

The Carmelite News

MAY 1994



HELLO once again, dear friend. I hope this finds you well and praising God for it; and if not so well, then bearing patiently the ills that assail you knowing that God always wills our good, even when asking us to share the sufferings of Christ. As I write we are still celebrating the great feast of that goodness when Christ was raised from the dead to open the gates of heaven to all believers. As you read this, Eastertide has finished with the whirlwind of Pentecost and we are into the Ordinary Time of the Church's year. Before I get on to the main meat of this letter let me deal with some nitty-gritty of administration so that I am sure I have got them in (my memory being what it is!)

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Greed for money is, the Good Book tells us, the root of all evil - but we must recognise the need to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and deal circumspectly with it. Money cannot buy happiness but at least it allows us to be miserable in comfort! So in this vale of tears I have to keep an eye on the money. My novice master used to say that if we genuinely had a need (like new shoes) then we should not be ashamed to ask for the means to meet that need. And that, after all, is the very purpose of this Newsletter. So here comes the begging bowl.

You will see on the **My Intentions** leaflet that it is Draw Time again. I hope you will feel able to support us again in this annual event at raising funds. Even if you can't this year, please remember our work for the

Church in your prayers. We constantly have to add new jobs to the list to meet the needs of the Church today. Last summer we opened a new House in Scotland - basically the University Chaplaincy at Aberdeen but with some other work in the area as well. People are spread out thinly in that part of Scotland but their spiritual needs are as great as anywhere and the work to meet them will not be cheap - but the need is real and with your support Carmelites can meet at least some of them. And as our students have increased in number we shall have to find a new student house because the present one is bursting at the seams. So if you can, join in the Draw. Who knows, it might be your lucky year? If you do have a flutter don't forget to keep the big part of the ticket safe at home so that you can prove the winning number is yours. Good luck!

MORE ABOUT MASSES

I mentioned last time the need to overhaul the arrangements for Masses in connection with our Societies and the Shrine generally. It won't make much difference in practice for you, but it is important that you know what is going on. So from 1st July this year of our salvation 1994 this will be the system.

Except for Good Friday and Holy Saturday (when no Masses are celebrated anywhere);-

1. There will be **every day** a Mass celebrated by a Carmelite for the health and spiritual well-being of all living members of the Societies of the Little Flower, the Child of Prague

FORTHCOMING NOVENAS

To the Sacred Heart	2nd-10th June
To Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	8th-16th July
To St. Jude	16th-24th August

and St. Jude and for the Holy Souls (i.e., the deceased friends and relatives of members of the Carmelite Society of the Holy Souls).

2. There will be a **monthly Mass** for the deceased members of the Societies and for other deceased benefactors of the Carmelites.

(Inclusion in the intentions for these Masses is AUTOMATIC for members of the Societies and the dead as listed).

3. In addition there will be a daily Shared Mass for any special intentions you wish to be remembered. (One page of the My Intentions leaflet has space for your intentions for this Mass as before).

4. During the year there will continue to be the thirteen Novenas of Masses as announced in the Novena leaflets that accompany the Newsletter (with a page of the My Intentions leaflet for these just as before).

5. We shall continue to arrange individual Masses as before. Please write your requests and intentions for them separately in your letters as before.

This may seem complicated when listed like this, but the only change is the re-grouping of the Masses for members of the Societies and of the masses for benefactors and the Holy Souls - and that is all automatic and involves changes at our end: you do not have to do anything new or different. It is just that we must tell you what is being done in your name so that no-one can say "I didn't know" or

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Pure as Carmel's snows and lovely
As the first fair morning shine,
Crowned with stars of changeless splendour.
Hail, thou Mother-Maid divine!
Hail, thou Lady of the Mountain
Rearing up its stately height
Emblematic of thy graces.
Glowing in immortal light.
Mother of Mount Carmel, hear!
Shades are falling, night is near!

From the wide wastes of the ocean
Where the Bird-like vessels sail.
From the deep haunts of the city
Where the weak and tempted wail.
In the chapel, in the battle,
From the bondman and the free
This sweet incense still is wafted.
This sweet prayer swept up to thee.
Mother of Mount Carmel, hear!
Shades are falling, night is near!

