

# The Carmelite News

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WHITEFRIARS  
FAVERSHAM  
KENT

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## REFLECTIONS

**W**e are at the beginning of a new year and when I look back on 1962 it was not such a bad year at all.

In November we celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the opening of the Parish Church at Whitefriars. A converted cinema. First, it was a school, then a cinema, and now it is our Parish Church. We can hardly believe that it is twenty-five years since that day in November when we first opened its doors. It had been a sorry wreck of a building, and to tell the truth it didn't look much on its opening day. Since then we have built the Shrine of St. Jude as an annex to it and the congregation has grown over the years. The church is now too small for the people; but another mind and another hand must take charge of that problem.

As I write this I remember the days when I had charge of a number of candidates for the priesthood at a training college outside Dublin. Nearly all those young men went through to Ordination. One became Provincial of the Irish Province. Another is in California—he has been so often fined for speeding that now they don't summons him at all. They are hoping that old age will slow him up if nothing else can. Another is a Bishop in Rhodesia and I have just sent a cablegram to Father Charles Graham of New York City. It was constantly rumoured amongst the students of his day that most of his ancestors had been bandits, that a few of them had been hanged, and that the remnants of the clan were of dubious character. It is extraordinary how that old chestnut has lasted in our memories so

long, because this was my cablegram to him:-

"My dear Charles, I am glad I have lived to salute such a venerable member of your ancient family on your Silver Jubilee day. May you live in honour and in merit to the golden years. God bless you and watch how you go! Elias Lynch."

May I add that he was one of the most courteous and cheerful souls I have ever met. He was a convert as a boy. He was rejected by his family and I found him almost straying in the wilderness. He survived more set backs than any other student I knew. He has never returned to these parts without coming to see me, and he remains a poet of no mean order to this day. On his last flight back from New York he wrote a parody on an old Scottish song—"Westering home like a bird on the wing"—it was one of the most comical efforts at versifying I have seen.

When these lads went on to Rome my youngest brother was a professor there and he complained that they were almost completely ignorant of metaphysics. You may not know what metaphysics are, and I advise you to leave it alone. My brother was right! Now I know another truth about them—never think the other is a fool because he doesn't know metaphysics because God sometimes puts the Seal of the Lamb on the foreheads of men not because of the talents that they possess, but because of the talents that they lack. There is a story told about Pope John 23rd. He asked a visiting American cleric if he was a theologian. The American said, "No,



your Holiness, I am not a theologian, I hire these fellows." Pope John said, "I am very glad; look at the mess they have got us into." Catholic belief has been defined and defined until now it is so complicated that it is beyond the grasp of the ordinary man. Experts!

Our set up in those days was a real zoological seminary. Late vocations, if you like, but not the rule of thumb. I was perhaps the only one who could have floated them over. Now, I'm proud of them. Not one of them faltered on the way, not one of them betrayed the priestly trust, and now some are dead, some remain after a life of priestly work, to prove that metaphysics are not the answer to life but that a man wants to be a priest and to blaze with metaphysics.

To all my old students I send my blessing and good wishes "in the crumbling years," that they may live long in grace, and endure whatever God sends on the roads of life with patience and fortitude.

I am the financial procurator of the Anglo-Welsh Province of the Carmelites. My burden is to raise the money that is necessary for the support of students from the day they enter the Order as postulants till they are ordained as priests. "Many are called, but few are chosen." How well have I learned the truth of these words of an ancient parable. I must provide the money for the Colleges under our care, and I must do it almost single handed. Our other houses are small and just about able to pay their way. The huge tax for Diocesan development in schools must be met out of parochial effort and they are lucky

to be able to balance their books at the end of the year.

Of course there is Aylesford and also Allington Castle; both these are outside my field, and are still under the direct jurisdiction of the General in Rome. One day they will come into the Province and then perhaps Aylesford will become its Mother House.

We never ask for money in the "Carmelite News." We simply give you a motive that perhaps will inspire your generosity. I do this by design, because I think that people get terribly tired of one who is always asking for money. Anyhow, I would much rather tell a story.

I am writing my reminiscences. I will leave them behind me because I do not think I could stand the strain of ever seeing them published. I have lived in Faversham thirty-one years. I cheerfully admit that there was no joy in my heart when my Superiors sent me to Faversham. I rather think that they left me here because they couldn't figure out what to do with me if they took me away. That gave me time to find the niche I have occupied ever since. I have no wish to leave Faversham now. It is too late to go home.

By the time this letter is in your hands we will have opened the new department of the Carmelite Press and then I will be able to say without untruth that we have one of the most modern small religious printing presses in the British Isles. Everything that reaches you from us is printed on our own machines, packed in our own department. I will send you a picture of the works one day.



## THE MAN WHO COULD SMELL STONES

My dear Cahil,

My father, God rest his soul, used to be a member of the Shillelagh Board of Guardians. Once a month he departed in a grey check suit, muttonchop whiskers and an abbreviated grey topper, rather on the style of Winston Churchill. It was a fashion out of vogue even in his day, but somehow or other I cannot imagine

him dressed in any other way, just as I cannot imagine him without a walking stick. He evidently looked forward to his little train journey, and to his day out. As far as I can remember the only business they discussed was road mending, and replacing the parapets of the bridges thrown down by boys in the evening. On his return there was always a slight flavour of



Liffey Water on the soft air of the hills and he was sometimes full of words.

The quality of stone used in road metalling was very important, and that is what first drew my attention to Stonecracker Jack as he practised his craft by the roadside through the long summer days. The roads were never metalled until Autumn. First the contractor found the stone, piled it in a long line by the roadside and then along came Stonecracker Jack. His equipment was simple; he used a 7 lb. hammer, a 4 lb. hammer, and a 2 lb. hammer. The best hammers were made of armour plated steel. Stonecracker would take a hammer in his hand, hit a stone with it and then, if it hadn't a proper hammer head of hardened steel he would throw it away in disgust. It was not a question of weight, it was a question of quality.

