Carmelite Bulletin

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

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Dear Friends,

Warmest greetings to all of you as we slowly come out of these cold winter months and into spring. We hope and pray that you all are continuing to experiencing the peace of Jesus who became so small out of love for us. As the tensions increase in the world we pray more and more that His peace will come in a mighty way and bring unity where there is division, harmony where there is discord. We know that peace starts with each of us and so we try to live in His peace and so that we will be His peace to all those we encounter.

We have continued to be blessed with good health as a community with only a few sisters getting colds this year. We know that many continue to suffer because of COVID and its effects and we pray for them. Thank God for his protection of us. We are grateful that we have been able to have daily Mass throughout the pandemic and lately even during winter storms thanks to the goodness of our chaplain Msgr. Lawrence Frederick and our dear friend Tom Humphries.

Advent was a lovely time for recollection and prayer as we prepared for His coming. Each year we decorate our cells for the Infant Jesus and one sister really out did herself this year with an artificial fire in her cell and a wooden frame surrounding her door so that it looked like the entrance to a stable. You can see a few pictures of her cell and hear sisters share about our Christmas celebrations by viewing our video "Christmas in Carmel" on our YouTube channel *Carmel of St. Teresa of Jesus*.

Epiphany is a high point of our Christmas season. It is the day we discover who our patron of the year is and which sisters are our "king" and "queen" for the day. This year the little brass infant was in Sister Mercia Mary's slice of cake and so she was our "king" with Sister Andrea as her "queen". Our patroness is the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. The sisters threw us a lovely pizza party followed by carols around the Christmas tree after supper.

During the last few months Sister Lucia and Sister Anu Maria have been working in our preau expanding our brick path and putting in a fire pit. It certainly takes creativity and patience to fit the pavers together in the right pattern. We are looking forward to having a cookout soon, roasting marshmallows and enjoying the expanded area. Another work in progress is our website which is now on a new platform. We have been working hard on it and have added new pictures and updated our blog. Check it out! ***www.littlerockcarmel.org***

A highlight in January was the opportunity we had to visit with a team of missionaries from National Evangelization Teams, NET Ministries. One of our sisters is an alumna of NET (1991-92) and was thrilled to have the opportunity to visit again with a NET team after so many years. Some of those who attend daily Mass at the Monastery graciously provided housing and meals during the 24 hours they were in Little Rock on their way to Louisiana. It was a joy to visit with them and to hear about the work they are doing evangelizing young people through retreats. They sang some songs, performed an impromptu skit, and prayed with us. It is so encouraging to see their love for Jesus and for the young Catholics they minister to. They witnessed to us how the Holy Spirit is moving in power and changing lives even in times as challenging as these.

We are grateful to our strong protector Saint Joseph for watching over us and continue to ask for his intercession for vocations to our Carmel. Each Wednesday as the liturgy permits we have a votive Mass of St. Joseph with the intention of new vocations to our Carmel. We are confident the good Lord hears our prayers! May God bless each of you in abundance for all the good that you do, through the intercession of Guardian of the Redeemer, Saint Joseph.

Please join us
in our Novena to Saint Joseph
March 11th – 19th

St. Joseph, a Man of Virtue

The seven new petitions added to the Litany of St. Joseph by Pope Francis present us with an admirable composite of his person, his virtuous life and unique call in the history of salvation, most notably that of protector and caretaker of the child Jesus and His mother, Mary. Taken as a whole, the litany can be compared to a kaleidoscope being slowly turned allowing the cut pieces of glass to form admirable artistic patterns each distinct from one another. When applied to Joseph, these unique patterns form as it were a composite of his virtuous life; and this without a spoken word from the lips of Joseph ever recorded in the Gospel accounts.

As shadow of the Eternal Father, Joseph lived his Jewish faith trusting that the Almighty who in times past delivered his chosen people would without doubt continue his guardianship and fulfill his promises. Joseph's foster father-hood gave him the authority to name Mary's son. Having understood in his second dream that the child's name was to be "Jesus," Joseph fully accepted his responsibility as foster-father valiantly carrying out his duties. These duties of father-hood took different turns as unexpected events unfolded. It is quite probable that in such situations he endured the same invasive thoughts as any father might have such as, fear, anxiety, insecurity, consternation. These were not able to overpower the Joseph who did not falter in the face of dangerous journeys and physical hardship. In truth, Joseph can be invoked as "most valiant," "terror of demons," "patron of refugees."

Considering the hum-drum of day to day tasks menial and physically laborious, Joseph again comes across as an inspiration of strength and steadfastness. Carpentry or that of a joiner or craftsman as it was known in Jesus' time consisted in making and repairing tools for plowing, basic furniture, wooden beams and some construction work. When Jesus returned to Nazareth to preach, as the Gospel records, he was known as "the carpenter's son." (Mt. 13:54-55)

Workers of all kinds and trades enter our global consciousness. Some do grueling work; others are exploited through undocumented jobs and some labor in various inhuman conditions. All of these cry out for our attention in the present day.

Many are unemployed or suffer with disabilities. Joseph can be confidently invoked as "comfort of the troubled" and "model of workman." Summarily, when one prays the litany with prayerful attentiveness, the whole composite of this remarkable man comes to the foreground. Truly, God has made him master of his household, and ruler of all his possessions. St. Joseph, Protector of Holy Church, pray for us.