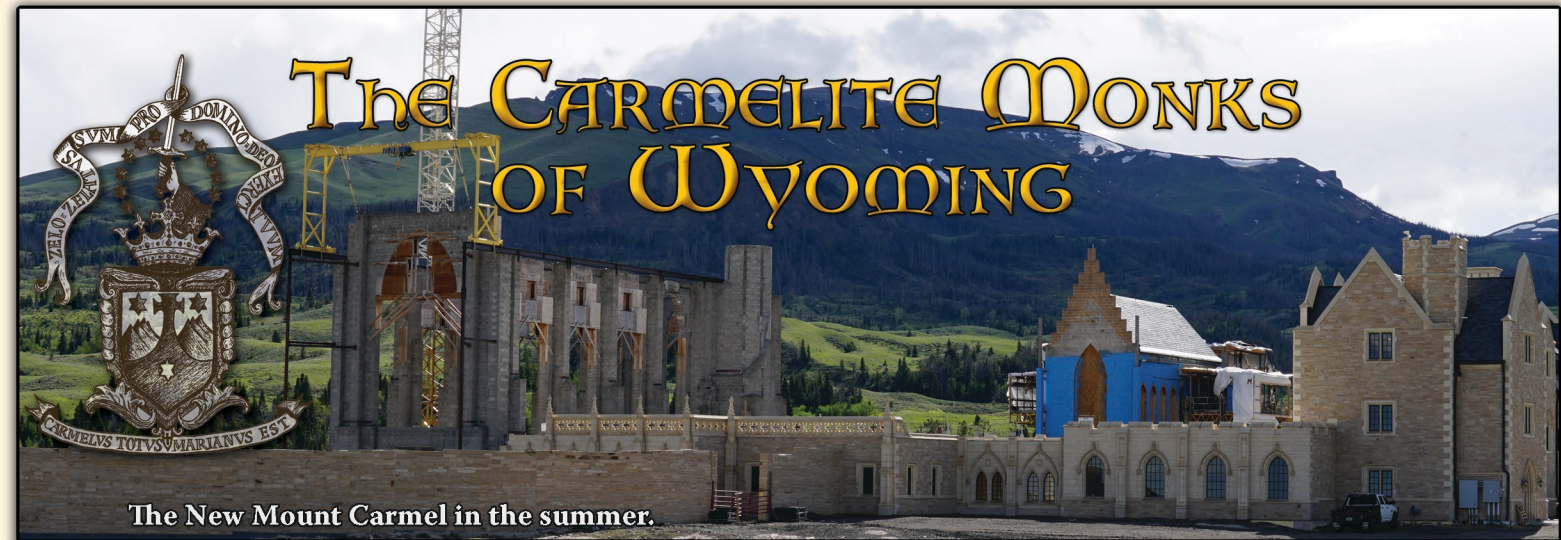




The entire community of the Carmelite Monks.



The New Mount Carmel in the summer.

September 2022  
Newsletter No. 4



Our Lady presenting the Brown Scapular to St. Simon Stock in Gothic portal of Chapter House.

The Carmelite Rite concludes with the singing of the Hail, Holy Queen or Salve, Regina once more greeting the spiritual mother of mankind and begging her to not only turn her maternal eyes upon suffering humanity, but to show us Jesus when this life draws to a close.

With unutterable joy and the warmth of the Blessed Sacrament dwelling in them, the servers and celebrant form a procession from the Holy Altar back to the sacristy as the schola pleasantly chants the Carmelite's favored Marian hymn of St. Simon Stock, *Flos Carmeli*. The candles are extinguished, and the altar covered, as the chant books are returned to the bookshelf. As the crisp morning breeze casts abroad the lingering

