

Vox Eliae

Provincial Newsletter of the North American
Province of Saint Elias

Fall ~ Winter 2008



Joseph Thien Nguyen, O.Carm. Ordained to the Diaconate

At 6 A.M. on a beautiful Friday morning, June 26, 2008, history was made in the foundation of the Carmelite Friars in Vietnam. For the first time, one of the friars was ordained in his native country. **Rev. Brother Joseph Thien Nguyen, O.Carm.**, received the Order of Deacon from the hands of **The Most Reverend Joseph Vu Duy Thong**, Auxiliary Bishop of the Ho Chi Minh Archdiocese.

The chapel of the Priory of the Most Holy Rosary, which is the home of the Dominican Center of Studies, was packed for the ceremony. Seventeen Dominican friars, one brother from the Society of the Divine Word, and our Brother Joseph Thien were ordained as deacons. In the United States, it is difficult for us to envision nineteen religious deacons being ordained these days in one ceremony but, thanks be to God, the vocational picture in Vietnam is a bit different.

Father Mario Esposito, O.Carm. Regional Superior for the Carmelites in Vietnam, and **Father Stephan Tuu Le, O.Carm.** concelebrated at the ordination. All of the professed brothers attended, including **Brothers Vincent Phuong Nguyen, Joseph Khoa Hoang** and **Joseph Tri Phan** who had just returned from Middletown, New York after their simple profession. Brother Joseph Thien's mother was present for the ordination, along with his two brothers and one of his sisters. The family's pride, happiness and sense of thanksgiving radiated in smiles and many expressions of gratitude to God and the Order that morning.

It has been a long journey for the ordinand. Brother Joseph Thien began with the first group of Vietnamese vocations in 1995 and entered St. Thérèse House on July 16, 1996. He was simply professed at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Middletown on June 11, 2001, solemnly professed on August 26, 2006, and completed his theological studies at the Washington Theological Union in May 2007.

We wish him every grace and blessing as he begins serving the Church as a deacon.



Rev. Bro. Joseph Thien Nguyen, O.Carm., (3rd from right) pictured with Fr. Mario Esposito, Fr. Stephan Tuu Le and Carmelite Brothers in Vietnam, following his ordination to the Diaconate.

Carmelite Friars - Province of Saint Elias
Celebrating 75 Years of Service to God's People

SOLEMN PROFESSION OF VOWS

Bro. Francis Xavier Chinh Nguyen, O.Carm. professed Solemn Vows in the Carmelite Order on Friday, November 14, 2008 in Saigon, Vietnam. He is the first Carmelite from the St. Elias Province to make solemn profession in Vietnam. It was a happy and joyous occasion, with more than 100 people in attendance.

Through the Solemn Profession of Vows, a Carmelite professes the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience for life, according to the Rule and Constitutions of the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. The Solemn Profession of Vows is always an exciting moment in the life of any Province. When someone is chosen and approved by the Community, he enters into full communion with the intention of sharing his life and talents with the Community for life. It is a time of grace not only for the St. Elias Province and the Order, but also for the Church in Vietnam. We congratulate Bro. Francis Xavier Chinh and thank him for his commitment and dedication and look forward to sharing our Carmelite life with him.

A reception followed at the **Domun Dei Restaurant and Catering Hall** nearby. Family and friends were able to extend their congratulations to the newly-professed and wish him well as he continues on his journey in Carmel.



(Left to right)

Fathers Mario Esposito, Michael Kissane, Joseph Trung Tran and Brother F.X. Chinh Nguyen.
(Brother Joseph Khoa Hoang can be seen in the background).

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Publisher and Editor

Very Rev. Michael Kissane, O. Carm.

Co-Editors

Rev. Alfred Isacson, O. Carm.

*Very Rev. Michael Driscoll, O. Carm.
Wilma Ward*

Send submittals to the Editor at:

P.O. Box 3079
Middletown, New York 10940-0890

Email: proelias@frontiernet.net

Phone: (845) 344-2223

Fax: (845) 344-2210

(Right)

Brother F.X. Chinh
pictured with his
parents

(Below)

A festive reception
followed the Mass



Carmelite All Souls

On Saturday, November 8, 2008 many Carmelite friars, as well as family and friends of the Carmelites gathered at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in Middletown, NY for the annual celebration of Carmelite All Souls. This yearly celebration helps us to remember those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith.

About 100 people braved the heavy rains and cool temperatures outside to gather in the chapel for the 11:00 am Mass. In his homily, **Fr. Michael Kissane, O.Carm.** reminded us that this was a special day for our Province, a day in which each of us can reflect on the past, and remember our brothers and sisters in Carmel who have gone before us.



Fr. Michael Kissane

He quoted columnist Ann Landers who said *"Nobody gets to live life backwards. Look ahead!"* Fr. Michael continued, saying that Carmelites do look ahead, but they also look at the past, to see how others have lived the Carmelite life. Those who have prayed the prayers and shared the richness of their lives and hearts with us.

The names of more than 80 beloved deceased Carmelites were read, and as each name was called a bell was tolled.

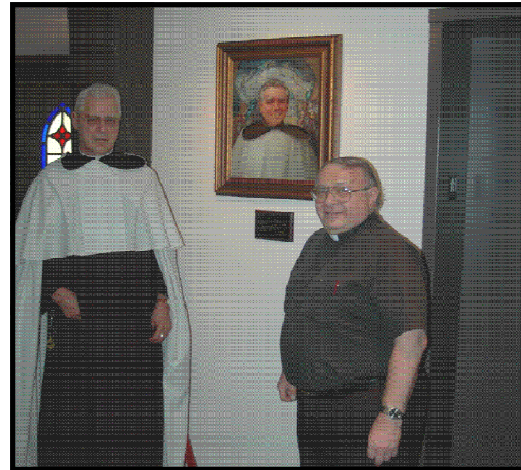
The music inside the chapel was especially suited to the occasion, and the choir directed by **Ms. Maxine Martin** did an outstanding job, as always. The choir sang the beautiful and sacred music, accompanied expertly by violinist Caitlin Mesic, who, at age 15 was likely the youngest member of the musical ensemble present that day.

