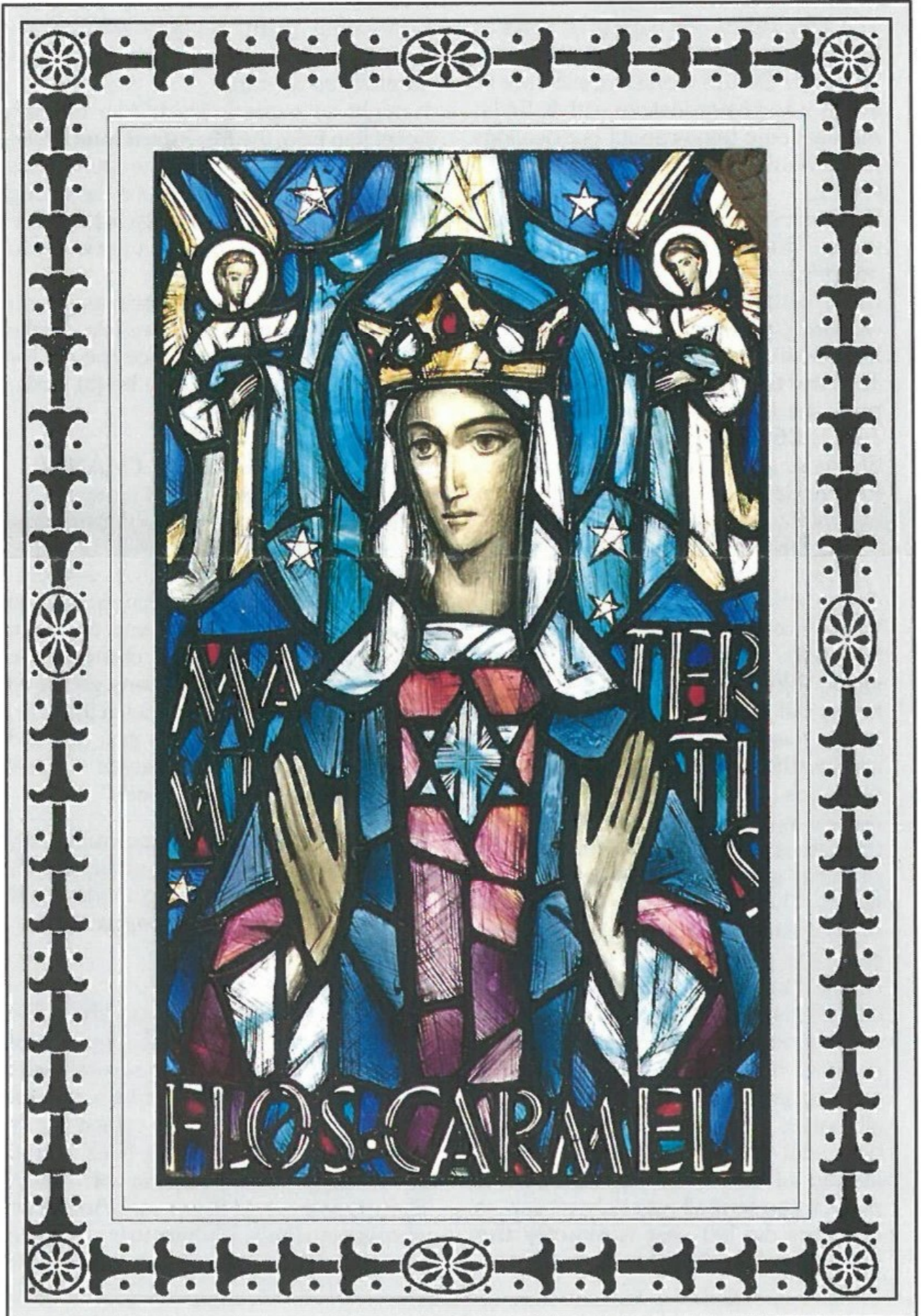


The Carmelite  
News

MAY 1993



Greetings in the Risen Lord. I hope Easter was as kind and grace-filled for you as it was - glory be to God - for me. And let's get straight down to business.

## THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL

The renewal of our baptismal vows at Easter reminds us that although we are no longer OF this world, we still have to live IN it and have dealings with it. So let me say some things about our dealings with it here at the Shrine and Newsletter Office.

