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THE CARMELITE NEWS

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Little Penances

We had a few days of bad fog before Christmas. The piercing cold and damp brought back memories of walking home from school in the cold foggy evenings. We never seemed to mind it. Being young and strong we took it in our stride, anyway we always knew there would be a good hot meal and blazing fire to welcome us home from a "hard day at the books". I still remember my favourite dish in weather like that, fresh carrots well boiled and mashed and then fried in fresh butter and eaten while they were piping hot. No matter how cold or dreary the evening or how 'bad' the day was at school, everything looked much brighter and better after a dish like that. It is the simple little things that can make such a difference in life.

This can be seen in our spiritual lives as well. If we take St. Therese of the Child Jesus for example. This is her centenary year. She was born on 2nd January 1873. Within a lifetime - seventy-seven years - she was canonized and is now well known throughout the whole world as the Little Flower. Her life story under this title of The Little Flower was found in a Library under the

Gardening Section! She would see the funny side to that!!! The Centenary celebrations started officially last October with great celebrations at Lisieux. I was there for the wonderful torch-light procession with her Relics, in a golden casket on a floodlit float, through the streets of the town to the huge Basilica on the hill. It was a very moving sight to see so many thousands singing her praises in the light of all the torches. One couldn't help comparing the grandeur, solemnity and the huge crowd that night with the small handful, only six people, which followed her simple coffin to the graveyard in 1897.

I was fortunate to be able to concelebrate Mass on the Sunday morning in the Basilica with a Cardinal, eight Bishops and thirty other priests. A congregation of about five thousand sang the Gloria and Credo with great fervour and volume. During the week I said Mass for all your intentions in the Carmelite Convent, where little Therese spent her life, praying that she should shower her roses on you. What has made her great is her little way. Her way of offering up little sacrifices to God.

She never went out of her way to do big penances or sacrifices. She just took the little simple ones that came her way in daily life and offered them up cheerfully to God, like being patient with difficult people, being kind to those who weren't very understanding, not telling off people when she felt like it. She teaches us how to make good use, for love of God, of all the daily trials we meet. We know from her life what wonderful good she did for others, by means of these little penances.

Now that we are approaching the season of Lent she teaches us how to make this period of penance really great and pleasing to God. We try to be patient and not grumble over our aches and pains which we can't cure. We accept them so that we can become more united with Christ. We keep our temper under control even if it takes an effort. We don't quarrel with our neighbours. We accept our disappointments cheerfully and do not let them depress us. If we only stop to think there is a whole host of ways by which we can do little penances. By means of these we can do great things. If we all offered up these for peace and justice in the troubled parts of the world and especially Northern Ireland we would help immensely in getting a solution to the Problems. St Patrick too patiently and cheerfully suffered a lot for Ireland. He worked wonders for the whole country and indeed for the whole world. In his writings he doesn't go into great detail but we can understand what he sums up in a few well chosen words. His was a hard, tough, phys-

ical penance, as tradition tells us about his time on Lough Derg -St. Patrick's Purgatory - it hits the body feels it most; in lack of food, of sleep and of the countless little ways by which we look after our comfort. As he prayed for Ireland then we will offer up the Novena in his honour for justice and peace there as well as in the other battle areas of the world. The prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes is a very suitable one for this intention of peace and especially for those who are suffering because of all the troubles. This will be one of the main intentions of the Novena in honour of Our Lady. When Our Lady appeared at Lourdes she called for Penance and more penance. We don't like doing penance or having to suffer. If we did it would not be penance at all. But it is a necessary medicine for us. Like medicine which so often is unpleasant, it does us good, and because it is so good for us and Our heavenly Mother is so concerned for our welfare she has urged us to do penance. When ever we follow Our Lady's request we always get deep interior peace and this is the basis for peace with those around us. St. Bernadette in her life gave a wonderful example of how to accept and bear the crosses which are our daily lot. These saints were always so happy and cheerful. It is a true saying 'saints are not sad'. We should not be sad either. After all we have the good Lord and His Blessed Mother keeping a constant kindly eye on us.

