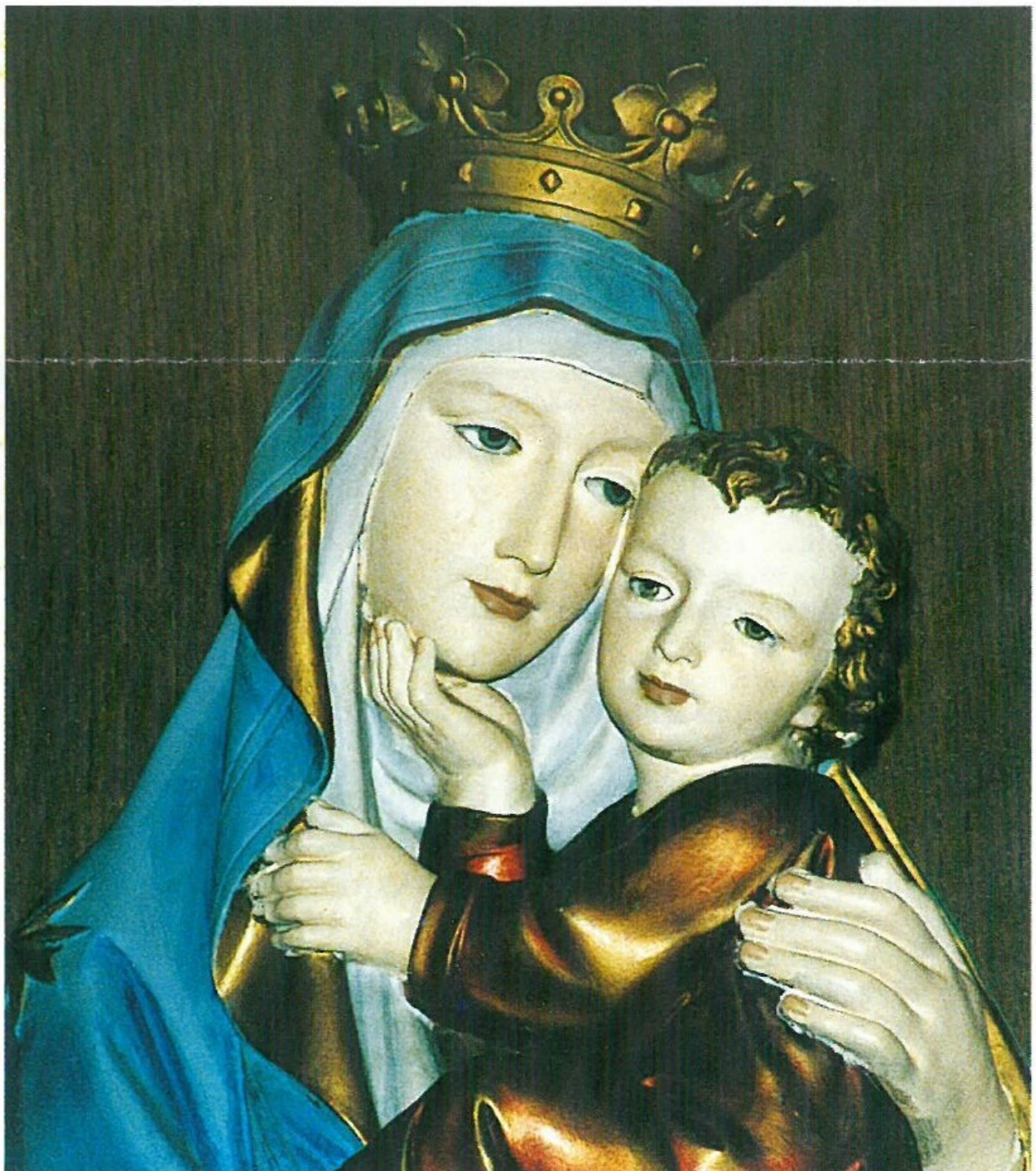




The Carmelite News



JUNE 1997





BITS AND PIECES: You may have noticed in the last Newsletter the box "Please tick the box on the Intentions leaflet if you want a reply". It was, as you saw, twice on the Intention leaflet. That was to draw your attention to it. The reason is that many people do not want a reply while some do. Up until now we did our best to acknowledge each one from you. This put us very much behind, at times. The idea is to answer the letters, on time, that need a reply, cut down on the work and to save on postage. I feel sure you can agree with the reasons. We are very grateful to those who sent UK stamps as they are a great help with our postage bill. Some considerate clients send a stamped addressed envelope, which saves us time and work as well as postage. Do not be concerned if you do not get a reply, we will keep you in our daily prayers.

