

Apostoli Viae

Live – Light - Lead



Apostles of the Way *(Apostoli Viae or AV)*

...To God

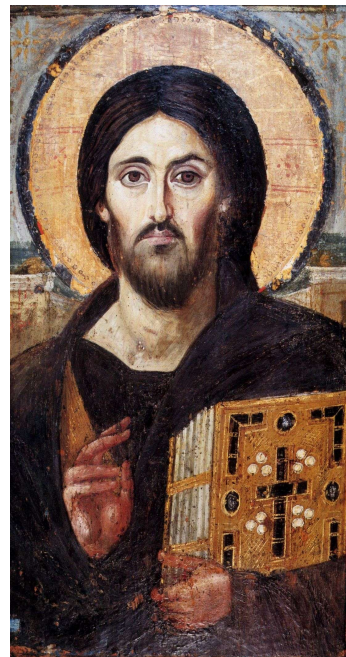
...To Prayer

...To Self-Giving

"I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through me." John 14:6

"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls" Jeremiah 6:16

"Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight..." Mark 1:2,3



The charism of the Way is an intense orientation of life and an expression of love:

to **God:** *We recognize that a covenantal encounter with Jesus, "The Way," opens the door to a living relationship with the Blessed Trinity and His call to a joyfully active pursuit of His way of holiness and sainthood resulting in union with Him and a life-giving love of His people. Union with the Blessed Trinity is the ultimate end of the Way.*

to **Contemplative Life:** *We commit to a joyful life of loving abandonment to God and pursuit of an ever-deepening relationship with Him through Eucharistic devotion, prayer, asceticism, and virtue as illuminated by the Holy Spirit's inspiration of the three ways and Carmelite spirituality.*

to **Self-Giving:** *We give ourselves to God and His people on the way, especially the poor, through the spiritual works of mercy, as we provide or support spiritual direction and Eucharistically centered formation to all seeking to know and then to deepen their relationship with God and His Church. Our proximate end is the instruction of souls in the interior life¹ toward the end of union with God.*



The central "means" of the charism consists in our commitment to prayer and self-giving focused on spiritual formation.

Our Mission:

The mission of the Apostles of the Way is to *live, light, and lead* the Way to union with God.

- **To Live the Way** is to understand, embrace, and joyfully live the contemplative life.
- **To Light the Way** is to joyfully witness to, reveal, and teach the contemplative path.
- **To Lead the Way** is to generously serve and guide pilgrims on the path.

Our Motto: *Unum est Necessarium* – “One thing is needful”

“Unless our life is one of intimacy with God... we cannot be His collaborators, docile instruments in His hands; unless we have an intense interior life, we cannot have the mind of Christ, and be associated with His love and His work for the salvation of souls.”²

In St. Luke’s Gospel chapter 10 verses 41-42 Jesus rebukes Martha in her failure to keep first things first. In contrast Jesus also praises Mary for making the right choice to sit at His feet. He affirms Mary by saying, “...*one thing is needful*. Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her.” So it is that our first desire, and foundational to the contemplative life, is to begin each day on our knees and to work toward a time when we can all remain continuously in union with Him regardless of our occupations or demands of state in life. Though “Mary and Martha must join together,”³ to labor for the Kingdom we seek to always first orient our hearts to prayer and then to service.



Our Coat of Arms:

The Apex and Epicenter of Our Charism - Union with God in this Life and the Next
(Divine Intimacy 194)

We Commitment to Prayer - All Things for God Begin Before God On Our Knees

We Embrace the Progressive Path of Purgation

We Choose the Narrow Road to Union with God

We Seek the Fire of Divine Love and Yield to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit

We Seek to Emulate the Complete “Yes” Offered by Mary and to Rely on Her Care and Guidance On the Narrow Way

We Embrace Self-Denial for the Purpose of Sacrificial Love and Self Giving

We Are Eucharistically Centered, Oriented, and Fortified and We Seek to Make His Presence Known to the World



Our Motto

² Fr. Gabriel of Saint Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.