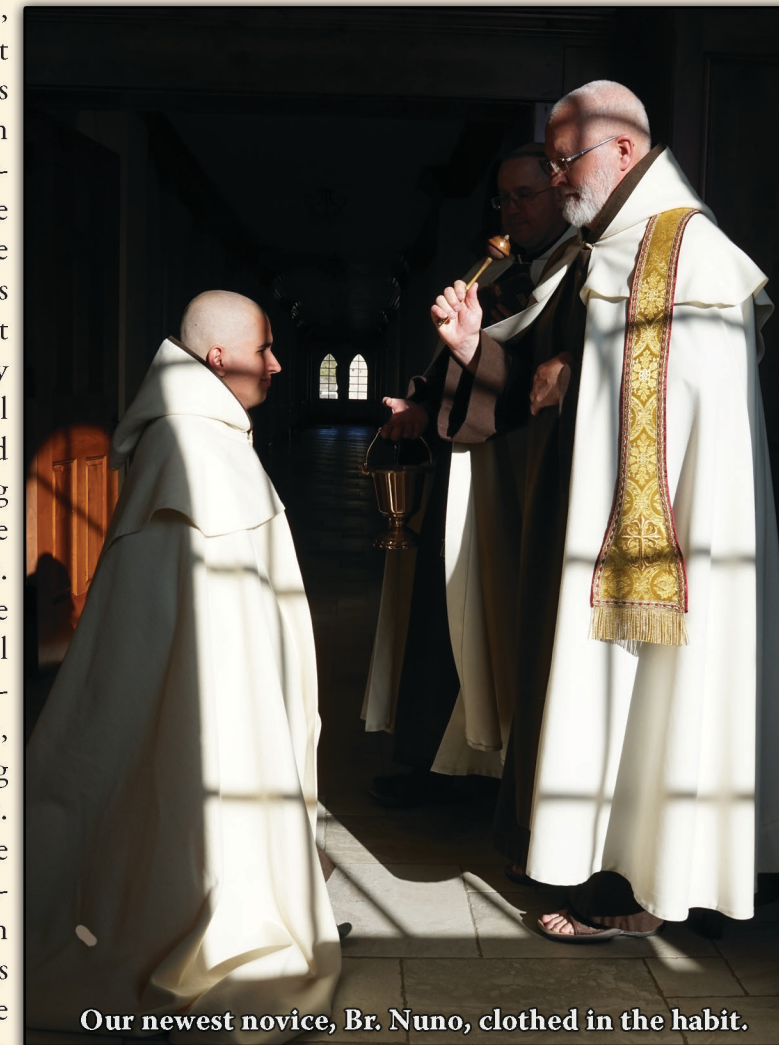
incense, the Fathers and Brothers kneel for a few moments of thanksgiving to try to express the inexpressible. The ancient prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola seems to somehow best articulate the monk's gratitude: "Take Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it. All is Thine; dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me. Amen."

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

The monastic day might be compared to an orchestral arrangement that starts ever so quietly, slowly swelling in instruments, volume, and complexity to a momentous culmination of sound, sentiment, and beauty from which it then just as gradually quiets and retreats into silence. In our exploration of the Carmelite daily schedule, we have now arrived at the apex, the summit, the climax towards which every earlier moment yearns and after which every other communal and personal event finds its meaning and strength in an unending hymn of thanksgiving: the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Having completed the morning hour of mental prayer, the monks now prepare to make Calvary present, but not without first praying the Divine Office of Terce. Chanting from one side of the chapel to the other, the Fathers and Brothers fix both mind and heart on the things of God and the needs of the world while praying three psalms, hearing a reading, singing a responsory, and concluding with a prayer according to the order of the day's feast. Immediately a change can be seen in the interim chapel as the brother sacristans begin to dress the altar, arranging chalice

and missal. The smell of freshly lit charcoal for the thurible sends forth its promising fragrance: It is time for Holy Mass; Jesus is waiting.



Our newest novice, Br. Nuno, clothed in the habit.

As the celebrant vests and the acolytes light their processional candles, the faint hum of a final rehearsal of the day's proper chants can be heard from the monastic choir known as the "schola." Other Fathers and Brothers stilly kneel donned with the white mantle of the Virgin of Carmel, having assumed their places amid the choir stalls, and prayerfully preparing to actively enter into the Eucharistic Sacrifice by prayer, voice, and action. At last, long-awaited, with the sound of the bell, the procession emerges from the sacristy to go before the Holy Altar as the morning's introit is intoned.

The Mass in the monastery is noticeably different from the Mass celebrated in our parishes, something ancient and monastic and proper to the

Carmelite family: the Carmelite Rite. The Carmelite Rite, resplendent with its Gregorian repertoire of chant and richly adorned with the Feasts of the Carmelite Saints, is not, however, a reaction nor a response, but rather serves as the vener-

able liturgical foundation upon which the Carmelite monastic life has been born in its hiddenness and obscurity at the New Mount Carmel. In the constant magisterial teaching of the past century and unto the present, monks have been encouraged to return to the sources of all monastic life—necessarily the Sacred Liturgy in the first place—and from this rich source to adapt themselves to the needs of the present age. Afforded ample time for study of the Latin language, chant, and the rubrics of the Carmelite Rite, the Fathers and Brothers find their prayer nourished and spirituality enriched in this liturgy celebrated throughout the centuries by the Carmelite saints—like the sons of St. Bruno and the Carthusian Rite.