The handicapped and those with walking difficulties are delighted with the ramp I mentioned in the last letter. I am very grateful to the St. Jude's clients who made sacrifices and have now paid off the cost of the ramp. God Bless you.

Although I would love to do some work in the garden here I am afraid it is out of the question—the years have caught up on me! But a generous client paid to have the rose garden cleaned up and hopefully I will get someone to keep it neat and tidy.

Included, as you see, are the tickets for our usual annual draw to help our Student Fund. I hope you will support us and not feel offended when you see them. I tried but failed to get a more

attractive way. We don't send receipts for tickets unless you request it.

Our first day of retreat on the 1st March was blessed with good weather and we had about twenty who spent the day with us. There were others who came for part of the day. It was very satisfying to see how the people entered the day of prayer and listening to the Lord. It was great to have two of our students, whom you help with your prayers and contributions, assisting me and they were very happy with their work. I trust we will have a good turn out on the 1st Saturday of June.

PILGRIMAGE TO PRAGUE has been cancelled for this year. Only four applicants. It was too expensive. I hope to try again for next year in May. I hope I will get a better deal.

ADVANCE NOTICE: Remember there will a Day retreat from 11.00am to 4.30pm on the First Saturday of September and again on the First Saturday of December. Please drop us a line if you intend joining us.

On Sunday the 26th October a Pilgrimage Mass at 12.30pm with devotions at 4.00pm. On the actual feast of St Jude, Tuesday, 28th October there will be Masses at 9.30am, 11.00am and 2.00pm with devotions at 4.00pm.

A good word costs no more
than a bad one.

INTENTIONS: Some people get a little worried if they have not sent their intentions on time for the beginning of a novena. You need not fret as I include all your worries, wants and desires in my Mass and prayers and the Lord can read your heart. Ideally, you should say the novena prayers each day and also pray for the intentions of all others who

join the novena. In this way you will benefit from the prayers of others and they will benefit by yours. It is good to make an effort to join spiritually where ever you are in the Mass and if possible to participate in Mass in your church.



THE MILLENNIUM when we celebrate 2000 years since the coming of Jesus Christ among us making known in such a simple and ordinary way the great love, compassion, understanding of Our Heavenly Father for each one of us. His coming has changed the whole history of the world. The big problem with the world is that so many will not listen to His Word and live the strengthening and peace giving message He has left us to support us. As a lead up to the Millennium the Church has asked us to concentrate this year on the person of Jesus Christ. Next year the emphasis will be on the Holy Spirit and in 1999 it will be God the Father. Following the example of St. Teresa we need to reflect more on the humanity of Jesus and through that to come to know His Divinity and His great mercy and forgiveness. We need to read the Gospels especially that of St. Luke. We should not read it as a story but as a special message for us. While we read it we should pause to think on the situation in which Jesus and his friends are e.g. who was there; what they were doing; how they felt; the comments and talk among the group and to see Jesus as a human being in the middle of it all and ask ourselves **what is the Lord telling me now**. We could finish our reading and reflection with a prayer. The Little Flower tells us: "How great is the

power of prayer! One could call it a Queen who has, at each instant, free access to the King and who is able to obtain whatever she asks. To be heard it is not necessary to read from a book some beautiful formula composed for the occasion. If this were the case, alas, I would have to be pitied. Outside the Divine Office which I am very unworthy to recite, I do not have the courage to force myself to search out beautiful prayers in books. There are so many of them it really gives me a headache! And each prayer is more beautiful than the others. I cannot recite them all and not knowing which to choose, I do like children who do not know how to read: I say simply to God what I wish to say without composing beautiful sentences, and he always understands me. For me prayer is an aspiration of the heart, it is a simple glance directed towards heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy; finally it is something great, supernatural which expands my soul and unites me to Jesus". Reflecting on the life of Jesus and praying simply like this can give us great hope and encouragement. A good old fashioned prayer appropriate for this year would be the saying of the Angelus as it helps us to consider the Incarnation of the Lord out of love for us.



