# Carmelite Bulletin

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Summer 2018 lrcarmel@comcast.net http://www.littlerockcarmel.org Vol. 61 No. 2

Dear Friends,

With you, we've had the weather!

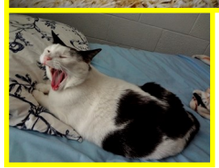
"His thunder rolled round the sky; His lightning flashed to and fro" (Psalm 77:18) … and the wind? Ah, who has seen the wind go by? Neither you nor I. But when we see the trees bow low, we know the wind is passing by. That is the way the Holy Spirit works: silently and effectively. This is His season to work in us all.

He worked in our Holy Father Pope Francis to proclaim the new obligatory memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, "Mother of the Church" to be celebrated each year on the Monday after Pentecost Sunday. We rejoice in this official title and celebration of Our Lady in the liturgy. How appropriate to extend what we have come to call the birthday of the Church at Pentecost to the next day as we recall Mary as Mother of all the faithful in the Body of Christ (see article on back side).

Our Carmelite Provincial and his Council met at Marylake (Monastery of the Carmelite friars here in Little Rock) and came here for a visit in March. We appreciated their coming in spite of their many obligations and limited time. Here in the photo they and our prioress Sr. Maria Cruz find shade under the Japanese Maple that actually got a chance this year to show its beauty, coming to full bloom and staying for quite some time. Usually it blooms too early, getting beaten by the unfinished winter cold.

It seems so far away now but our Easter Vigil was very beautiful and well attended this year. We have enjoyed having the Pascal Candle in our sanctuary and lit each day during the Easter Season—the symbol of Christ our true Light.

Sister Mary Clare, our Carmelite Association coordinator came to see the rooms at the diocesan center for the possibility of a future meeting there. Imagine all the Carmelite nuns from other Carmels coming to Little Rock! That would be an exceptional experience!



The Spring this year in our area was lovely, and stayed cool for an extended time, allowing us to enjoy the slow process of buds trying to open but waiting for just enough warmth. So many birds were in delightful jubilation to match the Easter season. We put up several bird feeders this year and enjoy seeing the many different species discovering free meals outside our windows! There is one squirrel who must be the most acrobatic of creatures, trying to get to the bird seeds and sliding down the Vaseline-greased pole instead. It truly deserves all it can reach.

← Speaking of little creatures, it is a mystery how one more charming stray kitty found its way into the loft in the green house and makes itself at home—not causing any trouble. It waits its turn for any leftover food in the cat bowls. Our own Paolo and Gracie are still doing their watch-dog duty all over the property as well as looking for our loving attention at times. Of course they love to stretch out on the newly turned soil for planting even if the plants are already in! Blue Eyes still loves silence and solitude!

In May we had two ladies for a "live-in" experience to discern a possible vocation to our Carmel. They are very prayerful, hard workers indoors and outdoors, and possess a good community spirit. One is tall, one is small! Pray for them as they seek to follow the Lord's calling in their lives.

At the end of May Sister Anu Maria's family came to visit her. Her brother and his wife live in this country—Connecticut—but her mother, a lovely lady, came in from India. We all enjoyed visiting with them. They had many interesting things to tell us about their land and home in India. It must be a beautiful country.

To close, may your summer be pleasant and restful and not too hot. We thank all of you for your great goodness to us and we keep you in our daily prayers. And, of course, a special mention in Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Novena: Please join us! Many blessings on all!

Please join us in our Novena to

*Our Lady of Mount Carmel*

**July 8th–16th** with Holy Mass Each evening at 7:30 pm

Novena preacher: Rev. Terrance Cyr, O. Carm.

*Come, ring out our joy to the Lord, as we thank Him for the favors we have received through Mary, the Virgin Mother of Carmel.*

Carmelite Liturgy

## Mary, Mother of the Church

When Jesus walked among us in Palestine some 2,000 years ago, in order to teach his followers he frequently used familiar imagery as part of the natural environment. Thus, he spoke about seed being sown and sprouting on rocky ground, wild grapes and wineskins, patches sown on garments new and old. The barren, rocky terrain of the area provided an apt image of the steadfast trust in the Lord presented in the Old Testament; an image of God as Israel's savior and widely used in the New Testament. "I love you, Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. My God my rock of refuge." (Ps. 18:1-3) Being able to cut huge rocks for transport and building purposes was a skill well developed in the time of Christ. Herod, a master builder gained considerable repute as archeologists have noted.

Christ, himself used the image of rock changing Simon's name to Peter and declared upon this rock (Petrus) I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:18) Peter received his commission to bind and to loose – to interpret Christ's teachings. In confrontation with the elders, Jesus referring to himself quotes Ps 118:22, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Having tasted the humbling experience of humiliation and grace of repentance, Peter goes on to prove himself the steadfast rock of his calling and becomes a witness to the faith in time a of persecution. Paul and other writers of the New Testament refer to the gradual building up of the Church as a body of living stones headed by Christ, the cornerstone and fitted together to form a temple sacred in the Lord.

*A new Obligatory Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, "Mother of the Church" was added to the General Roman Calendar this year, to be celebrated each year the Monday after Pentecost.*

The mother of Jesus standing at the foot of the cross until the end demonstrates her own rock like faith lived steadfastly under the guidance and continued strength of the Holy Spirit during her lifetime. In her waiting alongside the apostles in the upper room for the promised Advocate, she is like a pillar of faith in their midst and rightly takes her place as Mother of the Church, in the new temple constructed of living stones.

Given this background, for the early hermits on Mt. Carmel carving out cave like dwellings for themselves in the later 12th century and fitting stones together, was in a unique way a manner of building up the body of Christ both physically and spiritually. Choosing her as their Mother and Sister, they recognized their need to live faithfully their charism of a life of solitude and prayer. They honored her by erecting a small chapel dedicated to her thereby acknowledging this woman of faith as a strong pillar pointing to Christ, the center of their lives. We do well to live under the protecting and guiding influence of Mary, Mother of the Church as she has given birth to Christ in our lives and leads us safely and surely in our own journey of faith. Keeping Christ present in our midst, we join with her in building up the body of Christ as a sacred temple to the Lord.

*Image above: Mary, Mother of the Church by Duccio di Buoninsegna*
*Right: Today's remains at the first Carmelite site, Haifa, Israel*