



Hand finishing a statue for the Chapter House.



Recently laid stone with fresh mortar.



Inspecting a fresh roast of Mystic Monk Coffee.

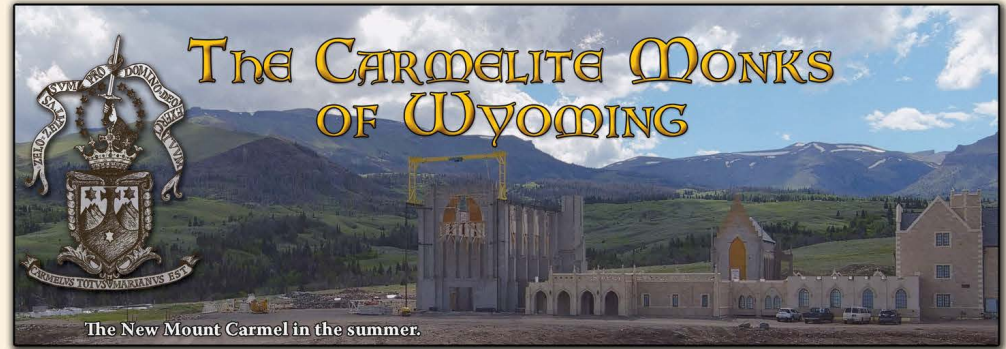


Processing from the chapel after Mass.

Who can fathom the graces and miracles that are purchased through this time of silent contemplative prayer? This practice of mental prayer, such an integral aspect of the Carmelite day, is not limited to the monastery, but rather serves as an invitation to the entire world to devote time each day to prayer in silence and solitude. While being faithful to the daily duties of one's state in life, mental prayer permits us to draw closer to the Source of Life—God Himself—and from Him to acquire the graces and virtues we need for ever greater fidelity to our baptismal promises. Prayer is like the match, albeit tiny and poor and sometimes even flickering, that can set the world afire with divine love and transform the world by grace.

As the hour of mental prayer draws to a close—some days long arrived at and others in what seems like but a second—Father Prior makes the knock upon his choir stall, and the monks pray together some closing prayers, asking God to bless and protect the Church, to receive the monks' prayers on behalf of poor sinners, and to obtain for all of mankind an increase in virtue and in grace that leads to eternal life. Fittingly, this contemplative hour that might rightly be termed a "power hour" concludes: "Lord, hear my prayer. And let my cry come unto you. Omnipotent and merciful Lord, hear us. And keep us always. Amen."

Your devoted Father in Carmel,
Fr. Daniel Mary of Jesus Crucified, M. Carm.



The New Mount Carmel in the summer.

THE CARMELITE MONKS OF WYOMING

The morning sun illumines the monastery with golden light as the meadowlarks joyfully sing their morning refrain and the antelope with their little ones

peacefully graze. The alarm clock once again tolls within the hermitages of the Fathers and Brothers, summoning them to arise from their restful slumber. Making their way to the chapel, the new morning presents another opportunity for the monks to renew the gift of their lives to God's glory and the service of God's people. Slowly all the monks gather in the interim chapel, making a genuflection to their Lord and a humble prostration as they take their place in the choir stalls forming a veritable army of prayer warriors to begin this new day with prayer. Following the Carmelite vision enshrined in the Rule, the monks come together as hermits united in a community of love to join their prayers.

After the tolling of the Angelus bells recalling the Mystery of the Incarnation, the monks begin to pray the first of the morning's Liturgies fittingly known in the

Carmelite tradition as "Prime." Fusing their voices, the monks aptly chant Prime's morning hymn: "Now That Daylight Fills the Sky." The Fathers and Brothers ask for

light this new day to satiate the darkness, the Light of the World Who is Jesus Christ. With apostolic zeal, they remember each of you and carry your special needs before the Lord at this early morning hour as parents ready their children for school and the morning routine begins for so many.

Following the chanting of three psalms and a reading, the reader sings the Martyrology while the monks intently listen. As the name "Martyrology" suggests, this special reading enumerates the many saints and martyrs (ergo the name) whose feasts the Church celebrates the next day; just as the Office of Prime heralds the dawn of the new day, the Martyrol-

ogy anticipates the feasts of tomorrow. Listening to the saints and gathering little details of their lives, the Church places before the monks the "one thing necessary"—holiness. Hearing the names of so many Carmel-

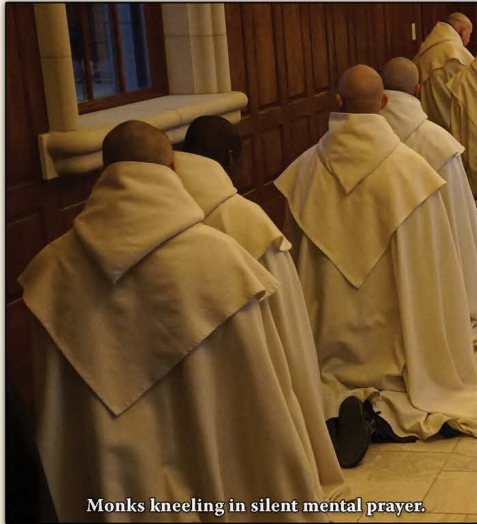


The Monastery at dawn.

