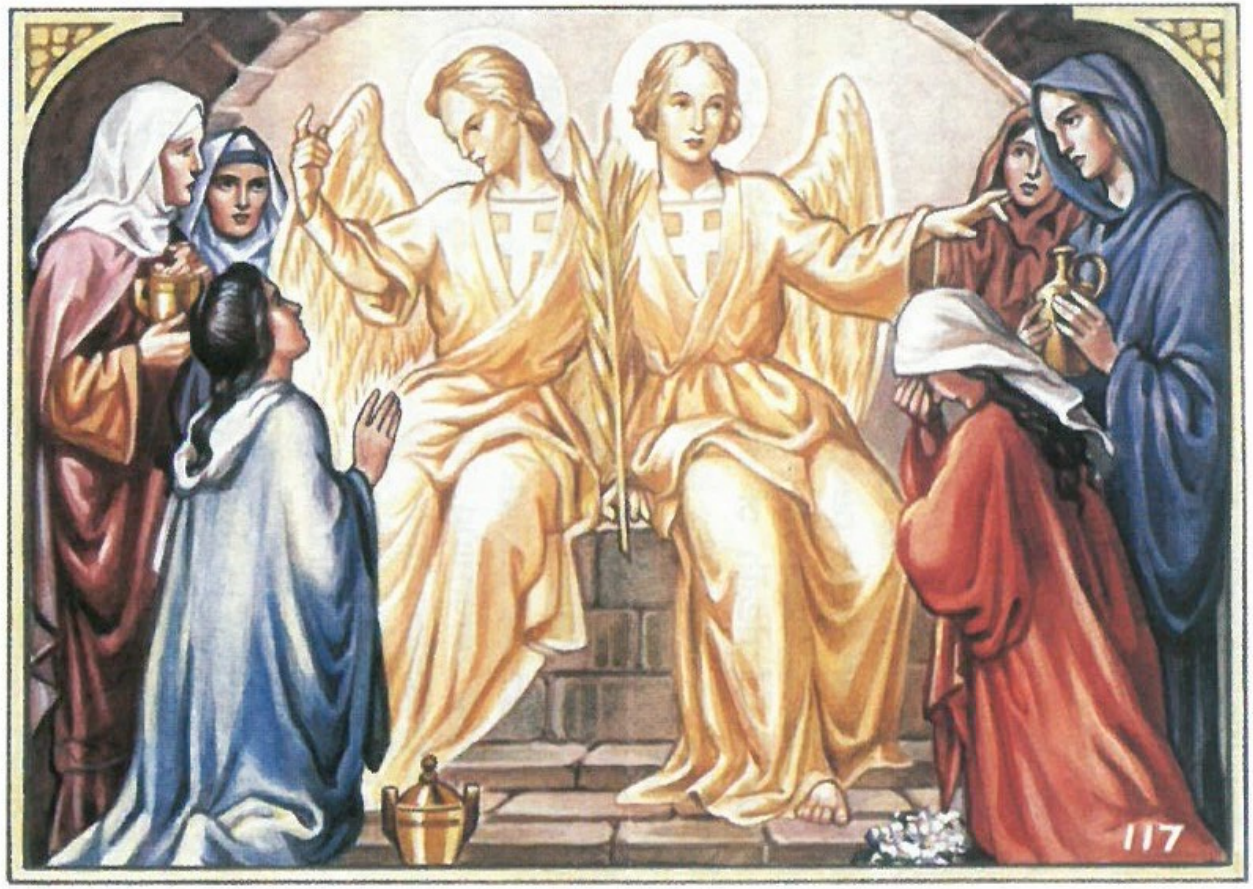
The Carmelite News

SPRING 1999

He is not Here



He is Risen

Alelluia



LENT- As we all know is the period of forty days before Easter. It commemorates the forty days of fasting by Our Lord in the desert before he commenced his public mission. We are asked to do some penance so that we are better prepared to enter into the Passion and Death of the Lord so that we will share in his resurrection. From the earliest christian times people travelled to the land made holy by the life, work and death of the Lord. They walked along the journey to Calvary. They stopped at certain places to meditate on some particular aspect of the passion. These 'stops' became known as 'stations'. People returning and especially the crusaders built representations of different 'stops' in churches and in their grounds. The number of such stops varied down the centuries from five to thirty at different times of the church's history. Over the centuries the number of 'falls' varied from three to seven. The fourteen stations we have now in our churches were approved in the late eighteenth century. It seems that the church simply ratified the pious and devotional acts of the people. So, although they may seem cast in stone, they are relatively new in their present form in the church. Even today some modern spiritual writers have stressed different aspects of the passion than the ones we grew up with. But, it is the entering into the passion of the Lord to grasp more fully what he suffered out of love for us, to make reparation for our sins and to try to live better lives according to his will that is important. Unfortunately, it seems that this devotion is dying out, like so many others. The stations can always be done privately and if we can't get to church we can take a few minutes each day to accompany the Lord on his sad and wonderful journey to death for our sake. That way we will be better prepared to celebrate the Resurrection.

