Carmelite Bulletin

Carmel of Saint Teresa of Jesus

7201 West 32nd St. Little Rock, AR 72204-4716

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Dear Friends,

Blessings and peace to you! We begin this Fall bulletin with the promise of our prayers for you and your intentions - always with gratitude - throughout our days of prayer from morning to night. Each hour of the day brings us back to our communal prayer (the prayer of the Church, the Divine Office) with you in mind, lifting you up along with the needs of Holy Church, our Order, and our world.

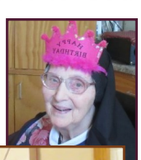
As we prepare this bulletin we join much of the southern portion of our country suffering under extreme heat with record high temperatures. The next fifteen days shows heat index temps well above 100F with no rain in sight. We are grateful for the luxury of air conditioning, and know there are many who do not have means to find relief. Our dogs spend most of their time day and night in our underground work basement area. That said, the gardens are left to die out for this year. Still, Sr. Karith Michael was able to pick a few precious, ripe figs and some okra. Earlier in the summer, before the temperatures climbed to 100°F, we enjoyed delicious, fresh cucumbers from the garden. And our sunflowers brought us another little bit of joy and beauty before the heat arrived.

We shared in the last bulletin about the nuns' choir renovation. It has been a great blessing to pray and sing to the Lord in this beautiful space and hear the acoustics improve our sound! We will have a special Mass of Blessing in September with our Bishop Anthony Taylor. Sr. Cecilia's deceased parents have made many of these repairs and beautification projects possible through a legacy to our community. Some of Sister's family members will be here for the Blessing, which will also include the new marble statues and bronze signage around the monastery grounds.

Our Novena to our Lady of Mt. Carmel this year was, again, very well attended with full capacity every night. It is a real joy for us to see so many people in our chapel, many of whom we have never seen before. Our Novena preacher, Fr. Daniel Klimek, MIC, was a great witness of what true devotion to Our Lady can be, speaking about her and the Truths of our Catholic Faith. Many attendees came forward to be enrolled in the Brown Scapular. Bishop Anthony Taylor celebrated the solemn Mass on the 16th.

What a beautiful and grace-filled occasion on Saturday, May 30th! The ordination of five men to the priesthood is truly a tremendous blessing for our diocese. Rev. Christopher Elser was able to come celebrate Mass with us and give us his first priestly blessing. We had a lovely visit with him afterwards. May God richly bless Fr. Elser and the other four newly ordained priests as they begin their sacred ministry.

Two months later all the seminarians of our diocese blessed us with their presence for Mass and a visit. It is at this time our sisters get to know these young men personally. It allows for a real connection with them as we pray for them throughout the year. Again, our gratitude overflows to God that He sends the Church these fine young men to be future priests.



Sr. Camilla turned 95 on July 26th! She asked for a chocolate cake, and Sr. Lucia made and decorated it beautifully. We are blessed to have our only remaining founding Sister with us. She edifies us by participating in almost all of the community prayers and activities. She even tried to learn how to play the violin during recreation time with Sr. Mercia.

Sr. Anu Maria's sister and her family came for a short visit in August, driving all the way from New Jersey, and continuing to Texas to visit Sister's brother and sister-in-law. We are enriched to know our Sisters' family members and watch the children grow from tiny to tall!

As these visits bring us joy, we also share in the Sisters' sorrows when her family member leaves this earth and goes to God. Sr. Andrea's mother (95 years old) died on August 10. Sister was able to travel to Kansas City to be with her before and during her death. We will all miss Mrs. Fulmer's voicemail messages: "ANN-dra! Call mom." Please pray for her and for Sr. Andrea's family.

Please pray for the young women discerning a possible vocation to our Carmel - right now there are five in touch with us! Thank you.

Novena Days:
September 23rd - October 1st

Please join us for the Mass of Saint Therese
and the Blessing of the Roses
Sunday, September 27th at 7:30 am.

Mass of Saint Teresa on Thursday
October 15th at 7:30 am

Novena Days:
October 7th - 15th

St. Teresa, On Steadfast Journey

In times of uncertainty amid life changing events, it is noteworthy to recall how earnestly St. Teresa set forth with steadfast faith, hope and love on her own journey of life. Through personal prayer, she came to understand that hers was a salient call to assist the preachers and teachers of the Word while living the life of a cloistered contemplative nun. She understood that this was to be accomplished by seeking intimate friendship with Jesus Christ and living a communal life like the small band of disciples with Christ in their midst as Teacher and Master. In her formation plan for the nuns described in the book, "The Way of Perfection" one finds the bold reasoning for such determination. She writes, "I resolved to do the little that was in my power; that is to follow the evangelical counsels as perfectly as I could and strive that these few persons who live here do the same. I did this trusting in the great goodness of God who never fails to help anyone who is determined to give up everything for Him. My trust was that… I could thereby please the Lord in some way. Since we would all be occupied in prayer for those who are defenders of the Church and for preachers and learned men who protect her from attack, we could help as much as possible this Lord of mine…" With little means at her disposal and the help of a few trusted friends, she managed to draw up plans and hastily remodeled a small house in the city of Avila, Spain, to serve as a monastery.

Initially, her plan was to found only one monastery and to retire there herself to live her ideal. With the visit of the then Father General of the Carmelites, Fr. Juan Bautista Rubeo, who was so pleased with this endeavor of reform, she was encouraged to found other monasteries of the same. Desiring that her nuns have sure direction in their life of prayer, she encouraged a young friar to join her in this endeavor, thus with the help of St. John of the Cross, the Discalced Carmelite Friars came into existence. From the years 1567-1582, she trod the rough roads of Spain in canvas covered wagons enduring heat or cold with a few nuns, sparse belongings and her own physical impairment.

As we each travel our own journey, that initial inner quest and longing for God planted deep within us by our Creator needs to be reaffirmed, perhaps, even refocused on the choices that really matter. As time passes, we come to realize that new and unexplored pathways are suddenly making their appearance. Alongside, the inner promptings to go forward are sprinkled fear and hesitation. New pathways can appear in the form of a new job, a new location or even a life changing event. In our pursuit to fulfill that initial longing and quest for God, St. Teresa offers these words of wisdom: "Keeping Christ present is what we of ourselves can do." Taking time out daily to sit quietly in his presence and entering into friendship with the one who we know loves us, can provide the clear insight, strength, faith, hope and love to travel onward undaunted. How comforting are these words from the book of Deuteronomy, "You have seen how the Lord carried you as a man carries his child all the days of your journey." Deut. 1:31

"Contemplative prayer in my opinion is nothing else than
a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently
to be alone with him who we know loves us."
-- St. Teresa