Carmelite Bulletin

Carmel of Saint Teresa of Jesus
7201 West 32nd St. Little Rock, AR 72204-4716
Winter 2024 contact@littlerockcarmel.org https://littlerockcarmel.org Vol. 67 No. 4

Dear Friends,

We hope you all had a great Summer. Down here in Arkansas we're always happy when Autumn comes. Our Summers each year are increasingly hot and humid. So, finally when mid-November approached, the temps began to cool off and we have been enjoying mild days and barely cool nights.

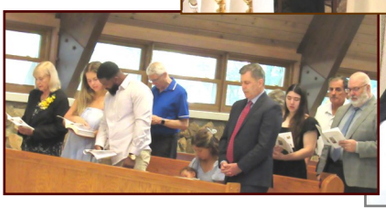
On September 14th, the Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross, all Carmelites begin the monastic fast season, and many Carmelite communities choose this day to renew their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, "into the hands" of their superiors, or prioresses. We do this each year and see it as a time of going "back to the basics" - a new beginning, so to speak, of living our lives according to our Rule and Constitutions, with renewed love and zeal.

Our Carmelite saints are cheering us on though, and we always have their great intercession. As you know from our last bulletin, we celebrated St. Therese of Lisieux with the Blessing of Roses Mass on Oct. 1st and St. Teresa of Jesus, our holy Mother Foundress, on October 15th. We were happy that our Bishop Anthony Taylor could be with us and celebrate the Mass for her this year.

We mentioned Sr. Bernadette's weakened condition last time. She had her 101st birthday on October 14th! We took cake and ice cream and balloons into her cell that day. Not long after that she began to regain her appetite and seems to have improved quite a bit. She is still in bed, but has come back to her (we won't say "old") former self again. Thank you all for your prayers.

On October 5th Sr. Petra and the whole Church celebrated her 60th Jubilee of Religious Profession with Holy Mass and a reception afterwards. The celebrant was our chaplain, Msgr. Lawrence Frederick with Fr. Martin Yslas, OSB, a life-long friend. Family and friends traveled mainly from California and Texas. Some had not seen her for many years. It was a joyous time and Sr. Petra thanks all who could come, and who prayed for her.

We're happy to say that some young ladies have been in contact with us and making plans to visit and discern a possible vocation to Carmel. Actually, three of them are from Arkansas - one lives just outside of Little Rock! Please pray for them. We know you pray for this intention, and we thank you very much!



This year for our annual community retreat we had eight days of silence and solitude and twice a day watched a Bible study on the Gospel of Matthew by St. Augustine Institute. It was excellent and we highly recommend Bible teachers Tim Gray and Michael Barber, who were the presenters.

Over the last few months some of our families have made visits. Sr. Camilla's sister and her husband, Kathleen and George Peck, drove all the way from Arizona. Sr. Camilla was so happy to have her "little" sister close by again, and we all enjoyed their lively company. Renee's father, Bob Kendall, came even further from California for a weekend. He left with a peaceful heart after seeing her happiness here in Carmel, and experiencing the silence and solitude in our monastery chapel. A couple weeks later her mother and step-father came for a short weekend visit from Mulvane, Kansas. Sr. Mercia Mary's sister, Tonya, only had to drive from West Little Rock for an afternoon visit. We also had visits from Angelica's parents (North Carolina) and Sr. Anu Maria's family from New Jersey and Texas.

Lastly, we must mention the newest addition to the monastery: chickens! Eight baby chicks (seven hens, one rooster) arrived in the mail at a ripe age of three days old. They are getting big now, and soon will be ready to venture outside of their incubator to the coop Sr. Lucia built for them. You can see all the fun details on our YouTube channel, along with some other new videos we've posted (more importantly, the Entrance Days of our postulants Renee and Angelica!).

We are hoping to keep our website updated, so keep checking! "Nuns in the News" is the title of a blog post you may be interested in. Our Prioress and Postulants were interviewed by our local Arkansas Catholic paper.

