The Carmelite News

SUMMER 1999



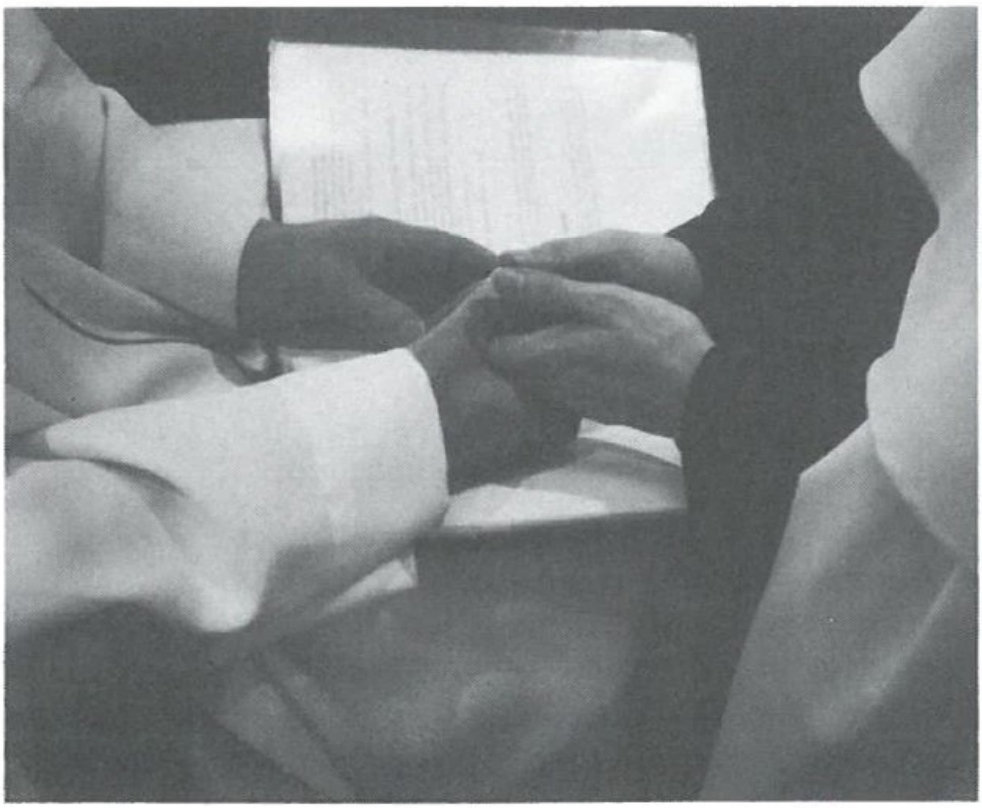
Photo by Louis Wheat.

The Bishop anointing Fr. Mark Paterson's hands for offering the sacrifice of the Mass.

CONGRATULATIONS FROM ALL TO FR. MARK PATERSON, O. CARM., ON HIS PRIESTLY ORDINATION.

We had a wonderful celebration at the end of the Chapter with the ordination to the priesthood of Mark Paterson. You may remember he wrote to you in the June 1996 Newsletter. We had all the Carmelites present, other priest friends concelebrating. It was a very uplifting, happy and dignified ceremony with beautiful singing by the choir and a touching homily by Bishop Tripp. His parents came from New Zealand for the happy occasion. Also present were many friends from Walworth parish, where he is working, also from Faversham and many other places including Scotland. I am sure you will keep him in your prayers that his ministry will be long, fruitful and happy. He will keep you in his prayers.

Our Provincial Chapter held in Aylesford during Easter Week was a great celebration of Carmelite brotherhood. No earth shaking decisions were taken. It was a long term planning meeting, given the scarcity of manpower and the extra demands that we are asked to meet. Thank you for prayers which helped us. Keep up the prayers for more vocations. We need them badly. The Lord has said "the harvest is great but the labourers are few so pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest". Let us take Him at his word and ask for many more to join us. If you want any information about our vocation material or retreats etc. please drop me a line and I'll put you in touch with our Vocation Director.



Where do YOU put your trust?