Heavy rains prevented the congregation from going outside to witness the blessing of graves, so the Litany of the Saints was sung inside the chapel.

Afterwards, a luncheon reception was held downstairs at Pilgrim Hall, where a wonderful meal was enjoyed by all.

Portrait Dedication

Eight months after the death of their beloved Prior and friend, **Fr. Robert D. Tracy, O.Carm.**, community members of the Church of the Transfiguration in Tarrytown, New York held a special dedication ceremony in his honor last September. A beautifully rendered portrait of Fr. Robert was installed following the ceremony.



Fr. Lucian Beltzner and Fr. Philip Marani, stand next to the newly installed portrait of their friend and fellow Carmelite priest, Fr. Robert D. Tracy

ALL MT. CARMEL HOMECOMING REUNION Auburn, New York



On July 19th, 2008, Alumni of Mount Carmel High School gathered for the All Mt. Carmel Homecoming Reunion. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first graduating class, the class of 1958. But this reunion was also designed to draw together members of the graduating classes of Mt. Carmel from 1958 up to 1973. Dozens of committee members worked on the project for more than two years, and by all accounts, the event was a huge success!

Alumni began the day with a tour of their alma mater. Afterwards, Mass was celebrated by **Rev. R. (Ray) Adam Forno**, who said *"Wherever we go, we all have that experience of Mt. Carmel. We all share that experience and that is where the seeds of hope were planted. That hope is born of faith, faith as we all face the years ahead."*

The All Mt. Carmel Homecoming Reunion was a wonderful and welcome opportunity for Alumni to renew old friendships and to share many happy memories of years gone by.

FR. RAYMOND BAGDONIS HONORED AT "SEND OFF" PARTY

**OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION CHURCH,
17 HIGH ST., BLOOMINGBURG, NY 12721 ~ 845-733-1477**

On Thursday, October 23, 2008, an official 'send-off' party was held in the church's parish center for **Fr. Raymond Bagdonis, O.Carm.**, Parochial Vicar at Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Bloomingburg, NY. On November 3rd, Fr. Raymond traveled north to Troy, NY, to assume his new position as Parochial Vicar at St. Joseph's parish. On November 1st and 2nd, **Fr. Stephan Huy Tran, O.Carm.**, celebrated his first Masses at Our Lady of the Assumption as their new Parochial Vicar.

More than 200 people attended the party, including a number of parish and community dignitaries:

- Robert E. Fiore, Supervisor, Town of Mamakating
- Fr. Peter Madori & Deacon Ed from St. Joseph's Church, Wurtsboro
- Msgr. George Valastro, Vicar of Orange County, NY
- Deacon Richard Trapani, Chaplain at Orange Regional Medical Center
- Beth Texter & Kathleen Fayol, Current and Past Prioress of the O.L.A. Chapter of Lay Carmelites
- Gail Johnson of the Middletown Interfaith Council

Gary Texter, O.L.A.'s Pastoral Assistant, served as emcee. Following a brief prayer service he introduced one of the evening's very special guests, 96-year-old Robert Bergen, a retired mounted policeman from the New York Police Department. At Robert's request to be present for the occasion, his daughter and son-in-law, Barbara & Rich Cinque, made special arrangements for Robert to be transported from Park Manor Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Middletown.

As the first to speak, **Msgr. Valastro** called Fr. Raymond a "priest's priest" – one to whom all other priests could look up and respect and a very special individual, indeed. **Deacon Trapani** told how the Eucharistic Ministry program at ORMC has grown because of Fr. Raymond's support and assistance in its early days through present times. With Fr. Raymond's encouragement, several members of O.L.A.'s team of Eucharistic Ministers to the Sick/Homebound also serve as members of the team at ORMC, including **Gary Texter** who coordinates the ministry at O.L.A.



Fr. Raymond "passes the fork" to Fr. Stephan Huy at O.L.A.'s annual dinner dance in September, 2008; the fork representing 'that the best is yet to come'!

Fr. Raymond was honored by several community organizations with whom he has developed a very special relationship. A contingency of 12 men representing the Mamakating American Legion Post 1266 saluted Fr. Raymond for his active involvement with and support of the group, including marching with them during the Memorial Day parade each year. Commander Bob Vogt stated Fr. Raymond will be missed, and they presented Fr. with a special certificate of appreciation. Representatives of the Catholic War Veterans, Eugene L. Kelley Post 1937 and Veterans of Foreign Wars also acknowledged Fr.'s participation with them and presented him with a plaque. Deacon Richard Trapani, representing the Knights of Columbus, John Paul the Great Council 486 of Middletown, bestowed upon Fr. Raymond a beautiful stole embroidered with the Knights insignia.

On behalf of the O.L.A. faith community, Gary Texter also presented Fr. with a certificate of appreciation. A number of parishioners spoke of Fr.'s impact on them and the church, lovingly reflecting how, during his six years as Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of the Assumption, he has truly served as God's shepherd and fostered a church filled with love, compassion, trust and strength. Texter commented how Fr. is 'comfortable in his own skin', and has been so encouraging and supportive of lay leadership. Our Lady of the Assumption, thanks to Fr. Raymond's fine leadership as priest and administrator, is a vital, active part of God's kingdom, the Catholic Church, and the Archdiocese of New York.

“¡Festejamos!” “Let’s Celebrate!”

On Sunday, October 12, 2008, St. Jude celebrated its annual Festival Latino.

With the Gathering Place filled to capacity, **Fr. Emiel Abalahin, O. Carm.** opened with a prayer of blessing over the festivities. The children of the parish followed with a parade of nations, led by Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella.

Afterwards, the crowd was treated to mouth-watering native dishes from all over Latin America, including *empanadas*, *papas a la huancaína*, *cochinita pibil* and *pernil de cerdo*.

The afternoon was a feast for the senses, as dancers in elegant and colorful traditional costumes performed beautiful dances to native rhythms, while the youth of the parish emceed the event and provided contemporary Latin sounds.

Mass concluded the day, with the various ministers dressed in the costumes of their homelands.

The parish would like to thank **Mrs. Alcira Gonzalez**, for organizing the event, as well as the many volunteers who donated food, drinks, talent, and time to making this the most successful event ever in the 13-year history of the community.



