



THE CARMELITE NEWS



WINTER 2015

Dear Friend of Saint Jude

Autumn is well underway as I sit down and write to you. I hope that this letter finds you in good form and that all is as well as can be with your loved ones be, they near or far. Here in Faversham we are well and catching our breath after the Feast day celebrations for Saint Jude. It is always a wonderful time as we meet friends old and new. Sadly this year I was not able to be present for the weekend before but I was there on the Feast itself. More of that later on.

I am always amazed at the generosity that friends like you show to us in your prayers and support, and this is especially so after my last letter. I am only too well aware that these are hard times and there are many demands on your generosity both from what comes through your letter box and today, increasingly, via the television. All I can say is a simple thank you and assure you of our prayers.

Your privacy

In recent months the media has been full of news of charities who are acting with little respect for their supporters. We have heard of people being bombarded by requests for money. People who have given to one charity, and then had their details sold to other charities targeting them for donations. People's personal details and addresses bought and sold with no prior consultation. Here at the Shrine of Saint Jude we think that this is very wrong.

Our promise

We take our duty of confidentiality very seriously and can promise you that we never have and never will pass on, and much less sell your address or details to another charity or organisation. This applies across the board both to other religious charities and other groups which raise money for the Carmelites. We are aware that many friends of Saint Jude also receive mailings from the Little Flower Society and, to look at their publicity, it looks as if we are all a part of the same operation.

If you do receive their material, we want to be absolutely clear that they have not obtained your information from us here at the Shrine. No doubt they can tell you if you ask which company they purchased your details from. We think it also helpful to know that the Little Flower Society does not in any way support

the work and ministries of the Carmelites in these islands.

I hope that it is helpful for you to be able to assure your friends that asking to receive information from our little Shrine does not mean that they will then be bombarded by unwelcome and uninvited post from who knows where. Equally we hope that it helps for you to know that any financial help you give is not spent on buying in new addresses, as people's personal details are traded on an open market.

Our Jubilee

As I am sure you are only too well aware, this year we are keeping our Diamond Jubilee of foundation. Inevitably our minds and memories go back over the decades to Fr. Elias and Bro. Anthony who responded to the desire of Saint Jude that there be a Shrine dedicated to him in Faversham. It was certainly not on our agenda. Some of you will remember just how scarce resources (especially building resources) were after the Second World War! And yet here it is 60 years later! It is still doing the work of Saint Jude, preaching the certainty of God's love and mercy to those who find it hard to hold on amidst the pressures and the hard blows that life sometimes gives.

Tradition says that Saint Jude met his martyr's death by being beaten to death. Perhaps this is why he understands so well the hard blows which come from nowhere and which are often cruel and undeserved.

Saint Jude invites us to place our trust in God's love for us which is there despite the fact that at times all the evidence seems to suggest that the opposite is true! As Christians we all follow in the footsteps of Jesus and, sooner or later, this will lead us to the Cross. This is when we have to walk by faith and not by sight trusting that the Cross will also lead us to the Resurrection.

Old traditions

I was talking during lunch the other day about some of our family traditions when I was growing up in Lancashire and one of these was that we always had a robin in the Christmas Crib. My Carmelite brother had never heard about this and asked why. I was taught, and my mother told me this so it must be true, that when Jesus was in agony on the cross a robin sang its sweet song to comfort him, plus Our Lady and Saint John who stood at the foot of the cross.

As it was close to the cross a drop of Our Lord's blood fell and stained its breast red. This is why the robin has a red breast and why we have a robin in the crib. It contains a profound truth - the child in the manger is so filled with love that he is willing to die for us.

Pictures

There is a saying that a picture is worth a thousand words! It has been suggested that I keep my letter short this time so that we can share some of the pictures of our Jubilee Day with you when Archbishop Peter Smith came to lead the celebrations and to open the new Shrine Information Centre. Please see below and the next two pages for some photos from this very special day.



The Mayor of Faversham and his Town Sergeant process to the front



Fr Tony Lester, O.Carm talks about the Shrine's sixty years of ministry



Archbishop Peter Smith celebrates Mass with Fr Tony Lester, O.Carm and Fr Michael Manning, O.Carm concelebrating. Fr Philip Glandfield, Private Secretary to the Archbishop was the MC.