First, some bad news that really is bad news. After FIVE YEARS of keeping our prices fixed the time has regretfully come for the prices of some of the things we supply to go up. So please note that from now on: the small statuettes of St. Jude and the Infant of Prague are **£2** by post; the 8" unbreakable statue of St. Jude is **£6.50** by post; the booklets on St. Jude, the History of the Infant of Prague Devotion and the Reflections on the Divine Infancy are **£1**, and the St. Jude prayer cards are 5p.

I'm sorry about these increases, but I don't think they are too bad after FIVE YEARS of no change.

Secondly, something that looks at first sight like bad news, but in fact isn't. I mentioned last time that some changes were

Yesterday's hurts  
can become today's understanding  
and so be woven into tomorrow's love.

needed in the way we conduct the draw to keep us inside the Law. Basically the problem was the cost of printing the tickets. They go out to everybody on the mailing list automatically because we pack the envelopes by machine (we have to, there are only 24 hours in the day!). This means that last year we sent out almost half a million tickets, two strips of 5 tickets to each client. And printing (and perforating, and folding) all that lot is expensive. So this year we have sent you two tickets, at £1 each - instead of 10 tickets at 20p. So the price, if you send all your tickets back, as everyone did last year is **exactly the same** as before. And the chance of your

tickets winning is also exactly the same (since 10 in 500,000 is exactly the same as 2 in 100,000: trust me, it really is!). And we save a bit more on the cost by printing them as an extra flap on the My Intentions leaflet, and a bit more by not perforating them. So you see we are looking after the money you give us as carefully as we can.

It might be a good idea to tear off the ticket flap from the **My Intentions** leaflet **now**, so that when you cut the counterfoils from the tickets you don't send the wrong bit back still attached to the **My Intentions** form and we have to send it back to you - costing us more postage.

Isn't it a bind? But it is the best way I can think of doing it, and I have lain awake many nights trying to reduce the bill for the tickets. If you have any bright ideas, please let me know!

## SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE

Can you guess when this was written?

"The children now love luxury; they show disrespect for their elders and love to chatter in the place of exercise. Children are tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when their elders enter the room.

They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs and tyrannise their teachers."

(It was written about 420 B.C., by the philosopher Socrates, who should have known better. And you thought you had discovered something new!).

## AN EASTER FAITH

During the 19th century it was fashionable for rich Americans to take a long tour of Europe - sometimes lasting several years - to see (and acquire) European cultural sophistication, then highly valued for its social value when they got back home. Paris was particularly popular with many. There is a story told of one such American who went to Paris. Wishing to buy his wife a special gift, purchased, just prior to his

return, a beautiful mother of pearl match-box container. And the special feature of it (said the shop assistant that sold it to him) was that it was phosphorescent, that in the dark it radiated a beautiful light. A few days later he packed it in his trunk, took it back home to the USA, and after the family dinner to welcome him home he asked for all the lights to be put out. Intending to surprise his wife he took the match-box container out of his pocket to give it to her. But when he looked at it there was no light: it was as black as the darkness around him. "Huh!" he said, "That is just what you would expect them to palm off on foreigners. I've been swindled." Next day his wife, a bit curious, examined the now discredited gift very carefully and discovered on the box, carved in the mother-of-pearl, some words in French. A few days later she took it with her on a visit to some friends who had a French maid and had it translated. The next night after dinner she too asked for the lights to be put out and surprised her husband by showing him the box, all aglow with delicate light. She had followed the instructions carved on the box:

*If you keep me all day long  
in the sunlight,  
I will shine for you all night long  
in the darkness.*

Our faith is like that. We must keep it in the light if it is to light others in their darkness. (Check it in the Good Book: 2 Cor. 4:6 and Phil. 2:15).

## SAINTS OF CARMEL (9)

In its homeland (Palestine and the surrounding region) the early Christian Church honoured many Old Testament figures as saints: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Elijah, all had their feasts in the calendar, and many of them survive today in the Eastern Churches; but in the west the saints

of the Old Testament had only a very restricted cult. Only in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which had direct access to the places where they had lived and worked their wonders, were they honoured in the Liturgy. The reason for this is not hard to find. The Liturgy of Rome imposed itself very quickly on the whole Western Church when the Latin and the Greek speakers went their separate ways, and that Roman Liturgy originally celebrated almost exclusively the feasts of Martyrs. Only one feast of the Old Testament penetrated the Roman Liturgy,

namely the feast of the Holy Maccabees (August 1st) because they were martyrs, and even this feast was removed at the last revision of the Universal (i.e., Roman) Calendar.

