

THE CARMELITE NEWS

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WHITEFRIARS — FAVERSHAM — KENT

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PURPOSE BUILT

You may have seen adverts on the Telly or in your newspaper or in both, for that matter, for handmade shoes and boots. The idea is so sensible that it should not really cause comment, but because most of us buy ready-made shoes the "individually designed and made for you alone" variety is somewhat rare. Generally speaking they cost more, of course, which is one good reason — in fact the only good reason — for not buying them. Something that is designed and made with your personal requirements in mind is obviously better suited to you than something that is not quite so purpose-built.

Speaking of handmade shoes reminds me of the lovely story of the little girl who had been learning in school about the Incarnation and about how Jesus's mother was prepared for her role by her Immaculate Conception. Every day, of course, the Angelus was said in class, a prayer that expresses so succinctly and so clearly the gospel of God becoming Man and Mary being his mother. Anyway, on the morning of 8th December, with the parish priest doing his rounds of the classrooms before saying Mass in the school, he asks our little girl, the star of the class, why was Our Lady so

perfect, expecting to be told that she was conceived without sin, which would lead on to further points. "Why was Our Lady so perfect?" asks the priest. "Because she was handmade by the Lord", replies our little girl! And wasn't she right?

KEEP YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND

To get back to feet again. Did it ever occur to you that the glossies, the adverts, the shelves of Boots, Marks and Spencers, and so on are full of liquids, lotions, potions, powders, preparations of all sorts, shapes, sizes, smells (**and prices!**) for the beautification of the human face, while the poor old foot, which quite literally bears the heat and burden of the day, is lucky to get a corner with a card of corn plasters and a packet of Radox? Big Deal!

FACES

I'm not against reasonable face care. In fact I can think of quite a few faces that need a lot of help! (Nothing personal intended, madam.) To me a face is lovely because of the personality it reflects, not because of the paintwork on it. Your face is you. Your eyes, your mouth, your smile, your wrinkles and creases tell the world the sort of person you are. There is a loveliness for each age, for our

life's spring, for its summer, for its autumn and its winter. If we help the good qualities of our personality to grow, if we let the lessons of our experiences and responsibilities refine and enlarge the good already in us, then we shall always be lovely people with the beauty appropriate to our age.

MATURITY

So many people have aching legs, sore ankles and tired feet because they do not take care of their "plates of meat". Take care of them, rest them when you can and spoil them a bit as you get older.

Confucius he say: "Maturity is reached when you take as much care of your feet as you do of your face."

GOOD NEWS

"How blessed are the feet of him who brings good news," says the scripture. For the travel-weary visitor there was the courtesy of a bowl of water for the feet. You remember how Simon entertained Jesus at his house but gave him no water for his feet, while Mary Magdalene washed his feet with her tears? On Holy Thursday Our Lord washed the feet of his friends, as we are reminded in the Liturgy of Holy Week. So we have scriptural warranty for looking after our old workhorse friends, our feet. Just let's make sure we use them to bring good to people not harm.

THANKS

As we come to the end of yet another year, I want to say "Thank you" to all of you. Please believe me when I say that I want it to be a personal message, a personal

handshake to each of you. Firstly for your interest, for taking the trouble to read the Newsletter and for writing to us. Secondly for your prayers, for us Carmelites, for our students, for our apostolates, for those we work for and for those we work with, for the whole Carmelite family, for all who ask our help and our prayers. Without your prayers our work would be impoverished and the people we share our lives and work with would be deprived. Without your prayers we would not gain or hold vocations to the Order. Thirdly, I thank you for your generosity in sending money or valuables to help our finances. You are our lifeline so far as money is concerned. We have no big investments to keep us going. We are beggars for Christ's sake and you have never failed us yet. May God reward you. I know that for you as well as me prices go up and money goes down. All the more reason why I appreciate your sacrifices.

The Provincial joins me in this word of thanks and the students too. He and they send their best wishes to you for Christmas and the New Year and assure you of their prayers and remembrance at Mass.

Finally I thank and commend to your prayers the people in the office at Faversham, without whose help I should be lost. They are a great wee team.

*As soon as the rush is over
I'm going to have a nervous
breakdown.*

I worked for it . . .

I owe it to myself . . .

*And nobody is going to deprive
me of it!*

STUDENTS

We, the Province, have just made a new arrangement for the training of our candidates for the priesthood. For several years they were with our Carmelite students in Ireland. Then we changed to Rome to see if greater benefit would be gained from the international experience there. However, over the last few years the tendency throughout the Order, and not only ours, has been to keep students in their own Regions, and as a result the international element of our student life in Rome has been greatly diminished. From this October, then, our students are going to Dublin and will live at our house of studies and conference centre, **Gort Muire**, in Ballinteer on the southern edge of Dublin on the lower slopes of the hills.

