
THE CARMELITE NEWS

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WHITEFRIARS — FAVERSHAM — KENT

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IT AIN'T HALF COLD, MUM

Come on out of the fridge, mother, it's warmer outside! I'm not joking either. One of my nephews was in a spot in Shropshire where the fridge was warmer than the porch. So next time you buy a fridge make sure you can fit in it yourself!

But "that was the fridge that was" wasn't it? If that's what is meant by a "White Christmas", give me a black one any day. It was so perishing cold, wasn't it? And to keep us on our toes the footpaths were as slippery as glass. Happy landings — thank God, I've got plenty of padding where it counts! Unfortunately not everyone has, and quite a few people hurt themselves, some badly. One reader said she'd got something in common with Kenneth Kendall — a broken arm! She was able to laugh about it anyway. I hope you can still manage one to start off 1982. It's got to be better than crying — it's no fun having icicles on your eyelashes! Tinklety-blink!

SOUTHERN COMFORT

Though I'm a northerner myself, I'm glad that today I'm in the South, where it is decidedly more comfortable. The noonday sun here is brilliant, if not particularly warm, the sky is blue with the occasional white cloud and in a pool of water outside the window where I sit writing to you a solitary blue-tit is having its morning bath, splashing the water

all over the place and generally enjoying himself. It didn't preen and groom itself afterwards, so it's hardly a lady is it!

Even as I look on, a clutch of sparrows has arrived finding perches all over the place and chattering away like a bunch of schoolboys waiting for the bus home. It's a really lovely day, and I hope you are experiencing it too. It does you good does a good day.

I suppose I should not feel so good when I think of the noonday news — floods in Yorkshire, floods in California — but after three weeks of snow, ice and rain I'm going to enjoy today — it might not be here tomorrow, if you know what I mean!

We enjoy a day, endure a day — just one at a time: "Lord for tomorrow and its needs . . ."

GALLOPING INFLATION

The other day I saw this old notice in London:

"It was unanimously agreed at a meeting held at the "Lord Admiral", Church St., Paddington, by the Paddington Coachmen that they would not pay their horse-keepers more than 1s. 6d. per week."

*Printed by
Order of the Committee
December 4th, 1842*

Next thing we know car-park attendants will be going on strike. Some people are never satisfied!

ST. JOSEPH

With March looming up over the horizon this might be the time to reflect a little on one of its major feasts, the feast of Joseph, husband of Mary, which falls on 19th March.

The Preface of that day's Mass puts into a few words what that man's life was about:—

*"He is that just man,
that wise and loyal servant,
whom you placed at the head of
your family.*

*With a husband's love he cherished
Mary,*

the virgin Mother of God.

*With fatherly care he watched over
Jesus Christ your son, conceived
by the*

power of your Holy Spirit".

ONE OF US

I suppose it is reassuring to find a saint whose life is not so far removed from ours in the ordinary day to day job and family responsibilities that form the warp and woof of our lives. Reassuring, because so often the saints are not carpenters and family men like our men are, and so we tend to think of them and their lives and therefore the holiness of their lives as beyond the experience of ordinary workaday folk. So St. Joseph is a reassurance that a working man with a wife and a child to look after and provide for by his sweat and his skill is a man after God's own heart. Perhaps I should make it clear that I'm not talking in class terms when I say "working man"—any man who works is a working man, and the same goes for a woman too.

Joseph is like us too in not being one of the great ones. In fact he is like us in being at the

mercy of the great ones and subject to the laws and officials of the government of his day—like having to enrol with Mary his wife at Bethlehem, even though it was inconvenient, to say the least.

Not only is he like us in that, but, as we are, he is vulnerable to the injustice of tyranny—as when he fled to Egypt to save the child from Herod. He knows what it is like to feel the cold hand of fear clutch at his heart because of danger or hurt to loved ones. He knows what it is like to feel helpless, anxious, hunted; to feel apprehensive about job security, to wonder what to do in doubt and uncertainty, to carry the burden of responsibility for people you love—people whom your mistakes can hurt. He knows what it is like to depend on a day's work, to live among strangers.

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART —AND OURS

So Joseph's role was to fend for a family, to love and care for a wife and a child; to have joy in them, to feel anxious for them and to look to God for guidance and strength. Isn't that us?

He had the traditions of his race to feed his mind and heart, but to apply them in all the circumstances of daily life and sometimes in crises demands judgment and common sense and oftentimes courage and determination and endurance. It makes great demands on our personal qualities of mind and heart. Isn't that us?

