Carmelite Bulletin

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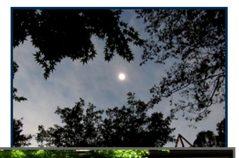
Dear Friends,

We thank God for all his gifts - great and small … pleasant and difficult - over the last few months. Considering all the turmoil of the world, our faith in a most loving God is our rock foundation. As contemplative nuns we strive to live the liturgy in union with our Lord, especially during Lent, Easter and Pentecost. We hope you had a blessed holy season, as well.



Soon after Easter, on April 8th, we were able to see the total eclipse of the sun here in Little Rock. Sr. Bernadette has a hard time lifting her head up, so a couple of us tipped her wheelchair back so she could also see the "diamond ring". April 8th was also the solemnity of the Annunciation this year in the Catholic Church. It's interesting to put the two events together: Jesus Christ is called the Sun of Justice and the Light of the World. The Fathers of the Church referred to the Blessed Mother as the moon because she reflects the light from the sun, without being the light herself. When Mary said "yes" to the Angel Gabriel God entered the world - hidden in Mary's womb. During the eclipse the moon (Mary) hid the sun (Jesus) from our view for a time. The moon became one with the sun, until the brightness slowly emerged into our view (Jesus' birth). So, too, our Lord eventually left his hidden life in Nazareth for his public ministry. He was the Light of the World, "to shine on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Lk1:79)

Alas! Life goes on back at planet Earth. On a more practical note, but much less exciting, we were blessed to have new flooring installed in some corridors and rooms in our monastery. It was a good time to clean well after the work was done. We're grateful to the good men who did the job so well.

In our Carmel each sister's birthday is celebrated with prayers from the community, little cards and good wishes, as well as her choice of birthday cake. It's fun to see the creativity put into the decorating of the cakes, depending on who makes it and who the birthday girl is . . . . .

The pond in the acreage has become full again after all the rain we have had, and the wild flowers on the side of the hill are providing pollen for the bee hives. Their delicious honey is fragrant as you walk close by, so we look forward to the harvest pretty soon. Thanks to a friend, Pat Cullivan, we have acquired more hives and equipment, and his most gracious help and expertise in bee-keeping. Now that our raised garden beds have been made "critter-proof" we've had some nice crops including broccoli, collard greens, kale, lettuce herbs and, hopefully, some tomatoes soon.

For many years our Carmel has Mass and a visit with the graduating class of Little Rock's Catholic High School for Boys and on another day with the seniors from Mount St. Mary's Academy. The classes are so large they have to add folding chairs for Mass. It is always a joy for us to see their bright young faces and answer their questions about our life. This year three young men from Catholic High were acknowledged by their class mates for their plans to enter the seminary for our diocese. They told us that two or three other young men from Arkansas are also joining. Thank God! They will follow behind many other young seminarians here, including newly ordained Cody Eveld and hopefully around five others to be ordained in the next couple of years. Congratulations, Father Cody Eveld and transitional deacon Joel Brackett!

Going down a little in age, Fr. Steven Elser from our diocese brought the fifth-graders from St. Paul Catholic School in Pocahontas, AR, for a visit, recently. They, too, had good questions and paid close attention. May our Lord plant his seeds in their hearts!

Matatu is the feral kitty that lives in our green house. He is too afraid to allow anyone up close except for his food providers Sr. Anu Maria and Sr. Lucia. He has lots of walkways and in's and out's in the penthouse - area of the green house (a small upper level). Who wouldn't want to pet that cute head?

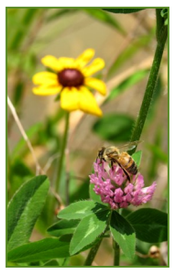
Last but not least … a report from "Animal Kingdom" at the monastery … All is well with the turtles, Koi and Goldfish, and wild birds, but for our watch dogs it's been a rough (not "ruff ruff", just rough!) few months. Poor Sadie was found to have heartworms. She has been undergoing treatment which has required her to remain calm and still for the past three months. No running, no jumping, no excitement or barking. Sr. Anu Maria is the dog keeper and has done an excellent job taking care of them both - a taxing vigilance in Sadie's case. It is almost as hard for Toby since we have to keep him from making Sadie excited (Toby lives for excitement). The crucial time is almost up and we hope for the best, that the treatment would be successful, as many dogs do not survive the sickness. We are united in prayer, and please pray for us!

Please Join us for the Novena to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

Homilists
Rev. Patrick Friend
and
Rev. Msgr. Lawrence Frederick

July 8th – 16th

Every evening at 7:00 pm



With Mary in the Family of Carmel

Signs can be attractive "attention getters" in our present day culture whether they are visible billboards, mobile related, computer-based or hand gestures. They reach out to grab our attention and direct our focus. We ourselves, individually and collectively, become signs to others. Undisputable, even the clothing and footwear one dons can connote a brand name of designer or manufacturer often signaling status or even elitism. Support groups of one kind or another with a common wearable insignia offer affirmation, strength and a sense of belonging toward a purposeful pursuit or aim.

Within the Christian community, the Holy Spirit working in the Church demonstrates the magnificent variety of God by inspiring particular attractions of grace. The prophetic zeal of St. Elijah on Mt. Carmel and his pursuit of the living God prompted a communal presence there in the 13th century by a group of men, some of whom were crusaders. These banded together and carved out of the soft stone livable niches on the rocky slopes near the traditional spring of Elijah in an effort to live a solitary life of prayer. In the early 1200's they petitioned Albert of Jerusalem, the Catholic Patriarch, to write a rule of life solidifying their lived experience together. Mary, the Mother of the Word Incarnate, became their patroness and model for listening to and meditating on the word of God. Living near the spring of Elijah still in existence today they were nourished in body and soul. Having dedicated their first small chapel to Mary, they became known as the Brothers of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

With the gradual invasion of Islam, pilgrims to the Holy Land dwindled and the hermits themselves began migrating first to Cypress and then on to European soil. Keeping the Marian presence among them, they creatively adapted to a new cultural milieu. The brothers wore a kind of work apron consisting of two panels of cloth front and back to protect their habits when performing daily menial tasks. To others, this became part of their recognized "insignia," now known as the Scapular. Their simple way of Christian living under the care and guidance of Mary attracted others. The double paneled scapular shortened in length became a sign of belonging.

To share in the benefits of the Carmelite way of life a person personally seeks enrollment by a priest or deacon and pledges to follow Jesus in the company of Mary. The wearing of the Carmelite Scapular is a sign approved by the Church for over seven centuries and points to a renewed hope of encountering God in eternal life with the help of Mary's protection and intercession. Enrollment in the Scapular is a one-time experience although cloth Scapulars themselves are replaced periodically as needed. Our community takes pleasure in the sewing and distribution of small Scapulars upon request. Following enrollment, the cloth scapular can be replaced by a Scapular medal displaying on one side an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and on the other side the image of Mary.

"What better teacher could we have than our holy Mother?"

"Let us learn from Mary to live every day, every moment, every occupation with our inner gaze turned to Jesus."

- Pope Francis