

Module DC38: Women in Carmel

This module considers the way four Carmelite women lived out their vocation in particular ways. They have all left us insights into ways to grow in prayer not only through their writings but also by the way they embodied this in their lives.

It begins with the Teresa of Avila living in difficult times when being a woman both in the Church and in society brought with it many limitations which Teresa managed to an extent to overcome and persevered with her mission to found many monasteries where God would be served and souls saved through the life and prayer of her nuns. She had the gift of being able to write about her experience of prayer so that we continue to receive her profound teaching.

Three hundred years later we find the young Thérèse pursuing her vocation to be love in the heart of the Church and overcoming difficulties to find that despite her physical weakness she could also have a mission to save souls. Thérèse's book *The Story of a Soul* remains one of the most widely read spiritual books today.

Like Thérèse, Elizabeth of the Trinity died in her early 20s and suffered greatly but in her short life she communicated an intense understanding of the indwelling of the Trinity and saw her life as self-giving for the sake of others.

In Edith Stein (Sister Teresia Benedicta a Cruce) we see a woman who found profound faith through understanding the mystery of the Cross and the power of the Redemption. Unlike Thérèse and Elizabeth, Edith spent much of her adult life of working in education before becoming a Carmelite. She too offered her life for others.