³ St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, Chapter 7

Our Patron Saints:

Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Saint Teresa of Avila

Our Spiritual Center:

Through our external formation and apostolate work we will actively honor all authentic spiritual traditions of the Church, our internal formation for members of the Way will be centrally grounded in Carmelite spirituality. Formation of members of the Way will draw centrally upon following the deep and pure wells of spiritual insight and guidance of:

- Saint Teresa of Avila
- Saint John of the Cross
- Saint Therese of Lisieux
- Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity
- Servant of God P. Marie-Eugene, OCD



The powerful insights provided by St. Ignatius' rules of discernment and the related examen prayer is also an important aspect of the formation of all members of the Way though informed by and interpreted through the related insights of St. John of the Cross and other Carmelite saints.

Eucharistic Devotion and Formation:

Pope St. John Paul II said, *"To evangelize the world there is need of apostles who are 'experts' in the celebration, adoration, and contemplation of the Eucharist."*⁴ Accordingly, Eucharistic devotion lives at the heart of the Apostles of the Way as the source and summit of our faith



and charism. This devotion is embraced as frequently as circumstances allow by participating and assisting at daily Mass, reflecting on the daily readings from Mass beginning in morning prayer and throughout the day, joining our works of mercy and daily struggles to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and through full, conscious, active, and faithful participation in the Mass. We also dedicate ourselves to preparing before Mass through meditation on the sacred mysteries and silent recollection, and then offering heartfelt thanks after Mass for the sacrificial love of the Lord offered in both

Word and Sacrament. We embrace our need for frequent holy communion with devotion and right disposition, confession, and devoting time to Eucharistic adoration. Finally, we seek to, in concert with our Bishop and priests, deacons and religious of our parish and diocese, promote Eucharistic adoration through study and teaching about faithful participation in Mass and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as a foundation and aid for mental prayer and evangelization.

⁴ Message for World Mission Day (2004)

Commitment to the Merciful Love of God:

Devotion to the merciful love of God is a dedication to unlocking the floodgates of God's tenderness and kindness in one's own life and on the whole world through frequent meditation on the Cross and the mercy of the Father through prayer and study. This devotion includes a readiness to be the first to forgive or ask forgiveness, dedication to being reconciled to God and to all those whom God has entrusted to our care, dedication to reconciling marriages and families as well as the broader communities into which we are sent, frequently praying for one's enemies and the enemies of the Church, readiness to advocate and pray for the persecuted and all those suffering the greatest misery. We embrace the frequent practice of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the observance of Divine Mercy Sunday, the enthronement of the Sacred Heart in one's home or else the veneration of an image of Divine Mercy as asked for in the Diary of Saint Faustina Kowalska, the readiness to take up sacramental and extra-sacramental penance for our own sins and the sins of the whole world, willingness to make any sacrifice or undergo any hardship for the conversion of our brothers and sisters and so that the immeasurable love of God might be known, the daily offering of ourselves as a victim of holocaust for the merciful love of God in accord with the text written by Saint Therese of Lisieux,

Apostolic Emphasis:

The Way is foundationally committed to the spiritual works of mercy serving the teaching mission of the Church and in particular to building up the contemplative life and the practice of Eucharistic adoration, mental prayer and developing an appropriate understanding and disposition toward the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In keeping with this mission, all apostolic works will, in some way, in cooperation with and service to local Bishops and priests, advance the rich spiritual patrimony of the Church. In this respect, a concern for the poor is paramount as they are often deprived of the best formation the Church has to offer. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* noted that, "*The worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care...*" *Apostoli Viae* (AV) is committed to ensuring that the poor always have a way to gain access to the spiritual riches of the Church as provided through all the apostolic works of the Way (e.g. publications, programs, SpiritualDirection.com, Divine Intimacy Radio, and the Avila Institute for Spiritual Formation). Accordingly, the primary emphasis (though not exclusive emphasis) of our apostolate will be the participation, education, formation, and vibrant evangelization of:

- Eucharistic Devotion
- The Contemplative Path of Prayer and Self-Giving
- The Need for and Practice of Spiritual Direction and Intentional Spiritual Growth
- Support of Diocesan Priests

Marian Devotion:

As Mary is the mother of God and the first and perfect disciple of Christ, we look to her example and intercession for all that we aspire to be and to accomplish, and in particular to her "yes" as a central movement of the heart of the Way. Accordingly, we annually take special effort to honor her in all her feast days, and in particular on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, we consecrate and re-consecrate ourselves to her through the Brown Scapular, and we pray the Rosary daily as both a meditation on the life of Christ through her eyes, and as a primary means of devotion and petition.

