

BOSTON CARMEL



Newsletter

for Carmel's Benefactors, Relatives and Friends
Spring, 2001

OUR LOSS... HEAVEN'S GAIN

On March 19th those of us chosen by lot filled our chauffeur's car, and made our journey to Marian Manor to celebrate our Sister Joseph of Jesus and Mary's 99th birthday! We went armed with birthday cake, ice cream, a fruit drink and presents. We sang and had help from one of her neighbors across the hall who begged to join us because she loved to sing! The party got bigger when we were joined by Sister's two nieces and grand nephew. We squeezed in like happy sardines in her little room, and sang 'Happy Birthday' again to the utter delight of her neighbor who wore a crown! We actually had a little song fest which we all enjoyed.

Besides gifts Sister's family brought something we did not: a camera, for which we were very grateful. Sister Joseph was a little less responsive than usual, and seemed more frail, but she celebrated with us and smiled for pictures.

On March 25th after praying the Office of Readings for the Solemnity of the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel announced the coming of Jesus on earth, we received the 'annunciation' that God came to take our Sister Joseph to heaven. She slipped away as quietly as she had lived. We were told that supper was brought to her and when they went to get her tray, she was gone. It was such a shock to us. But none of us doubted her

readiness to make her paschal journey to heaven.

Bishop Boles and 15 priests concelebrated her funeral Mass. We have a custom of the Prioress covering the face of a deceased Sister with a linen cloth during the funeral rites and the community says a prayer of farewell. We would like to share that prayer with you.

"Lord Jesus, you have called to yourself, our very dear Sister Joseph of Jesus and Mary. For ninety nine long years she walked this earth... first among shamrocks in Ireland and then on the shores of this land. What lessons she taught us about generosity, and prayer, about patience and perseverance, about fidelity and peace! But not by words. She taught by her deeds and by who she was. How many good works she did for our community as cook, as infirmarian, as seamstress, as gardener, as sandalmaker! Her bread was worthy of the heavenly banquet and its aroma when baking could almost cause an ecstasy! Her memory was colossal—she could recite poetry from memory, and tell us not only the year and date of an event, but also its hour! She also knew suffering: several surgeries and strokes, heartaches and disappointments and the diminishment age brought her. But she never complained. She was so powerful a witness of graciously accepting the aging process without regret or bitterness or lament. She was your true disciple who said like Mary, your Mother, "I am the

servant of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word". In the end, you, Lord, were all she had and she wanted nothing else. It was in this spirit that she waited for You. She was ready when you called, even though we were not.

Sr. Joseph, our warm memories of you will keep feeding us now just as your bread had in the past. Do not forget us now that you are with God. Keep helping us with your prayers. Amen"

A HUNDRED THOUSAND THANKS!

How else could we express our gratitude to you, our faithful and true friends and benefactors who have responded so generously to our renovation appeal? We are so touched and so humbled by your goodness and generosity. As this is being written we have received a wonderful response from you, our dear friends and benefactors for our fund which enables us to move ahead, thanks be to God and to you! May the Lord reward you a hundred thousand times!

A SURPRISE ENDING

Was your experience of the jubilee year the same as ours? After so many years of preparing for it and looking forward to it, it was going like a flash of lightning! There were not many days left of this very special year when we received a phone call from the Cardinal's office. His Eminence was inviting contemplatives of the archdiocese to the Cathedral for the closing Mass

of the Jubilee year! How could we refuse? With a jubilee spirit of joy and elation we filled the van provided for us and attended the closing Mass of the Jubilee Year with other contemplatives and faithful of the archdiocese. Things were a bit icy that January 6th but the sun was shining not only in Boston but also in our hearts as some of us entered the Cathedral for the first time for this unique celebration. Cardinal Law urged us to "tour" the Cathedral that was recently renovated, especially the Blessed Sacrament chapel. Having cared for our spiritual needs at the liturgy, the Cardinal then invited us to dinner at the seminary to care for our physical needs! Following the delicious dinner, Msgr. Lennon, rector of the seminary, took us on another tour, this time of the newly renovated seminary. We had a jubilee of a time! We were so grateful to the Cardinal for thinking of us and planning this wonderful surprise ending of the jubilee year! (By the way, His Eminence said we contemplatives would have to wait for the next millennium for a similar invitation!)

A LITANY OF DATES

We were and are being very blessed this year with some special events for our community. On February 2nd our postulant became a novice and received her new name in religion: Sr. Marie Frances of the Divine Heart and the Holy Face. On May 17th our Sr. Marie of the Incarnation renewed her vows for another year.

On August 5th Sr. Therese of the Queen of Carmel will celebrate her 60th jubilee anniversary in Carmel! Thank God with us for these blessings to our community. We truly cannot thank Him enough or too much!

ABOUT PROMISES

Many years ago now, when our Sr. Mary of the Trinity was alive and in her upper 90's, she would call when she wanted to get up from her afternoon nap. Responding quickly, one of the Sisters explained she would be back to get her up after getting another Sister to help lift her. Sr. Mary's response to that was, "Promises, promises!" We often remember and tell this story among ourselves knowing that promises are often very easily made but then go unfulfilled. However, we had a happy experience to the contrary on January 25th of this year when Kathleen Hegenbart came as representative of SOAR to deliver the \$25,000 dollar check promised us for renovating our infirmary bathroom. We are so grateful to that wonderful group who have come to the aid of so many senior religious.

"BIG LONG DIG"

As you know, we have been doing renovations on the monastery as we are able. To be honest, it cannot compare with Boston's BIG DIG, but it is pretty big for us and it is taking so long it might more accurately be called the BIG LONG DIG! Right now the 'digging' is taking place in our infirmary area. The "digging" has been most vehement in the infirmary bathroom. There were holes that allowed us to see rooms underneath and on either side! Old newspapers and matchcovers were found in the walls and floor but, alas, no buried treasures!

DEUTSCHLAND VISITOR

In May, we had a visit from Sister Anna Maria from the Tubingen Carmel. Those of you who are familiar with our Carmelite Sister, Edith Stein (Sr. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) will recall that Tubingen is a place of importance in her life. The Carmel there is new, founded only 20 years ago and it is named

after Edith Stein. Sister Anna Maria brought pictures to share and left us a very special book of pictures of Edith Stein. Her English was very good so we had no trouble communicating. Of course, the visit was too short but we used every moment well! One of the things Sister shared that reminds us to pray for our brothers and sisters in Germany is that only 3 percent of the country is Catholic, 17 percent is Protestant and 80 percent have no faith tradition! May St. Teresa Benedicta, Edith Stein pray for her homeland!

DOCTORS, DENTISTS AND VETS!

Like the rest of humanity, we too have times of sickness and/or ailments. One of the Sisters needed to have surgery on her knee and then some therapy, another had nerve pain in a tooth that required attention and then Lucky joined the ailing group when she did something to her back leg. The nuns are fine...Lucky needs more time to mend! God bless doctors and dentists and vets!

COME AND SEE!

The city is preparing the way for our next visitors! Mt. Pleasant Ave. is being repaved, alleluia!

Your loving Sisters of Boston Carmel