June 2022

Newsletter No. 3

-ites and their saintly lives, the monks are reminded at the start of this new day of the perennial pursuit of personal and communal holiness of life. Since these holy men and women lived the same Carmelite monastic life of “love in the heart of the Church,” let the monk not forget that he too is summoned by God through the Church to these same heights of light and of love. Prime concludes with a series of verses and responses begging God to shower His graces upon the world this day and keep us far from sin. Mindful of the account to be rendered at the close of life, the monks offer special prayers for the faithful departed family, friends, and benefactors that their time in purgatory might be quickened and that they may be admitted to heaven’s eternal beatitude. After the singing of the *Salve Regina* or *Hail Holy Queen*, this first hour of prayer comes to a close.



Monks kneeling in silent mental prayer.

Next follows an essential moment in the Carmelite day and a hallmark of every house that follows the observance of Ss. Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross: mental prayer. One of two such hours that bookend the monks’ day, the morning hour of mental prayer is made in common in the chapel before the closed tabernacle. With the beautiful practice of Adoration alive in countless parishes, many wonder, “Why do Carmelites spend the morning hour before the closed tabernacle and not enjoy the grace and consolation of Adoration before the monstrance?” In truth, the Carmelite delights to adore

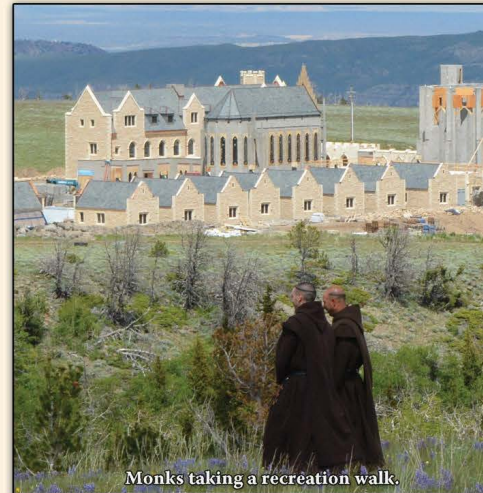
His Lord hidden behind the golden tabernacle doors; like His hidden God Who is verily present even if the tabernacle is closed, the monk is hidden and sometimes forgotten behind Carmel’s walls and grates, but the monk is nonetheless present in the life of the Church and a most useful dimension of the Church’s apostolic mission.

After asking the Paraclete to illumine this time of silent contemplation with His light, the Fathers and Brothers kneel quietly at their places. One fixes his gaze upon the tabernacle, looking upon the good God Who looks back at him. Another monk opens the worn copy of Sacred Scripture to the Mystery of the Nativity and prays that his heart might make a fitting dwelling for the Most High. Still another kneels quietly without words, but only with the silent language of a love of God and neighbor that escapes the finite limits of human expression. A new brother meditates upon Calvary, making himself a counterpart of St. Mary Magdalen at the foot of the cross lamenting his sins and the sins of others and considering the sights, smells, and sounds of the Lord as He died upon the tree of the Cross. Another old monk finds himself moved to beg and plead for the healing of the broken marriage that he learned about yesterday as a prayer intention on the bulletin board. Each monk seeks to follow the impulses of grace to make this hour most fruitful with his God, having prepared himself remotely by practicing the divine presence throughout the hours before.



Praying in the chapel.

In the eyes of the world, this morning hour of mental prayer is often reduced to “wasted time” or some sort of “self-help exercise” whose purpose is one of personal wellness—if any at all. For the monk, however, the hour of mental prayer is a gift, a cherished time with His Lord to begin the day in the Lord’s presence beseeching the Lord’s grace for that day. Moved by faith, the monk believes that God is real, heaven is real, and prayer is efficacious! Since as the ancient adage goes a man “cannot give what he does not have,” the monk’s quest for holiness is urgent and pressing; it is only when he is completely transformed in God that the monk can fulfill his contemplative mission of mediating grace to the world after the example of the Carmelite foundress and model *par excellence*, the ever-Virgin Mother of God. This hour of mental prayer, such a special time in the monastic horarium, seems outwardly quiet, still, tranquil with only the occasional interruption of the mountain bluebirds heard through the open chapel window, yet this hour of mental prayer is nonetheless a time most fecund, most fruitful in the mystical order of grace. Just think of the miracles of today—an occasion of sin overcome, a traffic accident averted, a new friendship cultivated, a favorable prognosis from the doctor—whatever the miracle, these graces have been purchased by the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ and distributed to a suffering humanity by the prayers of contemplatives.



Monks taking a recreation walk.



The Chapter House stone installation progressing.

As the monks continue their hour of prayer, they slowly find their minds illumined and their wills enkindled with love. Of course, this is not to say that prayer is free from its challenges. For one, his seasonal allergies prompt the occasional sneeze and runny nose. For another, the praying of Matins and Lauds at midnight has left him still rather tired, so he fights back sleep in what St. Thérèse insightfully termed the “battle of a Carmelite.” While one monk’s knees grow tired so he sits back on his haunches after the Carmelite style, another sits in the choir stall facing towards the altar. Another monk finds himself distracted by the day’s labors ahead, and so he lingers a bit longer prayerfully reading the Word of God to put himself in God’s presence and leave the day’s cares for later. Still another veteran of Carmelite life finds his prayer dry and arid, painful in fact due to its lack of all consolation or apparent fruitfulness, but he perseveres in his prayer mindful that prayer is not about feeling much but loving much. For the monk overcome by sleep and beginning to nod off, the brother next to him gently arouses him from his slumber. Another, finding his prayer gone cold, returns to kneeling from sitting in the hopes that the change of posture might challenge him anew to love the good God.