

BRINGING THE CARMELITE SAINTS ALIVE

FIFTEENTH EDITION 2025



IN THIS MONTH OF JUNE, WE WILL BE HIGHLIGHTING BLESSED ANNE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW WHOSE
FEAST DAY IS JUNE 7TH



“SILENCE IS PRECIOUS, BY KEEPING SILENCE AND KNOWING HOW TO LISTEN TO GOD, THE SOUL GROWS
IN WISDOM AND GOD TEACHES IT WHAT IT CANNOT LEARN FROM MEN.”

Entrusting her little daughter Anne to the care of the two girls sewing on the porch of their residence, the mother cautioned:

-Keep an eye on your little sister, because if she falls from this height, it could kill her.

Like good Spaniards, the two girls kept up a lively conversation as they worked, and as soon as their mother left, they did not lose the opportunity for a brief debate:

-Anne would be lucky if she died today. Being baptized and innocent, she would go straight to Heaven – commented one, observing the child who was looking at them.

-I disagree! – interrupted the other – She is only three years old; if she continues to live, she could become a great Saint!

-But who can guarantee that this will happen? Now she is incapable of sinning, and her salvation is assured. But when she reaches the age of seven and has the use of reason, who can be sure that she will not offend God and be lost?

Although not yet able to speak or even fully understand the meaning of her sisters' words, the little girl followed their dialogue with keen interest and, with a child's candour, she became filled with dread at the thought of reaching the age of seven, understanding this to be the fateful point at which she would run the risk of sinning. She knew that something had to be done to avoid such a calamity. Showing herself to have already grasped the mysteries that the Father reveals to little ones, she silently placed herself under the care of Our Lady and other heavenly guardians, such as St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Joseph, thinking he too was an Angel.

It is not surprising that this surrender of herself to the supernatural, at such an early age, in fact led Anne to sanctity, as one of her sisters had presumed. What awakens our admiration is the means by which God allowed her to experience, on this earth, something that constitutes one of the greatest joys of eternity, the society of the Saints! She was blessed to closely accompany the great St. Teresa of Jesus, to whom she was nurse, secretary and confidante, and later on to follow in her spirit and continue on in her mission.

Anne Garcia Manzananas was born on the first day of October of 1549, into a prosperous farming family of the village of El Almendral, close to Avila. She was the sixth of seven children and had the happiness of being instructed in the Faith early on, not only through hearing the devout teachings of her parents, but also by seeing them conduct themselves as model Catholics. They took their obligations toward God so seriously that they made a point of attending Mass every morning, together with all the children, even if there were grave and pressing matters that needed to be resolved on a given day.

Accustomed to giving supernatural realities their true importance, Anne always felt a strong attraction to Heaven and deep aversion to sin. This explains her reaction at three years of age in the aforementioned episode, which in fact, did not end there...

On that same occasion, she experienced the first mystical phenomenon of her life, which greatly fortified and consoled her: as she was thinking about what her sisters had just said, she looked up and saw Heaven open and Our Lord Jesus Christ surrounded in glory and gazing upon her, instilling in her heart ardent desires to love and serve Him. From then on, Anne's life would be permeated with

extraordinary manifestations of this kind, such as, for example, frequent apparitions of the Child Jesus, who always appeared as having the same age as her.

When Anne was ten, her parents died, and her siblings put her in charge of watching the family flocks. She derived great benefit from this, for in the serene solitude of the fields, the Child Jesus came to her in visible form every day, providing her with such spiritual joy that, on one occasion, she asked: "Lord, since you are here with me, let us not go where there are people any more, but let us go alone to the mountains, for in Your company I will lack nothing." The Divine Child smiled at such a loving petition; without saying a word, He made her understand in the depths of her soul that this was not God's plan in her regard...

With the passing of time, it became clear to young Anne that God was calling her to the religious life. Our Lord Himself showed her, in a dream, the monastery she should enter: the convent of the Discalced Carmelites of Avila, recently founded by the already-famous Mother Teresa of Jesus. However, Anne was only able to follow her vocation after waging difficult battles, both against relatives who strongly opposed her decision, and against the devil, whose cunning attempts to lead her to damnation were tremendous.

In the Convent of St. Joseph in Avila, Anne was admitted as a lay sister and added St. Bartholomew to her name. Responsible for the material needs of the house, she was able to unite a rich interior life to her untiring activity in caring for the sisters of the community, cheerfully taking upon herself the most onerous tasks. Nevertheless, trial, which so often visits those whom God wants to perfect in a special way, descended inexorably upon her at the outset of her novitiate: the sensible presence of Our Lord that she had felt since childhood completely ceased.

