



The Carmelite News



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I hope this letter reaches you around the great feast of Pentecost. This is the great birthday of the Church and the gift of the Holy Spirit is so vital for each of us. The gift of the Spirit is the gift of love that is at the heart of our saviour Jesus Christ. The Spirit moving in Jesus enabled him to fulfil his mission and Jesus promised that same spirit would be given to his followers. Let's be aware of that power of love in our lives and also remember that

moved by the Spirit nothing is too difficult for us. Really it's remembering to let go and let God be. God's power working in us can do more than we can imagine!

Back from Rome

I have just come back from Rome, where Angelo Paoli an Italian Carmelite was beatified on Sunday. Blessed Angelo was an amazing apostle to the poor and sick. He was able to inspire the well to-do of his day to support his various projects. The beatification ceremony took place at St John Lateran which is the seat of the Pope as bishop of Rome. I had memories of a day in 1962 when I received minor orders one Saturday in May in that beautiful basilica. There was a wonderful gathering of the Carmelite family for the ceremony and the beauty of the liturgy was such that time stood still. It's always good to go to Rome and meet Carmelites from all over the world. I met up with a friar from Columbia working in a country torn by civil strife and a young Romanian friar pioneering the spread of the order in that

country. My visit was over all too quickly but I came back full of hope seeing how the order is growing world wide.

Just before my visit to Rome I had to go to Holland for a meeting of the European Provincials at Boxmeer. I decided when organising the journey to go by train which was just as well as all air travel was out because of the ash problem. The Order in Holland is well established and the Dutch have done much to plant Carmel in Indonesia and the Philippines. The Priory at Boxmeer goes back to 1652 and has a church that is as big as any cathedral. The priory has links with Titus Brandsma, his habit and many other personal belongings are preserved there. I was also in Nijmegen where Titus taught in the university and our priory church has a fine exhibition charting his life and death in Dachau. The Carmelites are still involved in the university where they direct the Titus Brandsma institute of spirituality.

Spring in Kent

Just now the weather here in Kent is warm and sunny; the east wind is having a rest which is a blessing. With spring being so late the flowers have come out all at once giving wonderful displays of colours. The countryside around Faversham is at its best and before long the apple blossom will be out. Many of the fields have the powerful gold colour from the rape seed crops. However too much of that bright gold can be overpowering. Despite our priory being in a town, it's very peaceful, so with the lighter mornings it's good to wake up to bird song. The beauty of nature is such a great gift, so it is important that we care for God's great gift of creation. The consequences of the Icelandic volcano's fallout also shows how delicately balanced our planet is and how despite all our technology, nature can always be so powerful. Many people were inconvenienced by the closure of the airways; I only hope that none of your families were badly

affected. We had some Polish friars stranded in Aylesford but in the end they got home by coach, though that was a long trek for them.

Recent Difficulties

This last while has been difficult for the Church with the sad saga of child abuse. As the bishops of England and Wales have said these terrible crimes and inadequate response by some church leaders grieve us all. The bishops also go on to say “That the criminal offences committed by some priests and religious are a profound scandal they bring shame to the whole church. But shame is not enough. The abuse of children is a grievous sin against God. Therefore we focus on our sorrow for these sins – They are the personal sins of only a very few. But we are bound together in the Body of Christ and, therefore, their sins touch us all.” The bishops then go on to say “We express our heartfelt apology and deep sorrow to those who have felt ignored, disbelieved or betrayed. We ask their pardon, and the pardon of God for these terrible deeds done in our midst. There can be no excuses”. Our bishops stress full cooperation with statutory bodies is essential, and also a time for deep prayer and reparation. It is also important that we pray for Pope Benedict at this time, whose wise and courageous leadership is so important at this time.

Visit of the Pope

Pope Benedict will be in England and Scotland this autumn. He is no stranger to this island and let's pray that his visit will be a time of grace for all the people of these lands. He will declare Cardinal Newman blessed at a special Mass at Coventry. Cardinal Newman, besides being a great scholar, exercised a wonderful ministry among the poor of Birmingham. He cared

for the sick at a time when our overcrowded cities were plagued by outbreaks of cholera and typhoid. Cardinal Newman was no remote intellectual but full of loving care springing from his deep life of prayer.

Anniversary of Archbishop Romero

Just before Easter there were wonderfully moving celebrations remembering Archbishop Romero on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of his assassination. The Archbishop was shot on the Monday of Holy Week 1980 while saying Mass for Carmelite sisters. It was said of Archbishop Romero that having heard the cry of the poor he became the voice of the poor. I was fortunate to be at a beautiful celebration in his memory, held at Westminster Abbey on Palm Sunday. The service brought together Christians of all denominations and opened with a recording of Oscar Romero's final homily where he appealed to the army to stop oppressing the people of El Salvador. These words were too much for the regime and hence they organized his death. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave an inspirational homily showing how Archbishop Romero was faithful to the essence of the Gospel and ready in the spirit of Christ to risk everything for the Gospel that shaped his life.

Students and Novice

All our student friars and Andrew our novice are doing well. Ged Walsh is well on with his courses while Michael Brookes, Neil Scott and Paul Jenkins still have a while to go. What I find so helpful is that whenever we have meetings they all have something of value to contribute. I am grateful for your support in helping with their education and that of our young friars in developing countries. While I was at Boxmeer I heard how many vocations we have in Cameroon. On Sunday one of our

friars from the Congo said that despite the political problems the Order was growing there. At the beatification service it was good to see so many young friars present. One way you can help for the future is by leaving us a legacy. I am enclosing a leaflet about making a will which I hope you will find helpful, please take time to peruse it.