As the Mass advances, the chant swells and the chapel fills with the sweet smell of incense from the thurible. With true contemplative splendor, all of the senses of the monks are taken up in wonder before the Paschal Mystery made present before them: the flickering of the candles serve to incite the monks' faith to illumine the Mystery before them and the world around them; the warmth of the mantle reminds the monks of the tenderness of Mary's maternal love; the delightful aroma of the incense drifts throughout the chapel as a call to distribute grace everywhere by way of monastic witness; the taste of the Eucharist.... I get ahead of myself.

Following the Gloria and Collect Prayer, the readings are proclaimed that the Word of God might not only be heard, but that this true living Word might form every part of the monk, challenging him to be configured more perfectly to Jesus Christ and not merely to know the fullness of Divine

Revelation, but to love and live these same truths in the quest for personal and communal holiness of life. The Gospel challenges and invites a renewed fidelity to the radicalness of the vowed life of obedience, chastity, and poverty with fresh vigor and love. Immediately after, the celebrant descends from the Altar and begins to expound the readings just heard, explicating their meaning for the monastic community there assembled; the priest speaks from the depths of a life of study, laying bare the meanings hidden in the divinely and inerrant Word of God as at once a roadmap to be followed and heights of light and love to be uninterruptedly pursued. In true Carmelite fashion, the celebrant concludes by once again putting before the monks the true foundress of the Carmelite way: the ever-Virgin and Immaculate Mother of God who most perfectly witnesses to what it means to be a follower of Jesus; fittingly the short daily sermon, a fervorino purposed to insight fervor as the name suggests, concludes: "Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pray for us!"

Next, the Offertory of the Mass begins as the priest raises the chalice and paten together, a peculiarity of the Carmelites, making an offering not only of the bread and wine, but of each monk, of those gathered, of those united to this Sacrifice wherever they may be. Having incensed the oblation and com-



Chanting the reading at Mass.

mended the Offering to the prayers of the brothers, the celebrant begins to chant the day's Preface, but not without first inviting the whole world to lift its hearts to the Lord and give Him thanks. As the choir begins the chanting of the Sanctus, recited quietly by the priest, the bells peal their toll as if to say, "Jesus is coming. Prepare yourselves." The priest begins the quiet praying of the canon of the Mass as the prayers of the community intensify that God might "accept, and bless, these gifts, these offerings, these holy and unblemished sacrifices." The monks pray for the Church, the Pope, our diocesan bishop, clerics, laity, and religious, people everywhere cogni-



Br. Nuno receives monastic cincture.

zant that the monastery does not have territorial boundaries like a parish; the monks' prayers must universally extend.

Speaking the words of consecration clearly and intentionally, the bread and wine have been substantially changed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ; a true miracle has been effected upon the Altar this morning—and at every Mass: Jesus is truly present. The acolytes and monks bow low in adoration as the Sacred Host and Precious Blood are raised to the ringing bell. The monk is indeed before God there fully present, united in adoration with all the saints and angels invisibly gathered too around the Holy Altar. The monk must not linger in adoration, however, as St. Peter was tempted on the Mount of Transfiguration, but instead he quickly sets about doing the true work of a contemplative—of distributing grace to souls. With his sister, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, the monk does not merely contemplate on Calvary, but there gathers the Most Precious Blood of the Lord flowing from His pierced side and mystically giving this life-giving Blood of Salvation to souls. As the prayer immediately following the canon manifests—the Pater noster or Our Father—people everywhere long to receive their "daily bread," not only a living wage and the necessities of life, but most especially the Bread of Angels Who alone brings man perfect joy in eternal life. The sins of the world are only perfectly atoned for by Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Peace is exchanged between the monks in a fraternal embrace that begins at the Altar as the priest kisses the pall and

chalice's lip; the charity that reigns between the brothers comes from the source of all charity: God Himself. God, Who is Love, has united the monks at this Mass together in a community of charity. Before receiving into their bodies this loving God, the monks with fraternal warmth and gentle smile, pray as they embrace, "Peace be with you—Pax tecum."

The priest holds elevated in his anointed hands the Eucharist proclaiming with solemn joy: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world." After each has stricken his chest thrice confessing his unworthiness to receive the Lord, the priest begins to distribute Holy Communion to the monks kneeling before him. What unspeakable Mystery! What unspeakable Joy! The one God, living and true, has come as our food to nurture, to heal, to strengthen, to sustain us unto our heavenly home. Simply, truly words fail!

After reposing the King of Kings in the tabernacle and purifying the sacred vessels, the Mass concludes with a final prayer and blessing. Strengthened by the Eucharist received, the monks are sent forth to the various duties of the monastic day.



Detail of Blessed Virgin with Infant Jesus from Chapter House.



Procession at Mass.