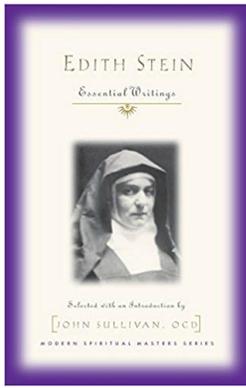


SPIRITUAL READING



Don't trust any old book for your spiritual reading... After all, this is our soul we are talking about! Read tried-and-true books to discover what the Church teaches. It's all too easy for a zealous author to unknowingly allow error to creep into his work if he's not steeped in authentic theology. If you are looking for inspiration, be sure to read books that are either by saints or authors who clearly base what they are saying on the words of saints, Scripture, and the Church Fathers.

Visit the Pastoral Centre for a large selection of books sure to inspire virtue!

E*dith Stein Essential Writings* introduces the reader into this saint's brilliant mind and profound Carmelite spirituality. I have always loved the Carmelite saints and their works. This book is no exception. So often I will read a quote that speaks to me, and invariably it is by a Carmelite saint. This love of Carmel eventually led me on a journey, which I continue today, to become a member of the Discalced Carmelite Secular Order.

In May of 2013, I walked into St. Peter's Church for the first time. I walked down the aisle overcome with emotion at the beauty surrounding me...the high altar, the paintings on the ceiling, and the stained glass windows. I was looking for a place to sit on the right side. I always sit to the right when coming into a church because of the Bible verse Matthew 25: 33: "He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left." I consider myself very much a goat; therefore, I sit accordingly. While gazing at the pew options for goats, I spotted a stained glass window with the name "Peter" on it. My husband has a very kind brother named Peter, and consequently, we have a son whose name is Samuel Peter. I decided to sit in that pew so I would always remember to pray for Peter Hay and Samuel Peter Hay. I scooted all the way in so as to be close to the window and the name. This became my seat everyday for years to come (remember this, as it becomes important later).

That summer, on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, a group of several women came into the church one Saturday morning. They were wearing brown scapulars and they all sat near me. Fr. Terry introduced them as the Carmelites. He explained that they would be reciting the Liturgy of the Hours, and we were welcome to join them. I had never heard of the Liturgy of the Hours.

On November 12, 2013, St. Peter's hosted an evening of information about the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. I was curious. I did not know lay people could be involved in a religious order. I listened as some of the members told their stories of coming to Carmel. I was intrigued, but came to the conclusion that my life was too busy at the moment to make a commitment.

The following spring, on May 24, 2014, St. Peter's hosted a Day of Silent Recollection sponsored by Our Lady of Mount Carmel Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. I took part in this retreat and received much grace. In the silence I began to journal. I don't remember what I wrote, but I wrote and wrote for quite some time. Not long after this experience, I called the president at the time, Sharon Low. She explained to me that I could attend two meetings over the summer to see if I thought I was being called to this vocation. I attended a meeting in June 2014 at St. Theresa's Church in Kakabeka Falls. We prayed, listened to a spiritual talk, and had discussions on books written by Carmelite saints. Could this get any better? It could. During the business portion of the meeting, the existing members made the decision to move the meeting place from Kakabeka Falls to St. Peter's Church. They also planned to ask Fr. Terry to be the Spiritual Assistant. They were particularly drawn to St. Peter's because the church "had a statue of St. Therese of Liseaux and a painting on the ceiling of Our Lady of Mount Carmel." I remember thinking, "Where is this painting of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and how can this all be falling so neatly into place?" I had come to one meeting and they were moving to my parish, and asking this dear holy priest, of whom I had become very fond, to be the Spiritual Assistant.

The next day, I attended Mass at St. Peter's. I began looking for this painting they mentioned of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. She was directly above "my seat" on the ceiling. She had been watching over me all of this time. I became very emotional, feeling as if I had been led to this from the beginning. I attended another meeting over the summer and became an aspirant in the fall (September 2014). It is now 2019, and I am about to embark on my fifth year of formation! The journey has been nothing short of grace filled. God willing, I will continue to Profession and ongoing formation for life. This fall I will study *Interior Castle* by St. Teresa of Avila. Carmel has been a gift and I have been blessed more than I deserve.

If anyone would like more information on the Discalced Carmelite Secular Order, please contact the president, Gail Gibbons, at 683-8981.