Ordained, Religious and Laity Leading and Working Together:

The Way affirms the distinctions between religious, consecrated, and the laity, and proposes a co-responsible cooperation called for by Pope Benedict XVI when he said, *"In the first place we must renew our efforts for a formation which is more attentive and focused on the vision of the Church, of which I spoke and this should be both on the part of priests as well as of religious and lay people to understand ever better what this Church is, this People of God in the Body of Christ. At the same time, it is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people. This demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as 'collaborators' of the clergy but truly recognized as 'co-responsible', for the Church's being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity."*⁵ This proposed approach to leadership allows both to fully live the charism within the unique expressions suitable to the state of life of each individual according to their progress in association. Accordingly, the Way envisions:

- Lay and Religious leading together.
- Laity engaging at whatever level as is appropriate to their state in life.
- Priests and religious dedicated to the provision of the sacraments and formation to the community of the Way along with the apostolate of formation and spiritual direction regarding prayer, authentic participation in Mass, and Eucharistic adoration.
- Cloistered contemplatives dedicated to the formation of leaders in the Way and the apostolate of prayer for the community and the world as it relates to the charism.

Community:

The gathering, mutual charity, belonging, and building of faith, relationships, culture and values around a common purpose, is what defines a community. Authentic community is liberating and vivifying, not isolating or stifling. Authentic community is a channel of love and growth resulting in the full flowering of each participant, not a structure focused on control and suppression into a kind of foreign uniformity that is contrary to the unique nature and calling of each individual. The Way values community as a properly structured means of the outplay and growth of love toward God and one another and AV encourages the development of community whenever or wherever possible as essential to the charism. Accordingly, our expression of community, though flexible, is made most visible through:

- Daily individual participation in the Liturgy of the Hours and community prayer and worship
- Bi-Weekly participation in AV evangelistic prayer groups
- Bi-Weekly participation in AV formation groups
- Monthly or Quarterly Eucharistic Gathering for community Mass, adoration, Liturgy of the Hours, and fellowship.
- Annual Pilgrimages, retreats, and Conferences
- Community living for religious and lay who are specifically called to it

⁵ Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome on the Theme: "Church Membership and Pastoral Co-Responsibility" Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Basilica of Saint John Lateran, Tuesday, 26 May 2009

Progress of Association in the Way:

Association with the Way is marked not by the expectation of an instant perfection in the rule of life of each expression but rather by an active and progressive abandonment to God, with each degree of association providing spiritual guidance to lead the soul ever more deeply to union with God. Each rule of life or plan of love is embraced recognizing that fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church, active participation in the sacraments, community life, and daily mental prayer are foundational to progress in association. These are the primary sources of grace necessary for substantive progress to living the life of the Way as we seek union with the Blessed Trinity.

Association with the Way will support and enhance the primary vocation of each member and will never supplant or disrupt them.

The Way is simply the path of life in God proposed by the Church and her saints and envisioned in her Baptismal promises. Even so, the unique approach of the Way is not suitable for everyone.

A key aspect of discernment regarding association is whether or not involvement in the Way is one that enhances the joy and freedom of the participant. Though the path of Christ is one of crosses, in those who are ascending from good to better, it is also marked by peace and transcendent joy. The unique means proposed by the Way bring peace and joy to those called to this path. If the path up Mount Carmel that the Way reveals is challenging but still joyful, then this may be a good indication of a calling to the unique life of the Way. The free will of all members will always be respected and devoid of any coercion. Life in the Way must be freely and joyfully embraced on a daily, monthly, and annual basis.

Each deepening of engagement with the Way reveals a path to union as expressed in the ancient spiritual wisdom of a rule of life. The Way is ever mindful of the scripture “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine.” (Song of Songs). As such, we, the beloved, increasingly experience through humility, the reality that we are first loved by God. The Passionate Lover is unceasing in His pursuit and our response to Him is one of trustful surrender and receptivity. While the distance between the Beloved and His beloved may be great, God will not rest until we have known the fulfillment of all desire in Transforming Union. Thus, the path of Union is a relentless seeking of the Beloved and joyful yielding to Him, which is humbly expressed through the living out of a plan of love (rule of life).

