



CARMELITE MISSIONS

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CARMELITE



MISSIONS



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Remember the Carmelite Missions when you write your will.



Father John Malley, O.Carm.  
Director of Carmelite Missions

## Lenten Season - A Time of Grace!

This year Ash Wednesday will be observed on February 17th. There are many customs and stories that revolve around Lent. One is the story of the "Butter Tower." If you were to visit the Cathedral at Rouen, France, you would be surprised to find the "Butter Tower." Tradition tells us that it was built by the offerings of the faithful who went without butter during Lent.

Today we don't build "Butter Towers," but we do build up human lives by our sacrifices and by "doing without" during Lent, and by your offerings to Carmelite Missions you make the world a little brighter in Dili, East Timor, in Jose Galvez, Peru, in Mutare, Zimbabwe, and throughout the world.

Mother Teresa, who was Calcutta's Angel of Mercy during her lifetime, gave us a beautiful meditation on the world of a Carmelite missionary. I want to share it with you, because through your kindness and generosity you truly participate in their ministry:

*"When I was homeless, you opened your doors.  
When I was naked, you gave me your coat.  
When I was weary, you helped me find rest.  
When I was anxious, you calmed all my fears.  
When I was little, you taught me to read.  
When I was lonely, you gave me your love.  
When in a prison, you came to my cell.  
When on a sick bed, you cared for my needs.  
In a strange country, you found me a job.  
Hurt in a battle, you bound my wounds.*

*Searching for kindness, you held out your hand.  
When I was Black, Chinese, or White,  
Mocked and insulted, you carried my cross.  
When I was aged, you bothered to smile.  
When I was restless, you listened and cared.  
When I was laughed at, you stood by my side.  
When I was happy, you shared in my joy."*

My prayer is that this month of February and the Lenten Season will be special times of grace for you, your family and friends, as we all journey together to our promised glorious Resurrection with the Lord.

Love and peace,

*Fr. John Malley, O.Carm.*

Director of Carmelite Missions





## SAINT OF THE MONTH

# Job

## The Old Testament Patriarch *Faithful in Suffering*

question that constantly challenges all of us: “Why do bad things happen to good people?”

### Job’s Story

According to popular folklore dating back to the earliest Hebrews times, Job was indeed a good and prosperous man living in the land of Ur, probably Edom, south of the Dead Sea. The *Book of Job* opens with a description of the Patriarch as “blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.” (Job 1, 1)

Job was blessed with seven sons and three daughters, a clear sign to ancient Jews of God’s special favor. He was further blessed with an abundance of livestock. Job, his children and their families offered constant sacrifices of thanksgiving to God. They were devout and grateful people.

God had a special plan for Job. He would be for all times the sign that human suffering is not God’s punishment on those who have sinned! The story pictures the Lord in a kind of heavenly council. He asks Satan whether in the course of his earthly journeys he has come across the pious Job. The devil replied sarcastically that it was easy for a rich and successful man to be God-fearing. “Put forth your hand now,” he dared God, “and he will curse you to your face.” (Job 1, 11) The Lord accepted Satan’s dare. He agreed that Job should be put to the test.

### A Man of Suffering

Soon after that heavenly dialog, Job’s donkeys and camels were carried off by robbers. His sheep were killed in a hailstorm. Worse still, the roof of his eldest son’s house collapsed during a gale, when all his children were gathered there. They were all dead. Job was grief-stricken but he uttered no words of protest against the Lord.

Job’s trials, however, were far from over. Now they would afflict his own body. He broke out in terrible sores from head to toe. In desperation he sat in sack-cloth and ashes scraping at his decaying flesh with a sharp piece of broken pottery. Even his wife taunted him bitterly: “Are you still holding to your innocence? Curse God and die.” Job replied that she was a “foolish woman.” If they accepted happiness from God, he argued, they must also accept suffering.

### Job’s Three Friends

Finally Job was visited by three old friends – Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Shuah, and Zophar of Naamah. They were also Edomites and, like Job had previously been, were among the wise and affluent. When they saw his plight they shared the popular opinion about sin and punishment. They could only sit in silence with Job on the dung hill outside the city gate for the seven days of mourning for a man as good as dead.

In the end, the three friends and a

fourth character named Elihu tried to console Job. They expressed the traditional view that God does not punish good men, only bad ones. If evil doers seem to prosper for a while, their sins will catch up with them. They reminded Job in effect that there is “a little bad in the best of us.” That had to be what God was angry about. They insisted that Job should repent and put his trust in God: “For He wounds, but He binds up; He smites, but His hands give healing.” (Job 5, 18)

Job did not listen. He could not listen. God’s seeming injustice was too much for him to bear, and he continued to rail against it. He recalled what a good life he used to have and how respected he was. He did no wrong, yet God struck him down. Everyone shunned him. Children spit in his face. “Those whom I loved turned against me,” he cried. “My bones cleave to my skin and to my flesh...Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has touched me.” (Job 19, 19)



Illustration of Job visited by three old friends

At one point Job was about to despair. He asked the question, repeated by good people throughout history: Does God really care about a world in which wicked men prosper and the poor go naked and hungry? He became weary of seeking justice and only wanted to be left alone and die.



The Lord Answering Job Out of the Whirlwind by William Blake

### The Lord Answers

God finally answered Job. He spoke to him out of a whirlwind and put before him some questions of his own. He asked things like this: Where were you, Job, when I created the earth? What do you know about the control of the seas, the coming of dawn, the snow and hail, thunder, lightning and rain, the movement of the stars, and the ways of animals and birds? Job was overwhelmed by the Presence of the Lord and humbled by the wonderful workings of His universe. He at once accepted (as we all must!) that there were matters beyond his understanding:

*“I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be hindered. I have dealt with great things that I do not understand; things too wonderful for me, which I cannot know. I had heard of you by word of mouth, but now my eye has seen you. Therefore I disown what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes.”*  
Job 42, 2-6

### A Happy Ending

The story of Job has a happy ending. After his submission to God, he is restored to his position and given double the wealth he lost before. His relatives and friends came to pay their respects and offer gifts. He again becomes the father of another ten children – seven strong sons and three beautiful daughters. He lives to see his descendants to the fourth generation.

The problem of human suffering will always confuse believers. The puzzle will remain: “Why do bad things happen to good people?” The *Book of Job* does not set out to answer this question but to proclaim a God so great that no answer is needed. It was in the end enough for Job to know that God was with him. “I know,” he could pray with confidence, “that my Redeemer lives...and in my flesh I shall see God.” (Job 19, 25) God’s ways are not our own, but His ways are marvelous. Even in our pain He embraces us with loving kindness. ✨