Sharing the Gift of Carmel

With Generation Z

Introduction

Passing on the Tradition to Generation Z

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Passing on the Tradition

“We recognize, however, that “Tradition is alive as long as it is being passed on from one generation to the next” (from the talk of Fr. Michael Casey OCSO to the chapter). This responsibility challenges us to a deeper knowledge and more enthusiastic living out of our tradition. We cannot pass it on to new generations unless we own it, interiorize it, and make it our way of life.”

From the Final Message of the General Chapter 2019

**“what we have loved,
others will love, and we will
teach them how”**

William Wordsworth

The synodal path: a way of proceeding

”At the heart of synodality, Pope Francis places **listening**, the mutual **listening** through which **listening** to the Holy Spirit is done: “A synodal Church is a Church which **listens**, which realizes that **listening** ‘is more than simply hearing’ [*Evangelii gaudium* §171]. **It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn**.”

Nathalie Becquart, “The Synod on Young People, a Laboratory of Synodality.” *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 45, no. 4 (October 2021): 411–26 (emphasis mine).

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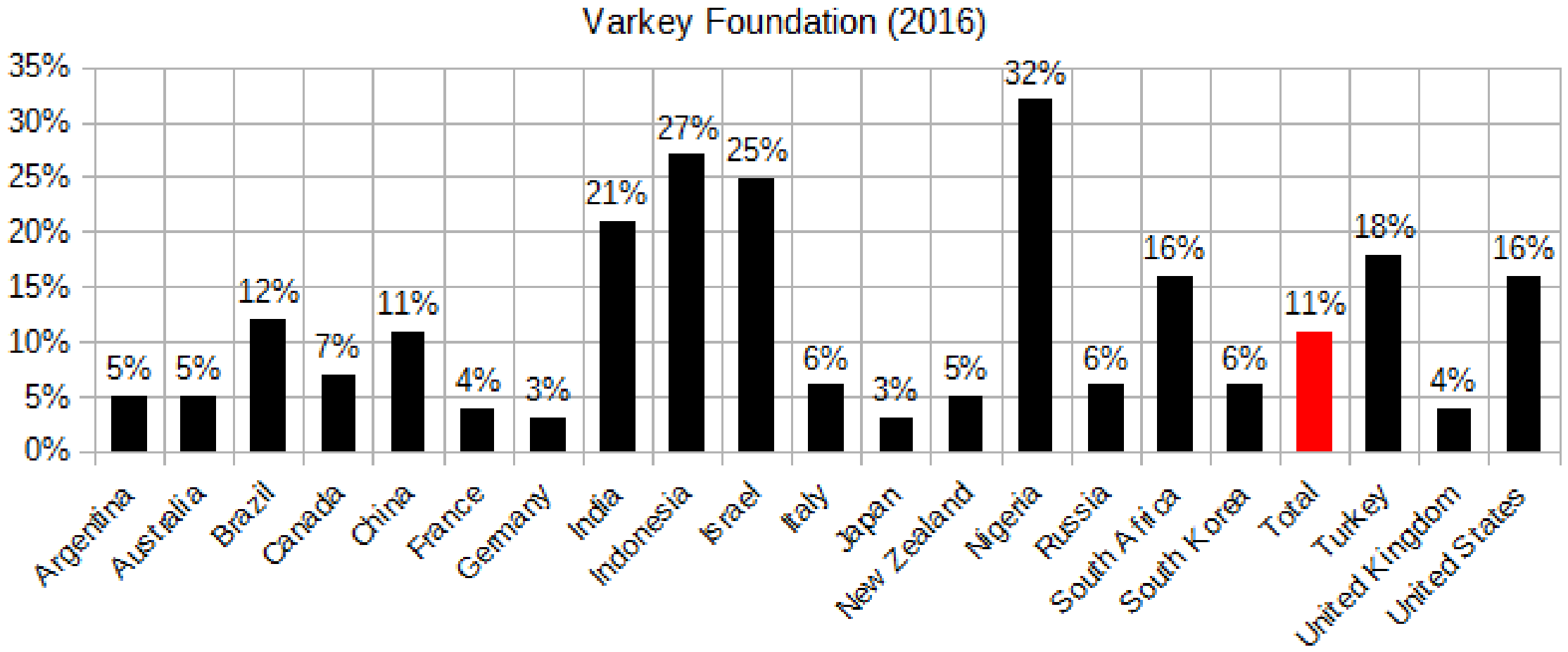
An important point of departure:
Gen Z young is not a homogenous group.

the Gen Z “nones”.

those Gen Z youth who are religiously inclined.

