

Advent 2017

Hello everyone.

Here we are again with a few “newsy bits” from behind the cloister walls. Most people think we have a very uneventful life but to be honest, it seems that there is never a dull moment!!

Our year 2017 began with sickness and hospitalizations and ended on the same note having been a common thread running through the whole year. Sr. Marie Therese was in hospital on several occasions for extended periods of time, Sr. Margaret Mary had a short hospital visit & Sr. Mary Gabriel had cataracts removed successfully from both eyes. In between we had 2 Sisters who got dengue fever and a few other minor health issues through the year. At the moment all are back on their feet again thanks be to God.

We had a few important guests visit us this year.

Sr. Anjali from Thiruvalla Carmel spent one month with us giving classes to our 4 young Sisters. She did a very good job! We all enjoyed having her here in our community.

In February Kolkata hosted the inter association meeting this year. It took place at “Anjali” in Barrackpore. This is a new retreat centre run by the Apostolic Carmelite Sisters and we had the pleasure of being the inaugurating group. The Sisters did everything possible to make our stay pleasant and very homely. The place & surrounding atmosphere was ideal. The administrative teams from our 3 associations in India were all present including the Religious assistants and we were blessed to have Fr. Johannes our Fr. Definitor with us there for a few days too. On the Sunday afternoon all the delegates of that assembly came to spend time with us here in our Carmel.

It was a wonderful to have our Fathers & Sisters from all over India here in our Monastery! What a real experience of “Teresian Joy” and a memory that is now forever etched in our minds.

Our 4 young Sisters travelled to Soso Carmel for a month long course organised by the association. The Soso Sisters looked after them very well and they enjoyed their stay. It was a good opportunity for them to meet other sisters from the Carmels of our association for the first time and to learn more about our Carmelite spirituality. Meanwhile we 5 managed quite well on our own although it was quite a challenge for an older community!!! We survived but longed for their return! We missed their presence and they were also “Homesick”! There was no end to the stories of their experiences on their return.

The first fruits of the West Bengal Vicariate of our Carmelite Fathers bore fruit this year in the Ordination of 4 Fathers from the region. They visited us after their Ordinations and after concelebrating Mass in our Chapel, they had breakfast and we spent some time with them.

Fr. Augustine, Vincentian Father from Pota-Emmaus visited us. He conducted a beautiful healing service. Even if we were not physically healed, we were certainly spiritually enriched.

Our new Papal Nuncio to India paid us a fraternal visit and spent an hour with us. He gave us an inspiring talk and we all had tea together. It was a very relaxed and cordial visit.

Fr. Johannes, our definator paid us a fraternal visit accompanied by Fr. Marcel. They came for one hour but we were all enjoying the time together so they spent the whole morning with us. Fr. Marcel took to the kitchen with our young sisters & together they prepared a lovely lunch for all of us. Fr. Johannes was happy to see our Monastery & was very pleased that we have pets...dogs, birds & fish. He was even more pleased to see that we have table tennis and a badminton court. After finishing dinner he challenged our young sisters to a game of table tennis I think they let him win!! A great day was had by all in spite of the heavy rain.

All of our big feasts were very well attended this year especially the feasts of Divine Mercy, Our Lady of Mount Carmel & the feast of St. Therese of Liseux. For these particular feasts, which were preceded by their respective novenas, we had a very solemn Mass with beautiful singing & well decorated Chapel after which the community met the people and then all who attended were treated to breakfast or light refreshments. We thank all our benefactors who make this possible and help us out in so many & varied ways.

The highlight of our year was on 21st November when our youngest Sister Fulvidaris made her first profession. Unfortunately her parents were unable to be present as her mother had just given birth to her 14th child. The service was in the evening and was attended by many guests. The novices of Missionaries of Charity sang for the Mass & their angelic voices enhanced the ceremony. Fr. Marcel was the chief celebrant & gave a stirring & inspiring homily. The chapel was beautifully decorated and Sr. Fulvidaris was radiant. Afterwards all enjoyed a meal together in our illuminated garden.

Now that our youngest sister has joined the ranks of professed, we ask all of you to please join us as we plead in prayer for more good young vocations to join our Carmel.

This past year many of our family members, friends & benefactors have been sick and some have died. We continue to pray for the recovery of all who are sick & for eternal life for the departed souls. They are all remembered in our monthly Masses for benefactors & also Masses for the dead.

So we are now in the season of Advent again. Advent has a two-fold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered; and as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. Advent is thus a period of devout and joyful expectation, a time of reflection, repentance, reconciliation & returning to the Lord, a time of wonder and awe that our God and creator, because He loves us so much, He took a human form as a small defenceless infant, born in a stable. It is a special time of PRAYER. Unfortunately the world does its best to distract all from these essentials and gets everyone caught up in the commercialisation of Christmas, leaving out the most important reason for Christmas....Jesus Christ.

As we look back over this year we can only thank God for all His Love & Mercy towards us through the ups & downs we have experienced. As we praise & thank God for the many good things that continue to take place in our world it is sad to say, there are many, too

many bad events also causing so much suffering & pain. We remember especially all those caught up in violence & warfare, those innocents who have been so badly affected by terrorist attacks all over the world, the poor refugees who are all too often running from the frying pan into the fire, those suffering from famine & disease, the homeless, the lonely, the rejected ones of society. The list is endless!!

Let us open our hearts & allow Jesus to be born in us and share that Love, Peace & Joy which only He can give, with all those around us.

God bless you all.

Very happy, holy & peaceful Christmas and all Gods blessings in 2018.