

BOSTON CARMEL



Newsletter

61 Mt. Pleasant Ave.-- Boston, MA 02119

For our **BENEFACTORS, RELATIVES, & FRIENDS**

Fall/Winter, 2022

www.carmelitesofboston.org

AN EVENT WORTHY OF NOTE

This year we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross's (Edith Stein) baptism into the Catholic Church. How ardently she searched for the truth and how fully she embraced it wherever she found it along her life's journey. And what a journey it was! And what a legacy she has left us! Born in 1891 and martyred in 1942, she has much to say to our times. Some may think she is all head, having graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in philosophy, but she also had a very tender heart that showed in many ways, perhaps maybe most amazingly as a volunteer in a military hospital for infectious diseases during WWII. She has left us many writings, some challenging to read, but some readily understandable. May this quote speak powerfully to you about the wonder of our vocation as Christians which she summarized thus: "...to laugh and cry with the children of this world and ceaselessly sing the praises of God with the choirs of angels.. until the morning of eternity breaks forth." St. Teresa Benedicta, pray for us to live according to God's truth!

VISITOR OR RESIDENT?

There was no paperwork. No application. No baggage. Just an unannounced appearance: four paws, two big ears and a fuzzy brown body! This is no hallucination. Different ones have seen it at different times and different places. Those who have not, long to see this BUNNY! We would like it to fill out a questionnaire! Where did you come from? How did you get in? Where are your living quarters? We do not expect answers from our new resident and we are happy about its choosing us as a dwelling place. But we do wonder and hope he/she will be able to survive the winter.

AN ABUNDANT HARVEST

We only have one grape vine. And it looks very ancient. It was planted before any of our present members came here. It looks like it could compete with Methuselah for age! But, oh, how it spoke to us of God's abundant generosity! This ONE grape vine gave us 40 lbs of grapes this fall! (Excluding what the birds claimed for themselves!) We have a special pot that makes it very easy to make grape juice from grapes and so we were the blessed recipients of very organic and delicious juice!

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

Remember our telling you that one of our Sisters was writing a book? Well, the book, SOUL STIRRINGS: AWAKENING TO THE SOUL WITHIN YOU by our Sister Jeanne Marie has been published and is now available! Several prominent people have given it very good reviews and it can be purchased online at Amazon, from us or from Barnes & Noble or other bookstores, even international ones! The book cover is exquisite, the book flap describes it as "An engaging, instructive and nourishing account of the spiritual life as a journey of the soul, an exploration of the intersection of our struggling efforts and God's abundant grace." The book was no small feat. It was in process for many years involving much thought, prayer and work! It is a first for us. Our nuns in the past have translated works of other writers, but none authored a book. May it bring many blessings to those who read it!

DEATH AS BIRTH

Falling leaves, the month of November and All Souls Day bring death to mind. When St. Therese was dying she said, "I am not dying, I am entering into life." Isn't that a good way

to think about death which will come to all of us? This year several dear ones have tasted this reality. Our Sr. Jeanne Marie's mother went to eternal life on October 11. Grey Nun, Sr. Gladys Marhefka, a dear friend, went to God in June. Sr. Jon Julie, SND who answered our door and phone for umpteen years was called to life eternal in August. They were loved, they were special, they are missed and now intercede for us to choose life in all its dimensions, which includes dying!

DID YOU SEE IT?

THE PILOT, our Archdiocesan paper, asked us if we would be willing to be part of a series of articles on contemplatives in the Archdiocese. We happily accepted. As it turned out, the piece on us was the first to appear, possibly because we are the first and oldest contemplative community in the archdiocese. The journalist, Jacqueline Tetrault, a young woman who did the interview, was lovely and we were very pleased with her article on us.

A NEW TREE

Our Prioress was celebrating very simply her silver jubilee and the nuns were thinking of what gift we could give her. One Sister reminded us that she likes persimmons, so we researched and found out it was possible to grow that tree in our area. So we ordered one, and, of course, we also blessed it! We began by singing (to the tune of GATHER AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE) Gather 'round the persimmon tree with adapted

wording. It is still alive, thank God, and its leaves have added to our fall foliage!

