady Mediatrix of all Graces: "*Recordare, Virgo Mater Dei, dum steteris in conspectu Domini, ut loquaris pro nobis bona.*" "Remember, Virgin Mother of God, when you stand in the sight of the Lord, to speak good things for us."

Over the main doors, exiting from the Chapel, there is a representation of Pope Honorius III officially confirming the Carmelite Rule, in 1226. Directly above the side exit door are the bas-relief figures of Saint Teresa of Jesus and Saint John of the Cross, in one of their famous dialogues, and the inscription is most appropriate: "*Nostra conversatio in caelis est.*" "Our conversation is in heaven."

The beautiful Stations of the Cross that are placed along the walls were carved from wood by Giacomo Mussner of Ortisei, Italy. Many years after he finished this work, he was asked to carve the statues of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Therese of Lisieux that stand in the niches at either side of the sanctuary. The candles in the black iron sconces along the walls signify that this is a consecrated Chapel--there are twelve candles, in honor of the twelve Apostles.

ONE OF THE QUESTIONS visitors ask most frequently is: "Are the Carmelites named for the town of Carmel?" It is rather the other way around. The first Mass to be celebrated in this area was offered on the shores of Monterey Bay by a Carmelite friar, one of three priests who had accompanied the Spanish explorer Sebastian Vizcaino on his long voyage in 1602. Vizcaino named the newly discovered bay area in honor of the Viceroy of Mexico, Gaspar de Zuniga y Acevedo, Count of Monte Rey. The Carmelite priest named a nearby river after the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel who was patroness of the voyage and whose picture was enshrined in the bow of the ship. Thus the river and surrounding area became known as "Carmel."

The holy sacrifice of the Mass was not celebrated again in this area until Father Juan Crespi traveled here with the expedition of Don Gaspar de Portola in 1769. At that time he offered Mass in this immediate area, most probably--from his description--in the meadow near the San Jose Creek, several hundred yards south of this monastery.

When Padre Junipero Serra reached the shores of Monterey the following year he celebrated the Mass of the Holy Spirit on June 3 in the same place as the Carmelite friars 168 years earlier. The famous Carmel Mission Basilica, where Padre Serra lies buried, is two miles north of this monastery. (Turn left at the first stop light on Rio Road.)

In 1967 the Diocese of Monterey-Fresno was split into two separate jurisdictional areas. This area is known as the Diocese of Monterey, and is presided over by Bishop Daniel Garcia, D.D.



HISTORY AND DISCRIPTION

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THE CARMELITE Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Therese was built in 1931, to fulfill a request made by the first bishop of the diocese of Monterey-Fresno, John B. MacGinley, D.D.

When Bishop MacGinley traveled to Rome in 1925 to attend the canonization ceremony of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, a French Carmelite of the 19th century, he had two great desires in his heart. During an audience with Pope Pius XI after the ceremony, he made them known to the Holy Father: he wished to place his new diocese under the spiritual patronage of this newly-canonized saint, and he wanted permission to found a monastery of cloistered nuns who would continue to follow the same vocation as this holy young Carmelite: to contemplate, praise and worship God and to pray continually for the needs of all His People.

Pope Pius XI promptly granted these permissions, and as soon as Bishop MacGinley returned to America, he contacted the Carmelite nuns in Santa Clara, California. Five months later, in October, Mother Augustine, who was then prioress, sent five nuns from her community to establish a new Carmelite monastery in a little wooden house near the picturesque village of Carmel-by-the-sea.

In 1931, the Francis J. Sullivan family, with true Christian generosity, purchased land and made arrangements for the construction of a new monastery on this present site. The building is a memorial to Mr. F. J. Sullivan who had died the preceding year, and now lies buried in the Chapel.

On November 1 of that same year, the five nuns who had begun the small foundation in Carmel transferred their few items of furniture to their new home, and began to prepare for the coming of other young women whom God would call here to lead the contemplative way of life.

The community grew in numbers, and in 1965, ten nuns were sent to San Rafael, California, to found another monastery. Eight monasteries of cloistered Carmelites are in California, and over 65 are in the United States.

There are many hundreds of these Carmelite houses of prayer throughout the world, from Israel to Ireland, India to Russia! In 1988 San Rafael made a foundation in Espoo, Finland. Another foundation from Santa Clara thrives in Hsinchu, Taiwan. These monasteries bear witness to the vitality and authenticity of the spirit of Saint Teresa of Jesus, who renewed the order in 1562, with the help of another great Spanish Carmelite of the 16th century, Saint John of the Cross.

