



CARMELITE MISSIONS

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"Mother of God, loves all God's Children"



A Lasting Tribute

"I will let fall a shower of roses. I will spend my heaven doing good on earth."
— St. Therese

Have you recently thought about writing your Will? Leaving your loved ones with an outline of your special wishes could be a **real gift** to your family. Consider it a joyful deed! Your Will should be a gesture of a positive and loving act, an expression of your wishes and desires. You might think of a Will as a prayer, because it gathers together the material fruits of your life and disburses them according to what you really value.

Perhaps, consider a bequest or other gift in memory or in honor of someone special to you. Creating a memorial through your Will or other plans can be a satisfying way to pay lasting tribute to loved ones.

Please remember the Carmelite Missions by providing the future resources needed to help the Carmelites in their good works in the foreign missions when you write **your** Will. Thank you for your longstanding support to the **Carmelite Missions!**

Remember the Carmelite Missions when you write your will.

Your offering
and your support
are needed NOW
more than ever.

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MISSIONS



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

Dedication to Mary Remembrance of Mother's Day

In this May newsletter, as I am very mindful of a month dedicated to Mary and of the beautiful remembrance of Mother's Day coming on May 9, I want to share with you our Carmelite mission work at Transfiguration Parish in Torreon, Mexico.

also serve as chaplains to the local prison, and they are responsible for ministry to the sick in three nearby hospitals. Fortunately since the beginning of their ministry in Torreon, our Carmelites have encouraged collaboration on the part of the parishioners. The people have accepted

The parish was entrusted to our American-Canadian Province back in February 1995. We have been serving the approximately 30,000 parishioners for 15 years, and it has been an enriching and rewarding experience for all the priests and brothers stationed there. The present pastor is Father Luis Torres, a native vocation, and he is ably assisted by Father Tom Jordan from Detroit. Father Tom was one of the original four American Carmelites who volunteered to go to Mexico, and he has done great work with the youth.



this responsibility, and they have taken many initiatives for the improvement of the mission chapels and activities there.

Thank you for your interest and support of our Province's work at Transfiguration parish.

Fr. Tom tells me that there are

still great needs, especially at the 12 missions in the rural areas where the children often arrive for classes and religious ceremonies very hungry, undernourished, and scantily and poorly clothed. Please continue to remember our Mexican neighbors in Torreon – only 80 miles south of Laredo, Texas – in your prayers, sacrifices, and generosity.

You are remembered in my Mass and prayers during this month of May, as I ask our Blessed Mother Mary to watch over you and your loved ones always.

Love and peace,

Fr. John Malley, O.Carm.

Director of Carmelite Missions

The parish is very large, as it comprises 12 chapels or communities, mostly in rural areas. Fr. Luis and Fr. Tom

Saint of the Month

Visitation of Our Lady 🌿 Feast Day, May 31

The Gospel of St. Luke is our source for all five joyful mysteries of the Rosary – the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of Jesus, the Presentation of the Christ-Child, and the Finding in the Temple. The Church keeps the memory of these events with special days in the liturgical calendar. The visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth is celebrated as the Feast of the Visitation. It falls on May 31. The Feast began in Bohemia and was extended to the whole Church by Pope Urban VI in 1389.

Mary Went in Haste

The Gospel story of the Visitation is vibrant with joy and motion – Mary’s haste, her journey to the hill country, her greeting to the older woman, and Elizabeth’s inspired reply, saluting the Virgin Mary as “mother of the Lord,” and praising her great faith. Tradition puts the town “in the hill country” of Judea as modern Ain Karim, where Zachary and Elizabeth lived, a few miles west of Jerusalem. St. Luke tells us that Zachary was involved in temple worship.

As the angel told Mary at Nazareth, her aged cousin has conceived a child six months earlier, long after giving up all hope of ever becoming a mother. The angel Gabriel was customarily entrusted with messages about the promised Messiah. When he appeared to Zachary, the old man was so hesitant to trust the report that, in their advanced years his wife and himself were finally to be parents, he was punished by being struck dumb. At the same time, the angel assured him of the blessings that



The Annunciation, 1644, painted by Philippe de Champaigne

were to come with this child sent them so unexpectedly: “Joy and gladness will be yours, and many will rejoice at his birth...he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb...God himself will go before him, in the spirit and power of Elijah.”