WEAPONS OF WAR & PEACE

Whether we like it or not, there are times we need to go to war! Our Carmelite Rule reminds us that our life on earth is a time of trial and the devil, our foe is on the prowl looking for prey! But If there are weapons of war, there are also weapons of peace. The weapons of war are so many and we hear daily how much destruction they are wreaking in the Ukraine, Africa, and other places where they are used. But there are also weapons of peace! We need to use them if we are to overcome the horrors of war. The Scriptures and our Rule talk about these weapons of peace: the shield of faith, the breastplate of holiness, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God! Let us go to this school of peace that the scriptures offer to us free of charge and drive war not only out of lands but even more out of our hearts.

RAINBOWS OF HOPE

Rainbows come in many ways. They are symbols of hope. We were blessed one summer evening with two that were over our monastery! They filled us with awe for many minutes as we gazed upon them.

Two other 'rainbows' we were blessed with came from two different groups of young people who visited us.

After our public celebration in honor of St. Therese this year,

we had a delightful visit with our Carmelite Brothers who are in formation in Brighton. They are young and enthusiastic and our sharing was joyful and hopeful for our Order. In January we will meet again. During this visit they will share with us their trip to Spain, which was part of their formation adventure.

In November six young men and women joined us for Mass. They are members of a group called ENCOUNTER HOMELESS MINISTRY. Their concern and care for the needy is such a gift of hope not only for those they serve, but for all of us who are inspired by this unselfish giving of themselves.

Let us thank God for these rainbows of hope given us by nature and by others!

WITH US ALWAYS

There are many ways to think and contemplate the mystery of Christmas. We can never exhaust the ineffable mystery of the Word become flesh. He came to make His dwelling among us. He came to dwell in every heart, in every home, in every age, in every land and He wants to stay! In fact, He promised to stay: I am with you always, even to the end of the world! What a promise, what a love, what a gift! Let us welcome Him. He is still turned away like He was at the first Christmas... by people, by laws we make, by the things we choose. Let us be one of the blessed ones who welcome Him with ardent faith, hope, love and thanksgiving!

Christmas love fill your hearts!

Your Sisters of Boston Carmel

his is not a reminder that Christmas is coming, you already know that! Something to think about: we know that Jesus is eternal and has no heavenly birth but He does have an earthly one. We don't know the actual day or year, even though we celebrate it on December 25. Would He be about 2223 years old this year? Or do we stop adding earthly years after we die? To throw in another tidbit to add to this discussion, St. Therese said death is about our approaching birth! Trivia food for thought when you eat your Christmas fruitcake!

We did celebrate another momentous birthday this year We almost made it...When Covid raged and spread in our midst, our community was spared. Who wasn't relieved when its grip lessened and restrictions were eased. Churches and public places opened, celebrations and parties possible again. It seemed like Covid was conquered or at least in its eleventh hour, ready to depart for good. Then a new wave came. This time we were not spared. One of our Sisters became a victim of it. She did it solo and recovered. We are hoping there will be no major side effects and that history's chapter on Covid will end very soon for the good of all our world.

ICE CAPEDES

Christmas morning. There was no practice. No music. No tickets were sold. There was no audience. It was quite unexpected and unplanned. If you remember, this past Christmas was quite icy and chilly. One of the nuns was opening our gate and managed that, but on her way back to the steps, being a never-before-ice-skater, she fell, unceremoniously, with no skill to rise from the ice. So, she sat on the ice, in wonder! (Not a bad attitude for Christmas!) Then two miracles happened. First, an Angel appeared! Clothed in summer-like garb, with bare feet in sandals, without wings she was able to successfully move across the ice! She contacted the Sisters who completed the rescue mission. The second miracle? The "ice capade star" suffered no injuries!

CARMELITE BITS AND PIECES

Our Carmelite General, Fr. Miguel Marquez Calle spent Holy Week in the Ukraine visiting Carmelite Friars and nuns living there and going to the places where war was waged. He listened, hugged, prayed, and wept with the people there and shared his chronicle with the Order, calling it A VOYAGE TO THE HEART OF HORROR AND HOPE. His chronicle is too lengthy to quote entirely, but you may find some excerpts enlightening and helpful for prayer. After celebrating the Easter vigil, he wrote: "...today, Christ has risen for me in the faith of a people, in their hope." As he ended his

journey these were his words: "We are all at war. And together we need each other. We must be prepared with the weapons of light, let no one erase our smile and hope, it is the greatest treasure I bring from the Ukraine. They are not poor massacred people, they are a people that will rise from their ashes because they have Faith and in their wound, they awaken us all to live and to stand up."