FORGIVENESS: There are many stories and parables to exemplify the power of forgiveness of the Father through the Son. The following is one such story "An old priest visiting a prison came upon a despondent young man. "Leave me alone father, I'm no good" the young man moaned. "Everything I have touched has been broken, battered and bruised. I have

committed many crimes and worst still I influenced others to a life of crime. I have wounded the only ones who cared for me - my mother, my wife and our young daughter. There is no hope for me."

The wise old priest was silent for a moment before he spoke. "The hurt you have inflicted on others can only be healed by God. What you have done is most serious. What you need now is to find a new compass, a new way to walk." Then he told the young man this story.

Once a very bad man died and went before the judgement throne. Before him stood Abraham, David, Peter and Luke. A chilly silence hung over the room as an unseen voice began to read the details of the man's life. There was not even one item of good recorded. When the voice concluded Abraham spoke: "Men like you cannot enter the heavenly kingdom. You must leave." "Father Abraham" the man cried, "I do not defend myself. I have no choice but to ask for mercy. Certainly you understand. Though you lied to save your own life, saying your wife was your sister, by the grace and mercy of God you became a blessing to all nations."

David interrupted, "Abraham has spoken correctly. You have committed evil and terrible crimes. You do not belong in the kingdom of light." The man faced the great king and cried, "Son of Jesse, it is true. I am a wicked man. Yet I dare ask you for forgiveness. You slept with Uriah's wife and later, to cover your sin, arranged his death. I ask only for forgiveness as you have known it."

Peter was next to speak. "Unlike David, you have shown no love of God. By your acid tongue and your vile temper you have wounded the Son of God." "I should be silent" the man

muttered. "The only way I have used the blessed name of Jesus was in anger and blasphemy. Still, Simon, son of John, I plead for grace. Though you walked by His side and listened to the words from His own lips, you slept when He needed you in the garden, and you denied Him three times in His night of greatest need."

Then Luke the evangelist spoke. "You must leave. You have not been found worthy of the kingdom of God."

The man's head bowed sadly for a moment before a spark lit in his face. "My life has been revealed correctly," the man began slowly, "I am guilty as charged. yet I know there is a place for me in the blessed kingdom. Abraham, David and Peter will plead my cause because they know the weakness of man and the mercy of God. You, blessed physician, will open the gates to me because you have written of God's great love for the likes of me. Don't you recognise me? I am the lost sheep that the Good Shepherd carried home. I am your younger, prodigal brother." And the gates opened and Luke embraced the sinner.

"You see" said the old priest, "it is always possible to learn to walk in a different way. Leave your past in the hands of God and learn to walk in his mercy."

Old age is like everything else.
To make a success of it
you have to start young.

CARMEL'S GREAT FEAST DAY is, as you all know, on the 16th July. We honour and thank her in a special way, on that day, for giving us the Brown Scapular as a sign of her motherly protection for each of us. When her Son was born she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes to protect Him. She

is doing the same for us today. She has given us the Scapular as a sign of her protection against evil and the temptations of the evil one. Many of the Popes including the present Holy Father have spoken of its great value. Pope Pius XII said it was a sign of our consecration to Mary and a sign of Mary's special protection of us. When Mary gave the Scapular, through the Carmelite Order to the Church, seven and a half centuries ago she accommodated herself to the mentality of the times. If a person was privileged to wear the colours or badge of a lord or lady then that lord or lady would take care of the person. The person, in gratitude, would be loyal to their master/mistress and do whatever she or he wanted. So we too when we wear the Brown Scapular we see daily that we have her special protection. Thus we need daily to please her by imitating her virtues especially faith and trust in the Lord, simplicity, her prayerfulness, her purity and her concern for others. We need to ask her regularly to teach us her way as we try to imitate her virtues in our ordinary daily duties. Mary's daily life, although sinless, was very ordinary like ours. She had to cook the meals, wash the dishes, the clothes, go to the well for water, say her prayers, go to the synagogue on the Sabbath, help the neighbours, teach her Son as he was growing up, look after the needs of her husband and his friends. But whatever she did she did it out of love for God. She reflected on the scriptures and on the events and saying of her Son. We please her most by imitating her attitude, mentality and approach to life trusting all the time in the goodness and mercy of God even when we do not really see reasons for things or the way forward. The Little Flower in her last conversations told us

