



KARMEL HEILIG BLUT

DACHAU

CARMEL OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD DACHAU

“Pondering the law of the Lord day and night and keeping watch in prayer”, so says the key sentence of the original Rule of Carmel. As a contemplative order, the Carmelite Order has prayer as central purpose of its life. Such a life of prayer means being present before God in silence, listening to him and growing in friendship with him. It requires openness, not only towards God, but also towards people and their problems and needs.

The Carmelites bring before God in intercessory prayer the concerns of the Church and the world of today. They share through their ministry of prayer in the sufferings and the issues of our time.

The Community's way of life is characterized by an atmosphere of stillness and silence. Essential elements in the Sisters' day are the celebration of the Eucharist, two hours of personal prayer, corporate recitation of the Divine Office, work in the various workplaces, house and garden to earn their living and support themselves, and an hour of corporate recreation.

The Carmel of the Precious Blood was founded in 1964 at Dachau and it adjoins the former concentration camp. It was the intention of the foundress, Mother Maria Theresia of the Crucified Love, to make this place, where there has been so much horror in the past, into a place of offering and prayer, and to establish here a living symbol of hope.

The essential task of Carmel is to stand before God in intercessory prayer. To do so in this place is to make a special contribution to the ministry of reconciliation in Christ and to help to bear the sufferings of the past and the present. This requires openness to the multiplicity of needs commended to our prayers, and also readiness to let others share in our liturgy and in our experience of faith and prayer.

“Mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends: it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.” *Teresa of Avila*

“The Carmelite Convent of the Precious Blood Dachau is built as a place of prayer, contemplation and inner life. The whole of its design is related to the former concentration camp, the first to be set up in Germany. It is laid out in the form of a Cross, with the camp street as its axis, the Sisters' cells forming the arms, the cloister the head, the chapel and choir the body, the altar and the tabernacle the heart.

The cells are gathered around the altar like a flock around its shepherd. The whole makes up a human form. The Carmel at Dachau is in every way as simple as the Carmelite's habit. In its purity of conception, the entire building is an attempt to accord with the longing for that silence which leads to eternity.” *Professor Josef Wiedemann, architect*

The statue of Mary in the church was originally used in the priest's barrack in the concentration camp. Next to the altar is the burial place of the donator of the monastery, auxiliary bishop Johannes Neuhäusler (1888-1973), who was himself a prisoner in the concentration camp from 1941-1945.