Carmelite Bulletin

Carmel of Saint Teresa of Jesus
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Dear Friends,

Greetings of peace and love from your sisters in Carmel. We welcome a new year and DECADE as winter begins to preview signs of spring in tiny sprouts of crocus and eager little shoots of green. It reminds us that there is always hope no matter how dark and cold things look for a time. As long as we have a God who loves us as He does, He always will have the final word that conquers death. And His word is forever and ETERNAL.

As you know, the biggest news for us came in the last six months of 2019, and first three weeks of 2020. Until then, our Carmel had not broken ground in our cemetery since 2011 when Sr. Mary Helena died. But, in July and August of last year we said goodbye to Sr. Ann and Sr. Mary Alice, and now we have seen Sr. Jean of the Holy Spirit leave us for her eternal Home. She died on January 19th after a short warning of eight days, when she experienced a sudden change in her condition. We thank God she was up and about as usual up until then, helping with jigsaw puzzles and joining the community for most of the daily routine. She was also alert—but extremely weak—after returning home from a short hospital stay and being put on hospice. All of us were able to spend time with her and pray by her bedside. Our good friends were so helpful and extended their love to Sr. Jean in her last hours, as well, and when the time came for her to go, we trust she was ready to go to our Lord. Thank you all for your supporting us with your prayers and love. May she rest in peace along with Sr. Ann and Sr. Mary Alice.

Our diocese is celebrating one of our very own priests being appointed to be the next bishop of Shreveport, LA. Msgr. Francis Malone has pastored the largest parish in Little Rock (Christ the King) for 19 years. We are among many who are proud of him and will be praying for him in this new ministry.

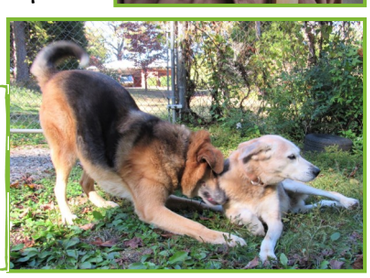
During Advent we have individual days of recollection with the Infant Jesus who travels from cell to cell. Each sister prepares her cell (bedroom) as an outward sign of her heart, decorating as she pleases. If you'd like to see pictures of this Carmelite tradition you can find it on our blog for Christmas/Advent seasons. There isn't a lack of seasonal customs in Carmel, so the liturgical year is brought to life beyond the prayers and hymns of the Mass.

We hope you had a blessed celebration of Christmas. We try to faithfully observe the four weeks of Advent preceding Christmas. It is a time of joyful anticipation and of preparing our souls for a new re-birth of the Savior in our hearts. Along with the theme of Christ's birth there is a distinct character of the parousia, or "second coming" during the first two weeks of Advent. Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD from our Marylake friars came to give us conferences on Eschatology (the End Times), which helped us delve into the liturgical season even more.

Surprise for Sr. Lucia on her feast day Dec. 13th, St. Lucy!

We are happy to say that Sr. Camilla had a hip replacement in early December and is now back to walking the halls with a walker instead of using a wheelchair. She is also relieved of much pain, which is a real blessing. Sr. Camilla and Sr. Bernadette are our two "pillar" sisters left, and we want to keep them with us for as long as we can! Both of them share in all community activities and need minimal help from us during the day. God bless them!

We mentioned in the last bulletin that we would update you on the winter garden, the pond and the well-digging projects. "*WELL* ...." we're still waiting for the well to be finished, but our Lord has provided abundant rain to fill the pond. At this rate the pond might be full by summer. All the grass seed put down by our sisters quickly sprang into blankets of green all around the pond. And the raised gardens? Thanks to the "determined determination" (coined term of St. Teresa) of postulant Marisa, we enjoyed some of the greens and lettuce, a little broccoli, and hope for more *small* harvests still to come. It has been very rough-going with our weather, and we were right about the November cold snap. It killed a lot of plants. Such is a "farmer" life, right? God bless our *real* farmers for what they have to go through to feed all of us.



Matatu on a sister's lap; Paolo and Gracie's true personalities; Sr. Andrea and Blue Eyes hard at work!

Until next time, let us keep praying for one another!

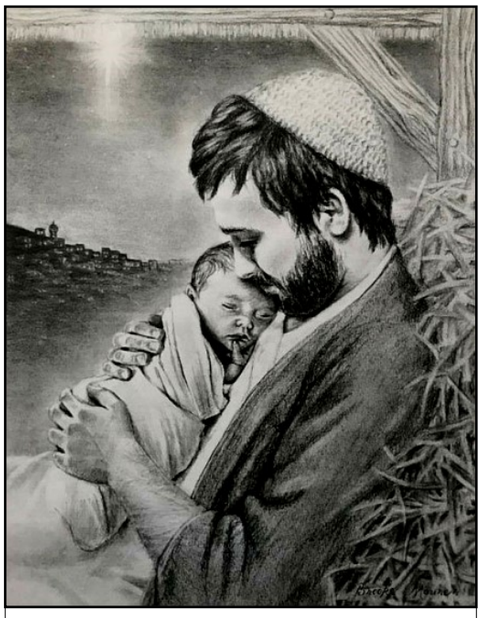
Silence to Silence
Was Jospeh to the Word.
And thus was built
a house of prayer
And not a sound was heard.

—*Sr. Jean Ryan, OCD*

Please join us in our
Novena to
Saint Joseph
March 11th—19th

Joseph, Man of Prudence

Upon returning from Egypt or the desert in the Negeb, Joseph is faced with the decision as to where in Israel, to settle for the protection and consequent growth of the child Jesus. Joseph chooses Nazareth in the northern part of Palestine. This is quite a distance from Jerusalem where every pious male Israelite was obliged to visit and offer sacrifice three times a year. Joseph's decision centers on the well-being of Jesus and Mary placed in his charge. Jesus in his public ministry would later be referred to as the "rabbi from Nazareth" or the Nazorean.



Artist Unknown

Many are the choices and decisions that one makes during a lifetime; some of lesser or greater consequence. Some decisions imply life-changing events as a consequence. The Holy Spirit dwelling within us from our Baptism is always pulsating and ready to prompt us in the decisions and choices that impact ourselves and others with whom we relate. The infused virtue of prudence given us at Baptism comes strongly into play. Prudence is actually an abiding inclination to choose the good and enables one to do so with ease and promptness. Genuine prudence has nothing to do with prudish behavior of sorts. Whereas the prudent person is one who has retrained impulsive and sporadic behavior. Coming to grips with ourselves and consciously reflecting before acting becomes an habitual attitude and unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit to broaden our scope of options for the well-being of those around us and far beyond.

The desire to choose always the good for others blends justice and mercy in ourselves. A whispered prayer to St. Joseph in time of need is sure to draw attention for Joseph is one who knows how to listen and act prudently.

Micah 6:6-8 *(Sr. Jean's favorite verse, Micah 6:8)*

With what shall I come to the LORD
And bow myself before the God on high?
Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings,
With yearling calves?

Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams,
In ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He has told you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?