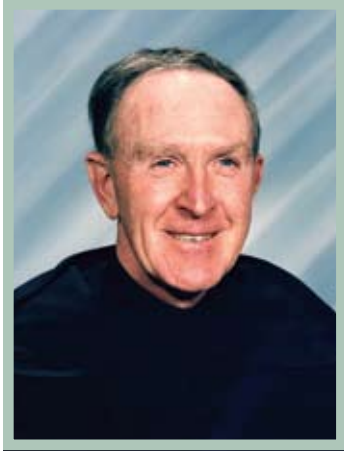


CARMELITE MISSIONS



Father John Malley, O.Carm.
Director of Carmelite Missions

Rays of Encouragement and Hope for Seminarians

The Carmelite Mission office was founded in 1949 to support our American and Canadian members who were going for the first time as missionaries to South America. Today, we continue to help that missionary effort in Peru, Mexico, and El Salvador. One of the key areas that we support is the formation programs of our seminarians.

Last June during one of the Masses at our Provincial Chapter, Father John Welch, the Provincial, introduced 29 seminarians who are studying in our formation programs in North and South America. It was a very special moment for all of us participants, truly a ray of great ENCOURAGEMENT AND HOPE that the people of God would be well served by members of the Province in the years ahead.

Many of these seminarians are from Peru, Mexico, and El Salvador. Their studies of theology will take place in a new seminary formation house that is being built on the grounds of our Carmelite parish in San Salvador. The students will study theology at the famous Jesuit University in that city, where six members of the Society of Jesus were martyred soon after the assassination of Archbishop Romero in 1980.

The formation house is named after a famous Spanish Carmelite professor of theology, Bartholomew Xiberta, who taught in Rome for many years, and whose insights into the

Person of Jesus Christ and the nature of the Church had a profound influence upon the bishops and theologians who participated in the Second Vatican Council.

Father David Blanchard, a Carmelite from Massachusetts, is responsible for the parish and for the direction of the new formation house. He is seeking your help, not only for the building itself, with sufficient rooms for the seminarians together with a chapel, kitchen and dining room, but also in drilling for a well for water (rather than trucking it in), and for the necessary landscaping that would direct water away from the buildings. In San Salvador, there are often torrential rains that cause great flooding.

After almost sixty years of involvement in missionary work in South America, this new seminary in El Salvador brings great excitement and hope for the future. Please continue to keep this intention in your prayers, and thank you for any help that you will give as our Province builds and dedicates the Xiberta Formation Center in 2009.

Love and peace,

Fr. John Malley, O.Carm.

Remember the Carmelite Missions when you write your will.



Saints of the Month ❁ Parents of Saint Therese

Blessed Louis Martin & Zelig Guerin

It is often said that the apple does not fall far from the tree. Although that is not an infallible rule, it would be logical to assume that the parents of Therese of Lisieux, or any great saint, might be holy and outstanding people in their own right. In the case of Therese, at least, we are not disappointed. Her parents, Louis and Zelig, may indeed be saints, but of the ordinary type that appeals to the rest of us...and gives us the courage to imitate them. They were beatified by Pope Benedict XVI this past October 19.

Both Louis and Zelig were born to military families, grew up surrounded by spiritual values, tried unsuccessfully to enter religious orders, and worked vigorously at living holy lives. Is it any wonder that their children were strongly conditioned by their warm

and loving home life?

Yet conditioning is only one contributing factor to a person's life – the final product comes from a whole series of free choices. Adolf Hitler grew up in a family where he was domineered by his father, and spoiled by his mother. So did Louis Martin, but what a different man he became!

Life of Louis

Louis was born in Bordeaux in 1823, where his father was a captain in the French Army. Like so many others, the father, Pierre-Francois Martin, had been conscripted during the years of the French Revolution. He survived the horrors of Napoleon's Russian Campaign, and decided that he would become a career officer even after peace returned. He befriended another

captain during the war, and eventually married his daughter, Marie. Pierre was 41 at the time, his bride only 18.