But the Carmelite Order took its liturgy from Jerusalem, and being largely independent of the Roman Calendar has preserved two of the Old Testament feasts. The presently more important solemnity of Our Father Elijah, Prophet, (July 20th) did not appear in the Carmelite Missal until 1551, despite Elijah's importance in our tradition. But long before that (1399 in fact) liturgical honours were accorded to Elisha (or Eliseus as he appears in the Latin books), styled

From  
**The Book of the Lover**  
(which is the Soul)  
**and the Beloved**  
(who is Jesus Christ)  
by  
Roman Lull  
(c1233-c1315)

39 They asked the Lover: "Wherein lies the glory of your Beloved?" He answered: "He is Glory itself." They asked him: "Wherein lies His power?" He answered: "He is Power itself." "And wherein lies His wisdom?" "He is Wisdom itself." "And wherefore is He to be loved?" "Because He is Love itself."

37 They asked the Lover: "Would you change for another your Beloved?" He answered and said: "Why, what other is better or nobler than the sovereign and eternal Good? For He is infinite in greatness and power and wisdom and love and perfection."



35 "O bird that sings of love, ask my Beloved, Who has taken me to be His servant, wherefore He tortures me with love." The bird replied: "If Love made you not to bear trials, wherewith could you show your love for Him?"

“foremost of the prophets” in a Carmelite document listing the nine saintly protectors of the Order.

The Carmelites, looking back to Elijah as their inspiration, if not their actual founder, saw themselves as “sons of the prophets”, and it was Elisha’s receiving a double portion of the spirit of Elijah and hence being the leader of the “sons of the prophets” that lead the Carmelites to honour him: what Elijah planted, Elisha watered, they proclaimed. So what do we know of Elisha? What can he teach us today?

There is no biography of Elisha in the Bible, only 18 separate stories scattered among the chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah as recorded in the Second Book of the Kings, and we have to read between the lines to piece together some understanding of the man and his prophetic mission.

The Kingdom of Israel was ruled in the 9th century BC by Kings of the Omride dynasty, and Elisha’s ministry extended over 50 years, spanning the reigns of six of the Omride Kings. His master Elijah had ended his solitary ministry opposing the new-fangled, desperately unjust, pagan ways of King Ahab and his Queen, Jezebel, who together had alienated a large part of the people of Israel who had come to yearn for a return to the simpler, democratic tradition of a now far-distant past. The extremists, like the Rechabites, totally rejected the New Order in Israel: Ahab, Jezebel and all their Courtiers were worthy of wholesale sacrificial destruction. Though less inclined to violence, the feelings of conservative Israelites generally were probably scarcely less bitter. The Royal House and all its works was very, very unpopular in the land.

It was into this highly charged political atmosphere that Elisha stepped up as successor to Elijah. But unlike Elijah, who stood a solitary figure in opposition to the subverters of the worship of the one true

## TRUST

Until I learned to trust  
I never learned to pray,  
And I did not fully learn to trust  
Till sorrow came my way.

Until I felt my weakness,  
His strength I never knew,  
Nor dreamed, till I was stricken,  
That he could see me through.

(Ps. 34:6, Ps. 56:3 & 11)  
(Isa. 12:2, Isa. 26:4)

God, Elisha worked in close co-operation with the groups of “sons of the prophets” in resisting the policies of the Royal House and its supporters. These “sons of the prophets” lived a communal life, supported by the gifts of the devout, often with a “master” (like Elisha) at their head. They were distinguished by a special mantle, they acted in groups - often elevated in ecstasy by music and dance. They expected a fee for their work, and their behaviour caused many to think them mad. Small wonder the Carmelites of a later age thought of themselves as successors of the “sons of the prophets” and came themselves to revere Elisha as a leader and an inspiration (after Elijah, who chose Elisha as his successor)! Elisha had gifts of knowledge and foresight, and a capacity to work miracles, and he was frequently in demand by the highest and the lowest in the land for his singular gifts which he readily used on others’ behalf. He was constantly on the move, like friars, enjoying easy access to the Royal Courts and peasant dwellings alike. If Elijah’s solitary ministry is represented in John

