



THE CARMELITE NEWS



From the National Shrine of Saint Jude



SPRING 2024



Dear Friend of Saint Jude and valued friend of the Carmelites

As you read our spring newsletter, Christians around the world are preparing for the celebration of Easter. I hope that together, as companions on the journey into the depths of God, we will be able to allow our hearts to be softened, reformed and renewed as we freely embrace opportunities to prepare during Lent.

In our Carmelite tradition we use the expression '*vacare Deo*' to remind us that we are called to empty what is false within us to create space for God. Carmelites try to do this individually, in our communities and in our varied ministries. At the heart of our Carmelite mission is our fervent desire that our lives of prayer, community and service will enable many people to experience the presence of God.

Growing in contemplative openness

At the Shrine of Saint Jude, pilgrims are drawn to a gentle contemplative peacefulness through the shrine itself, the artwork, the prayerful atmosphere of the church, the gardens, and through the chance encounters they have with other pilgrims. To rejoice in the resurrection of Christ, our attentiveness to God's word - unveiled in the ancient prophetic utterances of the Old Testament and fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus in the New - empowers us to savour something of the beauty, truth and goodness of God. To accept this summons is to grow in contemplative openness.

God desires to share with us the fullness of divine life that is perfectly revealed to us in the person of Jesus.

Our complete participation in God's life truly becomes possible when we, like him, abandon ourselves to God in love, freedom and joy. Important in this spiritual pilgrimage is releasing from our grasp all those things that disturb or hinder our openness to God. Lent can be a contemplative time for simply 'letting go' and 'letting God'. Prayerful openness stirs an awareness of God's presence in our lives, letting God touch and engage our hearts. Our outlook is renewed, and we are helped to live and love with our eyes fixed on a new horizon, vibrant with the presence of the Risen Christ.

Being reshaped

Lent is a time for allowing us our personal perspectives, prejudices, fears and fixed ways to be reshaped according to the mind and heart of Jesus.



Making a clay pot...

“...we seek to
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While we live in the concrete here and now, we also take the long view. We engage with the season of Lent so that our deepest authentic desire becomes focused on the vision of Jesus. In his resurrection he shows us that his life is stronger than death, God’s infinite horizon is greater than our limited imaginings, and self-emptying love is the gateway to the experience of eternal beauty.

During Lent we seek to attune our listening to God’s voice. We reshape our wills to become attuned to God’s will, allowing God to mould us as a potter shapes clay. We are not motivated by external pressure or a false and crippling sense of guilt,

but by a profound and willing decision we make in response to a love that is so great and freely given that the power of God’s attraction becomes liberating. We are not slaves but, in and with Christ, beloved children. We are not driven by seeking reward but desire to express love and gratitude. Unlike some of the pharisees of the time of Jesus, we are not concerned about external show but find our dynamism and energy in inner freedom, peace, a sense of connectedness with our sisters and brothers throughout the world, and generous self-giving.

Becoming Gospels

I don’t know if you have been able to see any of the episodes from ‘The Chosen’. I have been watching some episodes with some of my fellow friars. It is a compelling and imaginative dramatization of the life of Jesus and the impact he had on his disciples. I was, of course, interested to see how our patron, Saint Jude Thaddeus, would be characterised. Whilst there are a lot of creative interpretations of the actual written gospels, it portrays Jesus in a way that many have found authentic. Jesus connects to the pain and suffering of those he heals,





and the sense of Jesus' compassion and empathy is movingly expressed. Saint Teresa of Avila commented that if we want to come to know what God is like, we need to reflect often on the "sacred humanity of Jesus". Certainly, this representation beautifully communicates the humanity of the one who breathes the divine life deeply and fully.

As friends of Saint Jude and fellow disciples with him of Jesus, each of us are invited to engage deeply with him. Jesus is the Gospel of God's relentless, enduring, forgiving and reconciling love. As we reflect on and pray with the gospel testimonies of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we will notice variations in emphasis and interpretations of who Jesus is. The authors wrote their accounts from different

perspectives for different audiences. Immersed in his life, we might say that they themselves became living gospels. Our calling as the chosen is also to enter deeply into an intimate relationship with Jesus, so that we too become living gospels that proclaim God's love to all humanity.

Missionaries of Hope

Jesus formed and sent out those he had chosen to share in his liberating mission. He commissioned them to be his witnesses and partners in his mission. We can do this in our own neighbourhoods and church communities. We seek ways to engage in a positive way in the society in which we live. We find ways – often working with and through others – to make a difference, even globally. We may not be great at wordcraft, but we can preach

the gospel of freedom and bring reconciliation and healing through the very ordinariness of our lives as we gradually allow ourselves to be transformed by this extraordinary God who comes to us in Jesus. As Jesus called upon the help of others to continue his work, Jesus calls us to be living gospels and ambassadors of hope. May our Lenten journey, with its pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, help us to become more finely attuned to the sound of his voice, the impulse of spiritual renewal and the summons to become missionary disciples.

Footprints of Hope

This spring, the Shrine of Saint Jude will begin laying bricks for our 'Footprints of Hope' project. Thank you to all who have supported this

initiative, where bricks will be set from the Whitefriars Contemplative Garden to the Garden of Hope. We are remembering with prayer your loved ones – those who are still with us and those who have died. As pilgrims who walk along this simple path, not only do we remember others, we also re-commit ourselves to being people that bring hope to others. As we travel our own individual journeys in the footsteps of Jesus today, we become gradually transformed into ambassadors of hope and living gospels at home and further afield.