Titus Brandsma I heard recently from our superiors in Rome that it is hoped, and expected, that Blessed Titus Brandsma will be canonised next year. A miracle, attributed to Blessed Titus, is being investigated at the moment. A lady, in Chicago, who worked for years as a school secretary had a wonderful devotion to Blessed Titus. She just simply talked to him every-day about ordinary everyday things small and big, good and bad that she encountered. She developed cancer of the jaw. When she was taken to hospital for an operation it was discovered that she had heart problems. They had to operate on the heart first and clear up those problems before tackling the cancer. During all this time she kept up her daily chats with Titus. When she had fully recovered from the heart problems she was taken to hospital to deal with the cancer. When the doctors examined her they found no trace of the cancer. They checked and rechecked the original x-rays etc. There was no doubt cancer had been there. It was gone completely. That was a number of years ago. She is still hale and hearty and living and enjoying a full life while still continuing her regular daily chats with Blessed Titus. We hope this miracle will be accepted by the Vatican and then he can be canonised.

Titus Brandsma, O. Carm. was born into a very catholic family on 23rd February 1881 in Frisia, Holland. Although not very robust in health he joined the Carmelites. After ordination and post graduate studies he founded a journal of Carmelite spirituality. Later he became editor of a daily newspaper. He too, like Sr. Benedicta, helped the poor in simple and ordinary ways like helping push a handcart for an old lady along the cobbled streets. He too saw Christ in everybody. He was appointed spiritual adviser to the Association of Catholic Journalists in 1935. He defended the freedom of the press and the freedom of conscience against the Nazis. That led to his arrest and martyrdom in Dachau concentration camp on 26th July 1942. He was beatified by Pope Paul II on 3rd November 1985. His feast day is on the 27th July. I felt honoured and privileged to be present at his beatification as I had heard much about him from Carmelites who knew him when he visited this country and Ireland before the war. The nurse who gave him the final injection of poison in the concentration camp became a fervent catholic and was present at his beatification. Titus gave her a rosary, he had made in prison, as she gave him the lethal injection. I remember in the seventies getting many letters, especially from Cork, telling me how powerful Fr. Titus was in getting houses and accommodation for them. Let us pray to him for all those who have no place to live that they will get the accommodation they need. When he joined the Carmelites the Dutch Province was small in numbers. By the time he died they had a great number and were sending men to various mission

WATCH THIS SPACE, IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER, FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE MILLENNIUM CALENDAR WE WILL HAVE READY IN AUGUST.

areas. Let us ask him to intercede for us and get more to join the Carmelite family so that we can continue the mission work of the Church. We still have some of the cards with that lovely poem he composed while in prison waiting for his cruel but happy death.

When I lived in Rome, before my present appointment, I remember our Prior, Fr. Bede, telling our community the following story. As a young man he was Prior of a community in Holland. In the Spring of 1955 he was in Ireland for a week's holiday. He arrived early on Monday and was really enjoying himself and the weather was beautiful. On the Wednesday afternoon, walking in St. Stephen's Green, he suddenly got a very uneasy feeling that he must return home immediately. That feeling remained for the rest of the day even though he did not know the cause of the feeling. As Bede's English was not too good he got one of the Irish Carmelites to change his ticket and he flew home to Holland the next morning. When he arrived at his house one of the men there said "Thank God you have come. There is a lady in the parlour that needs help badly but I can't get the story straight. Will you see her". Fr. Bede said "It was a long and complicated story". The result was that she was the nurse that gave the poisoned injection to Titus in Dachau. She wanted to make her peace with God. "I was glad to do so" said Fr. Bede "and then I knew for certain that our brother Titus was in heaven praying for her".

I have just heard from our Fr. General, Fr Joseph Chalmers, O. Carm., in Rome that another Carmelite will be beatified on the 16th of June in Poland, with a number of others. He is Father Hilarius Januszeweksi, O. Carm. who died in Dachau concentration camp on the 23rd March 1945. He was only 38 years old. He was Prior of our large house in Cracow when he was unlawfully arrested by the Nazis. When I was in Poland, in the early eighties, I heard some of our men talking about him and his great spirit of charity. Typhoid broke out in the concentration camp. He volunteered to take care of those stricken down even though he knew he might contract the dreadful disease himself. Of course there were no medicines or vaccinations available. Some one had to care for the sick and prepare them for death irrespective of their religion. He got the disease and died of typhoid, helping the others. He could be a modern day patron saint of those who look after the sick and the old and by his intercession help them to bring Christ to those who are afflicted.

If I did not suffer minute by minute, it would be impossible for me to be patient, but I only see the present moment, I forget the past and take good care not to anticipate the future. If we grow disheartened, if we sometimes despair, it is because we have been dwelling on the past or the future.