EASTER is a season of joyful hope and hopeful joy. When we look around at nature putting on it's verdant vesture and bright colours to lift our spirits after the long dark evenings and late mornings. Now with the sun shining and birds singing our spirits are uplifted which echoes the joy of all in heaven as the Lord has conquered sin and death and won forgiveness and redemption for us all. THE LORD IS RISEN! What a wonderful thought when we think of the consequences of that statement. We can resist sin and evil because the Lord is risen and got that powerful help for us. Death is no longer something fearful because as we leave this world we enter the death of the Lord and we will rise to glory with him. What a great rea-

son to dance with joy! Our eternity of joy is assured if we allow all the help of the Lord into our lives. This is what we have to constantly try to do. Practice makes perfect. So why give up when there is so much to gain. Easter is public manifestation of the power and glory of our loving Father which he gave up when he became man in silence and humility in the womb of the Virgin Mary. As we celebrate the feast of the Annunciation we celebrate a miracle of love that we cannot really grasp. How an almighty and eternal God could, out of love for us, became a weak human person depending for life, food clothing etc. on one of his creatures. The consent of Our Lady, when asked to be the mother of the messiah, shows how closely she is involved in our redemption and happiness. Although it is not a day of obligation it would be helpful to spend a few moments reflecting on this indescribable mystery of love for us. It helps to put our own puny efforts into perspective and helps us to see how much we owe the Good Lord and his blessed mother.



God gives us eyes to see the beauty of the Spring,
And to behold Your majesty in every living thing –
And may we see in lacy leaves and every budding flower
The hand that rules the universe with gentleness and power –
And may this Easter grandeur that Spring lavishly imparts
Awaken faded flowers of faith lying dormant in our hearts,
And give us ears to hear, dear God, the Springtime song of birds
With messages more meaningful than man's often empty words
Telling harried human beings who are lost in dark despair –
"Be like us and do not worry for God has you in His care".

GROUPS: Last year you may remember I set aside a number of Saturdays for Half Day Retreats. Many of them were so poorly attended (two days nobody came) that I *have not* arranged any half days retreats this year. But if you want to organize a group for a visit please feel free to contact me. Please let me know well in advance of your proposed date as I have to co-ordinate the facilities with the Parish Priest here. I'll be glad to help as best I can to arrange a suitable timetable for your group. But if you wish to join another organized group there is no problem. Let me know and I'll give you the dates when days are organized. Last year we had twenty different groups. All enjoyed their visit and found it beneficial. I will be away the last half of July and early August as I need to recharge the batteries!

PROVINCIAL CHAPTER: Easter week we will gather in Aylesford from our houses in England, Scotland and Wales, with the newly elected Prior Provincial and

his Council, to consider our prayer life, our apostolates and manpower to see how we can better serve the Lord and his church for the next three years. As always there will be changes afterwards. Some will be easy and pleasant and some not so appealing! We would appreciate your prayers especially at that time that like our mother, Mary of Mount Carmel, we will be open to the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit. The Father Prior Provincial and his Council will really need your help as they have the final responsibility for implementing the Chapter decisions for the next three years.

NEW ADDRESS: I was pleased that so many took to the new address without too much trouble. Unfortunately there were a number who wrote my name or The Carmelites or both or St. Jude's Shrine etc. as well as the P. O. Box No. That may have given the game away to the thieves in the Post Office. I hope not. ***PLEASE WRITE NOTHING EXCEPT "P. O. Box 140, Faversham, ME13 7XR"***. Those outside the U.K. put England too. Thank you for your help and co-operation. I trust the next one will all be correct! Unfortunately the note about the new address brought to light a number of letters that had "disappeared" that we had not heard about. If anyone knows to whom I should write other than the Post Office to get the matter sorted please let me know. All in the office feel very annoyed, frustrated and helpless. Because of the extra letters before Christmas and the extra big increase in work because of lost mail we do apologise for the delay in acknowledging your letters and many beautiful cards and your kind much appreciated donations. Even if your letter did not arrive or was late in acknowledgement rest assured your intentions are constantly in my daily prayers.

