



# THE CARMELITE NEWS



SUMMER 2015

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

First and foremost, Happy Easter. I know that this comes somewhat belatedly but this is the first chance that I have had chance to pass on my Easter greetings and those of the Carmelites in Britain. The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is at the very heart of our faith.

### **Catching up**

It isn't just my Easter wishes that are late this time but my letter is also reaching you later than planned. I'm just about back at my desk after a bout of flu which laid me low for a couple of weeks and so Matt, who sees to the printing of my letter, has been champing at the bit somewhat but in a very understanding way you'll be pleased to know.

It has been quite a strange experience being out and about again because in just this short amount of time so much has changed in nature and I have been amazed to see the first bluebells are in flower. They are a flower that I always associate with May and with the May devotions to Our Lady when I was a boy. As you may know, I grew up in Lancashire and most Catholic houses in those days would have had a statue of Our Lady in the home. During May there were always a few Spring flowers from the back garden in front of the statue.

### **Mary and the Apostles**

We know almost nothing about the relationship between Our Lady and the Apostles. There are a few tantalising references in the Gospels, especially the one where Mary and Jesus' brothers and sisters came to get him because they thought that perhaps he had gone a little crazy. That might sound like a terrible thing to say, but Jesus was upsetting a lot of powerful religious people by teaching that all the religious rules and regulations have nothing to do with our friendship with God – people who believed that they could sell friendship with God, and that it was necessary to keep every single rule that they had invented. Life under the Romans had led to a real breakdown in society at the time of Jesus, and for most people it simply wasn't possible to do this, so people were taught that they were outside of the circle of God's friendship. Jesus doesn't just teach by what he says, but also by what he *does*. He showed that God's love is for *all* people without condition or reservation.

The powerful religious people were angry and Jesus was in danger. It shows us just what a tight-knit and loving family he came from that they were willing to be associated with him in public at such a time. Certainly the Apostles knew Mary and she knew them.

So it is that on the day of Pentecost we are taught in the Scriptures that the Apostles were at prayer in the upper room with Mary the Mother of Jesus, when the Holy Spirit came down and appeared in the form of tongues of fire. I find it helpful to think that whilst for the Apostles (our friend Jude amongst them), this was their first experience of the Holy Spirit the same isn't true for Mary. In the Annunciation when she consents to be the Mother of God it is by the action of the Holy Spirit that she conceives Jesus in her womb. So on the day of Pentecost she knew who this was and what a gift was being given to the Apostles and, through them, to the Church.



Icon of the descent of the Holy Spirit on Mary and the Apostles – Rosary Way, National Shrine of Saint Jude

As we prepare for Pentecost, let's ask Our Lady and Saint Jude to pray with us for a renewal of the grace of the Holy Spirit in our lives that, in small ways, we can bring healing to our broken and suffering world.

## One of the perks

I think that pretty much all of the Carmelites who have written this letter have a sense of the very personal relationship that people like yourself have with Saint Jude and the Shrine here in Faversham. This comes through especially in the letters you write to us. It was wonderful to receive a reply to my last letter which, as well as sharing a very personal family story, spoke about bees here at Faversham back in the dark days of World War II. The person writing was a girl at the time and remembered being taken to see the bees and going home with a jar of honey!

## A bee line

I'm afraid that if you are looking for my hives when you visit Faversham you won't see them here. Health and safety means that they can't be near places where people come in large numbers. Bees are remarkable creatures but they are creatures of habit. When they are coming back to the hive they follow a straight line – the same line every time – this is where we get the expression “a bee line”. They are gentle creatures but if they suddenly find a pilgrim standing right in the middle of their flight path they are apt to think that someone is being unfriendly with what are often unpleasant consequences for the pilgrim and even worse ones for the poor old bee!

## Thank you

Before I go any further with my meanderings (it's always a mistake to set a bee-keeper going on their hobby), please let me say a heartfelt thank you for the generosity of your prayer, mass stipends and donations since my last letter. They are all a life-line in ways that you cannot imagine; touching and helping people you will never meet this side of heaven. You are daily in our prayer and those of many others.