St Thérèse of Lisieux

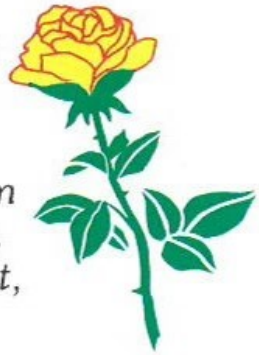
We honour Mary under various titles and names, just think of all the titles in the Litany of Loreto gives us an idea, not to mention all the local titles in the different countries and even parishes throughout the world. But it is the one and only Mother of the Lord that we venerate. A human person, sinless, but still very human and still mother with all the love and tenderness of a mother. One of the aspects of Mary's life that we should think about is her faith. There are four dimensions to the faithfulness of Our Lady. The first is search. The Blessed Virgin searched out God's will, she sought to discover the divine plan for herself and the world. Four times in his opening chapters St. Luke mentions her as seeking to know God's will: 'wondering'; asking the angel 'how shall this be'?; reflecting on the report of the shepherds; and treasuring in her heart the strange actions and words of her Son after the finding in the temple. It has been said that the human being is the question to which God is the only adequate answer. Our lady knew this from experience. She teaches us that to be faithful we must seek to know God's will, searching patiently and continually.

The second dimension of Mary's fidelity was acceptance, for after seeking comes finding. She had asked the angel 'How shall this be'?. She ends by saying 'let it be done to me according to your word'. No simple under-standing is meant here. God's ways escape human grasp. Like Mary we are called to accept the mystery of God in our lives. She kept all these things pondering them in her heart, she was always open to further enlightenment on God's plan. She accepted in faith and love. As one author said "to love Mary is to love what Mary loves or love like her, and this love is merely letting be in the face of the divine".

The third dimension to Mary's fidelity is 'consistency'; she lived as she believed. Rather than break her pledge to God, she accepted misunderstanding and enduring suffering. Here is the deep core of faithfulness, in all our lives, whatever be our vocation, wife, husband, father, mother, single person, priest or religious. The long pull, the tedium, the poverty, the heat, the dreaded illness, the inevitable agony of separation and death - consistency covers them all.

If you move house please let us have your old address as well as your new one so that we can keep in contact with you.

Our Lady is a seamstress, and patiently she bends
O'er the world's work-basket, and mends, and mends;
Stitching all our troubles, darning them with care,
Patching up our worn hearts, and knitting every tear.



She'll often thread her needle, and picking up a dream
She'll wind it round her thimble to sew a firmer seam.
Love and hope they sometimes gap, often do not meet,
Our Lady has to baste them and put therein a pleat.

When life shrinks up with wearing and can't be made to fit,
She knows where all the tucks are, and lets them out a bit.
And when its time for God to come, and clip the threads of NOW,
She'll run and catch the fallen ends, and save us all somehow.

(Anon).

The fourth dimension of the Virgin's fidelity the Pope has called the most demanding of all, it is 'constancy'. For only a constancy that lasts life-long deserves the name of faithfulness. In the Holy Father's words Mary's 'be it done unto me' at the Annunciation reached its fullness in the silent' be it done unto me' which she repeated at the foot of the cross. Mary's faith survived even on Calvary for it never had been based on visions, astounding miracles but only on complete confidence in the mysterious ways of God. One of the reasons we keep Saturday as Our Lady's day is to recall her faith which remained undimmed even through the first Holy Saturday.

The more we draw near to Mary the closer we approach to Jesus because she always leads us to her Son. During the novena in honour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel or, as some people call her, Our Lady of the Scapular let us ask for a reawakening of faith in world of today so that we like Mary will do her Son's will.

I pray that those who are ill will recover quickly and that all of you will enjoy a good rest over the Summer. Until we meet again may Mary, our Mother, watch over you all and lead you to her Divine Son.

Yours sincerely,

H. A. Brennan, O. Carm.

Hugh Alphonsus Brennan, O. Carm.,
Shrine Director

DO NOT FORGET OUR NOVENAS:

Novena in honour of the sacred Heart: . . . . . 11th - 19th June
Novena in honour of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel: . . . . . 8th - 16th July
Novena in honour of St. Jude: . . . . . 18th - 26th. August

P.O. Box 140, Faversham ME13 7XR, England
(A Registered Charity)