



The Carmelite News



SPRING 1998



'Happy Easter'

THIS and THAT: It's strange writing a Spring Newsletter in January. But if I don't do it now you will not get it in time for the novenas. But first, from all of us here, the ladies and I, a very special thank you for your letters, cards, prayers and good wishes received for Christmas. Due to sickness and the holidays and the heavy post we were a little late in acknowledging your gifts. We are grateful for your patience and understanding. But you were not forgotten in our prayers. We do hope and pray that the Good Lord through the intercession of St. Jude will give you good health, peace of mind, prosperity and contentment for the rest of 1998. Many suffered from the storms over Christmas and the New Year. I thought of you in the peace of Faversham and when I visited home for a break over the New Year.

Prague Pilgrimage had to be cancelled. We had too few applicants to make it worthwhile. But we will pray for you here at our own beautiful little Shrine of the Divine Infant. It was the third time I attempted to get to Prague.

New Year's Resolutions: I wonder how many of you made any!! Where are they now? Badly cracked if not broken altogether. But it is never too late to mend. Start again and you will have a better chance of success in the light of your experience.

Never give up hope of succeeding. The person who never makes mistakes never does anything. If we learn from our mistakes they become the rungs to success. Just look

at the efforts and failures you made to learn how to write or ride a bicycle or drive a car. Constant effort, practise, determination and correcting our faults brings success.

If you want a reply PLEASE, PLEASE *tick the box on the intentions* leaflet. That would be a great help to us and a New Year's resolution for you to start now. Another Resolution for those who never reply. Let us know if you do *not want* the newsletter. If you *want it* let us know, please. You will be doing us a big favour if you let us know. We want to save materials, labour, postage and time. So please help us. Another way to help is by getting another person, with their permission, on the mailing list to join in our novenas and prayers. That is another New Year's Resolution to be fulfilled before the year is out.

*The school of experience has
very few holidays*

Shrine: As advertised in the "Stop Press" in the last letter we had St. Jude's Shrine repainted and the floor sanded and resealed, in January. We are sorry some people were disappointed as they could not get to the Shrine while the work was in progress. After the washing, painting and floor redone it is now back to its pristine sparkling beauty. It is really beautiful. The professionals I paid did a very good job. It cost over £2,000. We are all very pleased with the results. I must say a special word of thanks to our local friends who

removed all the benches etc. before the work and replaced them afterwards as well as doing the final cleaning and dusting. I could not have done it alone. Please God more clients of St. Jude will come to visit his shrine here. If you wish to organise a reasonable sized group for Mass or devotions please let me know well in advance. The church is also the parish church. We have to co-ordinate the times and dates of Masses, various functions, events etc.



LENT is the period in which we give especial preparation for the celebration of Suffering, Death and Resurrection of the Lord. As Mary, his mother and our mother too, was involved in his life it might be helpful to reflect on the sorrows in her life during the seven weeks. In the *First Week* we think of the Presentation in the Temple. The trials and difficulties of the five mile journey to the temple in obedience to the law. The sadness of heart and dismay in hearing the holy man Simeon foretell the Passion and death of her son and the sorrows that would come to herself. A few quiet moments each day can teach us much. How willing are we to make sacrifices to fulfil what the Lord commands and desires and what the church is telling us as christians to do. The *Second Week* – the Flight in Egypt – what worry, heartbreak she felt having to take a few things in a hurry into an unknown country. The difficulties of the journey on a donkey and trying

to get some place to sleep each night and food for herself and the baby. We can imagine the difficulties living so far from friends and home as a refugee in a foreign country. Are we grateful for what we have? Do we try to help the homeless, the refugees, the strangers who need a helping hand? Or do we let our fear of the unknown cripple us when we should have courage based on faith. The *Third Week* the Loss of Jesus in the Temple. What must have been in Mary's heart during those anxious days fearing for her son's safety among such a large crowd with so many foreigners speaking so many different languages. Also the realisation that "he had grown up" and was destined to leave her. How do we react to the disappointments of our ambitions and of life? Do we just "give in" or with faith face the future problems. The *Fourth Week* the meeting of Jesus and Mary on the road to Calvary. What must have been the thoughts and feelings of pain, helplessness and agony of heart to see him so cruelly treated and suffering so much and there was nothing she could do to alleviate them. Do we, like her, bear our sufferings in silence and faith, trusting that God will support us. Do we ever say sorry to Mary for the pain our sins caused her and her Son. The *Fifth Week* The Death of Jesus. We have all seen people suffer and die and know the grief of losing a loved one. What must have been Mary's torment of heart and soul watching her son die as a thief. She knew who he was, his sinlessness, his kindness, his goodness, gentle-

ness and compassion for people. It was her faith alone which strengthened her in the great hour of her grief. How do we face pain and sorrow and loss of a loved one?. *The Sixth Week* Mary holds the dead body of Jesus. Surely now the sword of sorrow foretold by Simeon has pierced her heart to its innermost depths. What grief can compare with hers! How she would have lovingly fondled and kissed the sacred wounds. What can we do except be silent in sympathy with her in this tragic hour. *The Seventh Week* – the Burial of Jesus. It is always hard to see a loved one buried. But what must she have felt. She who was so tender-hearted, kind and loving and knowing who her son was and how he was treated by his own people must have felt really broken hearted and desolate as his body was placed in the tomb. What faith and hope was required to still believe in his words that he would rise again. What an example for us.