May brought our Provincial to us for Mass and a visit. Fr. Michael Berry, ocd is a very good homilist, singer, and brother to the nuns. We had a great time sharing stories and concerns and laughter and promising prayers for each other.

This May, another Carmelite was canonized: St. Titus Brandsma. A Calced Carmelite, he lived in the dangerous time of the Nazis and wore many hats. As a journalist he courageously spoke out against Nazi propaganda. It led to his martyrdom at Dachau. Fr. Micael O'Neill, Prior General of the O. Carms, so rightly said of his canonization: WE HAVE THIS CELEBRATION AT A TIME WHEN TRUTH AND INTEGRITY IS SUFFERING SERIOUSLY IN THE MAJOR CONFLICTS THAT NOW THREATEN THE PEACE OF THE WORLD. St. Titus himself said, "The Nazi movement is the black lie. It is pagan." We are dealing with so many lies in our times. May we not be deceived by them. To those trying to overcome the lies of our time St. Titus offers this

advice: "Those who want to win the world for Christ must have the courage to come into conflict with it." A dangerous mission indeed. Lord, raise up, and be with, those who are trying!

GREENING UP

The woes we have inflicted on our environment are so overwhelming we might be tempted to wring our hands in despair. But that is not the road to travel. One does what one can and little things add up and mean a lot. One new step we have taken involves our laundry wash. We are using a new detergent product called EARTH BREEZE. It comes in a cardboard package instead of a heavy plastic jug and has 60 sheets that dissolve in cold or hot water. You may like to try it, too. and take this little step with us that could lead to a big one for our planet as we do what we can to help our polluted environment. (We don't get a commission!)

CHRISTMAS HAT SHOW

An interesting phenomenon happens in our cloister courtyard when it snows. A large statue of Jesus as an adolescent is in the center. When it snows, His head becomes a sacred mannequin of sorts for hat designs! Sometimes the design looks like a beanie, sometimes like a Czar's hat with a cape, sometimes like a tower! It is quite entertaining and a different way that Jesus brings joy into our lives!

CRACKED

We all know about cracked eggs and have described some

people as cracked. But ever hear of a cracked toilet? We had one. Some water on the floor was discovered by one of the Sisters and after searching for the source, the culprit was the tank. We were grateful that the entire tank didn't let out all its contents to make a flood before it could be fixed.

LOOKING FOR GOLD

Did you know that primary gold is found in rocks and secondary gold in rivers? Would you like to know about another place to find gold? Try the psalms. The Liturgy of the Hours is an important part of our prayer life and it consists mostly of the psalms that were written centuries ago but are as current as the daily newspaper! They are a goldmine for times when we are struggling to find words to help us pray, or when we are looking for words to console someone who is suffering. They supply us with words of praise, of thanksgiving, of lament, of hope and more! They even give us images of awe and wonder to ponder. The riches in them are more stocked than the shelves in a supermarket! May you find many golden nuggets in the psalms to make you richer in mind, heart and spirit.

GARDEN UPDATE

We have been blessed with the songs of new birds in our garden, but they remain a mystery because we cannot identify them. They are hidden souls! But we so love to hear them. Talking of birds, when we are praying the Liturgy of the Hours some birds join us

with their singing. It is delightful and enhancing!

We have leaping koi! It is not a frequent occurrence but it is quite exciting to see! Could they have some dolphin genes in them?

The red hawks are seen less frequently, but do surprise us once in a while. Wild turkeys have visited again and happily have not stayed. Let us not forget the presence of our resident skunk(s) who occasionally fill the air with their powerful perfume! All creatures on earth, bless the Lord with us!

GOING LIVE!

After our long hibernation because of Covid we are planning to have our public celebrations for Our Lady and St. Therese live this year. We hope you will come.

Your Carmelite Sisters of Boston