Stonecracker commenced at the end of the pile and smashed the stone down to convenient size with the large hammers, then he put a bag of straw down and sitting on it with his legs wide apart, he commenced his work. After a day or so, when he had a short line of stone metalling behind him, he dressed the line with his shovel, 12 inches deep and 3 feet wide. Then his sack of straw went on top of it and he was on top of his job.

I used to linger with him on my way home from school, and found that he had preferences in stone. Some stone he would pick out and throw into the ditch as unfit for its purpose. He loved granite. Limestone, he didn't despise, but he didn't love it. He didn't like stones that came from river beds because they were too dank, there was still the taste of cold water about them. He didn't like stones from old houses, because he said it was like breaking human bones, they had inherited something of the lives that they had sheltered so long. Then, also, I found out that he was a man who could "smell stones." Indeed, I

could see it myself. He would turn a piece of stone underneath his hammer and some instinct told him where to crack it. Then, sometimes a sort of grey smoke came from the stone and you could actually feel the tang of it in your nostrils. He knew stones by their smell.

One day an extraordinary thing happened. He was using the 7 lb. hammer on some of the larger rocks. I saw him nudging a black stone that looked like marble. Then he hit it and stood back. He separated the two faces of the stone so that they were flat upwards and then he looked at me and said, "the Devil's nose." Sure enough, there it was, a face outlined in concentric lines, a long face, half animal, half human and wholly evil. He kept looking at it and I said to him, "Oh Jack, don't hit it." He said, "Now you have seen it, if I don't break it, evil will follow you all your life and follow me too." He turned the face downwards and smashed it with his hammer. Smashed it until it was in small pieces that shone like flint, and yet wasn't.

That moment came back to me at times during my life, but never with such impact as when I stood in the Basilica of San Sofia in Istanbul. That old city of Constantine, once the centre of the Byzantine Empire. Erected by Imperial edict it is one of the most glorious basilicas that ever came from the hands of man, and there on the wall was a green marble slab about five feet by four. There I saw the same thing again, only worse, because it was plainer. It is a slab that is called the "Face of Evil." The same long horse-like head, infinitely sad, infinitely evil, outlined in the white veins of the green marble. Half animal, half human, but no-one can look upon it and not realise what it is. As I stood there my mind went back over fifty years to a road that meandered over the hills of Wicklow, to Stonecracker Jack and a craft that is gone.

In these days when the "wind of change" has caused a certain amount of good feeling between non Catholics and the children of the Faith, it has become a custom to tell stories

about each other. Here is one of the new ones.

A Salvationist went up to heaven. St. Peter said to him, "You are so used to blowing a horn that you prob-



ably can't stop. You will find the band room third door down on the left." Next, was a singer. St. Peter said to him, "Second door down on the right. There is a choir practise there." The third comer was a Catholic. St. Peter said to him, "You have done very well in your own way. Try the second door upon the left—there's a Bingo session on."

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A friend of mine who is an hotel manager does all his interior decorating with the aid of a gardener and hall porter. The old hall porter retired and a new man took his place. "Did you ever do any painting?" said George. "Oh yes," the fellow said. "What experience have you had?" said George. "Well," said the hall porter "I always paint the number plates on my brother's cars." "How many cars has he got?" said George. "Only one," said the hall porter "but he changes it every year."

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How much would a woodchuck chuck, if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

## T H A N K S

Thanks St. Jude for favour received.  
Kennedy.

Thanks St. Jude for Nephew's success in Exam. K. Shannon.

Grateful thanks Sacred Heart, Our Lady, Saints Joseph, Jude, and Anthony. Llewellyn.

Most grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart and St. Jude for numerous favours received. E. & H.B.O.

Thanks to St. Jude for many favours received. P. Griffin, Co. Kerry.

Grateful thanks to St. Anthony, Holy Souls and St. Jude. G.M.S.

Thanks to St. Jude for favour received. B.D., Lancs.

Heartfelt thanks to St. Jude, Blessed Martin and St. Joseph.

M. Cahill, Cornwall.

Everlasting thanks to St. Jude for favour granted. K. Browne, Rugby.

Thanks to "The Holy Family" Blessed Martin for prayers answered.

N.M., Fleetwood.

Most grateful thanks to Pope Saint Pius The Tenth for favour received. E.M.

Thanksgiving to Blessed Edmund Arrowsmith. W.O.D.

My thanks to St. Jude. P.W.

## OUR COMING NOVENAS

OUR LADY OF LOURDES	- - -	Feb. 3rd—Feb. 11th
ST. JOSEPH and ST. PATRICK	- - -	March 9th—March 19th
OUR LADY OF SORROWS	- - -	March 15th—March 23rd
ST. JUDE	- - -	April 2nd—April 10th

ERRATUM—ST. JUDE Novena date on leaflet should read as above

## OUR BURSES

	Already acknowledged			Increase		
The St. Jude Burse No. 2 ...	£1,989	7	0	now £1,995	7	0
Holy Child of Prague Burse ...	556	16	6	879	6	0
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Burse ...	227	10	6	320	10	6
Our Lady of Lourdes Burse ...	96	12	6	97	12	6
Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Burse	97	11	6	102	11	6
Little Flower Burse ...	837	5	0	839	5	0
Sacred Heart Burse ...	63	10	6	64	1	6
St. Anthony Burse ...	43	12	6	44	12	6
St. Joseph Burse ...	1,045	16	6	1,046	16	6
Holy Souls Burse ...	7	1	6	8	1	6

Our Lady keep you !

Yours in Carmel

*M. E. Lynch O.C.*