He wasn't away on a desert island with his gramophone records or shut off from the hurly-burly of the market place like a Carthusian monk. He was in the middle

of it all, getting trade, dealing with customers — some of them niggling and unreasonable: "Could I have that table a week earlier than arranged, Joseph? The wife's mother is coming to visit us and we'd like to have things right." Or, "I thought your price for that job you did on the wagon was a bit steep. I'll have to think of another man next time unless you can drop it a bit". Or, "Business is business, Joseph. No hard feelings?" Pressure from work and people. Isn't that us?

And to want the love and peace that home can bring. Isn't that us?

And to pray from time to time, when one can make time, and even then find our minds full of the daily cares and our prayers interrupted by other people's needs? Isn't that us?

He grew close to God in that most common yet most demanding role for any man — husband and father. Isn't that us, too? Wife and mother is the same in this respect.

OUR WAY TO GOD

One of the great things about St. Joseph is that he points a way to God that is not only possible but practicable for all of us. It is within our own experience, our own circumstances.

We walk with God not only in the few moments of prayer we manage to snatch out of the day but in all the circumstances of the day, providing we try to deal with them properly. What does "properly" mean? It means being fair with people; it means making allowance for their difficulties; it means being firm with them when the situation demands it; it means

using your common sense in all situations, caring about what happens to people in all situations; it means realizing God is in all situations asking us to do what we can with his help; it means asking God's help for all situations. It means saying "Thank you", or "I'm sorry", or "I love you", to God and people as occasion demands. No need to keep on all day long — just say it and mean it and act accordingly.

And don't be disappointed when you find you're not perfect! Recognizing and accepting that one is not is part of being close to God. If you think you are perfect, you're a long way from God.

JUGGLERS OF LIFE

Talking of acting fairly, making allowances, being firm, using one's common sense and so on, in fact all the attributes we know we should have, would like to have, generally have if only we thought for a minute but find it difficult to balance them all in practice — like a sort of juggler with the plates of life spinning through the air in a semi-circle above us, and if one slips! — well, talking of that, I saw a lovely example of it the other day in a tobacconist's shop in London near Leicester Square — the "farewell" one of the song.

TIMELESS TOBACCONIST

Don't think this is one of your ordinary tobacco shops with glass topped counters and shining wood glowing and reflecting under bright lights, where people dressed like bank clerks serve you with grave decorum and polite formality. Oh no: this came straight out of Dickens. Small and pokey, packed from floor to ceiling with such a

variety of tobacco and snuff and associated accoutrements, instruments and receptacles as would set a connoisseur's eyes glowing and his nose twitching. The only gap was a small counter, just large enough for two hands, a tin of tobacco and a pound note.

Behind it two gentlemen surveyed and served the world, each in a suit of brown of archeological wearing qualities and a shirt with neckband but no collar: no concessions to the frivolity of fashion here, but a witness to the continuity of tradition and the dedicated, single minded service of humanity. We were served immediately, quickly and with a cheerfulness not always found elsewhere.

CONFUCIUS HE SAY:

Experience is a great teacher, and our two friends looked as if they combined a fair amount between them. Behind the counter was a handwritten notice which ran

"You ask credit

I no give

You get mad.

I give credit

You no pay

I get mad.

Better you get mad."

MISCELLANY

You could call it "BITS", but it doesn't sound so good!

OUR COMING NOVENAS—

OUR LADY OF LOURDES

February 11th — February 20th

ST. JOSEPH AND ST. PATRICK

March 10th — March 19th

ST. JUDE

April 22nd — April 30th

Let's pray for the Pope, that his visit to Britain will help us grow close to God and to each other; will renew a spirit of faith and hope; will foster greater understanding among people of different churches and creeds; will help to heal the divisions in our society.

Let's pray for the people of Poland in this difficult period, especially for our Carmelite sisters and brothers. We heard from our sisters in Cracow recently but they give no news of present conditions — they promise and ask for prayers.

Let us pray for each other and for Carmelites and their friends everywhere, that Spring may bring joy and hope anew into our lives — like the snowdrop I saw the other day blooming under the snow. God love you and give you joy.

Our Lady keep you

Edward Hughes O.Carm.

TEN DAY PILGRIMAGE TO THE SHRINES OF FRANCE

led by Fr. Hugh Clarke, O.Carm.

Visiting Lisieux, Lourdes, Rocamadour, Ars, Paray-le-Monial, Nevers and Paris

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Dates: Monday, 26th July — Wednesday, 4th August, 1982

Booking Forms and further details: FR. HUGH CLARKE, O.Carm.,
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