Louis was their fifth child, and the only one to survive infancy. His early life was spent in military garrisons, wherever his father was sent. After Bordeaux, the family moved to Avignon, then Strasbourg. Pierre was a stern and demanding father, and wanted his son to grow up to be a soldier like himself. Louis admired the sense of order and discipline of army life, but really had no interest in a military career. He was drawn to art and literature instead, especially the writings of Chateaubriand and Lamartine.

In 1830, a revolution overthrew the Bourbon dynasty once and for all. Pierre was a staunch royalist, and refused the new situation. He retired from the army, in good health at 53 years, and moved to the pretty town of Alencon in Normandy, where he and his wife opened a small jewelry store. Alencon was a fine place to raise a family, and young Louis grew to love the peace and quiet that he found there. His father continued to be devoted, if severe, and his mother tried to give him every good thing. Louis grew into a quiet and reflective lad, sometimes melancholy and even retiring. Religion was very important to the entire family, and Louis eagerly adopted the flamboyant piety of 19th century France.

When he was 20 years old, he trekked to the Swiss border to join the Augustinian Canons of the Great Saint Bernard hospice. He admired the great courage and charity of these men who, together with their famous dogs, rescued travelers stranded in the snow-choked passes of the Alps. The monks were kind and



understanding, but gently refused his application because he had not studied Latin. Louis was deeply disappointed, but resolved to learn the language and re-apply.

Louis' Work

In the meanwhile, he decided to study watch-making in order to make a living. He spent two years in Strasbourg learning that craft, and became quite good at it. The slow, silent, but very precise trade suited his temperament and talents better than anything else he had tried. He returned to his parents in Alencon, where he worked, studied, and stayed busy in religious organizations. He was especially active in the Catholic Church, a young people's club that had been founded by a friend of his.

He continued his study of Latin, but he never did master the difficult language. This inadequacy made him even more timid and indecisive. His keen disappointment caused his health to break down in 1847. He seemed to live with his grandmother in Paris and worked to recover his health. The big city seemed very sinister to the impressionable young man. He recalled it as a time of "horrid temptations" and stated emphatically that only his piety had saved him.

He returned to Alencon in 1850, and opened a clock and jewelry shop of his own. He became reconciled to life outside a monastery and threw himself into the practice of his religion even more vigorously. He attended weekday Masses and nightly adoration, met with the Catholic Circle, and went on pilgrimages. He refused to open his shop on Sunday, and probably lost business as a result. But the shop prospered in spite of all, and he was generally admired by his fellow citizens. His favorite pastime was fishing, which suited his reflective nature.

The town of Alencon had once been famous as a center for lace making, but the demanding craft had all but died out by 1789. It was revived in 1830, however, and by 1860 Alencon lace was once again world famous. It is curious that the lace maker's trade would be the link between Louis and his future bride.

Life of Zelie

Marie-Azelie Guerin was born at Gandelain (Orne) in Normandy, the second of three children. Her father, Isidore Guerin, was also a military officer, a captain in the cavalry. He had fought at the battle of Wagram (1809), Napoleon's last great victory, and afterwards campaigned in Spain and Portugal. After the atrocities of guerilla warfare, he accepted a discharge from the army when peace returned, and became a mounted gendarme in the town of Saint-Denis.

He married Louise-Jeanne Mace, a good peasant woman with hardly any education. Zelie and her older sister Elise received very little affection from their parents, since their young brother Isidore was the apple of their eye. Zelie was not given to self-pity, but she admitted that her childhood had been a dismal time. Her father was distant, and her mother was a severe discipli-

narian, sometimes even using Zelie as a scapegoat for her own shortcomings as a parent. Not surprisingly, the girl experienced migraines and frequent illness.

