

BOSTON CARMEL



Newsletter

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

For our BENEFACTORS, RELATIVES, & FRIENDS

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www.carmelitesofboston.org

GENERAL CHAPTER

As Discalced Carmelites, our Order is headed by a Superior General who is elected at a General Chapter that is held every 6 years. This year, 2009, was a General Chapter year—the 90th—and it was held in Fatima, Portugal from April 17 to May 9. This chapter marked the second time that the nuns were invited to be present. We were not part of deliberations or voting, but were to give 30 minute reports about the life of the nuns in different regions. It was no easy task to discern how to choose the very limited number who would represent nuns from all over the world! To show how limited the choice had to be, only one Sister represented all of the USA and Canada; in some instances one Sister represented several countries! We were very happy that Sister Michael of Christ the King of Danvers Carmel in Massachusetts was the one who represented Carmel in America and Canada. It is our hope that as time goes on the nuns will be given an opportunity for greater participation in the future General Chapters.

INTRODUCING....

...our new Superior General, Father Saverio Cannistra of the Sacred Heart! He was elected on April 20 and is from the Italian Province of Tuscany. Father is 50 years old, and knows several languages; importantly for us, he knows English! He studied philology, has a Doctorate in Dogmatic Theology and most recently was professor of Christology and theological anthropology. In his brief

message that closed the Chapter, he said: "...only in dialogue with (St.) Teresa can we, men and women Carmelites of the third millennium, discern the right path to that renewal that we ourselves, our churches and our world need." He concluded by saying: "...join us in giving thanks to God that He give us the grace to continue this journey in search of His face and His love, and ask Him not to forget the strong support of His arm and the delicate touch of His Spirit." To which we say, 'AMEN!'

OUT OF SPACE

We are not running out of space for the living yet, but we are literally out of space for the dead, i.e. our dead Sisters! Such is our present dilemma. We know we have not a lasting city here on earth, and that no one will live forever, and that many, if not all the saints, were very eager to go to heaven, nevertheless, we do hope God waits a bit before calling any of us there! Having said that preamble, we are aware we must be willing and ready to do God's will, so work is underway to make more space in our crypt.

ANOTHER ACCOMPLISHMENT

It would be very hard to describe the very dilapidated condition our provisor's room has been in for many, many years: peeling paint, exposed wires, cabinets that were falling apart. It experienced a Lent of sorts with our community during that sacred season when walls were repaired, cabinets pulled out, wires replaced. Then, in Easter time, it had a taste of resurrection with us when its

renovations were done! We are very pleased with its new look and new cabinets. Blessed be God and His gifts!

BLESSING OR WOE?

We are all familiar with the eight beatitudes as they come to us in Matthew's gospel. But there is another version in Luke's gospel that is less familiar to most of us. The Lucan author gives four beatitudes and four woes! Most of us would rather deal with blessings than woes. What brings this to mind is the economic problems our world is dealing with at this time.

There is definitely a woe about the economic crisis we are in, but as OHF Pope Benedict has pointed out to us, there can be a real blessing behind it. The crisis has revealed how necessary it is for the world to come up with a system that is more fair and just; a system where everyone has a place to live and food to eat and an opportunity for education. We admire those who are making sacrifices and adjusting their lives to the reality of the situation. Our hearts go out to the many who are struggling to make ends meet, to those who have lost homes, to those who have lost jobs, to those who are looking for them. There is so much to pray for in this regard. Let us also remember to pray that God will bless us with men and women who are gifted in the area of economics and can come up with ways to create a world economy that is in accord with the beatitudes given us by Our Lord.

WHAT WAS IT???

It was definitely a bird....that much we know for sure...but what kind? Most of us thought it was a dove of sorts being all white with a feather or two of light brown. It hung around the ground longer than most birds do so we were able to get a good look at it. One of the Sisters actually was able to pick it up and hold it and it didn't seem to mind. How soft its feathers were! It was able to fly, but it had a growth that made us wonder if it was going to survive. It was put in a safe place in our garden, but it didn't stay. We hope it doesn't come to an unhappy end.