(below)

Fr. Richard Champigny, O.Carm. celebrated his 70th birthday on November 3rd. with children from St. Jude Elementary School.



NEWS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

**PADRE GOLF 2008
A MILESTONE EVENT**

What a ride it was! The weather certainly made for a memorable 20th **Annual Fr. Forrester Memorial Padre Golf Tournament**. We won't soon forget the torrential rain on August 11th!

And who could forget the perfect golf weather on the rescheduled golf date of September 8th? We wanted to make this milestone event one to remember and the weather did that job for us!

August 11th was a big disappointment, but everyone smiled through the rain. I guess one could say bad weather to golfers is "par for the course." And everyone who returned in September enjoyed a great day of golf, lunch, hospitality on the course, dinner and a chance at winning one of more than 50 door prizes.

The Carmelites are grateful to all who participated and helped make the tournament a success. Through the 20 years of the tournament, we've been fortunate to have many, many faithful golfers and sponsors who have played a large role in helping the Carmelites achieve this milestone. We could not have done it without them. But in particular, there were six golfers and 11 sponsors who were recognized as "charter" supporters of Padre Golf. From 1989 to 2008 they have been consistent participants. On September 8th, each received a gift and certificate in recognition of their commitment. Our Provincial, **Fr. Michael Kissane, O.Carm.** is one of those dedicated golfers.

Way to go Fr. Mike!



Surely, **Fr. Nagle** - the padre of Padre Golf - looking down on the day's events, must have been pleased. The tradition of Padre Golf that he devoted himself to in his retirement years has flourished. It's a milestone 20 years and counting....

**HAPPY RETIREMENT
ANN CLOUSE!**

It was a first for the Development Office – an "official" retirement! Having reached the age of Social Security, Ann Clouse retired on October 3rd. Her departure broke up a team of six that had worked together for nine years. Martha O'Brien, who is Ann's "replacement," has been heard to say that Ann is "a tough act to follow."

Besides her work ethic, Ann will be remembered for the little things she did which meant a lot – such as starting the tea kettle for the morning break, picking up lunch at noon, and for her enthusiasm for all the holidays. Ann always left a gift of holiday candy on every desk from Valentine's Day through Christmas.

For Ann, who was always cold, no matter what the temperature, we wish her many long, warm days of retirement. However, she's not home free. She was reminded that the contract states conditions of retirement: She has to volunteer at the Padre Golf Tournament and occasionally pick up lunch for the crew. Those are two good reasons for "coming home" to the Development Office.



**Development Office team (L-R)
Martha O'Brien, Ann Clouse, Stephanie Weisbeck,
Kathy Webb, Lorraine Witkowski,
Gloria Mullarkey and Laraine Flood**

Carmelite Sisters Hold 12th General Chapter

“Continuing with Christ on the road to Emmaus”

The Twelfth General Chapter of the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm was held from September 5-17, 2008 at St. Teresa’s Motherhouse in Germantown, NY. **Father Mario Esposito, O.Carm.** served as Chapter Facilitator.

Mother M. Mark Louis Anne Randall, O.Carm. was elected as Superior General. **Father Michael Kissane, O.Carm.**, Prior Provincial of the St. Elias Province sent a letter congratulating Mother Mary Mark and her new Council. He also expressed his great appreciation and thanks to the former **Mother Mary Suzanne, O.Carm.** and her Council for all that they have done for their congregation over the past several years.

New Council members are:

Superior General

Mother M. Mark Louis Anne Randell, O.Carm.

Vicar General

Sr. Ann Elizabeth Brown, O.Carm.

Second Councilor

Sr. M. Anthony de Lourdes Veilleux, O.Carm.

Third Councilor

Sr. M. Michelle Anne Reho, O. Carm.

Fourth Councilor

Sr. Patricia Margaret Rawdon, O. Carm.

Secretary General

Sr. Marie Richard Carmel Brusca, O.Carm.

Treasurer General

Sr. M. Veronica Robert Bien, O. Carm.



In his congratulatory letter, Father Michael added: **“Leadership in our Church today is no easy task. As each of you begin your important service to your Congregation and the Order, know that you are in the prayers and have the support of many Carmelites in the St. Elias Province.”**



**Newly Elected
Superior General
Mother M. Mark Louis
Anne Randell, O.Carm.**

**former
Superior General

Sr. Mary Suzanne, O.Carm.**



**Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm
Mission Statement**

“Our apostolate is not only to staff and operate up-to-date homes for the aged, but as religious it is to bring Christ to every person under our care. Bringing Christ means giving them His compassion, His interest, His loving care, His warmth morning, noon and night. It means inspiring the lay people who work with us, to give the same type of loving care.”

Mother Mary M. Angeline Teresa, O.Carm.

Defying odds from birth, child takes first steps

By Nancy Flanigan—Florida Catholic Correspondent

(The following article appeared in the Florida Catholic on 10/28/08)

Friends and colleagues said “maybe you should interrupt the pregnancy” when Daniele Cardoso told them the devastating news: Her first-trimester tests indicated her unborn baby boy had a serious brain and skull defect, and had little chance of making it into the world.

But Cardoso remained hopeful.

“For God, there is no percentage,” Cardoso, a parishioner of St. Jude in Boca Raton, told the Florida Catholic, shaking her head with a defiant twinkle lighting her blue eyes.

João Pedro Cardoso, the first child of Daniele and Murilo Cardoso, was born June 13, 2003. Three surgeries in his first year of life corrected the brain problem, but João Pedro still has cerebral palsy. The curly haired, 5-year-old beat tremendous odds “with the help of prayer,” according to his mom, but life has not been easy for the tot or his parents.

“I talk with my heart now about my feelings then,” Murilo Cardoso explained. “We were praying – he is going to turn around, going to improve and he is going to have a better situation in the future. I prayed that he would walk, talk, play soccer – you know, have a normal life.”

João Pedro took some of his first steps during a Mass celebration Sept. 7, the Sunday before the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“I was in tears,” said parishioner Elena Moro, who witnessed the child struggling to walk.

