



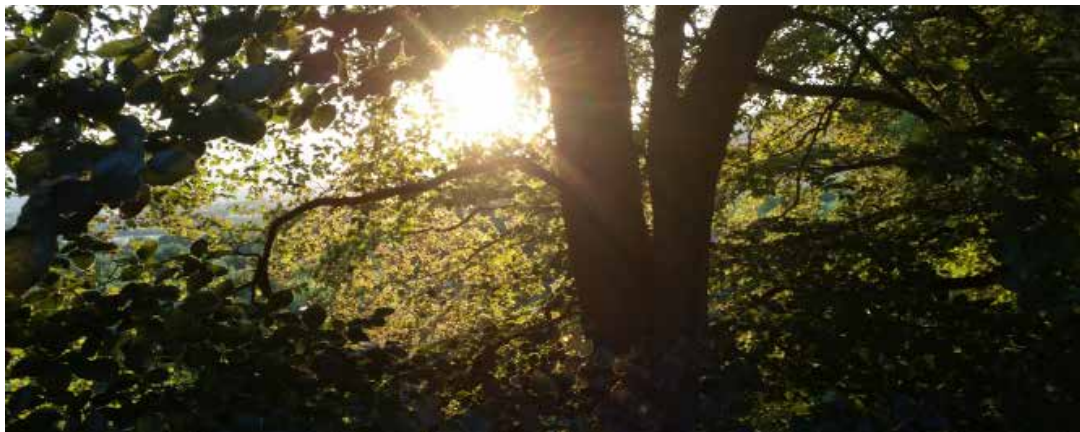
# THE CARMELITE NEWS



*From the National Shrine of Saint Jude*



SPRING 2021



## ***Dear Friends of Saint Jude***

**T**he Carmelite Community in Faversham experience a tremendous sense of blessing and gratitude, privileged as we are to be living on the site of the Shrine of St. Jude. This is a sacred and prayerful space in which we venerate the memory and intercession of the great apostle who brings hope to the multitude who call upon his friendship and aid. We are therefore incredibly conscious of how challenging it has been over this past exceptionally long while for many who would normally come to visit his Shrine.

Although we continue to live with restrictions and we are still not able to open the shrine, we want to assure you that each day we pray for your intentions, light candles in the shrine that represent your prayers and intentions,

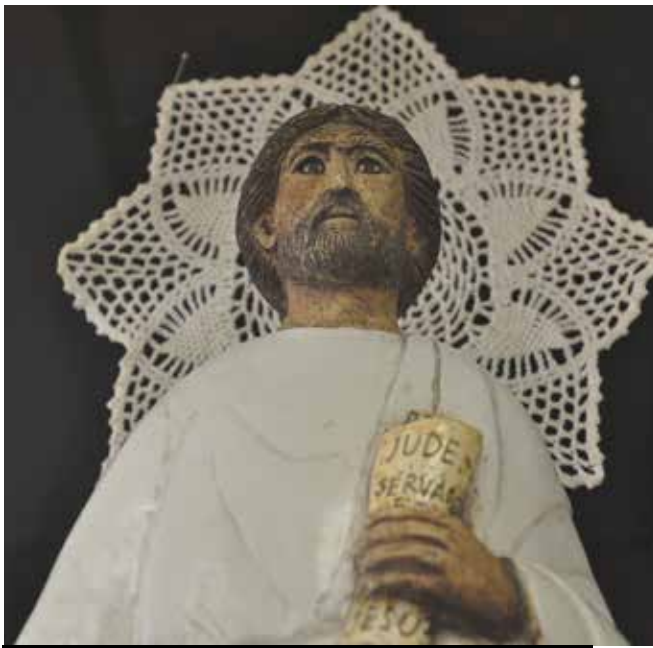
and remember you and your loved ones as we celebrate Mass. Together, we form a spiritual bond with prayer at the centre, we know that – although we are not meeting physically in person – we continue to be united in faith, hope and love.

While daily we hear of the struggles with which people are living, the tragedies that have befallen many and the uncertainties that surround us, it is also true that we have been inspired by friends of St. Jude who have told us about his powerful intercession and the ways in which they have been supported, especially in moments of great need. Let's keep that spiritual connection alive and recognise with thanksgiving in our hearts that our God will never be outdone in generosity and one day we will be able to gather again

in prayer, community and friendship.

Unfortunately, it is also not possible to hold our annual 'Summer Celebration' in May. However, we will be praying the novena to Saint Jude together for the nine days up to the normal date for the Summer Celebration - why not join us either online or at home? We will be getting together at 11am every day from 20 May 2021 for nine days.

