



## ***Dear Friend of Saint Jude***

**O**NCE AGAIN THIS Christmas, I would like to write to you, as a supporter of the Carmelites in Britain, a more personal letter which includes our very special Christmas card just for supporters of the Shrine. This time, our Christmas card uses an exclusive image painted in the early years of this remarkable place. As usual, I have so many pieces of news to share with you so I am going to get on with it right away.

In September I was in Rome for three weeks with Fathers Brendan and Francis at our General Chapter. This is a meeting of all the Provincial Superiors in the whole Order and delegates from each province. In all we were around 100 people. We listened to many presentations on the

life of the Order around the world, as well as talks on the importance of silence in our lives.

One of the important tasks we had to accomplish was to elect a new Prior General and Council for the whole Order. Father Fernando who, if you remember, was with us in July had now completed his maximum term of twelve years in that office. It was therefore time to elect a new friar to take us forward for the next six years. We elected Father Míceál O'Neill, O.Carm, from the Irish Province. He has held international responsibilities in the past and most recently was the Prior of the International Study house in Rome. He and his Council will serve until the next Chapter in 2025 – that feels so far away!

We were also very honoured that each of us were able to meet Pope Francis after the Audience.



At the previous Chapter in 2013, Father Wilfrid McGreal was present as Prior Provincial. Unfortunately, on 23 September this year, during the afternoon session, I received news that Father Wilfrid had died peacefully.





When this was announced to the Chapter, there were many tributes paid. In his official obituary, I wrote: "... *Wilfrid's Carmelite vocation [was] rooted in a very practical manifestation of faith and community.*"

We celebrated his funeral in Faversham and Aylesford at the beginning of October, recalling that he had been Prior of both houses over the years.

Another Carmelite who also held both these posts, Father Denis Lynch, died on 16 October. For many years, he assisted and supported the Lay Carmel groups in Aylesford and Faversham. Above all, he is remembered as a long-serving chaplain to HMP Maidstone. For some twenty-two years, his ministry to prisoners and their families was noted by all as compassionate and caring. May they both Rest in Peace and rise in glory!

**T**HE HIGH-POINT EACH year at the Shrine of Saint Jude is the Feast of the Apostle on 28 October. It so happened in 2019 that this day fell on a Monday, so we had celebrations on Saturday and Sunday too. A bonus to the Feast celebrations this year was that we were able to use the newly redecorated and refurbished church.

I want to thank all the supporters who donated towards the work in renovating the church - it is much appreciated.

It is often said that if you wait long enough in this country, you will see all four seasons in rapid succession! It certainly felt like that on a warm and very wet Saturday, which was followed by a very cold but bright, Sunday! Our pilgrims are hardy folk and the weather did not diminish the enthusiasm at all.

I was pleased to welcome back the Mayor of Faversham, Mrs Alison Reynolds, and her husband, Mr Dennis Reynolds. After Mass, we enjoyed some tea plus a beautiful cake made by parishioner Jane Deeson.



Thank you to all who organised, helped and supported in any way. Our motivation in visiting the Shrine is much more than a day out, it is part of our Christian hope to come nearer to God and in fact to discover the meaning of faith. I have included some photos from the three days on the next page - God's people full of HOPE.

**FEAST OF SAINT JUDE CELEBRATIONS**  
26, 27, 28 OCTOBER 2019



*May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance!*



*Be glory, majesty, power, & authority, before all time...now and for ever.*



*Saint Jude, pray for us.*



**F**INALLY, WE ARE now preparing for Christmas in the Shrine Office, and you will find the usual opportunities to order Christmas cards with this mailing, as well as a chance to fill in your intentions for our Christmas masses or Advent Flower.

In an age when it is often so hard to find religious cards, we have produced and designed some lovely cards for you.

Of course, Christmas is so much more than cards or decorations.

We recall:

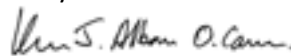
*the amazing  
the incredible  
the awesome*

fact that **our God** became a **human being like us.**

That is the real point of our celebration. Not only do we recall that God became a human being, but that we human beings are enabled to take part in the life of God: *"...may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity."*

That is our Christian vocation to be like God. Christmas is the answer to our deepest longing that God will understand and identify fully with our human struggle.

I wish you a Holy and Blessed Christmas under the mantle of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and in the intercession of the Blessed Apostle Jude. May God bless you!



Kevin Alban O.Carm.  
Prior Provincial



### Remember our Novenas

#### Novena to the Holy Infant of Prague

17 - 25 December 2019

#### Novena to Saint Jude

9 - 17 January 2020

#### Novena to Our Lady of Lourdes

3 - 11 February 2020

Please recycle or pass this newsletter onto a friend after you have finished reading it - thank you.



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