The Path of Progress on the Way

Though the Way proposes a specific path of growth that is normative to the development of the spiritual life, *this should not be seen as a rigid formula* that somehow creates in the person what it aspires to by the mere fulfillment of each commitment or rule of life. Instead, the progressive plans of love should be used as a kind of spiritual *compass* and reasonably adhered to but *adapted to the unique manifestation of God’s plan for each soul* in concert with the discernment of a spiritual director. The four phases of association are summarized as follows:

Sojourner:

A sojourner eagerly desires a deeper relationship with God, is attracted to the works and charism of the Way, and seeks to discern if this attraction reflects a calling to an ongoing relationship. This discernment will be rooted in the context of engagement with formation and the apostolic works of the Way.

Disciple:

A disciple is drawn and committed to active development of the interior life and desires to deepen their relationship with God and recognizes and nurtures this call in and through camaraderie, solidarity, and active participation with the formation, community and works of the Way. As a transition into this phase of association, after a period of a year as a Sojourner, the participant expresses interest in the Way in writing, and if after scrutiny is admitted, they begin to live out commitments specific to the community and charism, and orient their lives to it.

Advocate:

An advocate has all of the foundational elements in place of a Disciple but also includes two years as an active associate under the guidance of an Apostle and can demonstrate knowledge and the ability to clearly articulate the AV charism and The Way of Ascent paradigm for spiritual growth. Advocates live a joyful and positive disposition reflecting the living and hopeful work of Christ in the soul in and through association with the Way and are active in living and promoting AV spirituality.

Apostle:

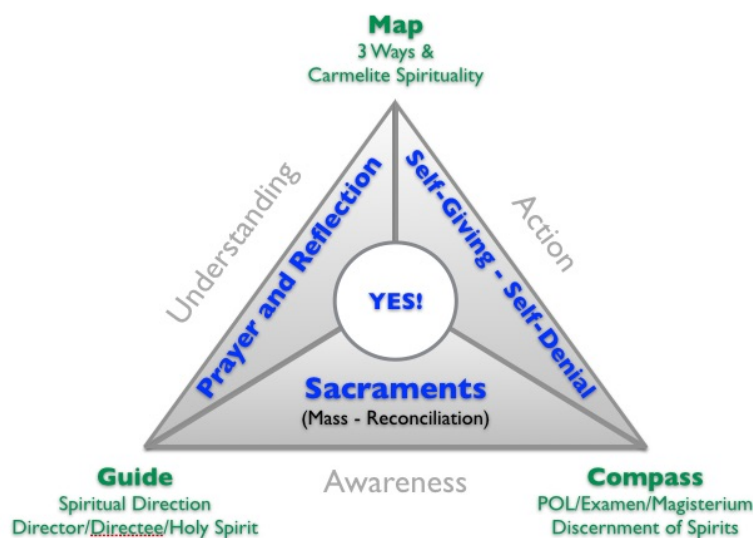
An apostle has all of the foundational elements in place of a first and second degree associate, has completed four years of AV formation and can readily demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the AV charism. They have the ability to communicate, teach, or appropriately support many or all the aspects of the AV Spiritual Life paradigm. They are active mentors or spiritual directors and/or are active in direct support of the work of AV. They make permanent vows to AV and renew these commitments each year through a novena to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and a visit to a Marian shrine or approved alternative. They live a commitment to relentless pursuit of self-giving to God and others.

The Way of Ascent – Formation Paths of the Way:

The formation programs of the way are summarized in The Way of Ascent diagram below. Every ongoing participant in the Way will eventually demonstrate:

- A clear fundamental and substantive “yes” to God in all aspect of their lives.
- An unwavering commitment to participating in the sacraments.
- Daily participation in prayer and reflection.
- Daily engagement with intentional self-giving as expressed in a Plan of Love.
- An ongoing commitment to learning about the interior life.
- An unmitigated embrace of the magisterium.
- An understanding of and daily practice of discernment of spirits and examen prayer.
- Regular engagement with a spiritual director.
- Energetic commitment to community life.
- Enthusiastic engagement in evangelism and formation.

