

THE CARMELITE NEWS

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WHITEFRIARS, FAVERSHAM, KENT

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A RED LETTER DAY

THE Carmelites take their name from Mount Carmel in the Holy Land. They were hermits who lived on Mount Carmel in caves or in huts. Mount Carmel is a delightful mountain. Practically the only decent one around. The rest are arid, rocky, threatening, but Carmel has been in the eyes of the Jews a sort of Garden of Eden in Jewish history.

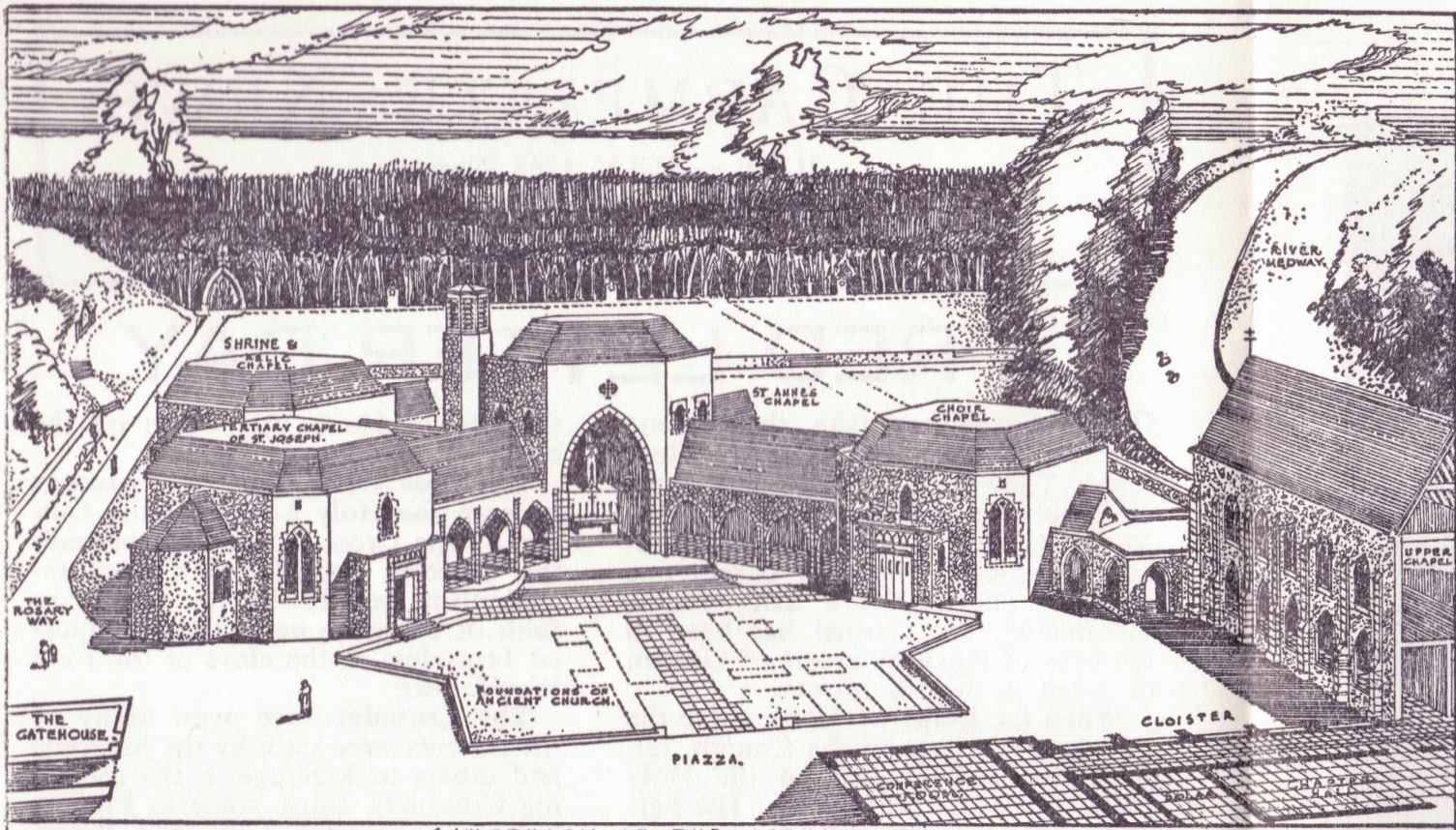
When the Emperor, Constantine the Great, gave peace to the Church, pilgrims made their way to the Holy Land to see the holy places. The hermits of Carmel were made up from the residue of those who never wanted to leave. Some were priests, some were pious laymen, some were soldiers who were tired of the wars. In fact a hermit of Carmel could be almost anybody. They lived the old heremital life, each man apart looking after himself, and this mode of life continued for a long time. It was the Patriarch of Jerusalem, St. Albert, who eventually gave these scattered hermits a Rule of life written in Greek. This Charter was valid only in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. It gathered those hermits into one central Hermitage; it arranged for some sort of common table, for a common oratory and for a Prior whose residence was close to the gate. The hermits were allowed to keep donkeys for transport, pigeons for food; each man lived apart and had a rather independent sort of life. Weaving baskets was one of their trades, but the idea of the Patriarch Albert in giving a Rule was to give them some sort of systematic life. It became a community life and there was some hope of help and sympathy to the ageing hermit who was past his labours. The water for the hermitage was drawn from a well named after Elias the prophet of Carmel. The well is now part of the water system of

the city of Haifa way down on the coast.

