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March 2023

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## Head of the Holy Family



*“Especially is Saint Joseph’s help needed in our day when God’s enemy has directed his attack precisely against the family in order to desecrate and destroy it, thereby converting it into an instrument of malediction and making of it an earthly hell. In the face of these evils Saint Joseph, as patron of the family, must intervene; and as of old he arose to save the child and His mother, so today he must arise to safeguard the sanctity of the home.”*

*- [The Truth about Saint Joseph](#), Father Meschler*

Dear Friends of Carmel,

**H**appy upcoming Feast of St. Joseph! In a few days we will be celebrating this great feast (transferred this year to March 20th because of the Lenten Sunday). We have chosen this time to send our greetings and news, since giving honor to this great Saint is pure joy to Carmelites.

After all, Our Holy Mother St. Teresa is known to be one of the most prominent promoters of devotion to [St. Joseph](#). “To other saints, Our Lord seems to have given power to succor us in some special necessity,” she wrote, “but to this glorious saint (I know by my experience), He has given the power to help us in all things.” It seems that St. Teresa did not know that the illustrious St. Thomas Aquinas expressed the exact same

thing a few centuries earlier: “Some saints are privileged to extend to us their patronage with particular efficacy in certain needs, but not in others. But our holy patron St. Joseph has the power to assist us in all cases, in every necessity, in every undertaking.”

Today, we wish to highlight St. Joseph’s special patronage of families. Why? Because we know that so many families are struggling. It is no surprise, for now the family, the essential building block of society, is under attack more perhaps than any other time before, and when the family fails, all of its members are left more vulnerable. Fathers, Mothers, and children face constant pressure and propaganda regarding what

a family even is, let alone the virtues that should to be nurtured and practiced. Responsibility and fidelity to duty, charity and forgetfulness of self, loving obedience – the virtues practiced by the model of all families, the Holy Family, are painted in disdain rather than emulated in our modern day culture.

Every Catholic knows that St. Joseph is the patron of families and family life. His exalted vocation, by God's singular design, was to be the father-on-earth of God the Son Incarnate – and to be head of the Holy Family. Yes, we know we run contrary to the trend when we say families do have a head! Men are often encouraged if not demanded to abdicate this role, but in the Holy Family the Blessed Mother and the Christ-child obeyed and depended on him. St. Joseph embodied, and was designated, the authority of God the Father on earth. And understanding this responsibility, all of his decisions regarding his family and their lives were made in light of God's will as it was revealed to him, not his own will. Thus he was the perfect model of authority and leadership – with deep understanding and humility, in the spirit of the words of Christ, **“as the last of all, the servant of all (Mk.9:35).”**



True it is. So very much of family happiness and peace depends on the father of the family. If he is dedicated and unselfish, God will guide and bless every step he takes to insure that peace. If he for even one day thinks of his own needs and wants above those of his family, he fails. Very sadly, modern culture and society can be almost defined by this failure.

But a family is a FAMILY. More than just Dad makes up its membership! And more than just Dad's unselfish devotion can take credit for its peace, just as more than just Dad's self-centeredness can take the blame for its unhappiness. So no finger-pointing here! We are all responsible for the peace in our homes – and St. Joseph is the patron of every family member – whether there are just two or fifteen! St. Joseph's virtues – the virtues of the “just man,” as Holy Scripture calls him – we must all emulate, with the help of God's grace. Humility with magnanimity, gentleness with strength, meekness with confidence and courage, wisdom with simplicity, generous self-denial. Living faith, hope and charity filled the heart of this just man. He was obedient and yet not afraid to take the initiative when humbly guided by Heaven. He was tenderly patient in the midst of wonderment, fear, suffering – the suffering of his precious charges, mostly; of the suffering prophesied for them both.



So of course, fathers in particular find a compassionate model and patron in St. Joseph. They may recall the joys, labors and trials in his life as the reputed father of Jesus. His greatest joy and glory in life was to be the husband of the Virgin Mary and the father and guardian of her Son, the Savior of the world. His labors and worries were incessant – and what father of a family cannot relate to the burden that weighs upon him in every aspect of life? St. Joseph's trials, sent by God, every one of them, worked to elevate his prayerful soul to utter trust in Divine Providence. You may read of all of this in St. Luke's Gospel; and there, if you read carefully and thoughtfully, you will find much more than is written in words alone.



There can be no doubt that he was a perfect soul before God, reverent, incessant in prayer, and holy. However far we find ourselves from any or all of these virtues, we cannot throw in the towel and admit defeat – especially if we have other souls to consider, others we may either help or hinder on their way to God. Every Christian should love and honor St. Joseph! Every one of us needs such a father, protector and guide. Is he not the father of each one the baptized, the shared guardian of the adopted children of God, through Jesus Christ Our Lord? As one of our priests frequently repeats

when he preaches about St. Joseph and points to the Child Jesus depicted in his arms “As a member of the mystical body, as belonging to Christ, that is you in St. Joseph’s arms.”