not to say unlikely things about Mary. For example, that, when she was very little at the age of three, the Blessed Virgin went to the temple to offer herself to God, burning with sentiments of love and extraordinary fervour. While she went there perhaps out of obedience to her parents!" For a sermon on the Blessed Virgin to please me and do me any good, I must see her real life, not her imagined life. I'm sure that her real life was very simple".

The reason a dog has so many friends is that his tail wags instead of his tongue.

CARMELITE THIRD ORDER: We get many visitors from various parts of the world to our Shrine of St. Jude. Many come very regularly from London and the home counties. If anyone would like to join the Carmelite Tertiaries—the lay branch of the Order which meets here every month—please drop me a line and I will gladly send them information about our Lay Third Order.

I thank you for your Easter Cards, good wishes and prayers. It gives an old man's heart a lift to be remembered! I am grateful, on behalf of all the Carmelites, for your support and all the prayers you offer to the merciful Lord and His Mother for us. May that mother ever keep you under her mantle of protection until she leads you smiling to her Divine Son.

Yours gratefully in Carmel.

H. A. Brennan, O. Carm.

Hugh Alphonsus Brennan, O. Carm.

**PLEASE TICK BOX ON INTENTIONS LEAFLET
IF YOU WANT A REPLY**

STUDENT'S LETTER.

I believe that my journey to Carmel, Our Lady's Order began many years ago! I was born in Glasgow, but grew up in the Yorkshire town of Harrogate, in the Methodist tradition. I was regular at Sunday school, did all the things Methodists do I suppose.

As a teenager I used to spend my summer holidays with a catholic family at the seaside town of Broadstairs, Kent. It was on one such holiday that I found a small medallion lying in the gutter. I cleaned it up as best I could. I tried in vain to read the writing on it. Not sure what to do with it I attached it to my key ring, and there it stayed year in year out. Occasionally I would look at it trying to read the inscription. I never really gave it much thought. In fact it was a good many years before I discovered that what I had found was a miraculous medal. I truly believe that Jesus sent His Mother to help me on my journey. As I look back I can see the many times she has held me and led me through the darkness into her Son's Church. Finally being led into her own Order. My first contact with the Carmelites came on a visit to Hazlewood Castle with friends one Sunday afternoon. There I met a friendly grey haired friar and he gave me

information about vocation retreats. One thing led to another. But it wasn't until two years later after a great deal of soul searching that I gave up the butcher's carver and block which I had been working at for twelve years after leaving school.

During my noviciate I had the privilege of looking after an old Carmelite priest during his final year on earth. He could be "grumpy" at times! He passed peacefully to his heavenly reward. I still miss him and often think of him. I think it was this experience that led me into my work for the past two and a half years. I worked in a nursing home for people with varying degrees of physical disabilities run by the Daughters of Charity. I learnt a lot about courage and determination as well as learning about myself. I am now working at Nazareth House, caring for the elderly, which is only five minutes down the road. No more early morning drives down the M25!!

If working with the sick has taught me anything it is that life is very fragile and that life should be lived to the full. We never know, from moment to moment, what life has in store for us.

Bro. Thomas Johnson, O. Carm.

DO NOT FORGET OUR NOVENAS

SACRED HEART:	May 29th - June 6th
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel:	July 8th - 16th
St. Jude:	August 18th - 26th

The Carmelites, Whitefriars, FAVERSHAM, Kent • ME13 7JN
(A Registered Charity)

Photograph by Syd Gogerty. Statue in Whitefriars Church