Proclaiming the Gospel

I am delighted to write that one of our friars, Richard Green, whom you have been supporting through your prayer and generosity during his time of Carmelite formation and study, will be ordained a deacon on Saturday, 23 March 2024 at The Friars, Aylesford ME20 7BX. The ceremony begins at 11.30 am and all are welcome to the Mass. Many who have visited the Shrine of Saint Jude for our feast day celebrations and at other events, may remember Richard with his gentle and smiling welcome. Deacons assist at the Eucharist by proclaiming the gospel

and often preaching the homily. Deacons can also baptise, witness marriages in church and preside at funerals. These are key and often emotional moments in people's religious lives, and it is good that Richard will have the opportunity in this way to proclaim the merciful love of God by word and action.

Compostela, Lithuania and Cyberspace

As you read in our last newsletter, Richard will be leading a pilgrim group of young adults in the Camino to Compostela, Spain during Easter Week. Do pray for them. With other friars from Europe, he is also developing a programme of retreat opportunities for our lay Carmelite friends in



Brs. Richard (right) and Matthew (centre) with a pilgrim during the Feast celebrations...

Lithuania for 2024. In addition to his regular responsibilities and work, together with John Toryusen, our Carmelite Young People's Coordinator, and our youngest Carmelite brother, Mathew Janvier, he will also be involved in an online series of reflections with young adults in Lithuania. A Carmelite friar is never idle and can never complain of being bored!

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Paris and Lisieux

At the beginning of Lent, a good group of young men and women travelled from Britain to Paris and Lisieux on 15-18 February. Our Carmelite brother, Gerard Walsh, and John Toryusen were members of the team leading a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Saint Marie-Eugénie and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. This was a joint initiative of the Carmelites and the Religious of the Assumption. Despite being at the beginning of Lent, this weekend was marked by its joyful spirit, prayerful openness and inspiring reflections. I suspect there was also a lot of fun, good sharing of stories and maybe even some sore feet!

Supporting Carmelites preparing for Ministry

As well as Richard, in Britain you are supporting Matthew, who is doing very well in his study of philosophy at Blackfriars in Oxford. In September he will begin theology. We are very conscious that we belong to a global community and a worldwide Carmelite family. I was fortunate nine years ago to be in Colombia, and I witnessed first-hand the positive impact that our Carmelite confrères are having in the communities

where they live and work. Our students of theology live in the capital, Bogotá; our students of philosophy (some pictured below) live in Arjona, about an hour by bus from the major city of Cartagena. Your donations this year will also help to ensure that Carmelites in Colombia will have the necessary funds to pursue the courses they need in philosophy and theology in preparation for the future. Thank you for your ongoing generosity.

For several years you have also been enabling our Carmelite students in Timor-Leste in their study programmes. You may remember that some time ago Kevin Melody, our Carmelite brother who is parish priest in Faversham, spent time with them and has been able to tell us from his experience of the great work the Carmelites are doing there.

Transformative Practical Action

CarmelCare is a very practical means through which our brothers in the Philippines address social needs through developed programmes. Through 'CarmelCare' our friars and supporters can respond practically in times of

calamities. Livelihood programmes for sustainable living empower families to be self-sufficient in supporting themselves and their communities. Education through scholarships enable young people with no other means to access quality education, pursue their dreams and in turn become agents of transformation in their communities. Environmental protection initiatives are working towards the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. Trusting in your continued generosity, the British Province of Carmelites is pleased to have committed financial support in a modest way to these life-giving initiatives over the next four years. Each of us can become an ambassador of hope, a witness to resurrection life and a participant in the mission of Jesus today to bring life to others.





Praying partners – Mission partners

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux – the Little Flower – discovered that her vocation was to be love in the heart of the Church. Although she lived the life of a cloistered Carmelite nun until her death at 24 years, she had the zealous heart of a

missionary and became the patron saint of the missions. Through your prayer and the generosity of your donations, you are enabling good things to happen for others. You are a missionary of hope. Thank you.

Wishing you blessing, peace, determination and

a joyful missionary spirit as together we journey through Lent to Easter,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brendan Grady".

Brendan Grady, O.Carm.
Prior Provincial

Notice Board



Remember our Novenas

Novena to Saint Joseph

11 - 19 March 2024

Novena for Easter*

23 - 31 March 2024

Novena to Saint Jude

23 - 31 May 2024

Please recycle or pass this newsletter on to a friend after you have finished reading it - thank you.



*Please note that the novena leaflet included with this newsletter has incorrect dates. Above is the correct date. Apologies.



Saint Jude Summer Celebration

1 June 2024

*Praying with Saint Jude
and the Apostles*



11.00: Devotions with Anointing

13.30: Open Air Mass

14.30: Procession to the Shrine

**Refreshments &
piety stall available**

ALL WELCOME

Coaches welcome - please book via 01795 539 214

Shrine of Saint Jude, 34 Tanners Street, Faversham, Kent, ME13 7JW

 **Carmelite Friars, PO Box 289, Faversham, ME13 3BZ**

 **01795 539 214**

 **newsletter@stjudeshrine.org.uk**

 **www.stjudeshrine.org.uk**

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Front cover - the Resurrection at the Shrine of Saint Jude by Richard King. Images on page 2, 3, 8 purchased and used with permission of istockphoto.com - shows a wildflower meadow in Kent. All other photos © Carmelite Charitable Trust. Carmelite News has been written by Fr. Brendan Grady, and is designed and edited by Mr. Matthew Betts. The newsletter is correct at the time of printing. Contact the editor on: newsletter@stjudeshrine.org.uk.