So in family life, as in all aspects of our life, St. Joseph guides everyone, he prays for everyone, he is everyone’s patron saint! Each one of us can go to him for help: men, women, children; yes, young and old, good and bad, high and low in the family pecking order. And we here in Carmel recognize our own Community to be a family included under his patronage. Indeed, St. Joseph is father of us all by extension of his fatherhood of Jesus Our Lord, and this is beautifully proclaimed in his title of Patron of the Universal Church.

*Ite ad Joseph:* Go to Joseph! Bring to him your troubles and cares – “in all cases, in every necessity, in every undertaking.” We will be praying over the coming days especially for all of you and your families, that all may imitate his example of holiness in daily life.



**Go, then to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you;**

**Go to Joseph, and obey him as Jesus and Mary obeyed him;**

**Go to Joseph, and speak to him as they spoke to him;**

**Go to Joseph, and consult him as they consulted him;**

**Go to Joseph, and honor him as they honored him;**

**Go to Joseph, and be grateful to him**

**as they were grateful to him;**

**Go to Joseph, and love him, as they love him still.**

– St. Alphonsus Liguori

## WEBSITE NEWS

### New Holy Family Relic Badge

In honor of the feast of St. Joseph and in order to promote devotion to the Holy Family, we introduce today a [new Holy Family relic badge](#). Some of you may remember that when we constructed our new work building four years ago, we named the building Loreto, the name given to the house of Nazareth

that was moved miraculously to this town in Italy. (See this book: [Loreto and the Holy House](#). The story of how the shrine came to be moved from Palestine to Italy, and the miracles surrounding it is a fascinating one!) In this house, the Holy Family lived their life and labored for so many years. It was a great blessing for us to obtain a relic of the Holy House from a convent in Belgium several years ago. We enshrined this special relic beneath a framed photograph of the Holy House, which hangs in the entryway of our Loreto



building, where many Sisters spend most of their hours of work time each day. We pass this little shrine each morning – a wonderful reminder of all the Holy Family stood and worked for. The [new relic badge](#) will have cloth touched to our relic of the Holy House. It is our way of sharing this blessing in some way with you – and of bringing to you the presence and loving help of the Holy Family. We could not decide which color edge we like better, [brown](#) or [burgundy](#), so we decided to offer both!

### New Candles

In our last newsletter, we introduced new [scented candles](#). [Frankincense and Myrrh](#) was by far everyone’s favorite, and it is not hard to see why. The frankincense given to the Infant King by the Magi expressed faith in His divinity, since frankincense was burned as incense to the gods. Myrrh recognized His humanity, since ancient cultures used myrrh to anoint their beloved dead. The candle is the same double symbol, with Our Lord’s humanity represented in the wax made from virginal bees and His divinity represented by the flame. So besides just smelling wonderful, these scents do compliment the symbolism of the candle! We have added another new scent with beautiful symbolism: [Rose/Spruce](#). The rose has long been a symbol of Christ and evergreen a symbol of eternity – once again, these scents beautifully compliment the idea and symbolism behind the candle as a sacramental!



Many people have been asking for candles with holders, and while we still hesitate to sell candles with glass because of the complications with secure shipping, our artisan has developed a beautiful little [candle in a white tin](#). Besides the unscented, we have a scented version of this candle as well.



Last but not least on the list of new candles is a [First Communion candle](#), which has been in development for two years. It took time, effort and careful skill to get the design just right, and this 100% beeswax candle is bleached white to express the purity of the Holy Eucharist, and decorated with a gold-dusted host and chalice symbol. We are very pleased to be able to offer it just in time for First Communions this year.

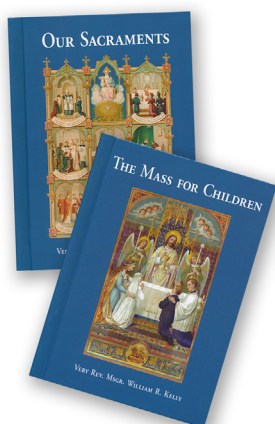


As always, if you would like us to have your [candles](#) (or any of the sacramentals you order) blessed before shipping them to you, please just mention it in the comment section of your order when you check out.

## New Children's Books

Also new and in stock for First Communion gifts are several excellent [books for children](#), originally published in the 1920s.