**N**ormally, Father Kevin (Prior Provincial of the Carmelites in Britain) would be writing to you at this time. Friends of St. Jude know him for his fine preaching and writing, his listening ear, his compassionate presence, his tremendous intelligence and wit, and his unflinching dedication to his Carmelite vocation.



Statue of Saint Jude - Adam Kossowski (Shrine Information Centre)

“..we have witnessed the global reach of prayer and concern that transcends any one space or time..”



Fr. Kevin Alban

Unfortunately, after feeling very unwell, on 23 December he was admitted to hospital where it soon became apparent that his situation was very grave (not COVID-19-related).

Naturally, his Carmelite brothers in this country and around the world, together with so many friends, prayed earnestly for him and the medical team that was working to stabilise his condition.

After spending many weeks in the Intensive Treatment Unit of the hospital, his condition became stable enough for him to be admitted to a ward, where he has continued to receive

more treatment. In his own words, “it will be a long road”. Literally, tens of thousands of generous hearts have held him during this time with loving openness to God. Together, with you, the friends of St. Jude, we have witnessed the global reach of prayer and concern that transcends any one space or time.

Fr. Kevin writes, “I am immensely grateful for all the expression of love and kindness I have received. Thank you all.” Thank you for uniting with us in prayer for Fr. Kevin and indeed for all who live with illness at this time.

On Ash Wednesday we began our Lenten journey towards the celebration of Easter, which will soon be upon us. The forty days of Lent remind us of the time Jesus spent in the wilderness. There, he prepared for his future mission of healing, reconciliation and sharing the experience of God’s tenderness and compassion. This season also takes us back to the time of Moses who led the Hebrew tribes from slavery in Egypt through forty years in the desert to freedom. Through their experience, the people were led and formed by





God. They came to know that God provides, is faithful and always to be trusted. The God of Moses was concerned for real people, wanted to have a personal relationship with them and wanted to speak to their hearts.

We may at some point have a desert experience. It can be one that we choose to enter freely, as we do in the season of Lent. It may be one that is thrust upon us – lockdown, restrictions, sense of isolation, illness, bereavement, loss, broken relationships and so much more. It all brings a sense of powerlessness. Jesus freely embraced his forty days in the wilderness and later his journey to the Cross on Calvary to identify fully with the naked vulnerability of every single human person and to express on behalf of all humanity our total dependence on God:

*“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”*

During his ministry, Jesus constantly went to the margins, the desert places where people experienced abandonment, neglect and rejection. Through his Cross, Jesus embraces human abandonment, absorbs it and takes it through death to a transformed new reality in his own resurrection.

**W**hen our usual supports and what is familiar to us are stripped away, we need to find a way of refocussing and looking towards a new horizon. The Cross was only possible for Jesus because of his absolute trust in the fidelity of God and his conviction in resurrection. Disciples of Jesus recognise that the promise of resurrection is not only a *“light at the end of the tunnel”*, but also a growing present reality in the hearts of those who

accept the journey towards deeper authenticity and meaning.

With the resurrection as our horizon and our desire to release all falsehood, we can begin to value those things that are most important in life. We might discover anew that God often has the greatest freedom to whisper gently to our aching hearts when we have fewer distractions. We might wonder what things distract from being attentive to that still, small voice that comes to us at unexpected times, in unsuspected situations or even through the most unlikely of people. The sound of sheer silence and apparent emptiness into which we are led may also become our moment of light and a deeper experience of the divine.

Before Moses led the Hebrews from Egypt, they celebrated a Passover meal, which involved eating unleavened bread. One custom many Jewish people have in preparing for the celebration of Passover includes removing all leaven from the home. *Chametz* is the name for leavened food, and the ceremony of *Bedikat Chametz* is the final search for leaven, which is then burned so that the house is *kosher* (that is, pure and suitable) for Passover.

This radical cleansing of the home involves shining a light into every area to ensure that nothing “*impure*” remains. Our pilgrimage towards Easter can allow God to shine a light onto those areas of our lives that still need to be made completely open to the touch of God and transparent with God’s love. The Christian life, St. Augustine says, “*is an exercise of holy desire*”. We do not suppress our normal God-given human desires but allow God to raise and purify them. We look deeply into our lives and examine our motives and patterns of behaviour. We pray that we might desire what God desires. A “*holy desire*” will lead us into greater



The Resurrection - Richard Joseph King (Shrine of Saint Jude)

receptivity to God’s own light.