the Baptist, Elisha seems to anticipate the miracle-working aspects of the ministry of Jesus. As Carmelites honour the first, so they revere the second. If we are inspired by Elijah to stand up heroically for God and his values in a pagan society, denouncing that society if necessary, so we must be inspired by Elisha to help one another in daily life as our gifts allow, and to be active politically, using the instruments of our society to defend and propagate the Gospel values of justice and integrity, of love and peace. Elisha personally lit the fuse that brought down the hated House of Omri. So we should never miss an opportunity to help the cause of right. Never miss voting in any election - that is **our** way in **our** day of making **our** mark on **our** political landscape. Carmelites are prophets, proclaiming the values of the same one true God that Elijah and Elisha in their ways proclaimed in season and out. We must proclaim them on the political scene as well as on the religious scene, because in the end - although the politicians don't like to be told this - if our understanding of the world is correct there is only one scene and God's plans encompass all of it.

The feast of Elisha, recently restored to the Carmelite Calendar after a brief absence, is on the 14th of June.

*Father, whose word was proclaimed  
by the prophets in times past,  
grant, we beseech you, that  
as you gave the double spirit of Elijah  
to your prophet Elisha,  
you will deign to increase within us  
the grace of your Holy Spirit  
so that we may always give witness  
to your presence in the world.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
Middle age is when you start  
eating what is good for you  
instead of what you like.

## WARTS AND ALL

The American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote this well known prayer:

*God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
the courage to change the things I  
can;  
and the wisdom to distinguish the  
one from the other.*

All of us are confronted in life with situations we'd like to change, but cannot. How can we cope with these situations? We can bend like a tree planted by the water, with deep roots tapping the water of life, or we can resist for a time, apparently strong, but eventually break. If we are to be flexible enough to bend with the storms of life and so survive them, we must in the first place **learn to accept ourselves as we really are, warts and all**. Rather than feeling sorry for ourselves and cursing the limitations which life has put upon us, let us accept those limitations and live with them as children of God loved by him.

Then in the second place we must learn to accept **other people as they are**. Recalling our own faults and failings let us be charitable towards those of others.

In a village garage, the mechanic made entries in his daybook in such a way as to identify owners by the faults of their cars: "Mrs. Ellis won't start in the cold." "Something wrong with Mr. Murphy's wiring." Now there are lots of people who may appear to us to be in need of repairs, but it will save us many a headache if we can accept them **as they are**, knowing that we too have our dented panels and run-down batteries. Jesus looked at people, felt sorry for their faults, and accepted them as they were, loving them as brother and sister, children of God.

Again, we must learn to accept **situations which cannot be altered**. In other words we must learn to co-operate with the inevitable. One recent British monarch had these words hanging on the wall of his study: "Teach me neither to cry for the moon, nor over spilt milk." But my, how hard it is to do. It is one of the toughest lessons we have to learn, but learn it we

## FORTHCOMING NOVENAS

O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O

To the Sacred Heart of Jesus ..... 10th-18th June

O-O

To Our Lady of Mt. Carmel ..... 8th-16th July

O-O

To St. Jude ..... 16th-24th August.

must if we are to bend and not to break. We must learn to live with situations in life which cannot be altered. But this does not mean we must be filled with despair. Nor that we should give in to all adversities that come our way. That is mere fatalism. We must fight as long as we can to save a situation, but when there is nothing more we can do wisdom tells us to accept it as a fact. Let us remember that God's plans are not dependent upon their fulfilment here, certainly not by me, He has an eternity in which to work them out. When we have done all we can, we must leave it to Him.

*O God, forgive us for letting life's problems cripple our spirits.*

*We have given way to despair, to self-pity.*

*Pardon our past failures.*

*Fill us with a portion of your everflowing patience*

*and grant us a new chance to redeem our lives from unworthiness.*

*Give our souls a calmness sufficient for life's unrest.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

"I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on the frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words . . . When I was young we were taught to be discreet and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly impatient of restraint."

(There is nothing new under the sun. These words were written by Hesiod, a Greek poet, about 750 B.C. And you thought you were saying something new!)

We've had some lovely sunny days here recently: let's hope the Summer will be a good one. And don't forget to get those counterfoils for your Draw Tickets to us as soon as you can. Who knows, I might be writing to you soon to say you have won one of the prizes.

Be good; remember us in your prayers as we do you in ours.

Yours in the Lord's garden called Carmel,



David J. Fox, O. Carm