The Carmelite News

Christmas 1998





ODDS & ENDS I have been very touched by the replies of so many of the "silent ones" who wrote letters of appreciation for the Carmelite News. I thank all of you for taking time to write, it is very encouraging. Some went so far as to give me their spiritual life's journey which was a joy to read and see how the Lord had led them along through difficult times and situations to arrive with peace and containment even though not rich in worldly goods. Many who wrote in have been in contact regularly, some for over 50 years, even if they did not write letters. Many are in the 70's-90's. Can you get a replacement for one so that devotion to St. Jude can continue to flourish in the modern world.? The silent ones I am after are those who never indicate that they say a prayer for us and never ask for a prayer, even though they are included in our prayers. I wonder if they are out there at all! I know our prayers are not lost! A few write in telling us of their new address but don't give us the old one. We need both in order to update our files. When the Newsletter goes out we get a lot of replies in a few days. It is impossible to answer all the day they arrive so I ask for your patience.

LOSSES Unfortunately some letters "disappear" in the post. We have reported every incidence we know of to the Royal Mail detectives. They have worked hard with various means to catch the culprits. But so far the problem has not gone away. It is very annoying and upsetting. You expect an answer from us. We don't know you have written. When your letter is stolen it is your donation they have stolen. Some are worried that their intentions are not included when the letter is stolen. Rest assured that in our prayers we pray daily for all who have asked us to pray for them, whether we have received the request or not. The Lord is all knowing and powerful. So your intentions are brought before the Lord. Being an understanding and merciful Lord he hears all the prayers and answers them as he knows is good for us. Royal Mail has suggested a P.O. Box No. It would remove the name of the Carmelites, St. Jude's Shrine etc. from the envelope when you write to us. Hopefully this will remove the temptation from those with "sticky fingers". When you write to us you simply put on the envelope:

P.O. Box 140, Faversham, ME13 7XR.

Those outside the U.K. need to put England. **NO NAME OF ANY KIND, NOTHING ELSE.**

I know this will look very bare compared to what you are used to. Some will think I have forgotten or left out something. But I HAVE

NOT. This is the safest way at present to get your letters to us.

We are assured that the letters will be delivered to me here, so I will know your petitions. But in the different sorting offices throughout the country nobody will know who or what the P.O. Box is.

A diplomat remembers a lady's birthday but forgets her age.

GROUPS It was pleasing to see the number that visit the shrine as individuals or as family groups. We have had a number of groups on Saturdays and some on Sundays as well as weekdays. On one week end I counted 15 different nationalities. Most live in this country but some were from overseas, like the cheerful Australian lady from Melbourne. For me one of the special groups was the International group of Carmelite students who paid us a visit in August. There were our own students, whom you help with your prayers and contributions, Irish, Dutch, German, Czech and Polish students. They were attending a course on the Carmelite Rule at Aylesford. Some of their lecturers were from America, Ireland and Italy. It was a great experience for them and gave them a small taste of our internationality and all were very pleased with the week. They could not leave without seeing our beautiful Shrine of St. Jude and hearing of your wonderful support. Talking about students we had two of your students, here at different times, during the summer. They were a great help and did a lot of work and were very pleasant to work with. Myself and the ladies here are very grateful to them. I hope they come again next year. One client wrote saying "It may amuse you to hear the following little story – I work in the local Oxfam shop, very few (3) of us are Catholics. When we have some difficulty over something I always say I'll have a word with St. Jude. Our shop manager who tends to Buddhism tells the others – it will be alright Margaret is going to talk to St. Jude about it – and wonderfully it nearly always is right, sometimes overnight!" For the half day of prayer in October we had quite a large turn out two full coaches from London plus a number on individuals. On the Sunday before the feast we had a coach full all the way from Manchester for the day. In all cases the stories they told were wonderful and the faith they displayed was heart warming. The church was full for the Masses and devotions on the feast itself. It was truly an international gathering and the prayerfulness and sharing was a joy to behold. At each of the Masses we blessed and distributed oil in honour of St. Jude.

OIL: Living Symbol: In the ancient world people anointed their bodies with fragrant oils for cleanliness and as a show of wealth and beauty. In our world people often do the same. But oil is also used to help machines run smoothly, and

to penetrate and loose things that appear immovable. Refined oils fuel our engines.

Oil is also used for ritual anointing. In the Old Testament the priests and kings were anointed before taking up their ministry. The anointing was a sign of God's blessing and power resting on them. The good Samaritan poured wine and oil into the victim's wounds. Olive oil does have real healing properties. And in the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, we are following the New Testament injunction, "if one of you is ill, he should send for, the elders of the church, and then must anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord".



So many qualities combine to make oil a powerful symbol of God's grace. Someone defined grace as God's love flowing through our lives. When a person is anointed with oil it is a powerful sign of God's blessing. This blessing penetrates, frees, heals, empowers and beautifies.