When Mary entered the house of Zachary, John the Baptist stirred in his mother’s womb. At the presence of Mary’s unborn son, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. These opening chapters of the Gospel are themselves filled with the Holy Spirit, and St. Luke follows the same pattern in describing the activity of the Spirit at the start of the Acts of the Apostles. Elizabeth cries out, St. Luke tells us, “in a loud voice,” and he would have us understand the

“loud cry” to be a liturgical acclamation. Not only the voice of Elizabeth but the voices of all the followers of Christ are to be raised in joyful greeting to the Savior, in contrast to the tongue-tied Zachary!

Blessed Among All Women

“Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” Mary is blessed before all other women; she is the mother of the Savior. Elizabeth continues: “Who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” “Mother of the Lord” has deep roots in the Old Testament: it means the mother of the messianic king. At the time of David and Solomon, in the Jewish monarchy, as in many other countries, the most important woman was not the wife of the king, but his mother.

Elizabeth has still more to say in praise of her young cousin: “Blessed is she who trusted that the Lord’s words to her would be fulfilled.” St. Luke likes to describe faith as openness to God’s word. Zachary failed to respond humbly to the angel’s announcement and was punished by being made mute for the nine months of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. He was slow to accept God’s word and so his ability to speak was taken away.

When John the Baptist was born, the family wanted to call him by his father’s name but the mother intervened: “No, he is to be called John.” Then old Zachary asked for a writing tablet to put down, “His name is John,” and his tongue was finally loosed to proclaim the praises of God.

The Magnificat of Mary

The culmination of the Gospel’s story of Mary’s visit is her response to Elizabeth’s greeting, her Magnificat, the familiar canticle which has been part of the evening prayer of the Church from early days: “My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit finds joy in God my Savior. For he has looked upon His servant in her lowliness, and ages to come shall call me blessed.”

Mary sings of God’s fulfillment of his messianic promises. Back as far as Abraham, hundreds of years before, God has promised to send the Savior. The assurances given to the patriarchs Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob, have now come to fulfillment in the son of Mary, whose herald is to be John the Baptist.

Human standards have been overturned – riches and pride and power mean nothing in God’s eyes. The merciful and almighty God has lifted up the lowly, has given every good thing to the hungry. God whose name is holy has done great things for Mary; salvation



And Mary rising up in those days went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. [Lk. 1:39-40]

has come. She is the blessed one, the daughter of Abraham who trusted that the word of the Lord would come true, for herself and for all peoples.

It is part of St. Luke’s writing technique to wind up one incident before he begins another, and so he simply tells us that Mary remained with Elizabeth “about three months,” that is, until her baby would be born, and “returned home.” Only then does his gospel continue with the story of John’s birth and the canticle of Zachary: “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, He has visited His people and set them free...”

Whatever is said of John, his origins and his family, is at the service of the greater mystery of the conception and birth of Jesus. John himself will say that he must give way to Jesus, he must grow less as



Jesus grows greater, the best man must fade out before the bridegroom. Then St. Luke hastens on to the story of the birth of Jesus, which is his main concern. John, though important, is only the forerunner.

The Joyful Mysteries

St. Luke is so skillful a storyteller we may easily overlook the deeper senses of his narrative. He is steeped in the Old Testament, describing the life and teaching of Jesus with constant allusions to God’s mercies to the Jewish people. Moreover, with careful editing, he links the “joyful mysteries” to the public life of Jesus, sometimes using the same words for incidents from both His public and His hidden life.

The Mass for the feast of the Visitation on May 31 focuses upon two themes – joy and service – that are such a part of Mary’s life. The first reading from the prophet Zephaniah speaks to us of the great joy at the coming of the Messiah, a joy that is the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who obey God with faith as Mary did. The gospel emphasizes the second theme of service: the love of neighbor that is shown by Mary’s haste to go to assist her older cousin Elizabeth. The great service of the Blessed Virgin was the blessing that she brought to the house of Zachary – the Son of God at whose presence the unborn John was sanctified and leaped for joy. 🌿