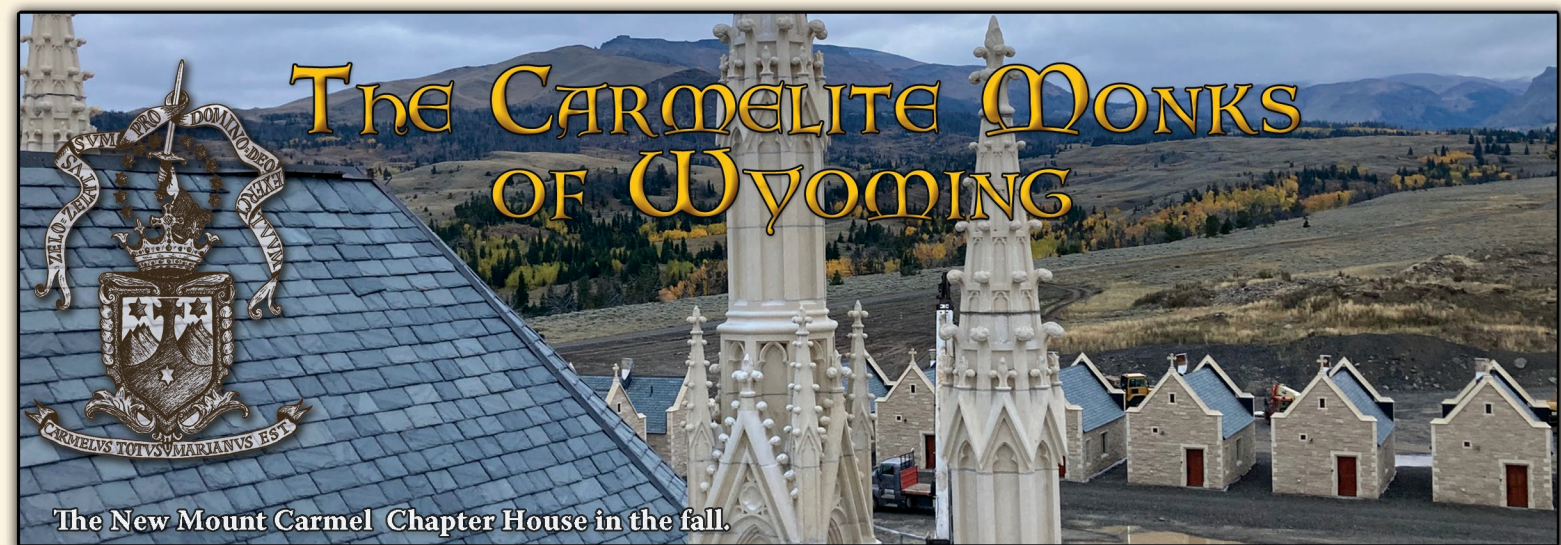




The monks use a crane to set the stone on the Chapter House.



A brother grouts the stone.



The New Mount Carmel Chapter House in the fall.

November 2022

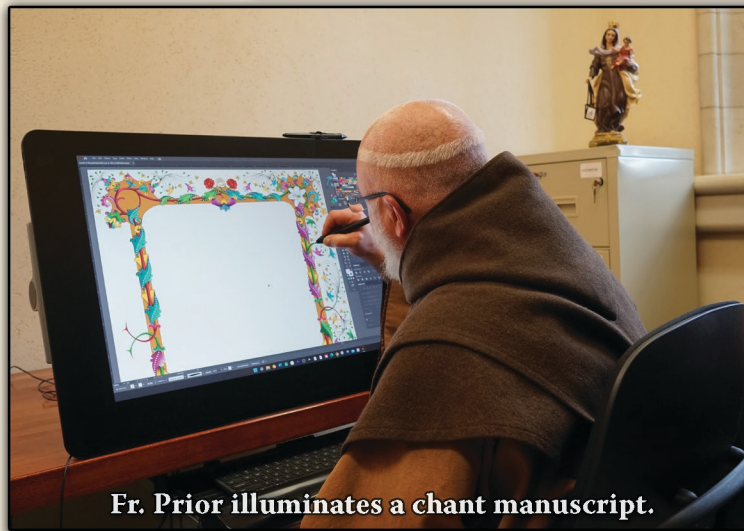
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duties. He later employs his artistic gifts to illuminate a manuscript of Gregorian chant notation, finding delight in the flowing vines and painting the medieval animals that adorn the pages with beauty for when the monks will chant from those large pages on an upcoming Marian feast.