The formation programs of the way are thus designed and ordered in a systematic fashion to allow for the gradual but deliberate incorporation of all of these spiritual gifts of the Church in the lives of each participant.



The order and summary content of formation is as follows (in development):

The Way of Encounter – Prayer Foundations/Level One: What is the spectrum of prayer in the Church, where am I within that spectrum, and how can I grow in prayer and union with God? Beginning with formation and the regular practice of Discovery Prayer.

Text: Into the Deep – Finding Peace through Prayer

The Way of Discernment – Foundations/Level One: How can I begin to engage in the freedom provided through awareness, understanding, and my choices regarding the forces at play both for and against my own spiritual growth? Beginning with the first rules of discernment of spirits.

Text: Discernment of Spirits – Fr. Timothy Gallagher

The Way of Asceticism – Foundations in a Plan of Love and the Examen Prayer: What is the path of self-giving and how can I travel that path as I grow in union with God? This asceticism includes the practice of sacred study or study of sacred doctrine.

The Way of Spiritual Direction – Foundations as a Participant: What is spiritual direction and how can I participate in it effectively and thereby lead others in the same way? How does the Way frame and provide spiritual direction that is specific to the charism and provides an environment where each individual can grow in union with God?

Text: Navigating the Interior Life – Dan Burke

The Way of Encounter – Prayer and Union/Level Two: What is the spectrum of prayer in the Church, where am I within that spectrum, and how can I grow in prayer and union with God? What hinders my growth and prayer and how can I overcome these barriers? How can I continue to foster my own commitment and growth in mental prayer?

The Way of Participation in the Mysteries: How can I fully engage with the sacramental and liturgical rhythm of the Church, worship God more completely, and gain the benefits of all the gifts provided therein?

The Way of Community - Foundations: What is my need for and relationship to a community of disciples in AV? How does the enemy work to destroy community life and how can we combat that activity?

The Way of Discipleship and Spiritual Direction: What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ within AV and how does that relate to Spiritual Direction?

The Way of Humility: What does it mean to humble ourselves before God and those whom we are called to serve?

Text: Humility of Heart – Fr. Cajetan Mary da Bergamo

The Way of Service - Apostolic Works of the Way:

Each member of the Way is a unique creation of God and thus reveals God's image through their interior life and their purposeful expression of love as they serve others. All apostolic activities should enhance the beauty and magnanimity of the soul both to God and others and should, even if difficult, result in increased freedom and joy in the soul.

Apostolic service of the Way can take many forms but all of them must be uniquely characterized by the understanding that *kerygma always precedes* catechesis. This means that Apostles avoid the assumption that those whom they serve know Christ in a personal way. This disposition drives the apostle to emphasize this relationship and to seek to lead all to the understanding of Christ's call to this reality and to offer the invitation to accept this call.

Apostolic works are a vehicle of disinterested self-giving and service to the Church, not as a primary means of increasing the work of influence of the Way. As such, the needs of the local Bishop and/or parish should always take pride of place in consideration for works of service. As much as is possible, members of the Way should use AV apostolates or related tools to serve the needs of their local Bishop, priest, parish, and diocese.

Areas of Apostolic Emphasis:

Primary

- Avila Institute for Spiritual Formation
- SpiritualDirection.com
- Parish Based Schools of Prayer Program
- Spiritual Mentorship/Direction: Spiritual direction will be provided first to members of the way but then freely to all those who desire to deepen their relationship with Christ and His Church regardless of their association with the Way.
- Adoration Events
- Liturgical Formation Events
- Spiritual Direction Schools
- Retreats
- Retreat houses
- Youth Formation and Mentorship and Campus Ministry

Secondary

Though not primary, the Way recognizes and supports those efforts that are unique to the calling of the members of the way and that nobly serve to advance the Kingdom of God. There are innumerable examples but these are just a few:

- Catholic Schools
- Healing and Deliverance Ministry
- Religious Formation
- Specialized Formation for Catholic Apostolates and Groups
- Exercise facilities that provide alternatives to Yoga etc.