The time came when the Saracens overran the Holy Land and the banner of the Cross went down beneath the Crescent and the Star. Mohammedanism was to be the dominant faith of Palestine until Allenby entered Jerusalem at the close of the First World War.

The Crusades were over. Many of the hermits were slain by the Saracens and others took refuge in the returning Crusaders' ships, some to France, some to Italy, some to England. Baron de Gray of Codnor, a crusading knight, brought a party to England. They sailed up the Medway to Aylesford, where the Baron settled his riverside manor and three acres of land on them. A further three acres was added later. Here the hermits settled. Shortly afterwards they appointed St. Simon Stock, a Kentish member of their community, as Prior. In 1247 a General Chapter of the whole Order, now scattered about Europe, was convened at Aylesford and St. Simon was elected Prior General. Under his leadership the Order abandoned their hermit way of life and became a mendicant brotherhood.

Life was very difficult for those hermits; they were not professional clerics in any sense of the word. A few were priests, many were lay brothers. But the Friary at Aylesford did become the Mother House of the Carmelites in Western Europe. St. Simon Stock died on a visitation to the French houses and was buried in Bordeaux, his relics were preserved beneath the high altar and on the restoration of Aylesford as a living Carmelite community the Bishop of Bordeaux gave his consent for the major part of his relics to be transferred there.



A. GILBERT SCOTT CBE, M.C., FRIBA
ARCHITECT.

SANCTUARY OF THE ASSUMPTION
OF THE GLORIOUS VIRGIN.
AYLESFORD KENT.

H. N. LAWS, ARIBA
1.2.1960. DEL.

Life was difficult for those hermits in England. They had arrived in the 1240's when the dioceses had been quite formed and parochial divisions already settled. It was difficult to fit them in anywhere and that explains why their houses were always found outside the towns; in places so bleak that the parochial clergy were quite easy in their minds about them. We find, therefore, that the Carmelites when they came to England lived outside the towns always on the banks of a river, that too, is the reason for the name of the place—Aylesford—because there was a ford across the Medway just a few hundred yards away. The old fording stones that allowed people to cross the Medway at low tide are still to be seen around the fish pond of the Friary in Aylesford. It was the Carmelites who eventually built the bridge over the River Medway, a bridge that has today become too narrow for the traffic that rumbles over it so the Kent County authorities have built a new bridge further up and the old bridge of Aylesford remains just an architectural curiosity. They built well, those old Carmelites, it still stands strong and firm and will stand after another

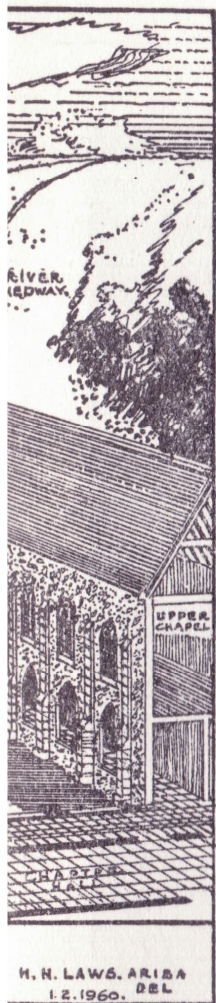
thousand years. It was the same at Queensferry, in Scotland, there the Carmelites had charge of the ferry that brought people across the Firth. The church is still there under the devoted care of a minister of the Episcopalian Church of Scotland to whom we all owe praise and thanks.

The Carmelites were probably in charge of Queensferry, so named because St. Margaret of Scotland was ferried over the Firth to her place of burial before the high altar in Dunfermline Abbey which she had founded.

The Convent at Hulne or Alnwick, on the northern borders, was more a fort than anything else; maybe there was still some fight left in the Carmelites because of their old connections with soldiers and crusaders.

So it is with the history of most of our convents in England, Scotland and Wales. They all disappeared under the grasping hand of Henry VIII when he suppressed the monasteries. Aylesford was given to a local layman, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and continued in lay hands until 1949 when I was instrumental in buying back our ancient home.

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Father Malachy Lynch took charge of the restoration and a marvellous job he made of it. To-day it is the surprise and delight of the thousands of pilgrims who visit the Shrine of Our Lady and St. Simon Stock. The present Superior is Father Kilian Lynch, an ex Prior General of the Carmelites and successor to St. Simon Stock.

