



**Nada: the Path to Mystical Emptiness traced by St John of the Cross**

and

**The Spirit of Carmel for Today**

*Fr Kurian Perumpallikunnel CMI and Professor Celia Kourie*

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2012 from 10am – 4pm**

*Ours is an era of growing interest in mysticism and in recent years people have become increasingly aware of the existence, heritage and legacy of mystics both within, and without, the boundaries of religion. Many people are drawn to the mystics for their inspiration and guidance, as they offer a message of wholeness and healing, of harmony, peace and joy, and also of immense struggles fought and won.*

*John of the Cross was a person who dared to embark on a personal encounter with 'nada' and was engaged in a search for truth in the uncharted waters of human experience. Proclaimed a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius XI in 1926, and traditionally referred to as Doctor Mysticus, "Mystical Doctor", his most important works are "Ascent of Mount Carmel," "Dark Night of the Soul," "Spiritual Canticle," "Living Flame of Love." In the "Spiritual Canticle," St. John presents the path of purification of the soul, that is, the progressive joyful possession of God until the soul feels that it loves God with the same love that it is loved by him. The "Living Flame of Love" continues in this perspective, describing in greater detail the transforming*

*union with God. The “Ascent of Mount Carmel” presents the spiritual itinerary from the point of view of the progressive purification of the soul, necessary to ascend to the summit of Christian perfection, symbolized by the summit of Mount Carmel. The “Dark Night” describes the “passive” aspect, which is God’s intervention in the process of “purification” of the soul.*

*In this day workshop, Father Perumpallikunnel will be exploring the path to mystical emptiness traced by St John of the Cross in the morning, and Professor Kourie will be drawing out threads from the life and writings of St John of the Cross to contemporary spirituality and the ongoing relevance of Carmelite mysticism outside Carmel in the afternoon.*

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**Fr Kurian Perumpallikunnel CMI** was called to become a Carmelite priest at a young age, and after a seventeen year long religious/priestly training in the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) Congregation, was ordained in 1991. In 1992 he went to Papua New Guinea as a missionary and teacher, and in 1995 was able to pursue his heart’s desire to specialize in the mysticism of the Spanish mystic, St John of the Cross, and studied at the Teresianum, in Rome for four years. He was awarded his doctoral thesis in 1999, which was published by St Pauls (London) as ‘Ascent to Nothingness’. In 2000, he was appointed as the Director of Thapovanam, an Ashram set up to promote Indian Christian Mysticism and joined the staff of St John Vianney and St Peters Seminaries, Pretoria, South Africa, to teach Spirituality and Theology in 2003. In 2008 he returned to India and presently teaches spirituality and mysticism at DVK, the Pontifical Athenaeum, in Bangalore. At the request of the Institute of Spirituality, he initiated the publication of Vinayasadhana, the Journal of Psycho-Spiritual Formation and continues to serve as its Chief Editor. Besides his academic endeavours he also serves as the Parish Priest of St Sebastian Church, Anepalaya, Bangalore.

**Dr Celia Kourie** is Professor of Christian Spirituality at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. She is the convenor of the postgraduate programme in Christian Spirituality at the University - DTh; MTh; and BTh Hons. Recent research projects include interspirituality, secular spirituality; inter-religious mysticism and Carmelite mysticism. She is married, with two sons.

**For more information and booking, please email [info@contemplativespirituality.org](mailto:info@contemplativespirituality.org) or telephone 020 8 451 5255. Please bring your own lunch.**

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