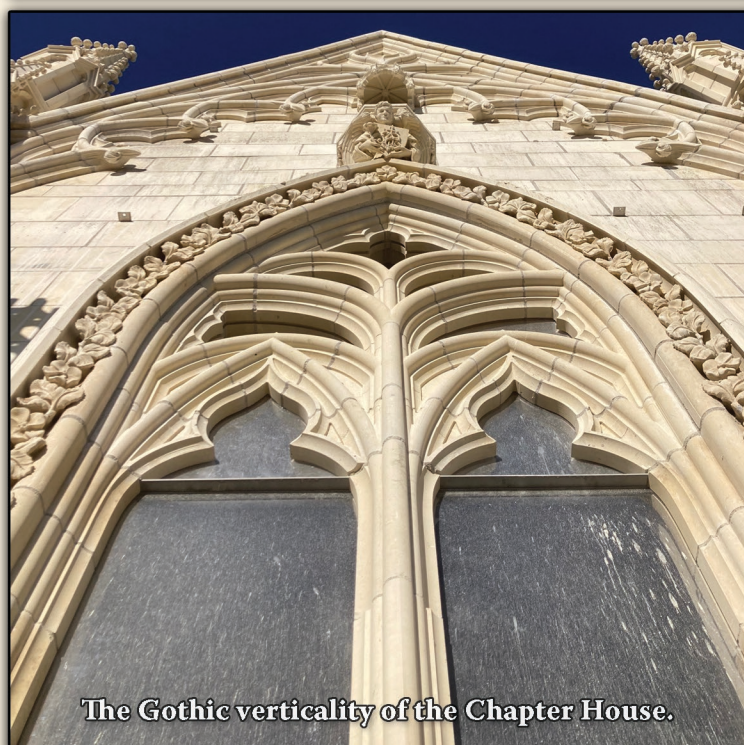
In another room, were we to open the door, we would find inside a priest meeting with a brother seeking a bit of spiritual counsel. In whispered voice the brother relates how that morning at mental prayer he found his prayer void of consolation, dry and arid like Wyoming's deserts. The brother wonders if he has done something wrong or to displease the Lord; he asks, "Why has God abandoned me?" From the adjacent bench where he sits, the good Father listens attentively and with compassion, offering some helpful wisdom of St. John of the Cross to spur on the directee in pursuit of union with God that is not found amidst consolation. The holy conversation witnesses to the great fraternal charity that has forever been a hallmark of monasticism—urging one another on after the Lord in a spirit of service and love.

Countless other daily activities could be enumerated, both those routine and those especially suited to a monk's talent or the needs of the community. The monastic life is hard and its labors demanding. Regardless, however, each monk labors with love and zeal for God and for souls as he performs his daily duty in the holy monotony of monasticism and its marvelous, ancient rhythm between prayer, work, and study. Truly, not just amidst the pots and pans of St. Teresa, but amidst the laundry, coffee beans, dust, bills, and souls does the monk find God and his soul delights.

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



Fr. Prior illuminates a chant manuscript.



The Gothic verticality of the Chapter House.



The monks process to the refectory after mass.

Having received Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, we now continue to peer behind the monastery's tall walls to explore the Carmelite happenings on an altogether ordinary morning. After a time of thanksgiving, the Prior makes a knock upon the wooden choir stall signaling the monks to rise following a prostration. The cantor intones a psalm singing, "May God have mercy on us, and bless us," while the monks—beginning with the youngest—file to the center of the chapel to make a genuflection, kiss the Brown Scapular, and bow to one another before slowly processing. A procession of monks thus emerges each morning from the chapel as the rays illumine the interim chapel and the monks with their brown woolen habits and hoods continue to alternate the verses of the psalm on the way to the monastery's dining room known as a "refectory."

