Carmelite Bulletin

Carmel of Saint Teresa of Jesus
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We begin writing this bulletin on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. We ask her and St Joseph's intercession for all those who have and are suffering from the effects of Covid-19. It is with great sadness that we have learned of those of you who have lost dear family members and friends. We grieve with you, but with great confidence in our Lord's mercy and the promise of eternal life.

As some of you may remember, we have a special custom on Epiphany for choosing a patron saint for our community every year. Sister Camilla found the Infant Jesus (a tiny statue) in her piece of cake and once again our Holy Father St John of the Cross is our patron! She was proclaimed King for the day and like all great kings she had to plan a party for the community that night. St John of the Cross has been given a job to do as our patron and we ask him to accompany and guide us throughout the year, as well as his intercession for all the needs of our community. "Well and good if all things change, Lord God, as long as we are rooted in You." (Sayings of Light and Love - St. John of the Cross)

In late January, we had our Triennial Canonical Visitation. Fr. Ralph Reyes OCD and Sister Mary Clare Trolley OCD, along with her driving companion Sister Christine Rosencrans OCD, spent nearly a week with us. The Visitation is a means of helping the community to evaluate how we are living our life as Carmelites and how best we might make changes if needed. Of course we were on our best behavior that is until Fr. Ralph cooked for us… "well and good Lord God if all things change as long as we are rooted in you!" and yes even the Bees were on their best behavior (unless you stood in their path of flight). Thank you Fr. Ralph and Sister Mary Clare! It was a joy to have you with us and indeed a big help for our community.

Our Carmelite Friars at Marylake joined us for dinner to celebrate World Day for Consecrated Life on the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord, Feb. 2nd. We enjoyed a delicious dinner that was prepared by our dear friends Mary Wildgen and Lee Lee Doyle.

Recently, the tomb stones for our three Sisters: Ann, Mary Alice and Jean were donated and installed by our dear friends. Seeing the tomb stones in place brought back precious memories for all of us. It was a joy to have a quick visit with Sister Ann's nephew Steve and his wife Pami Wiedemer, who were traveling through Arkansas to visit their daughter in Texas.

We ask your special prayers for a young woman, Angelica, who has requested to make a three month live-in with our community. A vocation to the religious life is a call from God that is tested over time. We ask prayers for her family as well, as they also answer the call to accompany her to where God may be calling her and where they know she will be happiest.

Blue Eyes joined our kitties Jerry and Velvet in early January. There are so many wonderful stories to tell about the gift he was to us. Our feral kitties Mat ta tou and Leggie, who live in the green house, seem to be content. Many beautiful birds come for the suet at this time of the year. The red of the Cardinals and the blue of the Blue jays are especially striking against the backdrop of the white snow. A possum too likes to share in the feast when no one is watching and will take away the bird suet if left unattended. Paulo and Gracie are doing well, maybe a little slower, but ready for a challenge if called on. The fish are laying low as they hibernate for the winter, but manage to come up when temperatures rise for a little food.

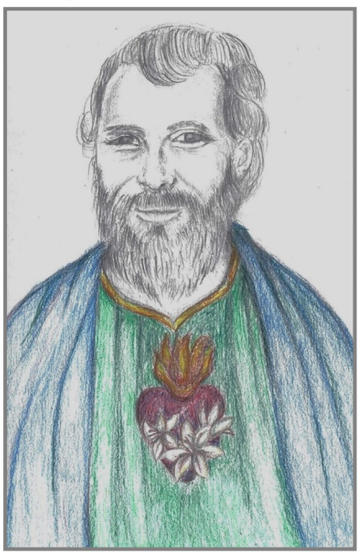
Please join us in our
Novena to Saint Joseph

March 11th — 19th

Patron and Protector of the Carmelite Order
And Model of Prayer

St. Joseph, Protector

Imagine, being suddenly awakened during the night and told to flee into a distant country. The mind might become flooded first with questions, then practical details as to what to take and what to leave behind. There is no time for brief farewells or explanations to relatives or close neighbors! St. Matthew records a similar happening in his gospel, Mt. 2:13-15. This becomes the second time that St. Joseph acts promptly after receiving a message during his hours of rest. This time the command is to flee for the protection of the child. Mary and Joseph as husband and wife offer us an admirable example of ongoing fidelity and trust as the plan of God unfolds in the lives of both. Like Abraham of old both are ready to step out in faith trusting in God as protector and the one who ordains all. In this gospel scenario, Joseph becomes protector, shadow of the eternal Father. As foster-father of Jesus, he valiantly steps forward, foot traveler into the night with mother and child. Leaving behind what is known and familiar the three travel quickly over dusty roads and rocky terrain. Familiarity with the scriptures may have led them to recite psalm verses together especially those of Ps. 31, so appropriate for the occasion. "My destiny is in your hands; Rescue me from my enemies, from the hand of my pursuers." (Ps. 31:16)



On December 8, 2020, Pope Francis proclaimed a year of Saint Joseph, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the declaration of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. From the pen of Pope Francis flows an exquisite explanation of this title so aptly appropriated to the foster-father of Jesus. It is with a father's heart - that is how Joseph loved Jesus to which all four Gospels refer to as "the son of Joseph." (Apostolic Letter – Pope Francis 12/8/ 20)

Allowing Joseph to be our protector and guide, a man of quiet prayer, dutiful discernment, and ongoing fidelity and trust establishes us in a quiet calm and acceptance. Unrecognized blessings are revealed after moments and events of struggle and hardship to those who persevere. As the year unfolds may we come to see and appreciate the steady and trustworthy Joseph offering himself in relationship both as friend and protector. Who among us would not welcome such a staunch and faithful friend in whom we can readily confide our cares and daily concerns? Setting aside our anger, our disappointments and accepting things as they are, may we too go forth in hope remembering God's words to Joseph: "Son of David, do not be afraid!" (Mt: 1:20) Ordering our lives according to the Gospel, enables us to find courage for everything for in the end all that matters is the attainment of his will. Just as Joseph made it clear that he was called to serve the person and mission of Jesus, our lives amidst varied circumstances should carry the same message to others both in speech and action. Being heralds of the Good News, Joseph goes before us without clamor or fanfare, but as a strong still light beckoning us onward. His compassionate heart is that of a father, ready to accept the broken and bruised reed of our failures and anxious to reset us on the course again. St. Joseph, I trust you as my father, friend and faithful protector.

(Drawings by our novice, Sr. Josefina Rose)

Winter wonderland in Little Rock Feb. 17