Carmelite Bulletin

Carmel of Saint Teresa of Jesus
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Summer 2019 lrcarmel@comcast.net http://www.littlerockcarmel.org Vol. 62 No. 2

Dear Friends,

By the time you receive this bulletin we will be experiencing typical summertime heat and humidity. But like many parts of the country—as we write this—we still have lots of rain and unseasonably cool temps. We have been praying for those places with floods and other natural disasters. But we also rejoice in the beauty all around us as a result of all the rain. Nature knows the risen Lord of all life!

We hope you all had a wonderful Easter season. Ours was blessed and festive. We try to live the liturgical life as best we can, staying with Jesus in the desert of Lent, through the night of Holy Thursday in adoration, and in His passion and death until He emerges from the tomb in glorious triumph!

During the Easter season we heard the sad news that three of our dear Secular Carmelites were called to our Lord and left this world. Joseph de Prez passed away on Divine Mercy Sunday and Ginger Crews died on the anniversary of her late husband's death, May 1st, St. Joseph the Worker. Teresa Siebenmorgan died March 30th. We will truly miss them and their quiet witness to holiness in the Carmelite tradition. May they rest in peace and intercede for us. Our prayers go out to their families.

Our Carmelite brother and friend of many years, Fr. Ralph Reyes, OCD, was in town at Marylake (where our OCD Friars live) and graciously came by for a visit. What a joy it was, as always, to see a "traveling friar" from our Oklahoma Province. We are blessed to have three of our Carmelite friars in Little Rock whom we see fairly regularly.

Another friend from "times past" visited us recently. Sr. Judith Maria, OSB belongs to St. Scholastica Monastery in Ft. Smith, Arkansas and was a novice here in our Carmel several years ago. She made her perpetual profession earlier this year. Our two communities have known each other since our sisters arrived in Little Rock in 1950. All the sisters enjoyed catching up with her and her mother who also came along.

Now for the news you've surely all been waiting for! Gracie (our dog) has recuperated well from her leg surgery. We're happy to report she is on "all fours" now. She is not yet running around at full speed, but we're sure she's content to be freed from the leash that kept her tied up for safety. The other critters are doing fine, and one of the feral kitties even allows Sr. Anu Maria (his food provider!) to pet him while he's eating!

Speaking of critters, Sr. Lucia is in the process of building a squirrel-proof cage atop one of the new raised garden beds for tomatoes. She built four good-sized raised beds in place of the one we had outside our refectory. They are lovely. We hope that by the time you get this bulletin we will have some vegetables, herbs and colorful blooming flowers. It seems many of our sisters now have a spot on the property somewhere that they are cultivating either for beauty or for crops of some kind. The place is looking much nicer outside. We even had a special "Gardening Day" on the feast of St. Isidore the Farmer on May 15th!

Last year around this time (May 2018) our bulletin showed a picture of two women who were visiting us to discern their vocations. We are happy to share the news that one of them, Lynne Purkey, will be entering our Carmel this summer! In our next bulletin we will share more about her. Please pray for her and for another aspirant to our community who will be spending time with us this summer—and for other women to answer the call to Carmel. We know you pray for us and we are very grateful!

Please know we are praying for all of you and your intentions, for our world and our Church. Don't forget to visit our website and blog periodically. Have a blessed Feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel!

Please join us in our Novena to

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

July 8th–16th
Holy Mass Each evening at 7:30 pm
Novena preacher: Rev. Steven Payne, OCD

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.

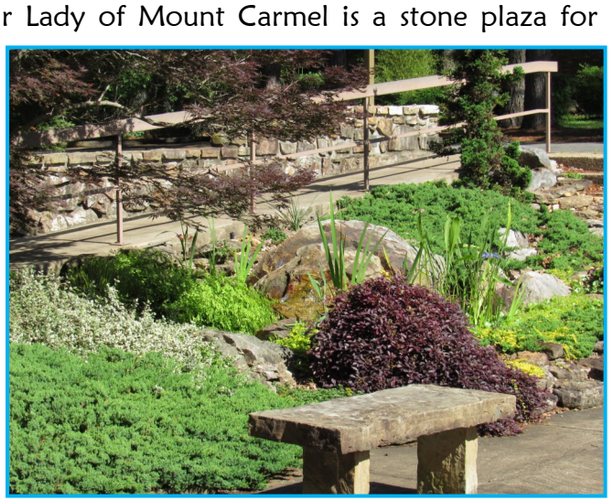
Carmelite Liturgy

The Spring of Elijah

Known to us from Old Testament times some nine hundred years before Christ, a lovely mountain spring frequented by the robust and fiery prophet Elijah gradually in time came to be known as the Spring of Elijah. Tradition has it that Elijah's cave atop of Mount Carmel in Palestine was a solitary place of prayer and rest for the zealous prophet. Later, in the early part of the thirteenth century, a group of hermits sought to establish themselves as a community and took Elijah as model. They too, wanted to be like the prophet zealous for the Lord God of Hosts. In order to stabilize their way of life, they petitioned Albert, the Patriarch of Jerusalem to codify their manner of living in the form of a simple Rule. This he did in the classical form of letter writing of the time. He addressed them as Brothers of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel living near the spring of Elijah.

Having constructed a small chapel in the side of the mountainous slope, they named it in honor of Mary, taking her as their Patroness and Lady of the Place. Some of these hermits were former crusaders. Now they laid down their tokens of chivalry to pledge allegiance to Jesus Christ and to his Mother. These solitaries lived in small cave niches carved out of the limestone slopes of the Wadi Ayin Es-siah. In imitation of Mary, their patroness and model, they pondered the word of God and balanced their life of prayer with some work and apostolic preaching.

Here at the entrance of our chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a stone plaza for prayerful reflection with a stream of water gushing forth from the middle of a huge rock (see below). Reminiscent of that first spring on Mount Carmel, it serves to remind and welcome us to drink freely from Christ in word and the sacraments who presents himself as a wellspring and torrent of grace. He the rock, who fed his hungry and thirsty chosen ones in the desert gives Himself freely to those who earnestly seek him. In the words of St. John, the Evangelist, "Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Rivers of living water will flow from within him"(Jn 7:38).



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Spring of Elijah photo https://www.karmel.pl/archeologia-karmelu/