OUR COMING NOVENAS—

December 9th - December 17th
ST. JUDE

December 25th - January 2nd
**THE DIVINE INFANT
OF PRAGUE**

THE HOLY FAMILY

They will study Philosophy and Theology at the Milltown Institute, which is affiliated to the Gregorian University in Rome. While it is under the auspices of the Jesuits, it draws its students from a wide variety of Orders and Congregations and its professors as well. You need have no doubt about orthodoxy of teaching or thoroughness of training or the calibre of the professors. I am sure they will prosper there.

Incidentally, since we have only one Novice this year, we have sent

him to the noviciate of the Irish Province in Kinsale, where he will be among a group of young men trying their vocation. We felt it would not be fair to have him as the only novice in the house over here: we would be accused of cruelty to animals!

ADVENT

I thought it might be of some use to you in your prayers if I were to pick out the introductory verse (from scripture) of each Sunday of Advent with a thought to expand it. You might like to make it your prayer each day for that week, short or long, as you please.

First Sunday:

"To you my God, I lift up my soul, I trust in you; let me never come to shame. Do not let my enemies laugh at me. No one who waits for you is ever put to shame." Ps. 24: 1-3

Let us tell the Lord of our fears, our anxieties, of the people whom we see as a threat to us and to our families, of our illness, our loneliness. Talk to him as a real person about these things and tell him you trust him.

Second Sunday:

"People of Zion, the Lord will come to save all nations, and your hearts will exult to hear his majestic voice." Is. 30: 19, 30

Let us remember that God has no favourites—except the poor and the humble. He was himself, in the person of Jesus, a member of a conquered race, he was a second class citizen. Let us tell him about our situation and ask him for the grace to listen to his voice speaking in the scriptures not just to the people of Judea but to us.

Third Sunday:

*"Rejoice in the Lord always;
again I say, rejoice! The Lord is
near."* Phil. 4:4-5

Let us admit to ourselves and to the Lord that we sometimes allow the fact of God's nearness to us, of his presence within us, to fade out of our minds through lack of prayer, through pressure of work, through the cares life thrusts upon us. Then let us ask for the grace to be more conscious of his presence and to draw joy from it as from the presence of a beloved friend.

Fourth Sunday:

*"Let the clouds rain down the
Just One, and the earth bring
forth a Saviour."* Is. 45:8

We need to talk to God in our own words, telling him how difficult it often is to keep him alive in our minds and hearts, so dry, so hard-baked do we become. Let us ask him for the grace to be open as the earth to the rain that produces growth; only this time the earth is my poor heart, and the rain is his Spirit, and the fruit is Jesus living and growing in me.

ONGOING INCARNATION

Christmas is a time to look back and a time to look forward. It is a time to look back at a moment in human history when a man who, above all others, shaped that history was born in Bethlehem: "The Word was made flesh and dwelled amongst us," Jn. 1:14. I recommend strongly to you that first chapter of John's Gospel. It is so

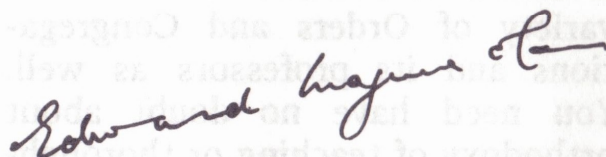
simple yet so profound. It is the statement of the infant church about Jesus; who he is, what he is, where he came from.

But that, marvellous though it is, is not the end of it. It is only the beginning. "When the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the Law and to enable us to be adopted as sons (daughters)", wrote Paul to the Galatians (4:4-5). That is you and I. Christmas is a time for looking forward to Christ's presence in the world of today and tomorrow. His presence is to be through you and me and millions like us.

Look at your good qualities, your gifts of heart and soul and mind and body. Leave your failings to God in trust. Resolve to use your gifts as well as you can in the New Year so that Jesus, through you, may be made man in 1983 in Birmingham, Bombay, Bridgend, Brixton, Blairgowrie, Bettws-y-coed, Ballybunion and Belfast. **That** is what Christmas is about. "Make me a channel of your peace . . ."

May there be more love than sadness in your hearts this Christmas, more hope and trust than regrets in the New Year. The peace and joy of Christ be yours, which no one can take from you.

Our Lady keep you



THANKS

Thanksgiving to St. Jude and St. Martin for health and exam results for family.—E.G., Donegal.

Thanksgiving to St. Jude and Mother Mary for a very great favour received.—H.N., W.5.

Thanksgiving to Almighty God for successful operations.—A.S., Glasgow.

Grateful thanks to St. Jude.—A.B.G., DG.5.

Grateful thanks to St. Jude for obtaining employment.—A.MacC.