Moro is a member of St. Joan of Arc Columbiettes Auxiliary 13051, a group of Catholic women from various parishes dedicated to working with the Knights of Columbus in various efforts.

The women heard about the Cardoso family and put together fundraising events this year

resulting in “a total of \$4,500,” according to Moro.

“It makes me feel great,” said Moro. “Whatever money we made for the family was used for his therapy. You can see the results of our fundraisers,” she explained about seeing the child reaching great strides.



The Cardoso family poses for a photograph with Carmelite Father Emiel Abalahin of St. Jude Parish.

(From left): 10-month-old Beatrice sits on the lap of Father Abalahin, Murilo Cardoso holds his 5-year-old son, João Pedro, Catharina, 3, Thiago, 10-months and Daniele Cardoso.

João Pedro was diagnosed in the womb with occipital encephalocele, in which a portion of the brain protrudes from the skull. The condition typically kills 95 percent of unborns diagnosed with it. The boy is badly affected with cerebral palsy now, a developmental condition that causes physical disability.

At less than 3 weeks of age, João Pedro underwent dangerous surgery. Then came a second surgery at 5 months, and another at 11 months.

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“It was very painful for us,” said Daniele Cardoso. “We would pray for our son to live and then we would be making funeral arrangements, you know?”

Now physical therapists are working with João Pedro, teaching him to walk and to talk. He attends the Arc Potential South School two times a week for physical, occupational and speech therapies. According to the family, medical costs are \$660 per week and insurance has stopped payments after a limited coverage. The family is on a waiting list for a Medicaid waiver which could take six years, they said, because the Cardosos are not American citizens.

Brazilian-born Murilo Cardoso, a financial controller for an oil and gas services company, and Daniele, a radiologist who practiced in Brazil, are celebrating eight years of marriage and their four children now. Thiago and Beatrice are 10-month-old twins and Catharina is 3.

“That first year with all that was happening I didn’t get crazy,” said Daniele Cardoso. “My husband didn’t get crazy. I am sure it is the praying. Everyone said, ‘I pray for you. I pray for you. I pray for you.’ You know, I am weak and because of God’s strength I got my strength.”

Carmelite **Father Emiel Abalahin**, parochial vicar of St. Jude, has known the Cardoso family for about two years. He said João Pedro has touched many hearts, but the parents have also touched many.

“They are a great family,” he said. “They are a witness of great faith and of respecting life.”

The family continues to pray and thank God for their son, who they say continues to teach them about suffering and love every day.

“We are not carrying a weight,” said Murilo Cardoso. “João Pedro is a kind of angel in our life with the kids. They play together. Four kids and they play together! We don’t have a sense of security, but we have no reason to. Living with insecurity reminds me that I am

weak and makes me feel the necessity to be connected to God.”

Linda Reeves of the Florida Catholic staff contributed to this article. For more information on the St. Joan of Arc Columbiettes Auxiliary 13051 and its efforts to help the Cardoso family and others, call

561-706-5896



Santa Claus attended the Children’s Christmas Party held at St. Michael’s Parish in Maracas Valley, on December 7th. More than 350 children received gifts. (By sheer coincidence, Father Michael Kissane was visiting the community in Trinidad & Tobago that week!!)



**The
Christmas
Tree
in the
Provincial
Office
Middletown,
New York**

Christopher J. C. Iannizzotto, O.Carm. Ordained to the Priesthood

Despite a big snowstorm the day before, a large number of people were present at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Middletown, New York on December 20, 2008 for the priesthood ordination of Rev. Bro. Christopher Iannizzotto. Two busses of participants came from St. Simon Stock Church in the Bronx where Rev. Bro. Christopher has served as a deacon, along with many friends from the Middletown area and beyond.

Present for the celebration were Mark Iannizzotto (brother) and Tiffany Iannizzotto (sister-in-law) who have been a great support to Fr. Christopher throughout his life. Fr. Christopher's parents who are deceased were remembered in the liturgy.

Bishop Dominick Lagonegro, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of New York was the ordaining prelate. In his homily, Bishop Dominick focused on the role of a priest saying that following his ordination, Rev. Christopher assumes the responsibility of ministering the Word and shepherding God's people.

The bishop also said that there is a restlessness within and among people, and that some people are having rough times with nowhere to turn. Our faith has the capacity and power to address that restlessness and to bring order to people's lives. Against this background he advised that the priest is called to administer the sacraments and proclaim God's word to all people.

Bishop Lagonegro pointed out that the priest must be a person of prayer and must develop a healthy relationship with God through prayer. He also spoke of the importance of

the sacraments and pointed out to Fr. Christopher that the people of God need him to administer the Sacraments faithfully.



**Several members of the
St. Simon Stock School Children's Choir
sang during the Liturgy**

The Rite of Ordination followed the homily. It included the call, presentation and examination of the candidate; election by the bishop and consent of the people; promise of obedience, laying on of hands; investiture with sacred vestments, anointing of hands and presentation of the gifts. The liturgy then continued as usual. **Fr. Patrick McGuigan, O.Carm.** was invited by Fr. Christopher to vest him in the stole and chasuble which are the vestments a priest wears during mass.

A combined choir of the Carmelite parishes in the Middletown area provided the music. A children's choir from St. Simon Stock school also sang during the liturgy.

Fr. Michael Kissane, O.Carm. and Bishop Lagonegro both made concluding remarks. Bishop Lagonegro thanked Fr. Chris for responding to God's call in his life and encouraged him to minister to the people of God. Fr. Michael congratulated Fr. Chris on his ordination. He said that he himself was ordained to the priesthood exactly 22 years ago on December 20th. He noted that he learned more about what it means to be a priest by ministering to the people in St. Simon Stock, which was his first assignment.



Fr. Christopher Iannizzotto, O.Carm.

Just before the recessional hymn the newly ordained priest gave his first blessing to Bishop Lagonegro. A reception followed in the dining room of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Fr. Christopher celebrated his First Mass on December 21, 2008 at St. Simon Stock Church in the Bronx. It was another snowy day! Many parishioners and a number

of Carmelites attended the celebration. Fr. Christopher was grateful that despite the weather, his aunt and uncle who raised him after his parents died were able to be present.



