Carmelite Bulletin

Carmel of Saint Teresa of Jesus
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Dear Friends,

Blessings and peace of Advent and Christmas be upon you! As we recall the events over the last few months we are amazed at all that has unfolded in such a short amount of time. When we left off last time it was the end of September. We were blessed to have some of the Mount St. Mary's senior girls come for their annual "Mercy Day" service project. They courageously tackled the much-needed job of cleaning up our Prayer Garden walkway behind the monastery which includes the stations of the cross and the mysteries of the rosary. We thank them for a great job. Our dogs also enjoyed their company, especially Paolo! Our annual community retreat ended the month of September and brought in October with the Carmelite feast of St. Therese and our Holy Mother St. Teresa.

Speaking of happy animals, we began noticing three baby squirrels scurrying around in our courtyard. Pretty soon they were running towards us for food like the turtles do in summertime. They hadn't learned yet to be afraid of humans, so some of us were able to pet them while they were eating. But we had to beware of bites since they did not know the difference between our hands and the food!

Arrows indicate future water level, 10 ft. at deepest level.

We mentioned last time that the two ponds in our acreage were transformed into one big pond. The work has continued so that the project is almost complete. Now we await the rains of heaven to fill it! We are also happy to learn that we have a water source on our property. We will be drilling a well soon for additional water supply for the gardens and the pond. We thank the kind, generous friends who have made all this possible. You are in our prayers.

The weather was so nice this fall that we postponed our plans of monastery-house cleaning (instead of "spring-cleaning") to quickly put in a winter garden in our new raised beds outside the refectory. We also had to put a finish on the wood which hadn't yet been done. Amazingly, we soon had a beautiful vegetable garden ready to grow. Now as we write this bulletin we pray the hard freeze of last night did not completely kill them. We'll let you know next time!

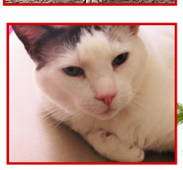
In October three sisters travelled by car to St. Meinrad Monastery/Seminary in Indiana to attended an Ongoing Formation meeting for our Association of Carmels. The material was enriching as well as the time spent with many of our sisters from around the country. We are now listening to the recorded talks during our meals and using them in discussion. Our sisters were also grateful to see five of our six seminarians studying there. They took us for a tour of the seminary and treated us to coffee in the campus coffee shop. One of our sisters was happy to see an old friend of hers when we stopped by in Kentucky. Her friend is currently the Mother Superior of the Passionist Nuns in Whitesville. They had not seen each other since 1995! Thank God for precious reunions. Soon after arriving home we finally began cleaning the monastery. Slowly but surely, by the time you receive this, we will have finished this big endeavor.

Our sisters are doing well although we miss our two who died, Sr. Mary Alice and Sr. Ann. They continue to be with us in many ways and we ask them for their prayers. Our two postulants are also doing very well as they enter into our way of life more deeply. They enrich our community very much, and we continue to be grateful to our Lord for sending them to us. Please pray for them and for more young women to join us!

May you know our prayers are with you. We are always grateful for your love and friendship. Happy Thanksgiving, blessed Advent and glorious Christmas!

Matatu

Gracie



Blue Eyes

Sr. Andrea *Sr. Petra* *Sr. Lucia* *Marisa* *Sr. Maria Cruz*

Please join us for our Christmas Novena
December 17th - 25th

Christmas Mass Schedule:

Tuesday, December 24th, 7:30am and at Midnight
(Christmas Carols 11:40 pm)

Wednesday, December 25th, 8:30 am

Advent: Season of Waiting and Hope

In the liturgical cycle as it carries us through the year, attention is focused on the prophets beginning in August reminding us that the day of the Lord is near; his coming is soon to be upon us; we know not the day nor the hour. Therefore, we are challenged to be in readiness with lamps burning brightly like servants ready for their master's return. Those who have persevered faithfully will be richly rewarded. Actually, we are each one held moment by moment in our Creator's hand with his loving compassion seeing us through successive moments and events. Never mind if the world around us seems unduly shaken and our own times turbulent; the psalmist assures us in Ps. 46 that God is in charge. "Be calm and know that I am God." Each of the Old Testament prophets in their day experienced similar chaos. Jeremiah speaks blatantly of his personal fears and anxiety, questioning the very worth of his existence.

Approximately four thousand years passed before the coming of Jesus Christ on this earth in his humanity showing by word and example just what our Creator God is really like and the unbounding mercy and love he has for each of his sons and daughters regardless of race or creed. All have been invited to the banquet in his kingdom. The four Sundays of Advent preceding Christmas serve as a means of pointing to his comings among us: at his birth, in our lives now, and at his final coming in glory. How encouraging are the words of the prophet Isaiah, used on the Second Sunday of Advent, "Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice and decide aright for the land's afflicted" (Is. 42: 1-3).

In the gospel of the First Sunday (Mt. 24:37-44), our attention is drawn to the unknown hour of the coming of the Son of Man. On the Second Sunday, John the Baptist appears as the prophet crying out in the wilderness to make straight his path, declaring himself unworthy to carry the sandals of one he heralds. Jesus Himself in the gospel of Matthew (11:2-11), points to John as the messenger sent ahead to prepare the way. The overall view is the resounding call to a change of heart because the Lord is coming. As we approach the Fourth Sunday, St. Paul in his letter to the Romans (1:1-7) reminds us that we have all alike been called to holiness. In the gospel that follows (Mt. 1:18-24) St. Matthew narrates simply how the birth of the long-expected one came about. Creating a climatic ending to both strengthen our desire and offer assurance of hope, the name "Emmanuel," meaning *God is with us*, closes the narrative.

Successively as events unfold, from birth onward to the end of Christ's human existence among us as God-made-Man, every human emotion experienced is mirrored in the life of Jesus. There is enough instruction for teaching and reflection for each person to ponder and personally identify with him in every challenging situation of life.

In this light, we might do well to examine our priorities, classifying in the order of importance the ordinary daily activities and plans that seem so important—the treasured customs garnered over the years. All of these can either keep us in tow with reality or stifle reflection on the purpose of His coming among us commemorated this Christmas. Permeated with a certain ring of joy, a reflective watchfulness can well serve to hold us in an attitude of simple readiness and welcome. This Advent season presents us with a new opportunity to usher him into our midst, this Emmanuel who promises to be and remain *God with us*. "All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of our God" (Ps 98:3b). May the Prince of Peace be truly "Emmanuel" to you ... God in your midst.

... Merry Christmas!

Sr. Magdalene, Sr. Mercia Mary, Sr. Cecilia, Sr. Jean, Sr. Stephanie, Sr. Bernadette, Lynne, Sr. Anu Maria and Sr. Camilla