Importance of Religious Faith in the Lives of People Aged 15 to 21

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation_Z



"...[P]eople today aren't merely secularized. They're not thinking about religion and rejecting it: they're not thinking about it at all.”

"Nones" are now the largest religious group in the USA and they are by far, the fastest growing.

A reality check: who are the “nones”?

Pope Francis on intergenerational sharing of gifts

“What do I ask of the elders among whom I count myself? I call us to be memory keepers. . . **I envision elders as a permanent choir of a great spiritual sanctuary, where prayers of supplication and songs of praise support the larger community that works and struggles in the field of life”.** It is a beautiful thing when “young men and maidens together, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord” (Ps 148:12-13).

Christus Vivit, 196 (emphasis mine).

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Pope Francis on Intergenerational Sharing (cont.)

“What can we elderly persons give to the young? “We can remind today’s young people, who have their own blend of heroic ambitions and insecurities, that a life without love is an arid life”. What can we tell them? “We can tell fearful young people that anxiety about the future can be overcome”. What can we teach them? “We can teach those young people, sometimes so focused on themselves, that there is more joy in giving than in receiving, and that love is not only shown in words, but also in actions”.

Christus Vivit, 197

The “Gift”

and the “gifts” of Carmel

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Seven “gifts” to share with Generation Z

1. Beauty
2. Fraternity
3. Prayer
4. Silence
5. Solidarity
6. Joy
7. ???: What would you add?

1. Beauty

"The name Carmel conjures attractive and fascinating images of mountain, loving encounter, fraternity and justice. It suggests beauty, and dwells on what is most essential in the life of the human person…. There is a beauty in Carmel that can inspire us. We have a feeling that Carmel might be the very thing that people everywhere are seeking today."

Fr. Míceál O'Neill, O.Carm.

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St. Elizabeth of the Trinity on how to share the Beauty of Carmel with others

Let yourself be captivated by God’s love.

Build a cell within your heart.

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Two “strategies” for sharing the Beauty of Carmel with Generation Z

1. “You need an ideal.”