(L-R)

Most Rev. Dominick Lagonegro, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of New York, pictured with Fr. John Horan (background), Fr. Jack Logan, Fr. Christopher Iannizzotto and Fr. Stephan Huy Tran

Fr. Mario Esposito, O.Carm. gave the homily at the Mass (*see pages 12 & 13*). He noted that he has known Fr. Chris and his family since the early 80's. He did the funeral for both of Fr. Chris' parents. He reminded Fr. Chris that he is first a Carmelite and that as a Carmelite he should look to Mary as a guide in his priestly ministry.

A reception was held in the St. Simon Stock school gym. Fr. Chris thanked the many people who were responsible for making his dream of being a priest become a reality. These included: his family, formators, the St. Simon Stock Community and the many people who have supported him over the years.

MASS OF THANKSGIVING

Reverend Christopher J. C. Iannizzotto, O.Carm.

21 December 2008 ~ St. Simon Stock Church

Homily given by Very Rev. Mario Esposito, O.Carm.

Father Provincial, Father Nelson, dear concelebrants, my brothers in Carmel, Parishioners of St. Simon Stock Church, relatives and friends of Father Christopher.

For sure, we must begin by offering a hearty and joyful thank you to Almighty God for our being here on this cold winter's day, the winter solstice, and the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Thank you to God for the gift of life and faith; thank you to God for the gift of family and friends, of creativity and industry; thank you to God for the gift of the vocation to Carmel and the Priesthood that is being remembered in this Mass by the newly ordained Father Christopher Joseph Carmelo Iannizzotto. Those of us who have known Father Chris for a long time can begin to know what this day means for him. To become a religious and priest has been his life's dream, conceived on 6th Street in Park Slope, Brooklyn, nourished in St. Thomas Aquinas School and Church on 9th Street, formed in various other schools and houses of formation over the course of more than 30 years. Neither Father Chris's life nor vocation has come easily to him. Really, he and his brother Mark have had to press on and persevere through countless trials and sacrifices to bring them to this day. So, the sentiments of thanksgiving which we feel today, and which we share with them, are very deep and real. Everything which we endure, everything which we conquer makes us stronger if we do so with the right spirit. I have great admiration for Chris and Mark, for Aunt Anna and Uncle Peter, and finally for Tiffany, who have walked together down a sometimes dark road which has yielded to light and joy today. We didn't count on the fact that the light today would come from the reflection of snow.

Once, I promised Christopher that no matter where I was, I would be present for his ordination. And so, thanks to the generosity of

the Province, I was able to travel the 10,400 miles necessary to be here from Vietnam. I have known the Iannizzotto family since the first week of June, 1982, when I moved into St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Brooklyn. Chris and Mark were already altar servers, and I met Carmine and Rose their parents, on Saturday, June 6, 1982. Everyone in the neighborhood, actually, knew the family. Carmine was a Eucharistic minister at St. Thomas'. Although I know I shouldn't mention this here, like most people in the neighborhood, they were not devoted to George Steinbrenner's Bronx Bombers, but rather, chanted "Let's Go Mets!"

Sadly, life was not meant to go easily for the family. Somehow, in the mystery of God's plan, illness and death would come not once but twice, taking first Carmine and then Rose to paradise way too early, both suffering from cancer. I offered the funeral masses of both Carmine and Rose; in turn, Christopher was the altar boy at the funerals of both of my parents. With the family, everyone in the parish and all of the Carmelites were touched by these deaths, and prayed earnestly for Chris and Mark and their aunt and uncle who had to go on – which they did, in faith and with determination. This is certainly what their parents would have wanted. I am sure that in heaven these days, there is great rejoicing as, in the communion of saints, Rose and Carmine shared the wonder of these moments.

Today's gospel for the fourth Sunday of Advent, points out for us the real source of our joy. God loved the world so much that he gave us His Son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem us. God sent His Son, Jesus our Lord to us because He loved us. The Son embraced and redeemed human life, through His passion, death and resurrection, all out of love for us. God accomplished this through the cooperation and faith of men and women like Mary, Joseph, John the Baptizer and the

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apostles. God continues to bring His Son Jesus to us through the agency, the ministry of men and women who, dedicated to God with all their hearts, become vehicles that bring the grace and mercy of God to us. In particular, the Virgin Mary stands as a model for us. Her complete fidelity and yes to God and His plans became the way that the Son of God entered our world, a birth that we will celebrate in just a few days on Christmas. Today, this has special significance for our reflections.

Many years ago, one of our older Irish Carmelites was complaining to his listeners that the problem was that the younger Carmelites today don't know their identity. Maybe he was right. Anyway, of course, one of the fellows asked him what he meant – though he intended to tell us whether we asked or not! He answered, "When we were ordained, all of us knew that we were Mary's priests, and that we had to follow our ideal. If we stick to that, we will know our identity." Now, of course, you know, I know and we all know that all of our priests are Christ's priests; we share His priesthood, Christ is always the High Priest, the one and only true mediator between God and humanity. In and through the Church which is the sacrament of Christ's presence in the world, we live our sacrament of Holy Orders always bound to the Church, obedient to the Church, building up the Church and drawing our strength as we serve the Church, the people of God. Like all Christians, the priest must love the Church which is the body of Christ and according to the sacramental character of the priesthood, be in the Church Christ for His people, offering acceptable sacrifices to God, living and preaching the word of God, and witnessing and serving God in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. But, Father Christopher and those of us concelebrating today are Carmelites first. We are consecrated religious, living the Carmelite Rule wherever we may be and in whatever we are doing. Our Order is dedicated to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel who is our mother and Sister and all of you, the people of St. Simon Stock Church who each week, each day, see the statue of Mary giving the scapular to St. Simon, and through him to the Order, so that

devotion to her could spread in the Church, know that, in a sense, we are Mary's religious and priests, like that old Irish Father stated. But we are not Mary's priests just in the sense that we wear her habit, or spread devotion to her. We need to be Mary's priests first through an interior likeness to her, by a deep living of her example. Mary represents for us the soul turned to God, open to God, ready to say YES to God in every circumstance in life. So, the Carmelite must be a person who within, through prayer and nature, is turned to God, open to God, receptive before God, and ready to say YES to God however He reveals and makes Himself know, and in whatever He asks. Like Mary, we must "Find our joy in God, Our Savior."