In the Carmels of Ss. Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross, the refectory takes on a special importance as the counterpart to the chapel. Fed with the Bread of Angels in

the chapel, the monk is fed with monk bread in the refectory. The refectory is a sparsely furnished room with wooden tables lining the two parallel walls and the superior's table at the front of the room under a cross or crucifix. There is never any speaking in the refectory, but rather the monks eat lunch and dinner sitting two by two and facing towards the center of the room with no one on the other side of the elevated table. Here the monks enjoy a hearty sustenance, albeit meatless according to Carmel's ancient penitential discipline enshrined in the Rule.

After the monks arrive at the refectory, bowing to the central crucifix and finding their places lining the refectory tables, the weekly celebrant or "hebdomadary" leads a concluding prayer asking the Lord to grant all the heart's desires on behalf of God's Holy People. The monks are now hungry; it is breakfast time. Breakfast in Carmel is simple, especially during the Great Fast from

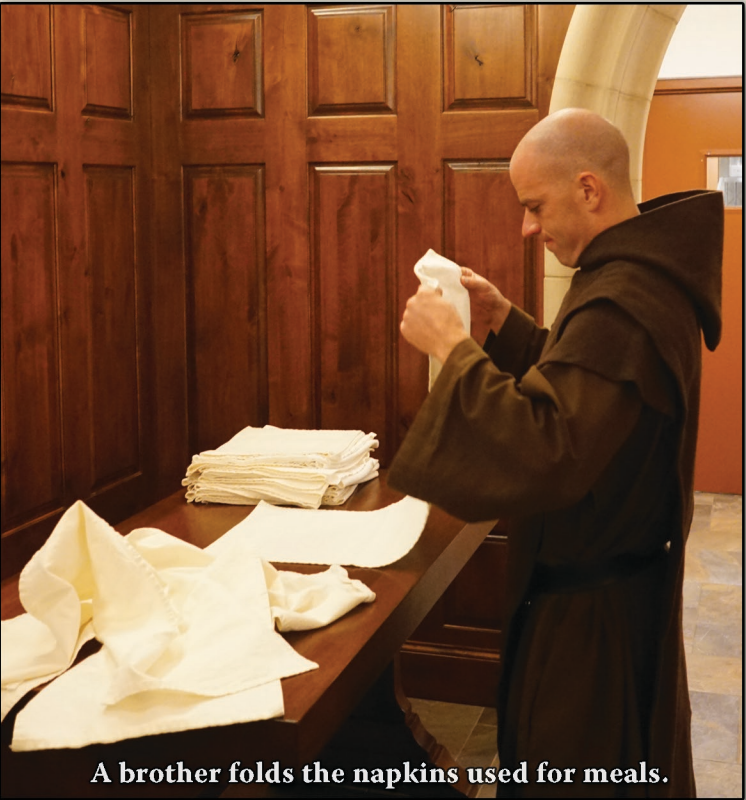


The monks drink their morning coffee.

the Exaltation of the Holy Cross until Easter. After the prayer is finished, the monks carry their double-handled mugs of freshly brewed coffee to their spots. Each prays grace silently thanking God for the simple sustenance he is about to consume before turning towards his table, standing, and raising the hood to enter more deeply into a spirit of recollection while sipping his morning's coffee. With newfound energy, the monk says a short prayer of thanksgiving before departing the refectory to set about the day's duties.

In Carmel, silence reigns and the monk seeks the solitude of his lonely hermitage or cabin whenever possible in preference to the common workrooms of other monastic orders. A visitor to the enclosure would perhaps wonder if any monks lived within the monastery walls for he would not hear the sound of chatter nor perhaps even see a monk; all the Fathers and Brothers quickly withdraw to attend to their daily work assignments in a spirit of prayer and holy recollection. The founding of this new monastery necessitates the realization of a remarkably wide panorama of works and so the monks like little bees seek to apply themselves with diligence and love to whatever work holy obedience entrusts to them. To find the monks during the morning hours of work, one is astonished at both the breadth of projects undertaken and the obscurity within which each Father and Brother occupies himself for love of God and souls.