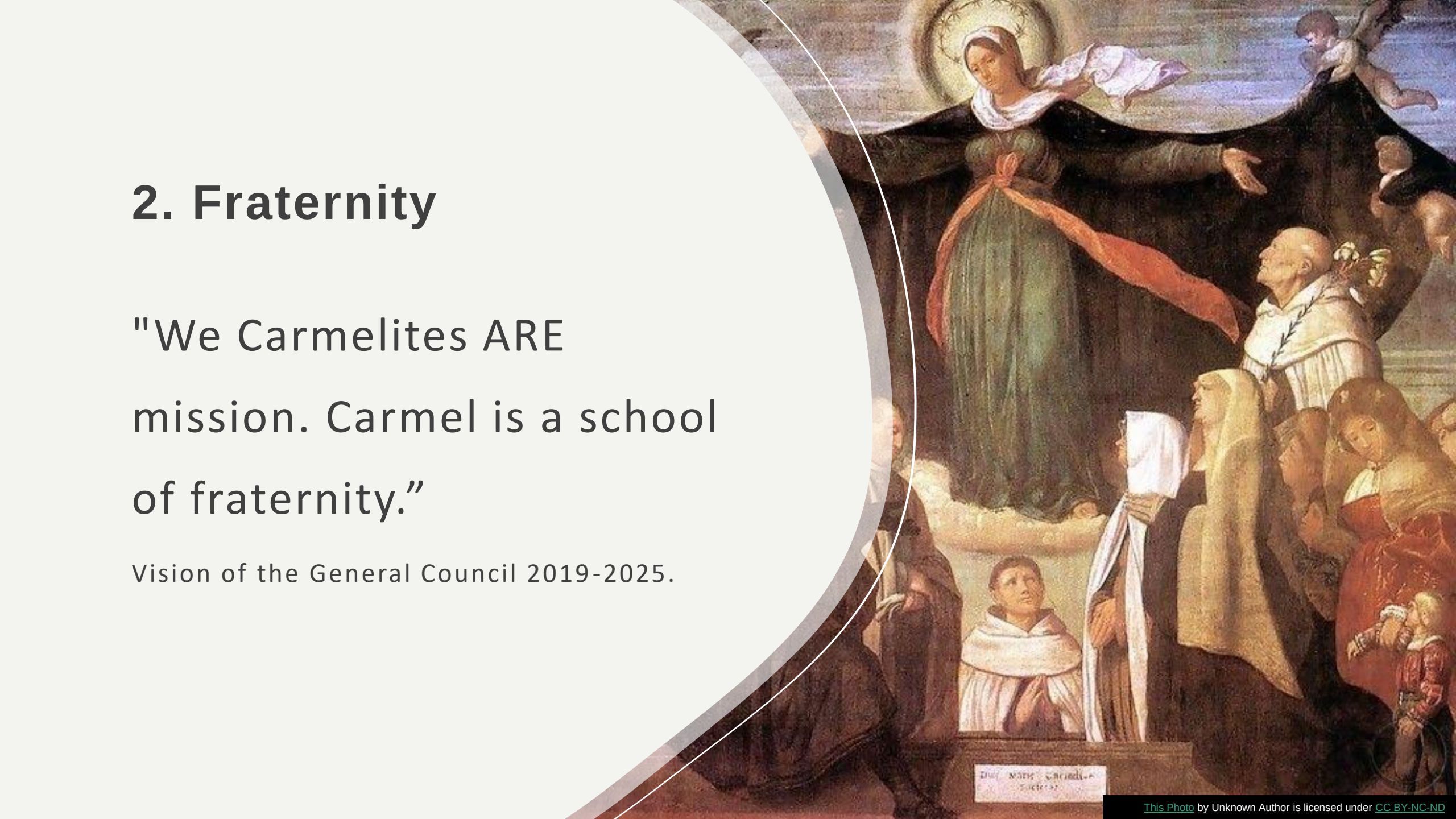
“I understand that you need an ideal, something that will draw you out of yourself and raise you to greater heights. But you see, there is only One, it is *He,* the *Only Truth*! If only you knew him as your Sabeth does! He *fascinates*: He sweeps you away, under His gaze the horizon becomes so beautiful, so vast, so luminious. . . . Since you need to live beyond yourself, live in Him, it’s so simple. And then be good . . .” (Elizabeth of the Trinity Letter 128, emphasis mine).

2. Discover “something more” through interiority.

2. Fraternity

"We Carmelites ARE mission. Carmel is a school of fraternity."

Vision of the General Council 2019-2025.



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Fraternity and Life in Community

"(C)ommunity is essential to our Carmelite way of life. Our communities are called to be a counter-cultural sign of hope to a fragmented and highly individualistic world."

Final Message General Chapter 2019

"Fraternity and life in community are the bedrock and nucleus of the Carmelite charism. Our communities are made up of individual friars who have felt the urge to "live in allegiance to Jesus Christ and serve him faithfully from a pure heart and a good conscience."

Vision of the General Council 2019-2025

Carmelite communities. . .

immerse themselves “in the Word of God through *lectio divina* and the Eucharist, the source and summit of Christian life”.

(Vision, 2019-2025)

Titus Brandsma and sharing the gift of fraternity

"In his own barracks a small group of prisoners began meeting whenever possible in a group they named "The Tilburg Circle," Titus was of course its driving force. . .Without exception each of them experienced a growing friendship for the slight Carmelite. ... Every night as they went to their bunks, Titus gave each one a warm handshake as he traced the sign of the cross on their palm--a simple gesture that reminded them of Him who had suffered for all. This gesture became proverbial. Sharing his own inner peace, Titus gave them confidence."

Miguel Maria Arribas. *The Price of Truth. Titus Brandsma Carmelite* (Darien: Carmelite Media, 2021), p. 169.