### Remember our Novenas

**Novena to the Sacred Heart:** 4 - 12 June 2015

**Novena to Our Lady of Carmel:** 8 - 16 July 2015

**Novena to Saint Jude:** 4 - 12 August 2015

## Statue of Saint Jude

You may remember that in my last letter I said that I would tell you in this letter about how the statue of Saint Jude came to the Shrine. This is how Fr. Elias tells the story which happened in World War II:

“The Faversham statue of St Jude turned up in a peculiar way. A man wrote to tell me that his wife was depressed and sorely afflicted because her son had been lost at sea in the submarine war. He asked me to pray to St Jude that God would give her patience, resignation and fortitude. This we did. I wrote to him to say that we did not have a good statue of St Jude and he wrote back to say that he had seen one in an antique shop in London, Spanish 16th century. Could he donate it to the Church? Of course I said “yes” and down it came. It certainly looked like an Apostle, but it was the most Mongolian looking statue I had ever seen. There was an element about it that was quite impressive and the artist had not spared either his time or labour in the carving. The donor asked me to put a little plaque under it, asking prayers for his son lost at sea”. I said to him, “It is a little too soon yet. Wait a while.” Sure enough, ten weeks later the son turned up as a prisoner of war on a captured German sea raider. The plaque was never put up.”

## A call from Jim

Now this is the account that I grew up with, and is one that is familiar to people around the world. However, a short time after my last letter I had a message to ring someone called Jim. It turns out that he had read my letter and, more amazingly, was the son of the man and woman who gave the statue. He wanted to tell me the real conclusion to the story of his brother who was lost at sea. It seems that the account of his brother having turned up as a prisoner of war was a case of mistaken identity. The ship that he was on was sunk after being torpedoed with all men lost. Sad to say his parents then lost another son to the war. Jim was able to share though that his mother found great consolation in her grief through the Shrine. I promised Jim that I would set the story straight and have invited him to our jubilee celebrations in October. The statue can be seen on the front cover.



So many people turn to the Shrine in their pain, loss and confusion and find here the strength to keep on walking day by day. As the soon to be beatified martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero said: “some things can only be seen with eyes that have wept”.

## A new priest

I am sure that you remember my sharing with you the good news of Fr. Paul’s ordination to the priesthood. Perhaps you remember that at the time I asked for prayers for Bro. Ged who hoped to be ordained this year. I am happy to be able to say that his priestly ordination took place on 25th January at our parish in York in the north of England. As with Paul he is in a special way your priest! Before he came to Carmel, Ged was a senior radiographer in Liverpool. He gradually came to understand that God was calling him to a different way of life. Having completed his noviciate he went to begin his studies and since he completed those, he has been a part of our community in York. Now that he is ordained, he is full-time chaplain to the University of York and also working in the chaplaincy to the hospitals in York.



*Fr. Ged's hands are anointed for service by Bishop Terry during the ordination ceremony*

## Your prayers

Never underestimate the power of prayer or of your prayers. Fr. Ged would be the first to say that he hasn't flown from his noviciate to his ordination on a magic carpet surrounded by sweet music and sunshine! There have been many times of just hard slog as there are in any way of life and anything that is worthwhile. Times when having a successful career to go back to was a serious temptation and possibility. This is why I keep repeating just how much we depend on the prayers of people like you. On behalf of all our Carmelite brothers, thank you once again, and if you ever find yourself twiddling your thumbs and wondering what to do next then whisper a prayer for us and the people God has sent us to serve.

## And finally

There is a famous story about the Irish and the Americans who were in a race to be the first to land someone on Mars. As pens won't write in space (no gravity) the Americans threw millions of dollars and hundreds of scientists into developing a pen that would write on Mars. As for the Irish? They simply went to the corner shop and bought a box of pencils!

In this letter you'll find your raffle tickets - please send them back for your chance to win some great prizes. Remember, ten winners will receive some of our honey too. Our novena prayers and intentions sheet is also included with this newsletter.

In my next letter I'll be able to share some news with you about the visit of the Prior General of the Carmelite Order to the Shrine.

May the Good God bless you and yours and, until we meet again, may Our Lady of Mount Carmel keep you under the mantle of her special protection.

In Carmel,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. G. Lester." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Fr. Tony Lester, O.Carm., Prior Provincial



## Summer Celebration 30 May 2015

The summer is a beautiful time at the National Shrine of Saint Jude, and we look forward to meeting and seeing visitors on our special day. Our Diamond Jubilee celebrations will begin at the Summer Celebration. All welcome.

11.00: Devotions with Anointing

12.00 – 13.00: Picnic on the grounds (bring your own food)

13.30: Open air Mass, followed by a Saint Jude procession and prayers


There will also be an opportunity to:

- \* purchase items from the Shrine shop
- \* light a candle
- \* leave intentions at the Shrine

The Shrine is at 34 Tanners Street, Faversham, ME13 7JW

However, we understand that some pilgrims will not be able to attend - you can have a candle lit for your intentions. Please fill in the intentions sheet to do this and send to the Shrine Office ASAP. Alternatively, you can order via our on-line shop: [tinyurl.com/StJudeshop](http://tinyurl.com/StJudeshop)

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Front cover - the statue of Saint Jude in the Shrine. All photos, copyright Order of Carmelites.