[The Mass for Children](#) and [Our Sacraments](#) are wonderful little books in which the author has devised a way to bring simplicity and clarity to the teaching of this great Mystery of Faith. Fr. Kelly knew how to approach the mind and heart of a child. He used this gifted insight to present in a most appealing way the sublime drama of the Mass, as well as the layers of meaning and symbolism in the sacraments. The language is simple, the explanations

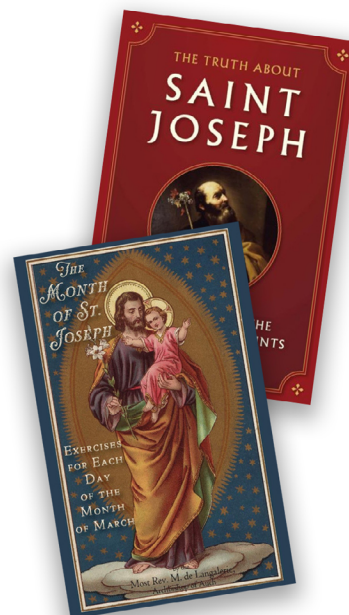


numerous and complete, the stories apt and compelling, and the illustrations superb, arising naturally from the text.

Not a children's book, [The Sacred Heart and Mine in Holy Communion](#) is another small book with a wonderful set of brief meditations on the titles of the Sacred Heart, suitable for Communion or visits to the Blessed Sacrament. A perfect companion and aid for Holy Hours of Adoration.

## St. Joseph Books

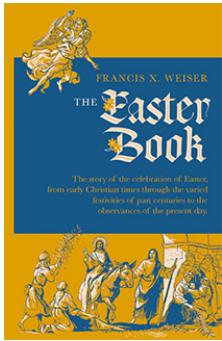
Returning to the main topic of this newsletter, we did not want to neglect to mention the two "old-new" [books on St. Joseph](#). Both of these are excellent re-publications of books from the past – just as relevant and beneficial for the faithful now as when they were first published. [The Truth About St. Joseph](#) - this beautiful and edifying work unearths many truths about St. Joseph hidden in the Gospel, bringing them to light and making use of them in Joseph's honor. In this book you will encounter surprising details about the life Joseph led on earth in most intimate companionship of Christ, as well as the role he plays even today in the life of the Universal Church. We have been reading it ourselves as a community in the refectory during meals, and have been enjoying it immensely!



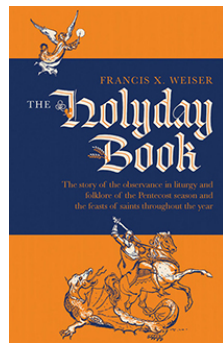
[The Month of St. Joseph](#) gives pious reflections and prayerful exercises for each day of March, the month dedicated to St. Joseph. Though we are now close to the end of his month, you may wish to use this book of solid piety to increase your knowledge and devotion, and to have on hand for next year.

Lastly, we might suggest revisiting one of our past newsletters to read "[The Divine Sculptor](#)". It may serve as a reminder of how God works in our souls to produce in them the wonderful virtues that St. Joseph so exemplifies for us all.

## New Easter Books



Father Francis Weiser, author of [The Christmas Book](#) which was so popular last Christmas, wrote two other volumes – one for Easter and one for the other holy days of the year. [The Easter Book](#) explores the history behind traditions such as the Easter egg, hot cross buns, the Easter bunny, traditional Easter recipes from different countries, and does not neglect the Liturgical background of Lent and Holy Week. [The Holy Day Book](#) is devoted both to the season of Pentecost and to those feasts of Saints throughout the year that have become holydays over the course of centuries.



Like its predecessors, the book is rich in history and legend. Fr. Weiser delves into questions whose answers fascinate as well as edify. For example, why do we wear our best clothes on Sunday? What was the Holy Ghost Hole in medieval churches? Where did the Halloween mask and the jack o' lantern come from? Father Weiser recounts tales of the traditional customs of "Trinity Rain," the "Day of Wreaths," the Sign of the Cross, the Feast of Swallows, the Russian "Annunciation bread" buried in the field to protect the harvest, and many more Catholic cultural practices.



Also, [Volume II of With the Church](#) is also now available. In one of our past newsletters, we described With the Church as a "mini [Liturgical Year](#)". We recommend it as an excellent way to learn more about the Liturgical seasons of the Church. The second volume covers the time of year from the Ascension to Advent.

## New Easter Cards and Chant

While sending [Easter cards](#) is not nearly as well known a custom as sending [Christmas cards](#), we know many love to send joyous greetings for this glorious Feast – the "Feast of Feasts," as the liturgy calls it. We have added [many new beautiful traditional styles](#) to our website.



We have been impressed at the sincere interest taken in our [Gregorian Chant recordings](#). The response has been wonderful, since the music of the Church draws souls in – almost like being drawn to enter a chapel to pray. Since the chant is the prayer of the Church, listening with mind and heart and soul leads one to pray with the Church. We recently added the [Easter Chants CD recording of the monks of Solesmes](#) - the Masses of Easter Sunday and the following Sunday, Low Sunday. Truly, these melodies are very close to our hearts and become so much a part of Easter that without them, something is missing. Three years ago, when many restrictions were in place, we were not able to have any of the chants of Easter for our Masses. How much more joyfully and gratefully do we sing after that sad silence!