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Carmel everywhere

The early monks dealt ingenuously with the challenge of how to remain “Carmelites” when they moved from Mount Carmel to the City. As Kees Waaijman notes, their answer was “[i]n whatever place you live, draw away from the finite and enter into the infinite space which is God. *Turn every place into a Carmel*.”

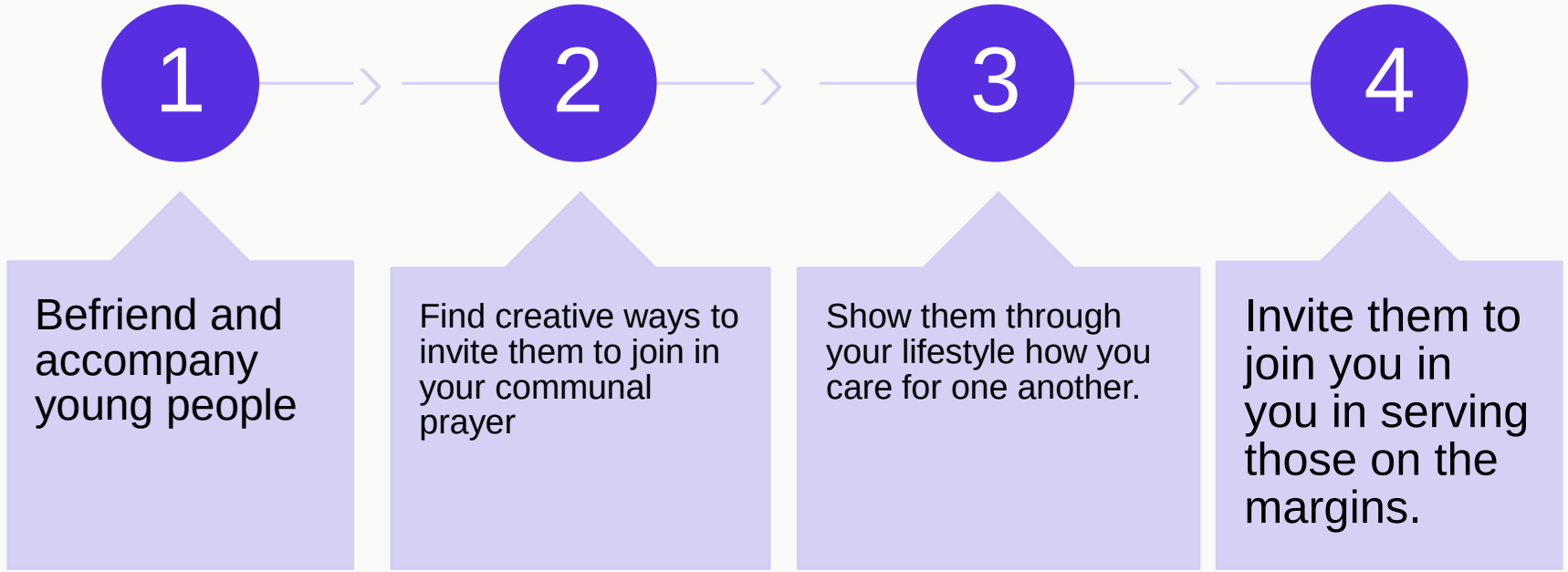
KEES WAAIJMAN, ***The Mystical Space of Carmel, A Commentary on the Carmelite Rule*** (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), p. 3.

What young people seek

"Young people look for a sense of self by seeking communities that are supportive, uplifting, authentic and accessible: communities that empower them."

- from "YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT" PRE-SYNODAL MEETING FINAL DOCUMENT. Rome, 19-24 march 2018

Sharing the gift of fraternity with Gen Z



3. Prayer

“Over its long history, it has been attested by many that Carmel is a school of prayer and that Carmelites teach others how to pray. Indeed we are called to be contemplatives in the midst of the people. Our Rule calls us to remain in our cells or near them “meditating day and night on the Law of the Lord and keeping vigil in prayer” unless we are occupied with other worthy activities.”