I am indeed very grateful for the donations which you sent to help us with the wonderful work of Hazlewood, all the little ones put

together add up and will in time enable us to do great things. There have been quite a number of visitors recently. The priests and brother are kept very busy. Next March we hope to have a Vocations Retreat in the Castle for young men who are interested in the Priesthood and Religious Life. There will be a number of priests available to advise and counsel these young men. I know you will pray for the success of this and other Vocation Retreats we are organising this year. The Little Flower worked and prayed hard for priests and missionaries while in this life She will not forget us in her Centenary year. The Late Vocation College in Aberystwyth has got a new intake of young and not so young men - all 'late vocations'. For some reason or other they didn't get the chance of studying for the Priesthood after they finished school. Now they have come along to prepare themselves for entry into a Noviciate or Major Seminary. On my last visit there I had a chat with a number of them, I was very impressed by the great spirit and atmosphere among them. The variety of jobs they represent is very wide indeed. We could take another ten or twelve in the College. Don't be afraid to encourage others who may feel the call, to enquire. We

will give them all the help we can. The ages range from 18 to 47 years. Luckily the students had gone home for Christmas before the boiler burst. It was a cold Christmas for the Prior and Community.

Our enclosed Carmelite Nuns are working and praying hard as usual. They are very grateful for any help they get and like their saintly sister, The Little Flower they pray for you and your intentions. Hidden away from the world they work very hard to support themselves but are very conscious of the needs of other people and help by their prayers and sacrifices. They are revising and updating their constitutions at present and it is hoped the work will be finished by the end of the year. We are printing a new pamphlet explaining their life and work. Again, if you know any girls or young women who may be interested, let us know. We will send all the information necessary.

Our Lady Keep You!

Yours in Carmel

*H. A. Brennan
O.Carm.*

PILGRIMAGES TO LISIEUX

27th August to 3rd September

25th September to 2nd October

Details Later.

St. Jude's Burse Draw

The first six months of every year always show a marked decline in subscriptions and donations. People are tired after the Christmas festivities; Lent looms up and just like the farmer we find that the grass is thin. The farmer looks forward to an early Spring and to an early bite and we must exercise our minds how to pull along over the early months of New Year until things get better.

We thought this over for a long time and finally we decided to run one Draw each year in aid of the St. Jude Burse to educate a student for the Carmelite Priesthood, and to do it within the first half of New Year.

We must work within the framework of our three Societies, the Holy Child, the Little Flower and St. Jude, because the people who belong to these Societies are members and therefore we have a right to approach them. Our programme is a moderate one. We send out only five tickets to each member; this makes it a family affair, father, mother and children. It doesn't create any concern amongst parish priests; it does nothing to upset local effort to raise funds for the Church. In fact

it is something that is private between ourselves and you.

Just five tickets to each member. This is not a heavy burden for anyone to carry and yet if each member will accept responsibility for five tickets and return the money within the date outlined, we ought to be able to improve the funds in the St. Jude Burse by a substantial amount. We have decided to spread the prize list and we are offering eight prizes at £25 in cash. This should be an attraction to most people.

Will you help by buying these tickets. The total represents only 25p contribution and we think you have a fair chance. Please remember that we do this only once a year. We do not like this method of raising money, but the business of financing education of students to the priesthood receives no State aid and often involves the work of priests who receive no salary. Thank you very much.

Winners will be immediately informed by post and a full list will be printed in the following issue of the "Carmelite News". Please retain your ticket so that winners can be verified. Thanks again.

REMEMBER OUR COMING NOVENAS

OUR LADY OF LOURDES — 11th-19th February

ST. JOSEPH AND ST. PATRICK — 10th-19th March

ST. JUDE — 8th-16th April