Father Christopher – you bear the name Christopher which means "Christ-Bearer". Mary was the Theotokos, "the God-Bearer". Blessed Titus Brandsma, Carmelite martyr, reminded all of us that our special vocation in Carmel is to be God-Bearers, like Mary. Every place we are, and in every circumstance we find ourselves, we Carmelites are meant to bring Christ: his word, love, compassion, wisdom and action. Like Mary, we are to bring Christ to birth over and over again. So, Father Chris, bear Christ in your heart, words, attitudes and actions like Mary and you will be a good and faithful priest of the Church, one of Mary's priests. For these wonderful people of St. Simon Stock, be a good Carmelite first and you will be a good priest for them. First and foremost, pray for them. Then, from the depth of your humanity and identity, be for them as Jesus and Mary would be, and you will fulfill your vocation, find joy, be loved, and be genuinely helpful. As it is already in your nature, say YES to what comes. The many yeses you have said to God over the years, have helped you deal with the sadness of life, as well as the joy of life, and brought you to this day. I know you will strive to be faithful, to be zealous, and to be within the Church, the kind of religious and priest we need, living always according to the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Father Mario Esposito, O.Carm.

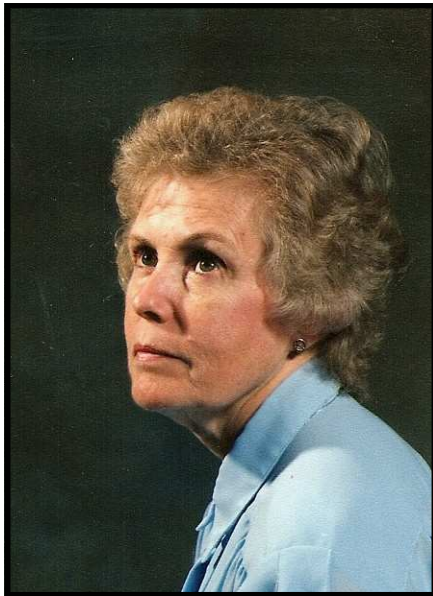
† Sr. Ann Johnston, O.P.

Sr. Ann Johnston, O.P.

R.I.P. October 19th, 2008

(Homily given by Fr. Richard Champigny, O. Carm.)

Readings: Song of Songs 2:8-14
I John 2:28-3:2
John 15:9-21



"I don't care what you say; you'll always be my friend!" That's what Ann *shouted* at me one day, standing in the hallway of our Retreat Center in Middletown, NY after we had just had a "disagreement." That was in 1981. I don't know what we disagreed about but I never forgot the sincerity of her statement and I have always considered it my privilege to be able to consider myself "her friend."

Solomon was a very romantic writer. He loved nature; lilies, apple trees, little foxes, gazelles, young stags. I think this is why Ann chose the second reading. I received an email the other day which reminded me of Ann, shortly before she died. I have never seen a deer in all the years I have known Ann without thinking of how much she loved them. This email had a picture of a *baby deer*, saved from its mother who died after being hit by a car. The baby deer was so small that someone was holding it in the palm of his hand.

Ann loved Carey Landry's song,

(Sing) "I will never forget you, my people...I have carved you on the palm of my hand."

Most of the birthday gifts I ever sent Ann after she left Middletown were *deer!* Brass, ceramic, wood...any image I came across. She loved deer. They are like her, quiet, soft and gentle and as one friend described Ann when I told her of Ann's death, "she was so soft-spoken." I will never forget you.

For Ann now, the *"winter is past..."* the winter of her many and long sufferings is past. Now is the time for flowers. Ann had a child like delight in things like flowers. I remember whenever I planted pansies or portulaca at our Spiritual Life Center at St. Albert's, she would beam with joy. She had the gift of *encouraging support*. It came for me at a time when I really appreciated it, since there was not much coming from my own brothers at that time! She also helped me to know that with Jesus, who I believe was a close friend of Ann's too, there always is a promise with his every command. One of the most wonderful and yet one of the hardest of Jesus' commands is *"to love one another."* There were times when Ann and I both struggled to do that. But there were times when we had to *join forces in support of each other* to love "others." The bond we formed was a positive outcome of that effort.

I remember the resistance we met with our Parish Sacramental Program! We worked closely with Fr. Ed Murphy and also with Kay Heppes who became Ann's Secretary. Ann became the Director of Religious Education, while I was the Co-Pastor in charge of Administration. How I ended up working with her in the Sacramental programs, I don't recall! We went to several workshops with Christianne Brusselmans, for her new programs published by Silver Burdett. (You educators may remember all that?) The programs required the whole parish to work together...that meant the Catholic School and the Religious Education School. ***That meant trouble!*** But we stuck to our guns and had a great program that the people of the parish loved...even though the parents had to get involved in the program too. Like John's Letter says, *"We are God's children now...what we shall be has not yet been revealed."* But now, for Ann, ***it is revealed.***

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I remember too, the days when Ann looked like a *queen*! Well, at least she wore a **crown**!

Because of her very bad case of scoliosis, it was decided that she should have a rod placed in her back, to straighten out her badly curved back. She was reluctant to do this of course but was told if she didn't her internal organs would soon be so pressed upon that she would be in grave danger. So that "won" her a crown. Before the operation it was necessary to try to stretch her poor little body and make it straighter and in fact three or four inches longer. The crown was a metal circle (I thought it looked more like a torture device!) literally screwed into the crown of her head. Then there were other screws in her knees, I think it was. For a few weeks, it seemed like months, she was on this rotating bed, with weights pulling at either end. It worked, it did stretch her body. In spite of the awkwardness and pain, though, she was always cheerful when we visited her. Why does the Lord choose some people for suffering and not others? Ann never asked that question; she just praised the Lord for his goodness to her.

She wears a different crown now!