Traditional

"You never told me that" in ten years time. So be it known from today!!
And finally, before leaving the topic of money I must thank you for the stamps you put in with your letters. We are working hard to reduce our postage bill - and since spit comes free those stamps have helped a lot. Please go on doing it, we are truly grateful for them!

MOTHER MARY'S SCAPULAR

This being May - at least as I write - my thoughts turn to Mary as I look out of my window and see a glorious display of Our Lady's Candles (i.e., a horsechestnut tree in bloom). And for a Carmelite of course thoughts at this time turn to St. Simon Stock (16th May) and then naturally forward to 16th July for the Solemn Commemoration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. And for many people these two

feasts mean the Brown Scapular. About three years ago one good lady (perhaps it was you?) took me to task for referring to St. Simon Stock's scapular vision as being a "tradition". Well, so it is. There were no witnesses and nothing written about it at the time: from our point of view just a tradition. But a tradition that has strengthened the faith of countless people down the ages in different ways, and whose value as a faith-strengthener does not depend on the vision at all because it is not a magic charm but a **sacramental**, a means through the right disposition of receiving actual grace to do good and avoid evil, to protect soul and body, to remit venial sin (as the Church traditionally phrases it).

Just as having a meal together is more than just eating, so there is more to clothing than meets the eye. Clothing shows status, belonging, proclaiming. Giving clothes shows special concern. God expresses his concern in sartorial terms: "I will spread my cloak over you . . . enter into a covenant with you." (cf Ez.16:8-13a) Clothes indicate membership: people dress the part. In the Gospel Jesus is described as clothing himself in our humanity, and his generous self-giving extends even to his garments - people touch the hem with faith and they are healed. In baptism we "put on a new self" and symbolise it by a white garment.

The **Brown Scapular**, a miniature of the large scapular worn by the Carmelite friars and nuns, is traditionally understood as Mary's gift to Carmel symbolising her promise of blessing and protection. In the Old Law, Jacob made a coat with long sleeves (traditionally a decorated tunic or a coat of many colours) for his beloved son Joseph (Gen. 37:3) Hannah made each year a

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You should never ask people not to tell - it puts the idea into their heads!

Elbert Hubbard

coat for her only son Samuel (1Sm.2:19); a cloak was the sign of the extraordinary friendship of David and Jonathan (1Kg.18:4); the priestly garments designed in detail by God himself (Lev. 8:7-9) were an outward sign of the high dignity of the Israelite priesthood. Similarly, Carmelite writers saw something special in the clothes Mary provided for Jesus - the swaddling bands at his birth and the seamless tunic of Calvary, traditionally woven by Mary. Thus Mary's love for her son was symbolised by the garments which she provided for him during his life on earth. Now, as the patron of the Order of Carmel she continues the maternal care of her son in his new mystical body by providing its members with an outward sign of that care - the brown scapular.

Pope Paul VI declared Mary to be "Mother of the Church", the mystical body which is Christ and which is also us, you and me and all other believers. And so as Jesus loved and still loves his mother so we, as members of his new body, wearing Mary's scapular, must reproduce the love of Jesus for his mother as through his spirit he lives in us. And dedicated to Mary by our personal acceptance of her gift-sign we seek to follow her in following her Son in obedience to the will of the Father who wills our good. Dedicated to Mary we must love Jesus as she did: following Jesus we must love Mary as he did.

Since wearers of the scapular are members of the wider family of Carmel they must live the family values of which the scapular is a sign and a pledge of support. It is NOT, as regrettably it has been preached, an easy way to heaven. Any wearer of the scapular pledges himself or herself to strive to live the ideals of Carmel, ideals of prayer, service and community. If we try seriously to live up to these ideals we shall have no need of any talisman

or charm when we leave this life for a better one. Our reflection of Mary's devotion to her Son will be all the advocacy we need. The scapular we wear - either as cloth or as a medal - is a constant reminder of the struggle we have committed ourselves to. That we have indeed struggled will be enough because as St. John-of-the-Cross wrote: We shall be judged on how we have loved. We follow Mary when she said to the stewards at Cana: "Do as he tells you" - and what he tells us is to love one another. If the scapular reminds us to do that it will have done its job.

SAINTS OF CARMEL (11) A MARTYR OF THE SCAPULAR

On 24th April this year the Carmelite family saw one of its members - **Isidore Bakanja** - declared Blessed by Pope John Paul II at a ceremony in St. Peter's during the Synod of African Bishops.