Besides the new chicks, the rest of the animal kingdom here at Carmel is doing well. Toby and Sadie are happy and spoiled, and guarding us well. The preau (courtyard) turtles had a nice Summer and are ready to hibernate for the Winter. Matatu the feral cat is still king of the greenhouse. The fish seem fine. And, gratefully, a baby king snake the Postulants named "Fluffy" ran away (slithered?) after only a few weeks of cloistered life in the preau to find a better home.

As you can see, Carmelite life is never boring! There's even more news: monastery cleaning week is just around the corner! More on that story in the next issue!

We continue to pray for all the desperate needs of our world, and for all of you and your needs. May you have a blessed Advent and joyous Christmas!

Please join us for the Christmas Novena December 16 – December 24

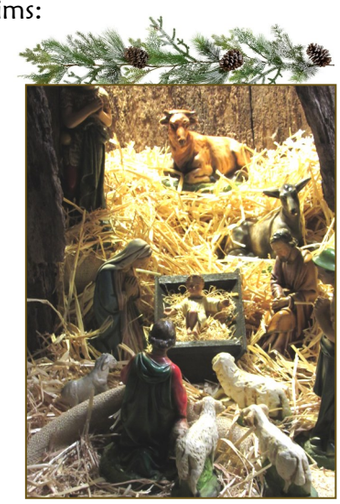
Christmas Mass Schedule Tuesday, December 24th, 7:30 A.M.

Carols 11:45 p.m. Mid-night Mass 12:00 A.M.

Wednesday, December 25th Christmas Day, 10:00 A.M.

The Living Word in Our Midst

In the First Letter of Saint John, written in the first century, the author proclaims:



What was from the beginning,
What we have heard,
What we have seen with our eyes,
What we looked upon
And touched with our hands
Concerns the **Word** of life -
For the life was made visible;
We have seen it and testify to it
And proclaim to you the eternal life
That was with the Father and was made visible to us -
What we have seen and heard
We proclaim now to you,
So that you too may have fellowhip with us;
For our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.
— 1 Jn: 1-3.

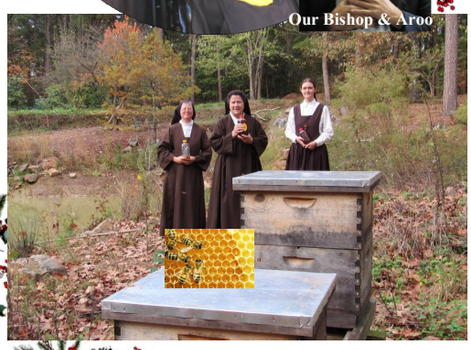
This is quite a declaration, clear and unambiguous. Who is this person who has attracted so much attention?

In the past many words had been spoken foretelling his coming; cherished prophecies collected and pondered over the centuries. Yet when he appears on earth taking on human flesh only a handful of persons recognized and acknowledged his presence. Among them was a group of simple uneducated shepherds startled by a heavenly vision of angels who imparted the joyful news. Making an effort to go and see for themselves, each was rewarded according to their faith. We are further told in St. Luke's gospel that "when they saw this, they made known the message that had been told to them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told to them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them." — Lk: 17-20

One wonders what impact this proclamation had in the lives of all who heard it. The shepherds spoke of what they had seen and heard. Over the centuries this event has become immortalized in the minds of artists depicting it in drama, music and art. So now once again the image comes to life as we prepare to celebrate Christ coming among us and it brings to mind the awesomeness of the reality of God's outpoured love for humankind.

The season of Advent with its select scriptural passages for daily liturgy and the Advent wreath invite us to renew the historical preparation set in motion by the Holy Spirit. With the shepherds, we too are invited to look, listen and experience personally the impact of Christ living among us now, Emmanuel, especially in His Eucharistic Presence. Blessed season of Advent and Christmas to all!

Our Bishop & Aroo



Wishing you
a Happy New Year
2025!