Anne's first meeting with the one who was to be the light to her path occurred when she was still a novice, in July of 1571. When the great St. Teresa first saw her, she showed such contentment that it was as if she had been waiting for a soul so attuned to hers. After analyzing the novice for some moments, she embraced her warmly and had Anne placed in her personal service.

For the three years in which the Saint remained in that convent, Anne was the beneficiary of innumerable lessons in perfection through constant close contract with St. Teresa. This period was the beginning of a long path which the two Saints travelled together. When St. Teresa left for Seville in 1574, her assistant could not follow her, due to a violent illness that sapped her of strength for her usual duties. On account of her generosity, the feeling of uselessness in this situation entailed only increased her desire to dedicate herself to God entirely. Accordingly, she asked Him to cure her or take her from this life, and she received the answer: "This is not suitable for you now; you will yet endure many labours in the company of my friend Teresa." Despite such a consoling promise, Anne's health did not improve... As only happens to specially chosen souls, Jesus desired a new act of confidence and surrender from her.

When St. Teresa returned to Avila, despite the fact that Anne was still ill, she ordered her to assume the post of infirmarian- quite an arbitrary command, at first sight. Although barely able to stand upright, Anne promptly obeyed, asking Our Lord to help her. Showing His pleasure with this act of submission, Jesus appeared and not only gave her strength to treat the sick sisters, but He also personally undertook the care of one of them. Days later, all the sick had recuperated and commented with wonder at the dedication and skill of the new nurse, who seemed to know all the secrets of the function as if she had

been exercising it for years. This God-given gift enabled her to assist her holy Madre Teresa on countless occasions with the health problems that afflicted her, especially in the final years of her life, when, having fractured her left arm, she required constant aid. These circumstances marked Anne's soul in a special way, as she affirmed in her memoirs: "It was a true Heaven to serve her, but it was the greatest of sufferings to see her in pain."

In addition to the journeys which represented a very special opportunity to be with St. Teresa, this closeness increased all the more when she became her secretary. Although she could neither read nor write, her great teacher had only to manifest the desire for her assistance in handling correspondence for Anne to hasten to help, trusting that God would furnish her with the necessary means. With simplicity, she asked the Saint for some of her writings so that she could imitate her script and, on the same day, she managed to write a letter, transcribing what her mother had dictated.

On October 4, 1582, St. Teresa was on her deathbed. Sensing her last moment approaching, she confessed, received the Viaticum and expired with her head resting in the arms of the faithful Anne, who had attended her day and night. Our Lord Himself came to console the faithful disciple, appearing to her full of splendour and showing her the magnificent commemoration, the Angels and Saints had prepared in Heaven to receive the one He had called "My Friend."

After St. Teresa's departure for eternity, Anne became a reference point for those who, both inside and outside the Order of Carmel, wished to come to better know the Teresian soul and her epic feat. It soon became evident how much that faithful witness had allowed herself to be shaped by her superior and assimilated her spirit. Out of obedience, she received the black veil, which meant she was no longer a simple lay sister, and she was sent to France, together with other religious, to introduce the Order of Discalced Carmelites there.

There is so much more to say about these beautiful women and there are so many beautiful paintings of Teresa and Anne together. St. Teresa appeared to her and placing her hand upon the head of the kneeling Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew as if blessing her protegee. Teresa descends from Heaven to bless Anne just like Elijah passed on a double portion of his spirit to Elisha. "The Reformer, another Elijah/in showing her wish/to her daughter, as to Elisha/Improves her in spirit.

On June 4, 1626 this courageous soul finished her course in this world to enter into the joys of Heaven, where, certainly at the side of her beloved Mother Teresa of Jesus, she continues to help those who work for the glory of God and His Church. (Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew Autobiography)

OUR CARMELITE MISSION

MAY WE EMBRACE MARY'S PURITY OF HEART (PURITAS CORDIAS), AS SHE HELPS US TO PONDER THE LAW OF THE LORD DAY AND NIGHT ASSISTING US TO BE CONTEMPLATIVES AND TEACHING US TO LISTEN. AS WE WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR FATHER AND LEADER ST. ELIJAH; WITH HIS FLAMING ZEAL AND COURAGE WHICH ALLOWED HIM TO COMBAT THE EVILS OF HIS DAY. MAY WE PRAY THAT HIS PROPHETIC SPIRIT BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR CARMELITE LIFE."

MAY OUR LADY'S MANTLE WRAP YOU ALL WITH HER PRECIOUS LOVE.ALL THROUGH THE IMMACULATE & SORROWFUL HEART & TEARS OF MARY, ALL THROUGH THE PURE AND CHASTE HEART OF ST. JOSEPH, ALL IN UNION WITH THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS. YOUR SISTER IN CARMEL, LINDA