Isidore was born some time between 1880 and 1890 in what was the Belgian Congo, now Zaire. He was evangelised by the Trappist missionaries that Pope Leo XIII had sent to the country at the invitation of the Belgian King Leopold II. These

AT THE NAME OF JESUS

Jesus is the Ointment

Delicate is the fragrance of your perfume; your very name spoken soothes the heart like an oil poured out.

(Song of Songs 1:3ab)

In ancient times ointment (made by mixing things with oil, to be applied to the skin) was used: . . .

. for cleansing,
 . . as perfume,
 . . . as a sign of hospitality,
 as medicine,
 in the mortuary process,
 on shields,
 and in consecration.

JESUS SAYS: Receive the anointing I have for you. I heal your inner hurts, your body; I cleanse you from past wrongs. Receive with joy your place in my kingdom.

missionaries and their converts were hated by the European planters for their opposition to the exploitation of the native population by the planters. Isidore, who was baptised in 1906, was particularly impressed by the analogy of a uniform identifying and proclaiming membership of a group such as the army or the police. How do you recognise a Christian? What is their uniform? And in answer he adopted the Brown Scapular and the Rosary as his uniform. So when in 1909 he

encountered a violently anti-Christian planter and was ordered to remove those "contraptions of stupid priests" he quietly but steadfastly continued to wear his 'uniform', and this led finally to a savage beating inflicting such terrible wounds that later, after much suffering during which he prayed for his attacker, he died. All the witnesses agreed that it was his refusal to remove his "habit of Mary" that led to the beating and its consequence, his death, and not any of the specious charges the planter later alleged. (The planter was later brought to court and condemned for his crime). If we wear the scapular - and I certainly do as part of my Carmelite habit - let us resolve to follow Mary in her devotion to her Son, and emulate her Son in his

filial devotion to his and our Mother; let us love one another as Blessed Isidore Bakanja loved even the planter who was responsible for his slow and painful death. If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you? Please God there would be.

The memory of **Blessed Isidore Bakanja** is celebrated in Zaire and throughout the Carmelite family on **12th August**.

COMMERCIAL BREAK

There is a new book coming out about Our Lady and the Scapular which I can recommend most strongly and from which I have drawn the ideas in this letter. There is more detail about Bl. Isidore, and something of interest to devotees of the Little Flower. If you want to know what it means to be a wearer of the Brown Scapular today and how we are rooted in Carmelite spirituality by doing so, this is the book for you. It should be ready by the time you are reading this, so do not delay. Write to us at Faversham now for a copy of *Mary and the Brown Scapular* by Fr. Hugh Clarke O. Carm. I am certain you will be delighted with it and your devotional life will be renewed. The price is £2.00 (plus 75p for postage). And while I am in commercial mode let me mention our new sweatshirt with an EMBROIDERED Carmelite motif. They are available in grey or maroon. Treat yourself or a young relative. They come in M. L. and XL sizes at £16.99 each (plus £1 postage) but you will have to write to Aylesford Priory, Kent ME20 7BX to get one as we have no room to stock them here in Faversham. End of commercial break.

FINAL SMILES

A few points, with some wry truth behind them, putting things right (and

not, I think, before time!).

Some male and female teenagers were shown these words WOMAN WITHOUT HER MAN IS A SAVAGE and were asked how it should be punctuated. The boys said that apart from a full stop at the end it required no punctuation: **Woman without her man is a savage.** The girls however punctuated it like this: **Woman! Without her, man is a savage.**

But this one (which was recorded by Samuel Palmer in 1869) is, I fear, beyond saving because it is carved in stone over the grave of an unfortunate Ulsterman:

Erected to the memory of
JOHN PHILLIPS

Accidentally shot
As a mark of affection by his Brother.

ENVOI

Until next time, God be with you, and may Mary cover you with the mantle of her mothering and draw you to her Son.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David J. Fox" with "O. Carm." written in smaller letters below it.

David J. Fox, O. Carm

PS Isn't there always something that gets forgotten! The picture on the front of this issue is a beautiful modern realisation of the Scapular Vision - one of the best ever versions of that scene I know. It is in the Carmelite Church in Valencia, in Spain.