



THE CARMELITE NEWS



WINTER 2017

Dear Friend of Saint Jude

We have just finished celebrating the Saint Jude weekend at the shrine in Faversham. The number of pilgrims attending and their devotion was tremendous. The Carmelite community in Faversham, led by Fr Brendan Grady; the Shrine Office staff, managed by Matt Betts; Fr Francis Kemsley, the Prior of Aylesford; and myself were overwhelmed by the response. We had two full days of celebrations, culminating with a Mass presided over by the Archbishop of Southwark, the Most Reverend Peter Smith. The Archbishop is a Life Member of the Guild of Saint Jude and kindly accepted our invitation to join us for the Sunday celebration. It was a great joy to have him with us.

What stood out for me was the way pilgrims prayed so intensely to God, with the intercession of Saint Jude. There were groups from many parts from the south east of England, but also from farther afield, like Manchester and Glasgow. Altogether we celebrated six extra Masses beyond the parish ones and anointed hundreds of pilgrims with the Holy Oil of Saint Jude. The photos below (and on the cover) tell the story far more eloquently than I could.



Brother Anthony McGreal room

One of the most exciting highlights of the weekend was the dedication of one of the rooms in the Welcome Centre to the memory of Brother Anthony McGreal. Brother Anthony arrived in Faversham from Ireland in 1935 to help the founder of the Shrine, Fr Elias Lynch. He worked for 30 years in the Newsletter Office, opening mail and writing letters to all the donors. He was a tireless worker for Saint Jude and a companion to Fr Elias. He was the uncle to Fr Wilfrid McGreal, the former prior provincial, and who did us the great honour of coming to open the Anthony McGreal Room. Fr Wilfrid spoke movingly of his uncle, his family and Carmelite vocation which he pursued despite his deafness. Fr Wilfrid himself is not in the best of health and came to our celebration at great personal cost in terms of tiredness and fatigue. We are most grateful to him.



Fr Wilfrid talks about his uncle



Fr Kevin welcomes everybody



The new room plaque



The Archbishop and Prior Provincial
bless the plaque



Br Tony O'Donnell and
Fr Richard Cosey

Keep in contact with the National Shrine of Saint Jude

Website: <http://www.stjudeshrine.org.uk>

Donate online: <http://tinyurl.com/DonatetoJude>

Online shop: <http://tinyurl.com/SaintJudeShop>

Saint Jude and the Carmelites

I suggested in my homilies on both Saturday and Sunday that Saint Jude, being 11th on the list of 12 apostles and being so often confused with Judas Iscariot, is the ideal saint to turn to when we feel neglected or forgotten. One of the disturbing features of our society is the significant number of people who feel worthless. This is a terrible condition to find oneself in. No one seems to listen or take any notice. Saint Jude understands this and is the one who intercedes for us when we feel like this.

Another thing I drew attention to was the connection between the gospel reading for the day and Carmelite spirituality. The passage for October 28 begins: "In these days he went out into the hills to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples, and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles;" (Luke 6:12-13) Jesus always turned to his Father in prayer: he began his ministry with 40 days of prayer in the desert; he faced up to his fate in the Garden of Gethsemane. In the gospel for St Jude's feast Jesus prays before he makes his choice. His prayer with the Father helps him to choose: he translates his relationship with God into the choices of his daily life. So too we are called to cultivate our bonds with the Father in prayer, and strengthened by that experience we make our choices. This is a very Carmelite approach to see prayer and action as a single expression of our relationship with God. We develop our connection with God in prayer and bring that same connection to our daily lives.

Saint Jude's outreach

For over 10 years with your help in prayer and in donations, the British province has been supporting a Divine Providence Hospital in El Salvador. The £3,000 grant from the Carmelites was transferred to Sister Maria Julia Garcia, Director of the Hospital and Superior of the Carmelite Missionary Sisters of Saint Theresa. She expressed once again her great gratitude to the British Province of the Carmelites for its continuing valuable support to the work of the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital (the Hospitalito). The funds are used for the running costs – that is for the palliative care offered to the patients – to ensure the efficient running of the Hospital and the sensitive care is offered to all the patients both those interned and those who manage to come and go as outpatients.

Sister Maria Julia wrote on 4 June 2017:

“The hospital has been attending to patients free of charge for 51 years and at the present time our care programme focuses on alleviating the pain and suffering and the symptoms which cause the discomfort, bringing a good quality of life to the patients in their last days.

At present 62 beds are available for patients and they maintain a daily occupancy rate of 40-45 patients. We rely on the donations from altruistic benefactors to be able to do the work we do.

In the name of the sick people we see we express our immense gratitude for the crucial economic assistance that you give us via the Romero Trust.

Thank you for being united through these efforts with the pain and suffering of our people who live with this sickness and death with hope and courage, thanks to your support, dear friends.”