We find our first monk in the basement laundry room where the monastery's brown aprons and cloth napkins from the refectory require a fresh laundering. There the good Brother quietly sorts the laundry according to color and



A brother folds the napkins used for meals.

pours ample laundry detergent into the washing machine. The task is simple, and it is quiet, but in Carmel something so ordinary becomes something most profound. You see while our little monk is sorting laundry, he is praying. There in that basement laundry room, he keeps Jesus and Mary company calling to mind that Mary too must have done such an ordinary task while maintaining the garments of the Holy Family in good order. As he loads the washing machine with the dirty aprons and napkins, the monk considers all those who stand in need of making a good confession that their souls might be cleansed, and he prays for these penitents and their confessors amidst these pearly white washing machines and dryers. Yes, Carmelite life is ordinary, but its power utterly extra-ordinary.



A monk sweeps the cloisterwalk.

Another monk can be found in his work habit of brown canvas and work boots preparing to roast a fresh batch of Mystic Monk Coffee. Ensuring the secret blends of green coffee beans from all over the world, the monk fires up the coffee roasting machine that appears not all that different from the dryers in the laundry room, but just much larger and with a cooling bin in front to welcome the freshly roasted beans. The poignant aroma of fresh coffee begins to fill the workshop as the beans crack under the intense heat at a carefully chosen temperature and duration to ensure the perfect blend. Carefully monitoring the roast as it progresses, the heat of the coffee roaster calls to mind the fire of divine love that God wills to enkindle in souls. Contemplating the beans inside the roaster

calls to mind the fire of divine love that God wills to enkindle in souls. Contemplating the beans inside the roaster before him, the monk prays for souls in the many nations from which these beans originated and who perhaps helped to harvest the green bean crop; may God set them all on fire with the ardor of His love.



Br. Berthold is clothed in the Holy Habit.

In the cloisterwalk, we find still another monk alone and solitary. Over his woolen habit, the Father has tied a brown apron to keep his habit clean. He slowly, methodically sweeps from one end of the long walk to another collecting the dirt and dust into an orderly pile. The swooshing of the broom's bristles, however, in no way deters our monk-priest from his contemplation as he begs the Paraclete to sweep from his soul all vice and viciousness that his soul might become a fitting dwelling place for the Most High cleansed of the filthiness of sin. As the sun casts its rays through the many gothic windows painting shadows as it were across the tile floor, the Father makes his way down the hallway leaving the floor tidy and more importantly conversing with his God.

Yet another monk can be found with a companion high atop the monastery's scaffolding that surrounds the chapter-house amid the monastery complex. Having exchanged the flowing habit for the necessary safety of workclothes, hardhat, and reflective vest, the two monks quietly mastermind the day's masonry progression as one stone is gradually stacked upon another. They speak sparingly and only of what is necessary. One readies the stones and grout while another operates the crane to heave each stone into its perfectly planned spot like Lego blocks, one after the next. Their feat is impressive, but more praiseworthy still is their prayer. From the scaffold-

ing's heights, the first little brother catches a glimpse of the surrounding mountains that act as a rampart for this solitary life; he beholds the fresh snow on the peaks and a coyote running through the field while a melodious bird sings a sweet song just nearby. All of creation reveals its great order as designed by God and prompts our monk covered in masonry dust to praise the Creator as the masonry wall slowly rises.



The finished stonework on the Chapter House.

Seeking out the Prior of this multi-layered endeavor of founding a monastery in the year of our Lord 2022, we find him in his office with its bookshelves lining the walls and a computer upon the desk. His secretary in the office next door returns the monastery's phone calls—first to a friend in need of prayer and then to another requesting Masses before forwarding a vocational inquiry to the Vocation Director. The Prior meanwhile busies himself with the day's administrative