There are many other stories I could share about Sr. Ann Joseph. We had many interesting excursions going to our Spiritual Direction course to Sr. Miriam Cleary. We had some wonderful retreat experiences that Ann had dreamed up. Like *the Mothers' Day retreat*. It was a 24 hour retreat for mothers only. They were to come for supper at 6:00 PM. Ann and I and other staff served them. We waited on the mothers hand and foot. We had a short prayer service for them after some quiet time in the evening and had Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament with Exposition for them until midnight, or whenever they wished to retire. The next day, we served them breakfast; then Ann did a wonderful talk on feminine spirituality. We had Mass, lunch, free time, quiet time, a final talk and sent them home just before dinner. That was all Ann's idea; it worked wonderfully. Some of the twenty or so women who were there still talk about it. That's one of the reasons why I described Ann, in a letter to our Province when she died, as "***gentle, creative and capable***".

Yes, I will "*always be your friend,*" Ann. I will remember you in many ways. I often think of your many stories. There are many others still to be shared. I can hear her gentle voice in the wind, (even though Ann was not a singer!)

Two of Josh Groban's songs occur to me. One says, "*She Dances...even her shadow has grace...*"

The other calls us to **remember**...who she was and all she did. "REMEMBER" (from the movie "TROY": during closing credits)

(Sing) *Remember, I will still be here,
As long as you hold me, in your memory
Remember, when your dreams have ended,
Time can be transcended,
Just remember me....*

(Recite)

*I am the one star that keeps burning so brightly
It is the last light to fade into the rising sun!
I'm with you whenever you tell my story.
For I am all I've done!*

(Sing) *Remember I will still be with you
As long as you hold me in your memory
Remember me, remember me...*

*Eternal rest, grant to her, O Lord and let perpetual
light shine upon her. May her soul and all the souls
of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God
rest in peace Amen.*

Good bye, dear friend!

GOLDEN JUBILEE

Fr. Richard Champigny, O.Carm.
Recently celebrated the 50th Anniversary of his first Profession as a Carmelite.

On September 15, 1958, Fr. Richard took the Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.



On September 21, 2008 **The Golden Jubilee** celebration began with a Noon Mass at St. Jude Church, in Boca Raton, Florida, and was followed by a luncheon in the **Gathering Place**.

A Christmas Reflection

Tradition holds that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a tiny town in Judea, “too small to be among the clans of Judah” (Micah 5:1), and that he grew up in Nazareth of Galilee. Both places were marked by poverty and oppression, Palestine being under Roman occupation at the time. Mary was a peasant girl who praised God for “look[ing] upon his handmaid’s lowliness” (Luke 1:48) in choosing her to be the mother of the Savior. Her backwater village of Nazareth, where Joseph was a poor carpenter, was evidently the butt of jokes by its neighbors. When Philip tells Nathaniel that “the one about whom Moses wrote in the Law” is Jesus of Nazareth, Nathaniel exclaims, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” (John 1:46) Yet it was into humble surroundings such as these that Jesus was born. From the beginning He knew discrimination and deprivation. And it was to the downtrodden and the marginalized that He preached the advent of the reign of God and the hope of human dignity and freedom.



I pondered all of this as I visited Imizamo Yethu on the Cape Peninsula of South Africa in September. Imizamo Yethu

is home to some fourteen thousand black residents, mostly Xhosa-speaking, who were moved there by the government from squatters’ huts in the fashionable Cape Town suburb of Hout Bay during the era of apartheid. Most of the people live in crowded corrugated iron shacks with no running water. The communal sanitary facilities are primitive. Crime and sickness are an everyday reality. Some have menial jobs in the factories around Cape Town; others work for a pittance in the homes of the affluent; still others live off the paltry revenue earned from selling crafts to tourists. Many are unemployed. Theirs is a life lived on the edge – the edge of degradation and squalor and despair.

Still, as if by divine intervention, there are glimpses of hope for a brighter future in Imizamo Yethu. I was able to tour a commercial enterprise called “The Original T-Bag Design Project,” run by an Englishwoman named Jill Heyes. The business employs twenty workers from the township and actually turns a small profit, which is shared among all involved. Jill’s aim is to help people gain a sense of pride in their efforts rather than depend on what she calls “sympathy giving” from humanitarian organizations.



“I didn’t really expect this to work out,” Jill told me, “but then God got involved and it took off!” An Irish philanthropist named Niall Mellon has also become involved in efforts to build humble and dignified housing for residents.

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Although he has overseen and financed the building of four hundred simple brick homes in Imizamo Yethu, land remains a problem. There is considerable resistance from Hout Bay residents to the sale of lots for this project. Nevertheless, Niall stands firm in his determination to do his part for the cause of human rights in the new and struggling South Africa.



The local haircutting establishment



A child in Imazamo Yethu enjoying a moment of "wonder and awe."

In the Gospel reading for Christmas Day we hear that "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us"

(John 1:14). A closer translation would read, "*pitched his tent.*" God, in his only begotten Son, hunkered down in the midst of human suffering to "bring glad tidings to the poor" and "to let the oppressed go free." This is what we celebrate at Christmas.

May we who are baptized into Christ, each from his or her own corner of the universe, do our best in the coming year to witness to the love of our compassionate God, who "pitches his tent" in the midst of our pain.

**Raymond Maher, O. Carm.
St. John the Martyr Priory**

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



On Sunday, July 20, 2008
Fr. Timothy Johnson, O.Carm.
celebrated the
25th Anniversary of his
Ordination to the Priesthood.

Noon Mass at **St. Jude Church**
in Boca Raton, Florida was
followed by a luncheon
reception at the
Gathering Place.

On Saturday, October 11, 2008
Fr. Guy Fiano, O.Carm., celebrated the
25th Anniversary
of his Ordination to the Priesthood.
He is pictured below with Bro. Mark Zittle,
Rev. Bro. Christopher Iannizzotto, Bro. Bob Chiulli,
Fr. Thomas Zalewski and Fr. Michael Kissane.



DELIVERING BLESSED OIL TO BELIEVERS

*(The following excerpts are from an article which appeared in the November 6th **Florida Catholic**, written by Linda Reeves)*

BOCA RATON | The tower high above St. Jude Parish, seen for miles around, holds more than a bell. It houses a holy oil ministry, which was inspired by the visit of a relic of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, also known as the Little Flower.

