

Editor's Preface

This is the 9th volume of *Itinera Spiritualia*, the periodical of the Carmelite Institute of Spirituality of Kraków (Poland). It is worth mentioning that the Institute owes its existence to the Discalced Carmelite lecturers of the Carmelite Priest Seminary, who twenty five years ago began a series of lectures at the Carmelite Monastery in Kraków. These were intended as an introduction to Christian and the Carmelite Spirituality. The Idea for these lectures, concerning mainly the lives and teaching of Carmelite Saints, arose from the suggestions of many secular and consecrated believers. They had a desire, to deepen their understanding of the Christian spiritual life. The originator and the founder of the lectures was Fr J.W. Gogola, lecturer and the director of the Carmelite Institute of Spirituality.

As the new editor of *Itinera Spiritualia* and the vice director of the Institute I express my thanks for all lecturers, to the former editor of *Itinera Spiritualia* Fr G. Firszt, to the authors of the articles and to more than six hundred students, who in the last twenty five years contributed to the existence and the development of the Carmelite Institute of Spirituality.

In the present volume the majority of the articles focus on the life and teaching of St Teresa of Avila, the doctor of the Church (four articles, including three in foreign languages). This preponderance of teresian subjects is attributable to the intensity of studies made in the jubilee year of St Teresa's birth (2015) in the whole Carmelite Order. The authors of these articles study teresian issues from diverse perspectives (A.S. Wach – philosophy, I. Matthew – mission and pastoral, U. Dobhan – history, F.J. Sancho Fermín – mysticism and anthropology). Despite this diversity of approach, they converge in their conclusions. Their subject of research, the life and the experience of the holy reformer of Carmel, concentrates in an extraordinary way on relationship with God. A.S. Wach observed that in the deep relation of friendship one could find a philosophical basis, a metaphysical groundwork for all actions, the *condition sine qua non* of the missionary work of the Church (I. Matthew) and of an understanding of the deepest dimensions of humanism. For “no anthropology has not reached so bright and positive understanding of human existence as the anthropology that comes from the living experience of God” (F.J. Sancho Fermín).

Two more articles also relate to the focus of events last year. They address the subjects of the evangelical counsels: chastity, poverty and obedience. Just as the teresian jubilee inspired the studies of the life and work of St Teresa, so did the year of consecrated life (2015) inspire these articles. The authors consider the evangelical counsel not only in the general perspective of the theology of mysticism (S. Urbański), but also in the thought of the doctors of Carmel (J.W. Gogola).

The other articles deal with current topics. The article *Merciful like the Father. Reflections on Confessor's and Penitent's Attitude of Mercy in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation* (S. Fudala) is connected with the year of Mercy. You will find in it a good profile of the attitude of mercy, that should be adopted not only by the confessor, but also by the penitent in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. The article of G. Firszt *The Constitutions of Institutes of Consecrated Life as a Blueprint of Spiritual Life* yield a spiritual reading of the constitutions of institutes of consecrated life as a kind of "book of life", as a "gospel in the perspective of an institute" and as a "gate for consecrated persons come in to the Christian life". The article can be thought of as an encouragement (invitation), to approach constitutions in a new way, and is addressed not only to Discalced Carmelites, who undertake during these six years (2015–2021) the task of a renewed reading of their own constitutions, but also for all consecrated persons. Finally we offer the article of C. Sękalski, which initiates an important question in the modern social world, namely the rule of gender in a spiritual life. This topic is really worth of examination, for it has not yet been sufficiently studied in Christian spirituality.

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