EASTER DAY is a day of joy, happiness and bright hope for us as we know the Lord has risen. Therefore we are saved as He has made atonement for our sins. What joy and happiness for Mary as she sees her Son risen from the grave and appearing in his glorified body. What a joy for her to know that now he is in the presence of the Father in the glory of the everlasting kingdom from which he came. He has

redeemed the world and conquered sin and death. She still has to live on in this vale of tears but her son has gone before her and she now knows she will join him, when her time comes. He has fulfilled all that he promised and finished all the Father had told him to do.

He has redeemed the world, all peoples, all of nature, and all in it. What we have to do is to accept this wonderful gift of his, because he has opened the gates of heaven for us. We do this by constantly trying to fulfil His will. We will never be punished for sins or faults we personally did not commit. Slowly the Church has developed an understanding of all that he did and is doing in the world. The church is made up of sinful people trying to be better. So, slowly, the church with its new rituals and prayers for unbaptised children, miscarriages and still births is recognising that those individuals have been redeemed by Jesus. Since they are individual persons who could not commit any fault and the redemption of Christ is for all surely its merits is applied to them. After all Mary was preserved from sin in her mother's womb. Did not John the Baptist leap for joy when Mary carrying Jesus spoke to his mother? Some may object that the unborn cannot make a decision so how can they accept the merits of the redemption. You may say how many babies are baptised without any say in the matter. It is the faith of the parents who, always wanting the best for their child, ask for the baptism so that they may ultimately share in the glory of heaven. All



parents want all that is best for their children. Surely the happiness of heaven is the greatest. So they should trust in the goodness and merciful redemption of the Lord. As Mary suffered deep pain and desolation when her son died so parents suffer inexpressible desolation when they lose a child. But, like her, they should have faith that all is well. There was a time, unfortunately, when the church, because of its human limitations, was not as clear about praying for children of miscarriages and still births as it is now. Thank God the Holy Spirit is still teaching us. But for many parents in the past in such tragic circumstances there was no comfort of church prayers or service. The loss and

desolation is so great that parents never forget it. On Easter Monday. Tuesday and Wednesday when we will celebrate the victory of Jesus over sin and death we will celebrate a Triduum of Masses for all such parents that Mary, Mother of the victorious Lord, will intercede for them and comfort them with faith and hope. Their children will be included that they can pray together now in preparation of sharing adoration in heaven.

Carmelite Association

for Promoting Vocations: You remember in the novena to Our Lady of Lourdes, in February, we had a special intention each day

for priests. Now we have taken that a little further and have the Carmelite Association for Promoting Vocations. The main commitment is to spend ten minutes each week praying specifically for vocations. Not a lot I know. But part of the discipline attached is to remember to make the effort each week. We have some general guide lines for those who are interested. We also have a prayer card, free, for those who would like one or need one. Those who join will share in a Mass each month for their intentions. Many of you I do know pray daily for vocations. This is just a further help and a spur to those who are not yet praying for vocations. Also we want to assure you of our prayers for you.

Thank God our students are doing well and have done well in their midterm examinations. We had one novice who started in September but left before Christmas after prayer, discernment and advice. He realised this was not his vocation and he left very contented. I am sure the Lord will reward him for his courage in trying.

A brief note from another student, in the midst of exams, says "My name is Tommy Leydon. I am twenty four years of age and I come from Scotland. I am one of four children, two brothers and two sisters. I left school at sixteen and started an apprenticeship as a barber which lasted three years – the training is useful now for the community. Towards the end of my training I became interested in the religious life. Before finally deciding to join the Carmelites I went back to school to pick up a few extra subjects.

At present I am living in the North London Carmelite community of fourteen. I am now in my first year of theology, having completed two years of philosophy. Apart from studying and praying I like to draw and sometimes to cook. The latter comes in handy on these cold wintry

days when a bowl of fresh home-made soup is most welcome to chase away the chill. Like my confreres here I am grateful for your prayers and support. We continue to keep you in our prayers."

*An industrious person seldom
has a busy tongue*

Until we meet again may the Risen Lord and his joyful Mother enrich you with their blessings.

Yours sincerely,

H. A. Brennan, O. Carm.

Hugh Alphonsus Brennan, O. Carm.
Shrine Director.



DO NOT FORGET OUR NOVENAS

To St Joseph:	19th - 27th March
Easter Novena Prayer:	3rd - 12th April
Special Easter Triduum:	13th - 15th April
To St. Jude:	15th - 23rd May

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(A Registered Charity)