Vision Statement 2019-2025

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Young people and openness to contemplative prayer

“Many young people have come to appreciate silence and closeness to God. Groups that gather to adore the Blessed Sacrament or to pray with the word of God have also increased. **We should never underestimate the ability of young people to be open to contemplative prayer. We need only find the right ways and means to help them embark on this precious experience.** When it comes to worship and prayer, “in many settings, young Catholics are asking for prayer opportunities and sacramental celebrations capable of speaking to their daily lives through a fresh, authentic and joyful liturgy”. Christus Vivit, 224

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St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus: Cultivating trust through prayer in an age of anxiety

“Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus was born in 1873. At fifteen years of age, having overcome many difficulties, she succeeded in entering the Carmelite convent. Thérèse lived the little way of complete trust in the Lord’s love and determined to fan with her prayers the fire of love burning in the heart of the Church.”

Christus Vivit 57

Carmelite Prayer and Accompaniment of Gen Z

Invite	Invite Gen Z youth into your communities for liturgical prayer, but first ask about the quality of your communal prayer.
Intensify	Intensify online opportunities for sharing about prayer, but more importantly opportunities for prayer together.
Invest	Invest time in training friars to accompany young people on their spiritual journey.
Organize	Organize gatherings to share about Carmelite prayer especially designated for Gen Z youth.

4. Silence in the midst of a spiritual drought

“Incarnate Word, in whom all nature lives.

Cast fire upon the earth: raise up contemplatives

Among us, men who walk within the fire

Of ceaseless prayer, impetuous desire

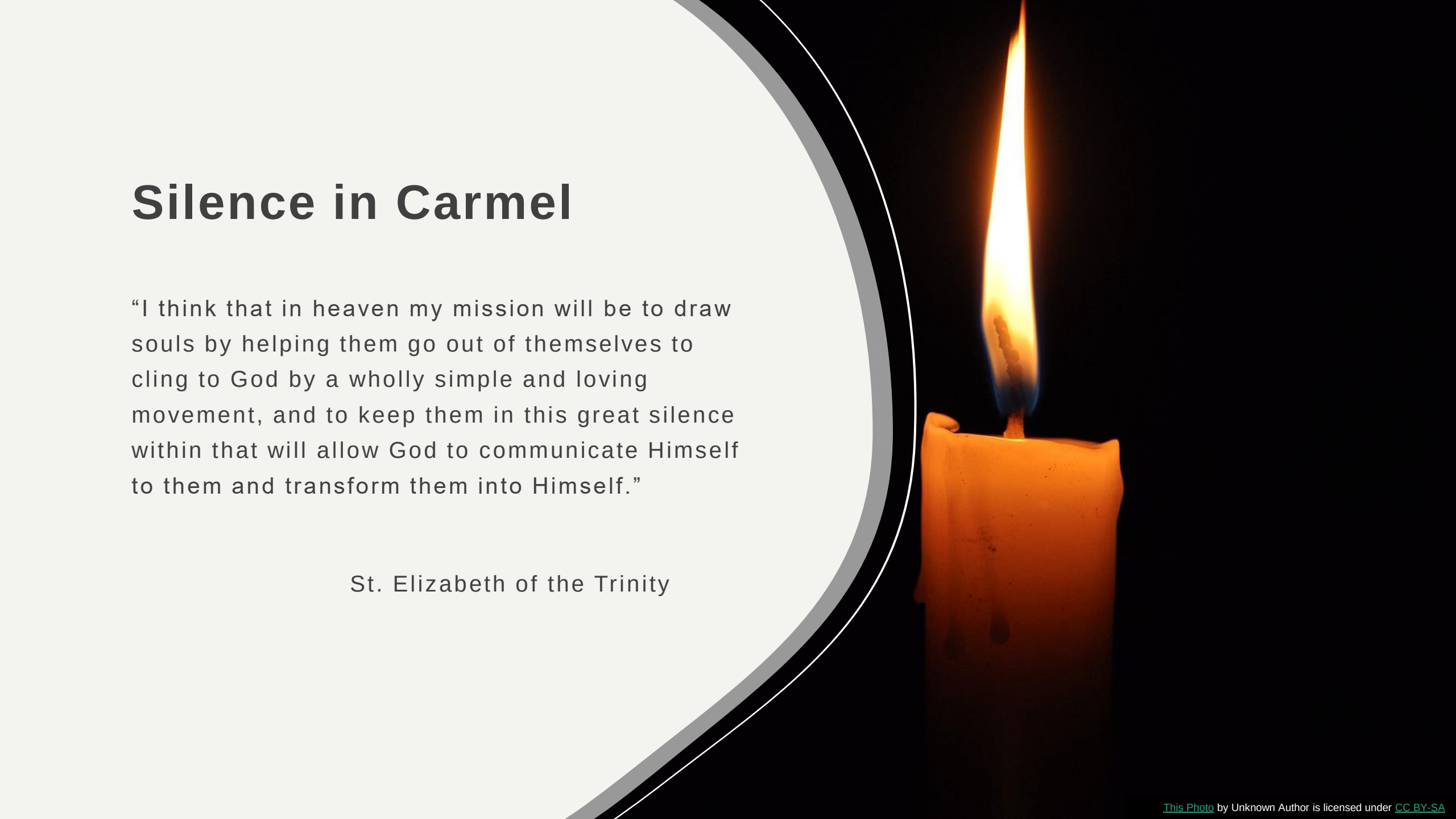
Set pools of silence in this thirsty land.”