For those who visit The Shrine and wish to attend Mass here on Sundays the Masses are at (Sat. 6.00pm) Sun. 8.00am; 10.30am and 6.00pm. Weekday Masses are at 9.30am, exceptions for funerals may occur occasionally.

ST. JUDE: We get so many accounts of his powerful help. One lady wrote: "In 1951 I was diagnosed as having a diseased mitral valve in the heart. In 1953 I was declared unfit for surgery and was sent home – for WHAT? In 1987 my GP put me in touch with a specialist at Southampton. I had the operation on the 21st Dec. 1987 and was given a man made heart valve. On Christmas morning the surgeon explained the serious condition and referred to the man made valve as "St. Jude Valve". Now I can never forget St. Jude. My health is fine and I have so much to be grateful for".

For those who wish to contact us by phone or fax the number is 01795-539214 between 8.30am and 1.00pm. All of us have other work to do in the afternoons. At weekends I help in the parish

THE NEW YEAR has well started. Nevertheless I plead for two things: ONE – that each of you get one new member, half your own age!, to join our societies before the year is out, if not our great apostolates may fail for want of support. As you know all our deceased members share in a Mass for our deceased benefactors each month: TWO – to double the membership of The Carmelite Association for Promoting Vocations. Will you joins us in praying for more vocations to the priesthood and religious, not just solely for the Carmelites? The Holy Father in his message for Vocations Sunday on the 25th April 1999 among other things has said "God continues to show himself as Father by means of men and women who, urged by the strength of the Spirit, give witness by their word and deeds, and sometimes even by martyrdom, to their unlimited dedication to serving their brothers and sisters. Through the ordained ministry of Bishops, priest and deacons, He provides the permanent guarantee of the sacramental presence of Christ the Redeemer, making the church grow, thanks to their dedicated service, in the unity of the one body and in the variety of vocations, ministries and charisms. The father has poured out his Spirit in abundance on his adoptive children, manifesting in the various forms of religious life his Fatherly love, which he wishes to extend to the whole of humanity. His love that awaits with patience and welcomes with rejoicing the person who has been far away; which educates and corrects; which satisfies every person's hunger for love. He continues to point out the expectations of eternal life which open the heart to hope, even in the midst of difficulties, pain and death, especially by means of those who leave everything to follow Christ, dedicating themselves totally to the establishment of his Kingdom. In 1999, dedicated to the heavenly Father, I wish to invite all the faithful to reflect on vocations to the ordained ministry and religious life.... How can we fail to stress that promotion of vocations must become the harmonious commitment of the whole church and of individual believers? The Lord commanded them to 'pray the lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest'. Aware of this, we turn in prayer to the heavenly father, the giver of every good thing:- Our father, with the voice of your Holy Spirit, and trusting in the maternal intercession of Mary,

we earnestly beseech you: send to your church priests and religious who will be courageous witnesses to your infinite bounty.
Amen.

Praying that the joy and happiness of Mary on Easter morning, when she saw her Divine Son in his joyous and splendid glory, be in each of your hearts for the future.

Yours sincerely,

H. A. Brennan, O. Carm.

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



Another of your students writes: *"I was born, the youngest of four children, in the West Midlands. My family moved to Aylesford when I was a toddler. It is true to say that the Carmelites have been on my horizon for most of my life. I first tried my vocation in Carmel in 1988, but it wasn't the right time for me. On leaving the noviciate I trained as a nurse in London. I enjoyed my time as a nurse, and I learned much from those that I had the privilege to care for. Out of this experience the desire to serve became more dominant. I believe that the Carmelite idea of living in the presence of God, means actually seeking Christ in all situations. As a nurse I had to make sense of much suffering and death. These were daily encounters in my life, and it was in seeking Christ in these times that helped me respond to my patients as a nurse. As a friar I try not only to find Christ, but to proclaim him present in our midst.*

I am studying in London to prepare for ministry. These years are, for those of us in initial formation, times of growth and surprise. As friars we often gather to tell the story of those who have ministered in Carmel before us. I am also blessed by the example of ministry of my father, a Permanent Deacon in Maidstone, and of my mother who is so supportive of his work. Ministry is about love and being passionate for people, as well as the God who made them.

Please continue in your prayers for those of us in the East Finchley community, that we may be worthy and gentle ministers of the Gospel."

Damian Cassidy, O. Carm.

PLEASE REMEMBER OUR NOVENAS

To St Patrick:. . . . . 9th - 17th March
To St Joseph: . . . . . 19th - 27th March
Easter Novena Prayer: . . . . . 4th - 12th April
To St Jude: . . . . . 13th - 21st May