Carmelite Bulletin

Carmel of Saint Teresa of Jesus
7201 West 32nd St. Little Rock, AR 72204-4716
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Dear Friends,

We greet you with joy in the Risen Jesus who is our hope, knowing that through His Resurrection He has conquered death and brought us the fullness of life. How grateful we were to be able to celebrate this great mystery with a public celebration of the Easter Vigil and Easter liturgy which we missed so much last year. The lighting of the Easter fire, the blessing of the Easter Candle and the singing of the Exultet had an added poignancy as we were able to be reunited again with our beloved congregation singing again the Alleluias.

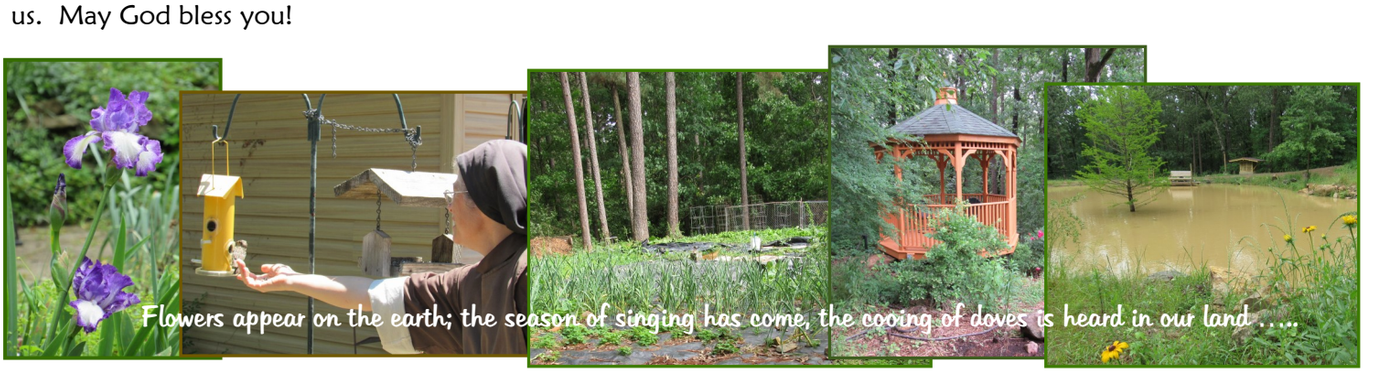
Almost all of the community was able to get the COVID-19 vaccine this spring, with no serious side effects. We thank our Bishop and Fr. Harvey for facilitating. This has enabled some family members to come and visit which is an added joy. We are grateful for again avoiding the virus but we are very much concerned for those who are suffering from the virus, especially in India. May God have mercy on the people of India and quickly bring them relief from their suffering and an end to the pandemic.

Another joy of the Easter season was the addition of two new puppies who arrived Easter Monday. They are certainly still puppies with an abundance of energy, curiosity and mischievousness. They have caught several of the turtles in the acreage and love roughhousing in and around the pond. It was not an easy task for 12 nuns to decide on theirs names. But after giving it time and getting to know their personalities, we settled on Toby for the male dog and Sadie for the female. They are named after Tobias and Sarah from the book of Tobit. Toby means "God is good" and Sadie means "princess". Toby is a Chesapeake Bay retriever mix and Sadie is a Labrador retriever mix.

We are enjoying mild weather this time of year along with some good rain showers. The bees are busy collecting the nectar from the flowers and keeping the bee keeping Sister busy. This winter we lost one of the hives so in the spring the sisters watched live stream demonstration with our local bee expert Jon Zawislak on how to split a hive. They proceeded to go out and successfully split the hive that survived into two colonies. In May, Sister Josefina Rose, the Community Bee Keeper, was up in one of our persimmons trees trying to catch a swarm from one of the hives, which proved unsuccessful as the bees did not stay in the hive she put them in. Many lessons learned so far in the first year of bee keeping. Pat Cullivan is keeping us supplied with raw honey.

We have also enjoyed having more time to garden this spring with two garden days. On one day Sisters were able to weed and clean up the many garden areas and plant a lovely assortment of flowers given by our friend Larry Freyaldenhoven. On the other garden day in honor of St. Isidore, some Sisters constructed a new garden bed outside of our refectory while others weeded and planted wildflower, morning glory and cosmos seeds near Stella Maris, beautifully refinished thanks to Sister Anu Maria. On Mother's Day we honored Our Lady by processing around the Monastery praying the rosary culminating with the crowning of Our Lady by Sister Petra at the Grotto.

We are very excited as our diocese ordained five new priests at the end of May. The ordinations were held at the Barton coliseum because of its large capacity which gave our Bishop Anthony Taylor the opportunity to invite the whole diocese and still keep social distancing. We were certainly united in the Spirit and prayer and look forward to having the new priests celebrate Mass here at the monastery. Please check out our website as it is being updated for more news and pictures and if you are able please join us for our Novena to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, knowing that wherever you are we are united with you in prayer. We are grateful for your continual goodness to us. May God bless you!



Our Chapel

Please join us in our
Novena to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

July 8th — 16th

Homilist for the Novena Masses will be
Rev. Jerome Early, OCD,

Discalced Carmelite Friars of the Oklahoma Semi-Province

The Garden of Carmel

Gardens are very attractive places. They are of many kinds. Some contain a plethora of flowers, vines, fruit orchards, ponds, waterfalls and salutary edibles of nutritional value. Some are more manicured with borders of stone and neatly trimmed hedges. Some have rugged pathways or carefully laid pavements. In sum they reflect the goodness, beauty and the variety of a compassionate and loving Creator providing for all his sons and daughters.

The verdant and luxuriant slopes of Mt. Carmel in Palestine, symbolizing the beauty of the bride in the Song of Songs (7:6) became for the early Carmelite hermits a reflection of Mary's own beauty as Bride of the Church. As St. Leo the Great, who in a Christmas homily says: "The origin which Christ took in the womb of the Virgin He has given to the baptismal font: He has given to water what He had given to His Mother – the power of the Most High and the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:35), which was responsible for Mary's bringing forth the Savior, has the same effect, so that water may regenerate the believer." As Bride and Mother of the Church, she stands by the baptismal font ready to cherish and nurture each new member of Christ's body – son and daughter. Acceptance of her motherly care, her tutelage and formation as a disciple and follower of her Son can bring one to the sure fulfillment of wholeness and holiness. She tends well the garden of souls who have willingly placed themselves in her keeping.

The statue of our Lady of Mt. Carmel
at Stella Maris Monastery at Haifa, Israel

The fumbles and waywardness of each one's life are like so many weeds and thorns that crowd in and choke both tender and stalwart growth. Under Mary's patronage we live and thrive, growing in charity and self- surrender with the sunshine of God's grace and occasional pruning.

Carmel is truly the garden of Mary where all are welcome to come and drink from the fountain of living water, CHRIST, as He nourishes us in word and sacrament. The wearing of her scapular as a visible sign of allegiance to her Son identifies one as belonging to the family of Carmel. At the feet of Mary, the door opens to the garden of Carmel, and enclosed garden of delight where the plenitude of her virtues is likened to a rich vine of fragrance and beauty.

I bud forth delights like a vine:
my blossoms are glorious
and rich fruit.
Come to me, all who desire me,
and be filled with my fruits.
(Sir. 24:17-19)