“We work in the bell tower,” parishioner Beverly Whitney told the *Florida Catholic* about the tiny space in the towering upper portion of the church. “We also call it ‘the oil room.’” And it’s not very easy to find.

The “oil room,” which has sweet aromas seeping from it, is small but the ministry it houses has gained big attention since it was begun by Carmelite **Father Timothy Johnson** shortly after a relic of St. Thérèse, the 19th-century French Carmelite, was exhibited at St. Jude in 1999. The encased remains made stops at Carmelite parishes such as St. Jude and at cathedrals around the United States, generating large crowds.



**The “Little Flower”
St. Thérèse of Lisieux**

“More than 60,000 people visited when the relic was here,” said Father Johnson.

Lines formed inside St. Jude and flowed outside into the street, and people waited hours to get close to the relic.

“I thought it would be good to have the St. Thérèse oil here,” Father Johnson explained. The saint is traditionally associated with roses, cures, favors granted and relief of suffering.



Beverly Whitney wraps labels around bottles of rose-scented oil.

Father Johnson has an authentic first-class relic of St. Thérèse in his possession, complete with documents and official seals from the Vatican. In a special ceremony, he blesses the pink, rose-scented oil using the saint’s relic.

Nancy Appella, a cancer survivor who frequently visits the special area, spoke to the *Florida Catholic* while making a stop Oct. 1, the feast day of St. Thérèse. She explained that she was diagnosed with colon cancer and had an operation five years ago on the saint’s feast day.

“St. Thérèse has been with me ever since that day. She has helped me a lot,” said Appella.

Father Johnson said there have been many testimonies of relief and restoration to health attributed to the saint’s intercession since the relic was exhibited at the parish nine years ago and also since the oil ministry began.

“Since the relic came here, there is something always happening,” he said.

He explained that many people simply find inner peace and renewed spirit by appealing to St. Thérèse. Faithful stop by the church to obtain the sweet-smelling holy oil and use it to anoint the sick, give to friends and personally keep it as a reminder of St. Thérèse.

“It is an expression of our faith,” said Father Johnson. “It is not the oil itself that cures, but the Lord who hears the prayers of the faithful.”

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE TO THE SURRETTS AND THE SURRETT SOCIETY

By Alfred Isacson, author of *The Travels, Arrest, and Trial of John H. Surratt*



Fr. Alfred Isacson, O.Carm.

I wrote my thesis for my master's degree on John Surratt. I had originally wanted to write on the March to Quebec during the French and Indian War, but my major professor felt that everything significant about the march had been published and the subject would then afford me little opportunity for original research.

Going through Leo Stock's *United States Ministers to the Papal States*, I noticed in a footnote reference to John Surratt being a Papal Zouave. That started me on my research into the absent conspirator. Original material that I found with some delight was the log of the *USS Swatara*, the vessel that returned Surratt from Alexandria, Egypt, to stand trial in the United States. The log author wrote, "At 1 p.m. received on board a person delivered by the U.S. Consul General, Mr. Charles Hale supposed to be John H. Surratt one of the Conspirators implicated in the assassination of the late President Lincoln." Correspondence between Washington and the US Consuls in Liverpool, Montreal, Naples, Florence, Malta and Alexandria were found at the National Archives. To see in the hand of the writer the name of the man I was researching brought me back to those times and the thrill of a find.

Someone told me to get in touch with Monsignor Edward McAdams, the pastor of Saint Joseph's Church on Capitol Hill and a friend of the Surratt family. I went to see him one afternoon and found him eating chitterlings for lunch. Annie Ward, a friend of the Surratts, was close to him and gave McAdams Mary Surratt's rosary, which he had me hold on my visit. He was also a good friend of Anna Surratt Tonry and her family. While collectors concentrated on presidential pictures and autographs, the Monsignor collected pictures of the vice presi-

dents and had the collection hanging in a hallway in his rectory.

I found from my research that Edward McAdams was not accurate in his recollections and was more inclined to believe what he wished than what was factual. He put me into touch with Helen Jones Campbell, who loaned me much material she had gathered for her book on Mary Surratt and her proposed book on John Surratt. In a move not consonant with my gratitude, I did a less than enthusiastic review of her book on John Surratt when published, and she considered this a sign of my ungratefulness for her help.

On trips to Rome to do other research, I had the opportunity to search for John Surratt in Roman archives. Searching the Vatican Archives was almost useless. Finally at the Archives of the State of Rome, I was able to find the military records of John Surratt under his alias of Giovanni Watson.

Some of my theology school classmates were going down to Leonardtown, Maryland, in 1958 for a visit. They invited me to go along with them and promised they would bring me to see the Surratt Tavern. This we did, and I saw the present society headquarters long before it became part of the park system.

When the Surratt Society was founded, I became a member. It is so long ago that I cannot remember when. The *Surratt Courier* has afforded me opportunities to publish research. The Society also brought me into contact with some good friends: John C. Brennan, Father Robert Keesler, Art Loux, Terry Alford, Michael Kauffman, Joan Chaconas, and all the officers over the years of the Surratt Society.

The Surratts and the Surratt Society have added a dimension to my life that has been enjoyable over the years. Through them, I have been the recipient of the pleasure of discovering some of our past through research.

Communication Corner

Provincial Mission Statement

As Carmelites of the North American Province of St. Elias, our primary mission is to follow Jesus Christ through prayer, fraternity, and prophetic service and presence in the spirit of Mary and Elijah.

Our chief means for fulfilling this Mission is by our lives and our ministries.

Therefore, we need to develop and encourage a sense of contemplative service to all God's people, with special attention to the poor and to developing lay participation in the Church.

This Mission will require: respect for the Church's expectations of all religious to Her sense of the Gospel, assessment of our resources especially financial and personnel, discernment of the viability of current apostolates, evaluation of and decisions about established and discontinued apostolates, Provincial and individual ones, and those based either internationally or in the United States of America.



A Christmas Prayer

By Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus. That we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate, and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.

Amen

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P.O. BOX 3079
MIDDLETOWN, NY 10940-0890
USA**



**PHONE: (845) 344-2223
FAX: (845) 344-2210
E-mail: proelias@frontiernet.net**

**Website:
www.carmelites.com**