Cardinal Newman once preached a famous sermon called "The Second Spring". He could see the Catholic Church of his day in England gradually emerging from the catacombs into which it had been thrust by the Reformation. He saw the old roots push out new branches and he called it "The Second Spring."

To the Carmelites, the restoration of Aylesford to its former glory is more than a second spring, it is the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Order. At one time the Order was very, very weak indeed. In 1904 the number of Carmelites was 404, I am talking about men; to-day the number is close on 5,000. New Provinces have sprung up through its missionary efforts in nearly every country in the world — Australia, North and South America, in fact the Carmelites are now everywhere. The Carmelites have never claimed real importance in the history of the Church. We have had our famous men, but somehow or another we have always remained individualists. The old eremitical independent spirit has never left us. I hope it never will. We are the least regimented of all the Religious Orders and Congregations in the world. It is said you can never change a Carmelite; it is perfectly true. After a long life, much of it spent in the cause of Carmelite education and indeed, of Aylesford itself, I can still marvel at St. Teresa of Avila; how she ever persuaded so many men and women to go back to the old eremitical life is quite beyond me—but then she was a Spaniard, and she was a woman, and she must have had a will of iron. What she

achieved was important and is still great, but I doubt if it has the lasting powers of what we like to describe as the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance. That straggly old band of hermits drawn from the heights of Carmel who yet survived to live on to the twentieth century and has promise to-day in the rebirth of the Friars at Aylesford of becoming a beacon light for the centuries to come. We cannot explain it ourselves so we take refuge in faith; we credit it all to the protection of Our Blessed Lady under whose Star we were born and continue to live.

JULY

16th (Friday)—Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Mass 11.30 a.m.

17th (Saturday)—Ordinations 5 p.m.

18th (Sunday)—Sunday after Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Diocesan Pilgrimage.

CONSECRATION OF ALTARS 10.30 a.m.

SOLEMN PONTIFICAL MASS, BISHOP COWDEROY, 11 a.m.

ARCHBISHOP HEENAN PRESIDING.

Procession and Pontifical Benediction 3.30 p.m.

Torchlight Procession 8.30 p.m.

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THANKS

Thanks to St. Martha.

Mrs. K. Smyth, Lurgan.

Thanks to Fr. Titus Brandsma. C.H.

Everlasting thanks to Sacred Heart, B.V.M., St. Jude, St. Anne and St. Anthony. K. Browne, Rugby.

Thanks to the Divine Infant of Prague. J. Breslin, Derry.

Thanksgiving to Fr. Titus Brandsma. M. E. Gillson, Bournemouth.

Favours granted through Blessed Virgin Mary, The Sacred Heart and the Saints. Mrs. M. Joyce, Mayo.

Grateful thanks to St. Jude for favours received. Anon. Barnet, Herts.

Thanks to St. Jude for numerous favours received. A. Keane, Limerick

Grateful thanks in honour of The Little Infant, Our Lady of Quito and St. Jude. H. Herlihy, Oldham.

Many people have asked me to print my photograph in the "Carmelite News". I don't like the idea because I have a touch of vanity. Last week, a client who has been writing to me for many years and who has never seen me came down and by a fortunate circumstance I was available. She looked at me in amazement and then said, "I always thought you were a little man with a big broad rimmed hat—a little man about 5ft. 4in. with a hat too big for him." I didn't like that very much because in my early days I used to wear a real sombrero. She was astonished. Anyhow she bandaged the wound by telling me she didn't like small men, so I felt as big as a policeman.



Well, here I am. Just my face. I am old; I am ill; and I am tired, and you can read it; but those who see it always complain that there is something lacking, a glint of what they call devilment in my eye. You can't keep it up for ever!

OUR COMING NOVENAS

SACRED HEART OF JESUS - - -	June 17th — June 25th
ST. JUDE - - - - -	June 21st — June 29th
OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL - - -	July 8th — July 16th
ST. ANNE and OUR LADY - - -	July 18th — July 26th

OUR BURSES

	<i>Already acknowledged</i>			<i>Increase</i>		
The St. Jude Burse No. 3 ...	997	7	6	1,399	7	6
Holy Child of Prague Burse ...	1,520	8	6	1,670	13	6
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Burse ...	490	16	0	492	19	0
Our Lady of Lourdes Burse ...	109	17	6	204	17	6
Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Burse	168	13	6	169	4	6
Little Flower Burse ...	878	5	0	898	5	0
Sacred Heart Burse ...	79	2	6	80	12	6
St. Anthony Burse ...	73	2	6	74	12	6
St. Joseph Burse ...	1,049	2	6	1,050	2	6
Holy Souls Burse ...	18	9	6	23	9	6
St. Martin de Porres Burse ...	10	9	6	16	6	0
St. Martha ...	2	17	6	3	7	6
Father Titus Brandsma ...	27	7	6	33	7	6
Father Cyril of the Mother of God	—	—	—	12	0	0

Our Lady keep you!

Yours in Carmel

M. E. Lynch O.T.