The British Province recognises that a special bond has been created with the Carmelite Sisters at the Hospitalito and the involvement through finance and visits since 2006 has been hugely important to the Sisters whose work is intimately connected to Archbishop Romero who lived on the site and was assassinated in the Hospital Chapel.

The year 2017 being the centenary of the birth of Blessed Oscar Romero, the Romero Trust has been at the forefront of organising events and focusing interest on Archbishop Romero in anticipation of his canonisation sometime during 2018.

For this the Trust has had to make new extraordinary appeals for funds to every single one of the Bishops of England and Wales and to several religious orders. Among those who responded positively, was the British Province of Carmelites which offered special help in the construction and location of a reliquary for the relics of Archbishop Romero.



The relic of Blessed Oscar Romero at the hospital

A few thoughts for Christmas..

At the third Mass of Christmas, in the morning, we will listen again to that beautiful gospel from the first chapter of John. It's impossible to justice here to the whole gospel, so I've chosen some of the most important verses to comment on in the light of the nativity.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

In this one sentence the gospel writer tells us all we need to know about the identity of the Word: that he exists from the beginning and therefore he is eternal. He does not exist in isolation, but he is eternally in the presence of God the Father; he is literally "turned towards him" in the original text. Finally, the Word is divine: not a creature or even a superman, but God himself. We know from the very beginning of John's gospel who Jesus is: he is eternal, he is in God's presence and he is God.

"And the Word became flesh ..."

The eternal divine Word of God took on our flesh, our full and complete humanity. Jesus is one like us in all things, but sin. If we think that Jesus is just pretending to be human, then we have not grasped the reason for the Nativity. Jesus became human so that we could become divine. If Christ is not human then we cannot become like God and to the extent Jesus is human, then to that same degree we can become like him. So it follows that if we are called to be fully like him, he has become fully like us, except that he cannot sin because he is always "with God".

"... and dwelt among us,..."

The Word of the Father becomes human and comes to live as one of us in our world. And more than this, the Word lives in the same space, in the same structure that the God of Moses lived in during the 40 year trek of the people of Israel. This is the same God that guided his people to the Promised Land and then stayed with them in the Temple. The Word that comes into our world at Christmas is not a stranger; he is not alien to our world, but very much part of it and involved in it in a direct and profound way.



“... full of grace and truth;

These two words have a special meaning for us as we read or listen to the gospel. Grace is not a “thing”, like fuel or food that we can measure or weigh. Grace is simply the life of God. Here that life of God is in the Word, in Jesus and we know from the rest of the gospel that Jesus is sent by the Father to give us that same life: “...I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” [John 10:10] The gospel of John is full of references to the life of the Father, to that of the Son and to our own life. Jesus himself is the life [John 14:6]. The second word here is also important: the truth for John is the truth about Jesus and therefore about God. In other words, what we can know about God, the truth about God, only comes through the Son. Jesus is the concrete revelation of the Father. As Saint John of the Cross put it, he is the final Word of the Father. After Jesus there is nothing more to say about God.

May the new born Christ Child bless each and every one of you this Christmas.

In Carmel,



Kevin Alban O.Carm.

Prior Provincial

Remember our Novenas

Novena to the Holy Infant of Prague: 17 - 25 December 2017

Novena to Saint Jude: 11 - 19 January 2018

Novena to Our Lady of Lourdes: 3 - 11 February 2018



Brother Anthony McGreal editing the newsletter in the 1960s

CHILDREN'S MASS

A shared Mass will be celebrated at the National Shrine of Saint Jude to pray for children. Those listed can be your child, someone else's child, or a child who has passed away. The Mass will be celebrated on 15 December - all welcome.

You can also add names and your donation via our online page: <http://tinyurl.com/JudeChildren17>

SOCIETIES OF ST JUDE, HOLY CHILD & THE LITTLE FLOWER

Before the Second World War, these three 'Societies of Prayer' were established. The Societies continue to exist at the Shrine, and are a very popular way for people to express their faith, participate in our Carmelite devotions, and support our ministry of service to God's people. The Society of the Little Flower at Faversham is distinct from and pre-dates the charity with the same name.

Members of the societies are enrolled for a year, during which time Mass is celebrated every month for their spiritual and temporal welfare. It is possible to enrol yourself and others in any or all of the Societies, and whilst there is no set fee, a donation of £1.50 or €1.70 per person per year is suggested. You can enrol by clicking on one of the boxes below:

**St Jude
Society**

**Little Flower
Society**

**Holy Child
Society**

**All three
societies**





Christmas at the Shrine



Saturday 2 December 2017
12pm - 5pm

Carols
Anointing
Prayers
Mince pies
Celebration
Christmas Tree

ALL WELCOME

For more information, please [click here](#).





Saint Jude, pray for us



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