The name "Christ" means anointed one. In Jesus, God's anointing of love is fully shown. As Jesus was anointed so he wants to pour his Holy Spirit on us. And as the Holy Spirit fills us we become a sweet fragrance to the whole world. (D. Longenecker)

Here St. Jude's Shrine oil is **blessed** as required and made available to the sick so that they may from time to time anoint themselves to symbolise visibly the strength, the comfort, and – if it is the Lord's will – the healing they seek in their prayers. The oil that we bless here is for that purpose.

There is no special prayer said when blessed oil is used, but some appeal to the Lord's compassion should be made, an invocation to St. Jude would seem appropriate when using oil blessed at St. Jude's Shrine e.g. the prayers in the St. Jude Novena Leaflet, especially the Litany.

Because the oil is a sacramental it needs to be treated with respect. So we give it to those who call at the shrine or who write in for it themselves. It is unsafe sending numbers of jars to people who distribute it far and wide, as we have no control over its use. So we limit the number of jars to two per person. There is the practical aspect that it takes time to properly fill each jar and we just have not the time or the staff to have an unending supply. As the oil is blessed there cannot be any charge for it. If a person wishes to leave a donation to cover costs they are free to do so.

Look at the world as a big fruit cake. It would not be the same without a few nuts in it!



ADVENT as we all know is the four weeks of preparation for the proper celebration of the birth of Our Saviour. Joyful hope, rather than penance, is the keynote of the season. That does not mean we should omit some penance to help us to be better prepared. The Church begins our preparation with readings and reflections form the Old Testament, especially from the prophet Isaiah. It leads us on until it begins its final preparation on the 17th December. It may be of interest to know why this particular day was chosen to begin the church's final preparation. It seems that at an early period in the West, before our Advent came into existence in the sixth century, the churches in Gaul (France) and Spain began their preparation on the 17th December. This was three weeks before the feast of the Epiphany, a feast of great importance there as well as in the East and a day on which baptism was conferred. So here we have the traces of a more ancient advent. The church in the Divine Office at vespers or Evening Prayer has what is called the great "O" antiphons in this proximate preparation period.

We could usefully use them as our own prayers, reflect on their content and see how we can improve our lives for example:

"O Wisdom, you came from the mouth of the Most High. You fill the universe and hold all things together in a strong but gentle manner. O come to teach us the way of truth".

"O Adonai and leader of Israel you appeared to Moses in a burning bush and you gave him the law on Sinai. O come and save us with your mighty power".

"O stock of Jesse you stand as a signal for the nations. Kings fall silent before you whom the peoples acclaim. O come to deliver us, and do not delay".

"O key of David and sceptre of Israel, what you open no one else can close; what you close no one can open. O come to lead the captive from prison; free those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death".

"O Rising Sun, you are the splendour of eternal light and the sun of Justice. O come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death".

"O king whom all the peoples desire, you are the cornerstone which makes all one. O come and save mankind whom you made from clay".

"O Emmanuel, you are our king and judge, the one whom the peoples await and their saviour. O come and save us, Lord, our God".

That final plea, "O come and save us, Lord, our God" sums up

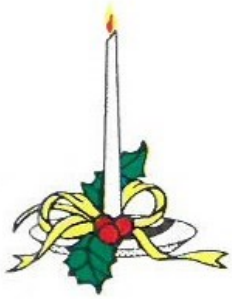
Please remember the new address is simply:-
P.O. Box 140, Faversham ME13 7XR

all the preceding petitions. It is a cry from the heart of the Church and, since the Church prays, not only for herself but for the world, it is also a cry from the heart of mankind. How universal and all embracing is this ancient prayer. How easy to remember and say frequently.

If it is true the world is getting smaller, why do they keep increasing the cost of postage!

ANOTHER of your students writes "My road to Carmel began in 1992 when I moved to Hastings where I joined the local Pallotine parish. Whilst there I went on the Pallotine pilgrimage to Aylesford in 1993, which was my first contact of any sort with the Carmelites. Over the years I began to go to Aylesford more and more and began to develop more and more of a love for Carmelite life and spirituality. When in April 1995, after several years of struggle, I seriously began to consider religious life, I decided to start by looking at the Carmelites and never looked anywhere else. I benefited greatly from my noviciate in Cheltenham, in the peace of the Cotswolds. At present I am finishing my philosophy course at the Mill Hill Institute and getting some pastoral experience as well. I trust you will keep me in your prayers as I do you".

Anthony.



May your Christmas be a peaceful one rich in the blessings of the Lord and his Mother to strengthen and support you through out the New Year which we pray will be a great preparation for the millenium, the two thousandth anniversary of the coming of the Lord among us.

Yours sincerely,

H. A. Brennan, O. Carm.

Hugh Alphonsus Brennan, O. Carm.,
Shrine Director.

PLEASE REMEMBER OUR NOVENAS

Holy Infant of Prague: . . . . . 17th - 25th December
St Jude: . . . . . 17th - 25th January
Our Lady of Lourdes: . . . . . 3rd - 11th February