

BOSTON CARMEL



Newsletter

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

Spring/Summer, 2006

www.carmelitesofboston.org

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A CARMELITE CENTENARY

On November 9 of this year, 100 years will have passed since the death of one of Carmel's most beloved mystics: Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity. Allow us to share a few words about this holy sister of ours who died of Addison's disease in Dijon, France at 26 years of age. She can help us be better mystics.

If you are doubting your call to be a mystic, cast them out, because we Christians are ALL called to be mystics, to be intimate friends of God. No ands, ifs or buts about it!! Mysticism is not just for the elite. In one of her letters, Elizabeth wrote: "Ah, I wish I could tell everyone what sources of strength, of peace and happiness they would find if they would only consent to live in this intimacy" (with God) Like the rest of us, Elizabeth was very human. She had a terrible temper as a child, she herself told us she had big feet, her writings contain many spelling errors, there were times when she struggled with doubts. Friendship was very important in her life and she had a profound and deep love for her mother and sister. It was with intense feeling she played the piano, even to moving some hearers to tears. (She won first prize at the Conservatory when she was only 13). She was quite stylish in

her dress and hair styles, played tennis and croquet and loved to travel and enjoy the beauties of nature. She danced and one young man she once danced with became a Bishop! Like the rest of us, Elizabeth also had her share of suffering in life. Her spirituality is not one that tries to escape being human. On the contrary, in her beautiful prayer to the Trinity, she prayed to 'be another humanity in which He (Jesus) can renew all His Mystery'.

We could fill this entire newsletter about her. We hope this little bit will whet your appetite to read more, and to make her one of your spiritual friends to help you on your mystical journey to greater intimacy with Jesus. Her writings are profound and moving and helpful. Here is an example: "Each incident, each event, each suffering, as well as each joy, is a sacrament which gives us God."

One way we are celebrating Blessed Elizabeth's centenary this year is with a concert and lecture. (11/5/06 at 2 p.m.) Fr. Robert Congdon will give a concert of some of the pieces she played, including the one that got her first prize at the Conservatory. Fr. Raymond Van de Moortell will give a lecture about her. We hope you will join us!

A DIFFICULT YEAR

It almost feels like an invasion!

There have been so many sufferings this year! Sr. Rose lost her brother on Christmas Eve, Sr. Juanita lost her Father on March 25, Sr. Catherine lost a 42 year old nephew to colon cancer. Sr. Mary Teresa lost an aunt in April and another in May. May they all be in eternal glory!

Another hardship has been illness...in community, among family members and benefactors. May all of these feel God's healing love in their lives.

Our monastery building had its hardships, too! There were some leaks on our first floor passageway to the choir. (They challenged us to tip toe around the rain drops!) But even worse was the sink in the priest's sacristy that backed up and overflowed—not once, but twice!!! Finding the trouble was a Sherlock Holmes endeavor and fixing it was quite expensive because it called for replacing a lot of very old drain pipes.

A SIX WEEK LIVE IN

Judy Lewis, who is discerning a call to Carmel, spent six weeks with us. She came during Lent and left after Easter. We were very happy to have her with us. She fully entered into our horarium and even did some cooking for us. One of her specialties is a drink they make in St. Vincent's, her place of birth. It

is called 'beer' but tastes nothing like beer and is non-alcoholic. It was a real treat for our taste buds and was consumed very quickly, even though she made very generous amounts!

EASTER VIGIL FIRE

Sometimes we have had our Easter fire ceremony outdoors in our cloister area. But wind can make for difficulty so the past years we have had it in our crypt which is all brick. None of our living members remember any presider being successful in starting the fire with flint, but they try. One year we had a mini explosion because lighter fluid was put on the wood to help it start! This year we had another experience. Somehow (we still haven't figured out how) not only did Sr. Therese's candle get lit, so did she! Well, Sr. Mary Clare acted very quickly and all was extinguished without major damage, thanks be to God!

ST. PATRICK'S DAY, 2006

We were honored to have Bishop Boles celebrate Eucharist with us on St. Patrick's day this year. We also used the occasion to celebrate his golden jubilee. The Bishop gave us an excellent homily and we had a lovely visit with him in the speakroom afterward. Our gift to him was an Irish tweed cap which we presumed he liked very much because he wore it when he left!

AN ATTITUDE TO ENVY

Our Sr. Catherine is not as keen mentally as she used to be according to this world's standards, but there is such a special grace in her attitude for all of us. One day as she was being taken to supper, the Sister taking her commented that we had some snow flurries that day. She then asked Sister Catherine, "Do you like snow?"

Sister responded, "Yes," and then added with a wonderful smile, "I like everything God does." God help us all put on such an attitude of grace!

HOPE BLOOMS ETERNAL?

We keep hoping that our renovations will be over soon, and we also hope eternity won't dawn before they are done, but sometimes it seems eternity will come first!

Work is still going on in the novitiate wing and perhaps the biggest change concerns the bathroom. When the plaster was removed from the walls and just the 2x4 framing was up, we could hardly believe how very small the bathroom was! So in order to make it possible for it to be used by more than one person at a time, we 'stole' some inches from other rooms. We are pleased with the plan so far...in its skeleton stage! Perhaps by the time you get this we will have moved along a bit further. St. Joseph, Patron of Workers, are you listening?

THE GARDENING BUG

"How much benefit have I received from the beauties of nature, bestowed in such abundance. How they raise me to Him who placed such wonders in this land of exile...!" We easily identify with these sentiments of St. Therese when spring comes. And, unlike mosquito bites, the gardening 'bug' bite is welcome and invigorating! God is so good to give us a share in His joy of being Creator as we plan and plant in our gardens and join Him in saying, "It is good", when we see our labor bearing fruit in a flower or vegetable! St. Therese has a good thought for another garden chore called cleaning up: "I imagine my soul as a piece of waste ground, and I ask the Blessed Virgin to take

away from it all the rubbish, that is, all the imperfections." Surely many of you are into gardening, too? If not, 'Try it, you'll like it! Even if it is only a flower pot on your window sill with one flower or herb!

A DOG'S LIFE

A dog's life...when we hear that expression it usually expresses envy at how dogs just seem to enjoy life without burdens or responsibilities. Well, that is not entirely true. St. Paul tells us that all creation is in travail as we await the fullness of redemption. Our dog, Chacha, can tell you about this, if she could talk! We will tell you for her. She had a bad tooth. It was bleeding and needed to be extracted. When she went to the vet it was discovered she need two extractions! And guess what? We were given the teeth...As souvenirs? Relics? To put under her pillow for the tooth fairy? When we saw how huge one tooth was, it was easy to conclude that it was to show us how very valiant she was about the whole process and make us proud!

GOOD NEWS REPORT

Dunkin, our frog lives on! He (she) seems to have 9 lives! She has survived at least 3 near death experiences with our dogs and we are very happy to still have her (him) in our garden! Thank you, Lord!

SUMMER CELEBRATIONS

Every season brings its own feasts and rituals. Make smelling the flowers part of your summer, it can be such an uplifting, wonderful, enriching contemplative experience. And may all your summer picnics, parades, swimming, boating, outdoor sports, reading, and whatever other ways you celebrate summer, be blessed and refresh you and yours.

With our love and prayers,
Your Carmelite Sisters of Boston