A long time has passed since we have updated you on news of our Community. As always, the days here in Carmel have been full and pass all too quickly! Many and varied are the projects that fill our hours of work.

A cold/flu swept through the community just before Lent, literally “knocking us off our feet.” It was a strange and unusual start to Lent, since the Sisters were so sick that many of the normal solemnities and ceremonies had to be simplified and curtailed. But as Our Mother reminded us, the best crosses are not the ones that we take upon ourselves, but the ones that God ordains, especially if they be different from what we want or expect. And so we spent the first days of Lent being sick, recovering and doing our best to keep the basic functions of the house going. Our poor postulant (the only one who stayed well) spent her first weeks in Carmel picking up kitchen duties and making hot soup. It took a few weeks, but everyone is pretty much back and the pace of Carmelite life has fallen into its usual rhythm. We thank all of the family and friends for their prayers and all of the extra help with groceries and errands.

Our Purification newsletter was a “spur of the moment” idea. As we prepared for the Feast day we thought, “Wouldn’t it be nice to encourage people to make use of this great Sacramental?” After all, these are difficult days in the life of the Church and the world, and the soldiers of Christ need to make use of all the weapons God has put in their arsenal. Obviously, the Mass and Sacraments are first and foremost. But we have always encouraged people to make use of the blessed Sacramentals of the Church as well – rosaries, the Brown Scapular, the St. Benedict medal and Miraculous Medal, etc. For many years now, every weekend we have prepared “the blessing tray,” a tray of Sacramentals ordered the previous week, which people specially requested to have blessed. This tray we place in the Sacristy turn for one of our Priests to bless.



As the years went on, and especially with the advent of COVID, when more people struggled to find access to a priest and have their items blessed, the “blessing tray” morphed into “the blessing cart,” which we wheeled down to the Sacristy each weekend. So we thought why not offer to have candles blessed at the special Candlemas Day Mass on February 2nd?



Well! We were not quite prepared for the overwhelming response and inundation of orders and requests! The blessing cart quickly became “the blessing wagon train” as we wheeled hundreds, even thousands of candles across the yard from Loreto to be blessed. The young artisan who makes the candles spent all of her time the next few days (and nights!) producing all she could for the Purification Mass. The candles we did not have in stock for the Feast were blessed with the regular blessing over the next two weekends, and we spent several weeks re-packaging the candles (each candle that is blessed is unwrapped so the holy water can be sprinkled on it) and shipping them out all over the world. Our mailroom smelled like Frankincense and Myrrh (the most popular of our new scented candles) for most of the month, and our poor mailman got a work-out wheeling the carts of boxes out of our entryway room every day – sometimes 10 or 12 mail bins on 2 or 3 carts. It was a very busy time, but a happy busy. We are so happy to know that so many more people are using, and hopefully benefiting from, the wonderful grace of using blessed candles.





*Sister packages candles for shipment*

Not all in Carmel is hard work. These past months have seen some special “family” events for our Carmel. In December, we celebrated the Silver Jubilee of Profession of our Prioress. We decorated the refectory in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12th was the anniversary) and, with help from her



We must close for now and return to some of those projects that have been occupying much of our time. We will be sure to tell you about them the next time we write. But for now, Passiontide is shortly upon us, and we will be entering ever more deeply into the mysteries of Redemption. Please know that you are all in our thoughts and prayers during this most sacred time.

May we all, through the prayers of Our Lady of Sorrows, make good use of the graces offered during the Holy Forty Days, and especially the final days of Lent.

God bless you,

Your Carmelite Sisters



*Sisters bring back wagons full of candles that were blessed in the Sacristy*

family and friends, made her favorites for the festive dinner. It was a happy celebration of many years of religious life and dedication to Our Lord. This, at a time and in a world that so often struggles with any type of commitment! Towards the end of this month, we will celebrate another Silver Jubilee, the profession of our Sister from England. The exact details remain a surprise, but the rumor going around is that somehow the day will include an authentic “British tea experience” – we’ll see!



*“St. Joseph did not do extraordinary things, but rather by the constant practice of ordinary and common virtues, he attained that sanctity which elevates him above all the other saints.”*

*- St. Francis de Sales*



Feel free to email any prayer requests to us. Unfortunately, we are not able to respond personally to all of the prayer requests that we receive, but please be assured that your requests will be added to our daily prayer intentions.

HELP US CONTINUE OUR LIFE OF PRAYER AND SACRIFICE

DONATE TO THE MONESTARY

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