The church was full with the friends of Saint Jude



The Mass was filmed by a local friend of Saint Jude



The Archbishop blesses the oil of Saint Jude



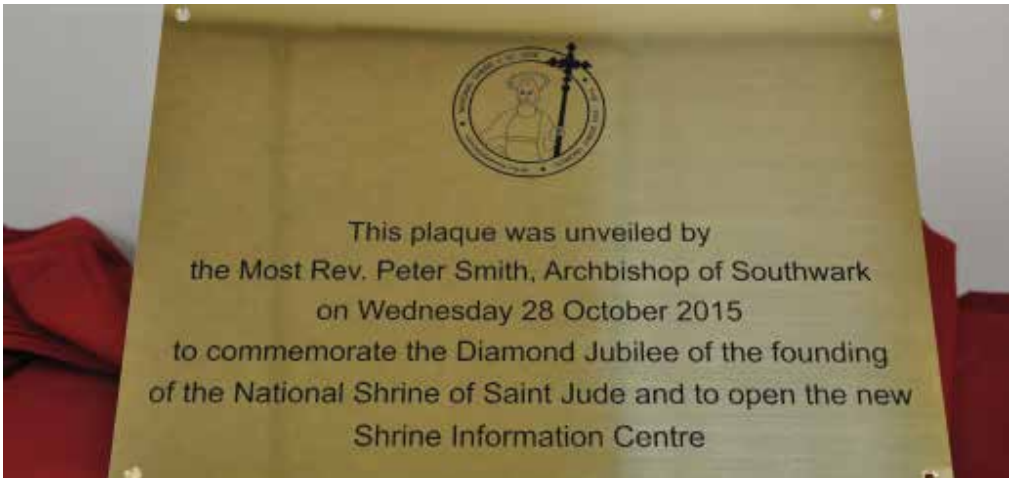
The Archbishop, the Carmelite Provincial and fellow friars, civic dignitaries, members of the Shrine management team, and other friends outside the National Shrine of Saint Jude.



The Archbishop reading letters of congratulations to the Shrine on its Diamond Jubilee



The Archbishop and Mayor look at the new display in the Shrine Information Centre



The Archbishop opened up the new Shrine Information Centre

Christmas

By the time my letter falls through your letterbox Christmas will indeed be drawing near. I am always conscious in writing my Christmas letter that this is an uncertain time of year and none of us know what are heating bills are going to be like. Whilst we depend on the generosity of friends like you I would hate the thought of you sending money and then having to turn off the heating at some point so please be wise. If you receive this letter you are not a stranger whose address we have bought. You are a friend who has a relationship with the Shrine.



And finally.....

WHERE DO PETS COME FROM?

A newly discovered chapter in the Book of Genesis (not really, this is a joke remember) has provided the answer to “Where do pets come from?”

Adam and Eve said, “Lord, when we were in the garden, you walked with us every day. Now we do not see you any more. We are lonely here, and it is difficult for us to remember how much you love us.”

And God said, “No problem! I will create a companion for you that will be with you forever and who will be a reflection of my love for you, so that you will love me even when you cannot see me. Regardless of how selfish or childish or unlovable you may be, this new companion will accept you as you are and will love you as I do, in spite of yourselves.”

And God created a new animal to be a companion for Adam and Eve. And it was a good animal. And God was pleased.

And the new animal was pleased to be with Adam and Eve and he wagged his tail.

And Adam said, “Lord, I have already named all the animals in the Kingdom and I cannot think of a name for this new animal.”

And God said, “No problem you will call him DOG.”

And Dog lived with Adam and Eve and was a companion to them and loved them. And they were comforted. And God was pleased.

And Dog was content and wagged his tail.

After a while, it came to pass that an angel came to the Lord and said, “Lord, Adam and Eve have become filled with pride. They strut and preen like peacocks and they believe they are worthy of adoration. Dog has indeed taught them that they are loved, but perhaps too well.”

And God said, “No problem! I will create for them a companion who will be with them forever and who will see them as they are. The companion will remind them of their limitations, so they will know that they are not always worthy of adoration.”

And God created CAT to be a companion to Adam and Eve.

And Cat would not obey them. And when Adam and Eve gazed into Cat's eyes, they were reminded that they were not the supreme beings.

And Adam and Eve learned humility.

And they were greatly improved.

And God was pleased.

And Dog was happy.

And Cat couldn't care less one way or the other

Those of you who are cat lovers will know exactly what I mean! And so, until we meet again, may the good God bless you and yours and Our Lady of Mount Carmel cover you with the mantle of her special protection.

In Carmel,

A. G. Lester

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



Remember our Novenas

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

Novena to Saint Jude: 10 - 18 January

Novena to Our Lady of Lourdes: 3 - 11 February

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Front cover - Archbishop Peter Smith praying at the Shrine. All photos, copyright Order of Carmelites.