As well as being a time for re-orienting our minds and hearts to the ways of God, these days are a time for self-reflection and naming the areas in ourselves for spiritual growth, allowing light to flood the darkness within. Maybe it’s easier to point out the potential growth areas in other people - we can all be quite expert at that! But we know that we all need to have a radical look inwards and invite God to shine divine light on those hidden areas, sometimes yet unknown or unacknowledged, that need to be transformed.

“  
..we all need to have a radical look inwards and invite God to shine divine light on those hidden areas..”



God the Father - Richard Joseph King

**W**e don't have to do all the work ourselves.

We simply need to give God the opportunity and permission to get to work on us. God will never force us. Rather, God finds ways to entice us. If we read the stories of Jesus calling St. Jude and the other disciples, there always seems to be a strong element of attraction. Those who follow a charismatic figure always find something appealing in their message or in their personality. With Jesus, the message and the person were completely in harmony. Remember how he warns his followers not to be like the hypocrites who put on a good show to gain attention? There was something incoherent in what they said and what they did. St. Jude must have been completely fascinated with the authenticity and compelling truth of who Jesus was, what he said and what he did. Jesus warned his apostles, and he continues to counsel us, about things that will harden our hearts and make us unreceptive to him, his message and his teaching.

As we move towards the light of Easter, we pray that our hearts will be softened and become open to the

new energy that the Risen One brings.

If we say *Yes* to God, then God who has already said *Yes* to us will take us at our word. The way of discipleship, as St. Jude discovered as he followed Jesus, will be different for each person. What is essential is that we give God permission to work God's wonders in us. As we hear Jesus say on Gethsemane on Holy Thursday, "*Not my will, but yours be done*".

**T**here is a certain beauty in hearing our names spoken gently, piercing through our pain and defensiveness. There is reassurance and affirmation in being known and called by name. Even when we have felt hurt, disappointed, disillusioned and angry, the sound of our names spoken lovingly can raise us up.

After his resurrection, Mary of Magdala was weeping at the tomb of Jesus. The grave of the one to whom she had listened, by whom she had been fascinated, accepted and loved, and whom she followed closely. As she pours out her heart in grief, she senses the presence of one she believes to be the gardener. She did not recognise him

as Jesus. Something about him had radically changed and yet, when she hears him speaking her name with tenderness, familiarity and reassurance, her heart breaks with joy as she knows with a transformed way of knowing that we might call faith that it is truly Jesus risen from the dead. How, she does not know. She simply accepts and then goes running to tell the apostles.

What hope! What joy!  
What love! What a transformation... in Jesus... in Mary of Magdala....



Praying to Saint Jude at the Shrine

“ ..there is a certain beauty in hearing our names spoken gently, piercing through our pain and defensiveness.. ”



prayer that, as we move from the dead, the same  
towards the celebration God who will raise us up  
of Easter, you will hear your and offer us new life.  
name spoken tenderly by  
the God who raised Jesus  
Happy Easter!

Fr Brendan Grady, O.Carm  
Chaplain

## Notice Board

### Remember our Novenas

**Novena to Saint Joseph**

11 - 19 March 2021

**Novena for Easter**

27 March - 4 April 2021

**Novena to Saint Jude**

20 - 28 May 2021

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



### Leave a gift in your Will to the Carmelites

After you have provided for loved ones, why not support the other things in life that gave you joy? By leaving a gift to the Shrine and the British Carmelites in your Will, you are helping to ensure that the work and ministry of the province and the Shrine will continue for many generations to come.

[www.stjudeshrine.org.uk/leave-gift-your-will](http://www.stjudeshrine.org.uk/leave-gift-your-will)  
or call 01795 539 214







Shrine of Saint Jude – a message of hope today  
[www.stjudeshrine.org.uk](http://www.stjudeshrine.org.uk)

“Even the darkest moments of the liturgy are filled with joy, and Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten fast, is a day of happiness, a Christian Feast.”  
Thomas Merton



### Praying with us at home

Since January, we have been adding weekly prayers and reflections each Friday at 11am at [www.praywithjude.co.uk](http://www.praywithjude.co.uk). All previous and present reflections are indexed into themes:

Carmelite Saints and Spirituality; God; The Gospel; Good thoughts and ideas; Saint Jude; Pandemic Heroes; Our Lady; and Other Saints who can help us

 Carmelite Friars, PO Box 289, Faversham, ME13 3BZ

 01795 539 214

 [newsletter@stjudeshrine.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@stjudeshrine.org.uk)

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