SEPTEMBER 27, 1970 marks the date of the Catholic Church's official recognition of Saint Teresa of Jesus (16th century, Spain) spiritual genius. On that day, Pope Paul VI proclaimed her to be the first woman Doctor of the Church. Her spiritual teachings are not only correct but inspiring, and many men and women of all faiths have discovered the sublime beauty and reality of the interior life from studying her writings. In such works as *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*, as well as in her autobiography, Saint Teresa of Jesus writes of the presence of God in the soul. ..and the soul's response.

Today, in this monastery, her spiritual daughters strive to continue her apostolate of prayer, remembering her forceful advice: "My daughters, since the enemies of God are so many and His friends so few, I want to see His friends be good ones." As the heart is to the body, so the life of prayer is to the Church and the world. The contemplative way of life reminds us all that some measure of solitude and silence is needed in everyone's life. "Deep calleth unto deep" and in learning to listen to the Spirit of God, people discover new depths within themselves.

This was true of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus (19th century, France), "the Little Flower." In her hidden life of prayer, listening to the Spirit of God, she discovered the "Little Way" of sanctity which is the way of spiritual childhood, the way of trust and surrender to God. Countless souls have been helped by her spiritual teachings found in her autobiography (*Story of a Soul*), letters and poems which are a "true science of love." In recognition, Pope John Paul II, bestowed on her the title of "Doctor of the Church" on Mission Sunday, October 19, 1997--only 72 years after her canonization!

VISITORS OFTEN ASK for the translation of some of the Latin inscriptions carved in stone above the doorways of the Chapel.

Mother Augustine, when planning the details of the Chapel, chose certain sentences to express the spirit of the Carmelite Order

and the specific title of the monastery. She also included several allusions to the beautiful setting of the buildings.

Above the main doors on the facade of the Chapel, a verse from Psalm 120 (121) is carved into the lintel: "*Levavi oculos meos in montes unde veniet auxilium mihi* " "I lift up my eyes toward the mountains; whence shall help come to me. ..." The quotation springs spontaneously to the lips when the visitor views the Chapel and monastery set majestically against the hillside of the verdant green trees and soft brown earth. The same verse occurs in the entrance song of the Mass for the titular feast of this Chapel, Our Lady Mediatrix of All Graces, which is celebrated on July 23.

Directly above the lintel, there is a group of bas-relief figures within the tympanum--Our Lady of Mount Carmel with her Divine Son Jesus in her arms. She is listening to the petitions of two of her most illustrious Carmelite daughters. On the left is Saint Teresa of Jesus (16th century, Spain), foundress of the Discalced Carmelites; and on the right is Saint Therese of the Child Jesus (19th century, France), secondary patroness of the monastery.

As the eye lifts higher on the facade, the visitor sees another verse from the psalms, carved in larger letters. The verse was inspired by Psalm 76 (77): "*Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi et exaudivit me de monte sancto suo.*" "Aloud to the Lord I cried, and He heard me from His holy mountain." It is an invitation to enter the House of the Lord and listen, as well as speak to Christ Who dwells in the tabernacle on the altar. It is this dynamic, real Presence of God--a personal presence--that visitors frequently sense.

The monastery was carefully designed with this dynamic in mind by the architectural firm of Maginnis and Walsh of Boston. The chapel aligns with the setting sun on the evening of the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. Gentle sunlight streams into the sanctuary through the high circular window on the facade, highlighting the tabernacle on the altar with a warm luster. The tabernacle door is sculpted in bas-relief with the early Christian symbol of the Pelican plucking its breast to nourish its young with its blood--symbol of the Precious Blood flowing from the wounded side of the Son of God.

At the time that Bishop MacGinley personally welcomed the nuns to the monastery, he told them that he would ask only one favor from them: a place in the monastery where he could be buried. A room in the Chapel was set aside for him, so when he died in his 99th year, he was brought back to Carmel from Ireland, where he retired, and was laid to rest in a sun-lit tomb that may be seen at the rear of the Chapel.

This year, 2025, we celebrate 100 years since that auspicious day in 1925 when Bishop MacGinley welcomed the five nuns to Carmel-by-the-Sea. We will celebrate with a triduum of Masses and the privilege of having the Relics of his beloved St. Therese of the Child Jesus with us for the anniversary day, October 24, 2025.