



ARIZON CARMELITE RETREAT

November 18-20, 2011

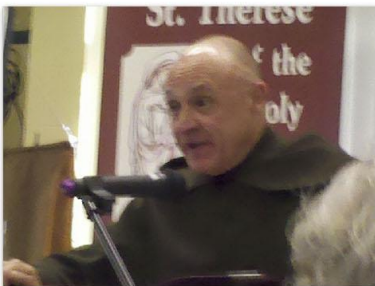
Redemptorist Retreat Center –Picture Rock—Tucson, AZ

Theme: Our Relationship with God is always a work in progress. We will endeavor to deepen our communication with God by cultivating the Wisdom to Listen, The Courage to Hear, and the Conscious commitment to be still and know God.



We were among the first to check-in on Friday afternoon. The desert valley below the retreat center was bathed in sunlight; the fall air was warm and refreshing.

The Retreat Master, Father Jim Mueller, O.Carm., has been a priest for over forty years, the first 12-years a Diocesan priest. He spoke slowly with feeling, pausing long enough to make sure the point he wanted to make was grasped, and then asking “are we together.”



Following the evening mass our retreat was a silent retreat – no unnecessary talking, no phone calls or internet. Aside from the instruction time it was to be a time for meditation and contemplation. We even observed our meals, which were very appetizing, hushed from any talking.

Our lecture time was about two hours each session. We prayed together the Morning and Evening hours, offered a daily mass, and had an adoration and penitential service with opportunity for confessions. We spent the remaining wake hours in contemplation or perhaps walking and praying the mountainside Way of the Cross



Salient Points Father Made:

- We are all called to holiness – “God trusts us.” We all can speak volumes about God, but what about our ‘witness’ of God.
- Spirituality of Imperfection: Sacred scripture is our story of successes and failures trying to get to heaven.
- We are creatures – “to be perfect” means to be as perfect as we can be.
- Holy Scripture is the word of God in human language—it is a “real presence.” Pray the scriptures – sit with them – marinate in them.



- Scripture is present in all liturgical procedures. The word is God’s word – not a suggestion.
- Sit in your favorite chair and hold your bible. Then you will know the power of God “because he is present in it.” He can speak to us awake or asleep. Remember we must do our part.
- On prayer: Quoting Pious 12 – Public worship is the whole community, Jesus Christ and us rendering praise to all mighty God – in us and through us. Jesus is always the priest using the ministerial priest.
 - Four things are liturgical (public prayer): Eucharistic prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, Adoration, and the Sacraments.
 - Rosary, novenas, etc. are private prayers.

The church is not perfect – we are all pilgrims on our way to perfection.
- Contemplative Prayer: Kind of unique for Carmelite life – in Albert’s Rule it is the foundation of Carmelite life. It is not what we do, it is ‘a way’ of what we do.
 - Father struggled with this wondering if he was called to be a Carmelite priest. His confessor told him he was going at all wrong. He said, “Give yourself permission to waste time with God” – in our society we think we must be doing something and getting results. Actually we need to be creating an environment in which we can be in contact with God – we must learn to be passive.
 - Do this incrementally – 10 minutes at first, gradually extend.
 - First do a ‘centering prayer’ – lectio divina (we didn’t have time to go into this).
 - Distractions – don’t fight it, go with it. It is not our agenda but God’s agenda we need to follow. Maybe the distraction is his agenda.
 - We may feel angry with him. It’s okay – however, he will never make us agitated.
- Prayer is lifting of mind and heart to God, (*conscious contact with God *conversation with God *dialogue with God * dynamic.) real conversation like with a best friend.
 - How do you know it is God speaking and not you? You must take time to discern. Prayer is not about us, but a relationship with God.
- Prayer is not a pious comma – it is dynamic and interactive.
- The Rosary is a private prayer of meditation.
 - Easy to say, but very difficult to pray – the beads help to focus on the mystery and/or intention.
- Embodiment – we are embodied spirits, human beings.

The body is an instrument given us by God – not an enemy.
Indisputable proof – “and the Word became flesh.”