GAMES

Did you know that there was a time in Church history when games were condemned? The reason for their condemnation was because they involved adultery and the like. They were a far cry from our current Checkers and Scrabble...or even TV games like Jeopardy.

We do not watch TV games but we did watch Jeopardy one time recently because we knew one of the contestants! Erica is a college student who visited us. No one had to tell us how bright she was, it sort of just flowed from her! She won on the first show which we did not see, but she lost in the second show which was the one we watched. However, even that time her giftedness showed. We were all proud of her achievement.

A CREATIVE 50TH CELEBRATION

This may surprise you, as it has nothing directly to do about Carmel, but it seems worth saying and sharing. One of the Sisters found out through a mailing that when ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2006, it did so by committing to plant one million trees each year for 50 years "in keeping with our responsibility to help preserve the environment around us for future generations." Isn't that a refreshing bit of news from the business world? May other businesses get such good ideas!

AN UNEXPECTED NEED

When our roofers came to do their usual check up on our roof, they discovered that our flat roof needed to be replaced! No one was expecting this report! God must have been watching over things because even though the insulation under the roofing was dripping wet, it was rather remarkable that none of it leaked to damage our cloister ceiling below. Such a need could not be delayed and the cost was high. Like others, we too are feeling the economic crisis. God bless our roofer who is allowing us to pay in installments.

MAY IN SEATTLE

Our Order has been having meetings to train Nuns in doing formation work for those who enter our monasteries. Since our Order is spread all over the country, the meetings are held in different places. Sometimes they are closer to the monasteries in the west, other times in the east. This year it was held in Seattle at a retreat place. About 60 nuns participated. Our Sr. Eileen Mary and Sr. Bernadette Therese attended and they said the input was excellent.

ANOTHER CANONIZATION

It happened on April 26, 2009. The new Carmelite saint of the Ancient Observance is Nuno de Santa Maria Alvares Pereira. His story is rather amazing. He was a Knight, a General, Hero, medieval Founding Father of Portugal, a husband and a father, Founder of the Royal House of Braganza and a Carmelite! He also was an illegitimate son of a prior of the Knights Hospitallers, who himself was also an illegitimate son of an Archbishop! (This is not said to scandalize anyone, but to show how God can write straight with crooked lines.) Being born out of wedlock made him an unlikely candidate to found royal houses. It happened because of an astounding battle he fought and won against an army of 30,000 with 6,500 volunteers who were fasting for the feast of Our Lady's Assumption.

A great devotee of Our Lady, he promoted devotion to her scapular and rosary and is known as the "Precursor of Fatima".

England's Queen Catherine also descended from him AND it was after her that the Borough of Queens in New York was named! (Wonder how many New Yorkers knew that fact!?!?!?) This also makes him one of the ancestors of Queen Elizabeth II of England! So much more could be said about this very interesting man who would kneel in the heat of battle to pray; who fed the hungry people of his Castilian enemies at his own expense. He died on Easter Sunday in 1431 as the Passion of Our Lord was being read to him. At the words, "Behold thy mother," he went to God. (St. Joan of Arc died that same year!)

The miracle for his canonization occurred in the year 2000 when a Portuguese woman was immediately cured of blindness through his intercession.

THEY ARE COMING!

Not the British! But our faces resemble their red coats because of the long time it is taking for the plaques that we have promised our cell donors! They are coming, they are coming!

QUEEN, BEAUTY OF CARMEL

Our Lady has so many titles. One worth pondering is the one Carmelites give her: BEAUTY OF CARMEL. One of our hymns has us sing: "You are all beautiful, O Virgin Mary, you are all beautiful!" Just think-- when beauty overwhelms us isn't it an experience that takes us close to ecstasy? Doesn't it fill us with joy? Let us stand before Mary, Beauty of Carmel, so we may be bathed in the beauty which exudes from her being so that we, too, may become 'Something beautiful for God', as Blessed Mother Teresa would say, and rejoice in God, the source of all beauty!

**Your Sisters of Boston
Carmel**