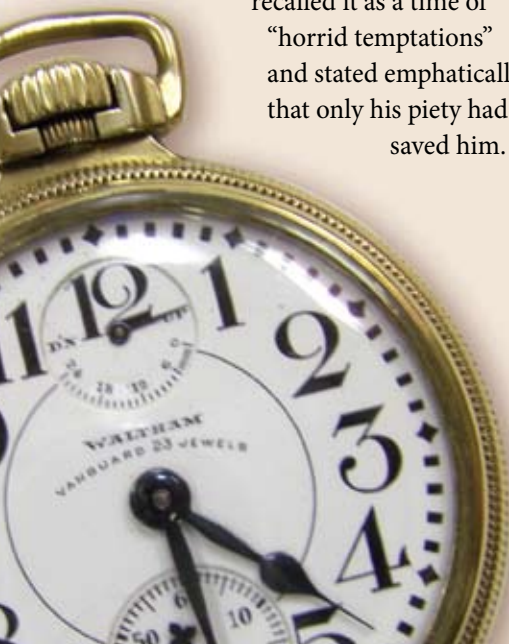
In spite of her hardships, Zelie grew up to be a hard worker with good native intelligence and a flair for writing. She did well in school, and was always very devout from her earliest years. Her religious outlook was austere and scrupulous, which was not at all unusual for the 19th century. Zelie hoped to join a religious order.

Elise had joined the Poor Clares, but had to leave because of recurring bouts with pneumonia. She joined the less rigorous Visitation sisters at Le Mans, with the religious name of Sister Dosithee, and corresponded frequently with Zelie, especially when she married and began to raise her own children. She also chided Zelie gently for being too hard on herself.

When she was 19, Zelie attempted to enter the convent of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul in Alencon. She was refused admittance, possibly because of her mother's displeasure. With that door closed to her, Zelie took up the difficult but rewarding craft of making lace. After two years of professional training, she became adept at the beautiful Pont d'Alencon style of her native town, which required delicate embroidery over a netted base. A single three-inch square of lace requires 60 hours of the most exacting work. Later in life, Zelie would manage her own very successful lace-making business, with as many as 20 other women working for her.

Marriage of Louis and Zelie

Now that she no longer expected to be a nun, Zelie wanted to have a large family of her own, with many children who would become priests, sisters, and





CARMELITE MISSIONS

8501 Bailey Road | Darien, IL 60561-8418

www.carmelitemissions.org



**Xiberta Formation Center -
Encouragement and Hope for Seminarians**

**Your prayers
and your support
are needed NOW
more than ever.**

Louis & Zelig continued...



Portrait of the Martin family

missionaries. As luck would have it, she met Marie Martin while she was perfecting her skills; Marie thought that Zelig would make a fine wife for her son, Louis, and introduced the two young people to one another. Zelig had seen the quiet watchmaker around town, and admired his piety and gentleness. She was especially touched by the small statue of Mary that he kept in his flower garden.

The unlikely couple was wed in 1858. At first, the shy Louis suggested that they would live as brother and sister, but his confessor convinced him that he should accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up as good Christians. Eventually the couple had seven girls and two boys. The boys and two of the girls died very young, but the remaining five grew to healthy adulthood, with some bouts of sickness along the way.

In 1871, Louis sold his watchmaker's shop and helped Zelig manage her thriving business. The Martins were fairly comfortable financially, since their careers had both been very successful. They had also inherited land and money from their parents. In his semi-retired state, Louis was able to devote his time and considerable love to his wife and children. His

help would be increasingly significant, because Zelig was aware of a slowly growing tumor in her breast as early as seven years before Therese was born. Despite the growing pain and weakness she suffered, Zelig drove herself to do everything possible for her children and her husband in the limited years that remained to her.

For all the limitations and shortcomings of their own early lives, both parents made their home a warm, devout, and nurturing place for their daughters, all of whom eventually entered religious life. Their love and courage in building a beautiful family stands in sharp contrast to their own personal difficulties and hardships. They remind us of the advice of St. Paul: "Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."