Introduce friends to the Newsletter

Also while I am being practical could you help in a very simple way, could you introduce a friend who you think would like to receive the newsletter, and in that way become a friend of the Carmelites? I always like to think that this is “a good news letter,” unlike so much of the media that love to rake over life. So can I thank you in advance for your help. There is a form enclosed with this newsletter for you to add names and addresses.

Novenas and Draw Tickets

I am also enclosing the Novenas for the next while. The first is the Sacred Heart that wonderful teaching about God’s unbounded love expressed in Jesus Christ. Then there is the novena for the feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel. I hope to be in Aylesford that day and will pray specially for all of you. Finally a novena to St Jude, a novena that reminds us of the light of hope, at a time when otherwise life could be overwhelming. Also while I remember the draw tickets will be sent with this letter; I know you always make a wonderful response for which I am very grateful.

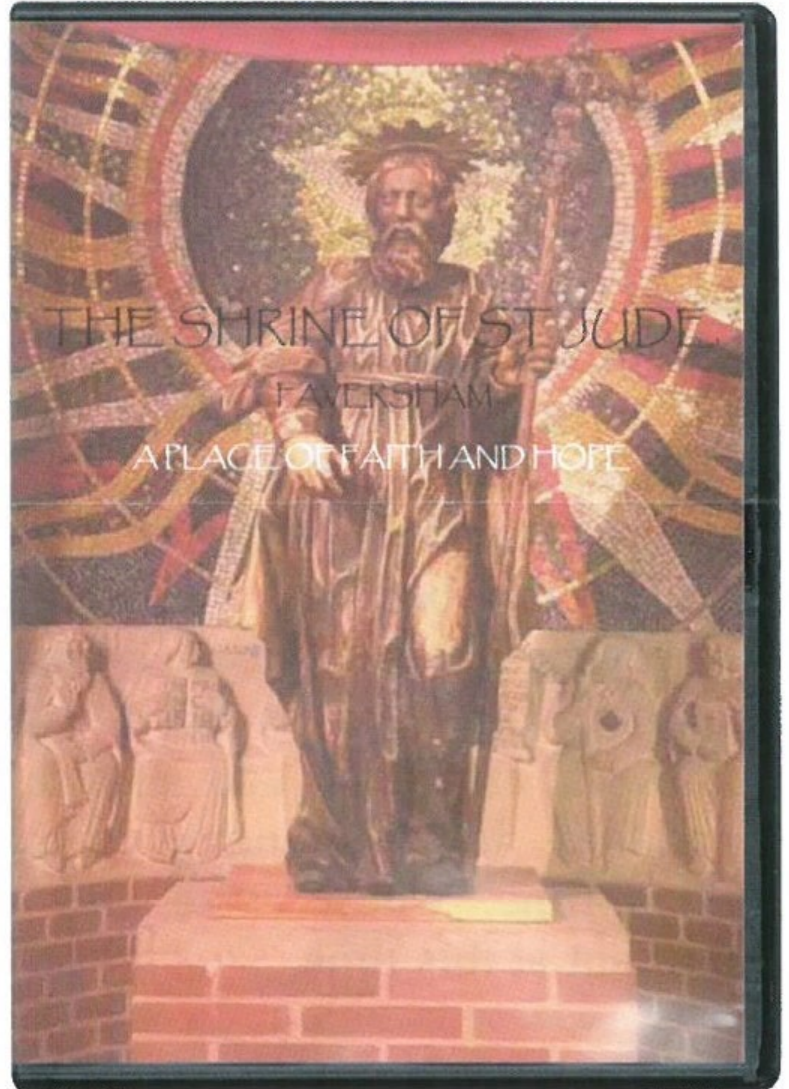
Changes here at Faversham

We have had to make some changes because of illness, Fr James Sweeney the parish priest here at Faversham is moving to

Llanelli. We have a lovely church there dedicated to Our Lady of Peace. Father Piet besides looking after the Shrine and Pilgrims has kindly agreed to be parish priest here in Faversham. I have promised to help him as much as possible and of course while Brother Michael is studying and living here, he is always ready to help.

DVD is ready and available

As I write I gather that the DVD about the shrine has arrived. From what I have seen it will be a great help to the apostolate of St Jude and will be a link with our friends. There are some moving testimonies which affirm the importance of the Communion of Saints. The DVD is available from Faversham and will cost £7.95 including post and packing. Please note that the fax number on the dvd is incorrect due to a clerical error, this should have been 01795 539511.



REMEMBER OUR NOVENAS

- Novena to The Sacred Heart.....3rd - 11th June
- Novena for The Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel8th - 16th July
- Novena to Saint Jude4th - 12th August

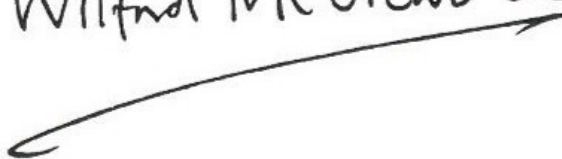
A Little of what does you good

They say some of the old jokes are the best jokes. I love the one about the old nun who was poorly and wouldn't take nourishment. She refused some lovely fresh milk. Then sister poured a generous drop of Jameson into the milk, I think it was a 12 year old. The nun drank it with relish and then with a seraphic smile said "Never kill that cow" Well they always say a little of what you fancy does you good!

So can we keep each other in our prayers, may Mary and St Jude be the best of friends to us and may God's love ever enfold us. As ever I remember you in my Masses.

God bless

Wilfrid McGreal O.Carm



Fr. Wilfrid McGreal O.Carm
Prior Provincial

Front picture: The Sacred Heart

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