See PETER COLEMAN, *The Heart of James McCauley* (Bacchus Marsh: Connorcourt, 2006) p.54.

Silence in Carmel

“I think that in heaven my mission will be to draw souls by helping them go out of themselves to cling to God by a wholly simple and loving movement, and to keep them in this great silence within that will allow God to communicate Himself to them and transform them into Himself.”

St. Elizabeth of the Trinity



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A challenge for Gen Z: embracing silence

"Try to keep still for a moment and let yourself feel his[God's] love. Try to silence all the noise within, and rest for a second in his loving embrace."

Christus Vivit, 115

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An opportunity: Sharing the Silence of Carmel with Gen Z

“Silence is where we can hear the voice of God and discern His will for us. **Many outside of the Church also appreciate meditation, and the Church’s rich culture of this could be a bridge to these secular but spiritual people. It can be counter-cultural, but effective.**”

Pre-Synod Document Youth, 15.
(emphasis mine)

5. Solidarity

“Whoever loves God must seek him in the poor.”

Blessed Angelo Paoli

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Solidarity, Contemplation and compassion in Carmel

“The Christian's programme —the programme of the Good Samaritan, the programme of Jesus—is ‘a heart which sees’. This heart sees where love is needed and acts accordingly.”

Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, 31

When contemplation is combined with compassion in the Carmelite synthesis, the “seeing” and the “doing” take on a new dimension, because Christ is the source, centre and goal of one’s action.

Generation Z, solidarity and involvement in social issues

”the active social conscience” of Generation Z

for example:

Malala Yousafzai, who at age 18, won the Nobel Prize.

Greta Thurnberg, Swedish Environmental Activist

Sharing with Gen Z the Carmelite way of going to “where the night is darkest”

The Carmelite Way: An invitation to go “where the night is darkest, especially among the poor and marginalized, since it is there that God has made himself more present and that his presence can be discovered in new ways. It is there that, like Elijah, we can sense the gentle breeze (1 Kgs 19:12).”

from “A Praying Community at Service of God’s People, 22.

6. Joy

Our Lady of Mount Carmel as guide and intercessor on the journey

Sharing the Joy of Carmel with Generation Z

Joy “is the best witness we can offer to God’s holy faithful people, whom we are called to serve and accompany on their pilgrimage toward the encounter with the father.”

Pope Francis

“Young people are attracted to the joy which should be a hallmark of our faith.”

Pre-Synod on Youth Document, 7.

A prayer

“May Mary, our mother and sister, Star of the Sea, show us the way and journey with us, as we continue to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ, her Son, and transmit from one generation to another the joy of living the Gospel in the Carmelite way of life.”

from the Final Message
General Chapter 2019

7. Which particular gift do you think Carmel has to share with Generation Z

- Which gift
- Why?
- How?