

Carmelite Institute of Britain and Ireland

Programmes: B.Th. (Carmelite Studies), Certificate/Diploma in Spirituality (Carmelite Studies)

Module: H02: The Origins of the Carmelite Family

This module is designed to introduce students to the early history of the Carmelites, to explore the way in which the Carmelite charism was expressed in the Formula of Life given to the Carmelites by St Albert, and to reflect on the way in which that Formula of Life was modified to become the Carmelite Rule.

Its overall purpose is to outline the way in which these developments provide the foundations for the way in which the different branches of the Carmelite family - lay people, sisters, nuns and friars - share the one Carmelite charism and give expression to that charism in a wide variety of different contexts and circumstances.

Units 1-4 outline the historical context of the Crusades and the Second Kingdom of Jerusalem and the likely origins of the first hermits on Mount Carmel in the late twelfth century.

Units 5-8 explore the background of St Albert of Jerusalem who wrote the Formula of Life for the first Carmelites, the text of the Formula of Life, and the way in which his Formula of Life gave a particular concrete expression to the Carmelite charism.

Units 9-12 outline the events leading up to the promulgation of the Carmelite Rule by Pope Innocent IV in 1247, and the way in which that Rule provides a definitive expression of the charism in a particular context and recognises the need for adaptation according to circumstances.

Units 13-16 explore some of the elements of the charism that are common to the different members of the Carmelite family.