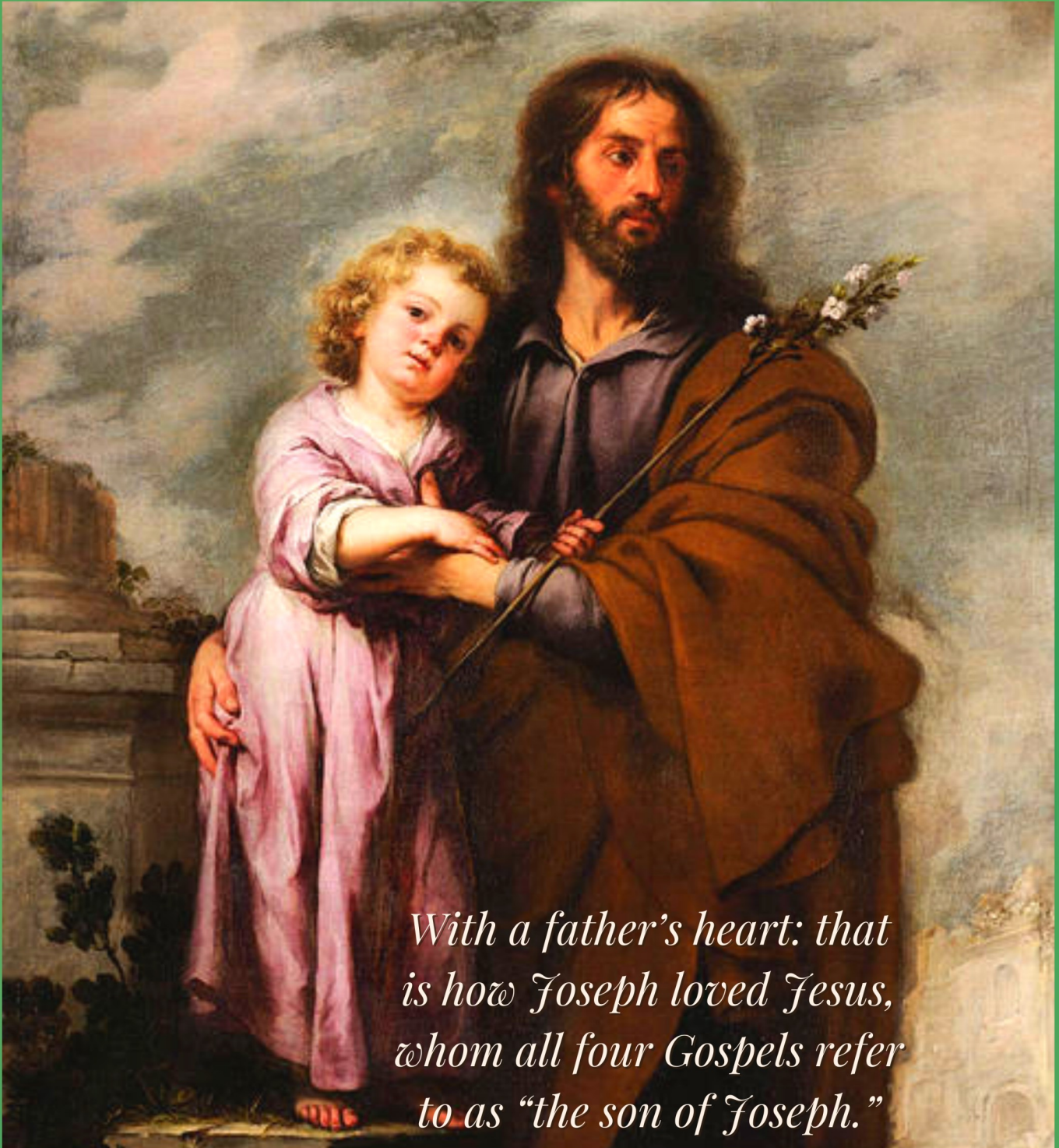


GENTLE BREEZES

WINTER 2021
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OF CARMEL



With a father's heart: that is how Joseph loved Jesus, whom all four Gospels refer to as "the son of Joseph."

ST. THÉRÈSE PROVINCE OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS

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DEAR FRIENDS,

We are at the beginning of a new year and a new liturgical time. We enter this time hoping things will be better than last year. So far, however, these first weeks of the year have not been very different. We are still experiencing changes and trying to adapt to new ways of doing things. At the same time, things we thought were only temporary are beginning to feel as if they are permanent. I know, though, that we must keep living in hope.

As Carmelites, we are called to live a contemplative life, and last year, it seems that many people were able to explore living a more contemplative lifestyle as there was more time to really reflect on many aspects of our lives. Even the Christmas liturgy was a more contemplative experience as we were unable to hold many of our traditional Christmas programs. I think you will agree that 2020 helped us value our need to be alone in the presence of God. Perhaps the difficulties we faced allowed us to be more aware of the presence of God in our lives and helped us to experience more strongly the meaning of the different liturgical seasons.

For many people it may be difficult to start a new year with hope because they are struggling with social isolation, economic stress, sickness, mourning the irreparable loss of a loved one, or with any other impact of COVID-19. To those of you struggling in this way, remember that our Good Lord is still with you and His presence is stronger than ever in your life.

The experiences of last year helped many of us live in a simpler way. Now, at the beginning of this new year, we find ourselves living without many things we thought we could not live without. Living in simplicity, yet still full of hope, not in what we can do, but in what God does for us. Therefore, let this new year begin with a spirit of hope that is rooted in our faith which is renewed everyday with the truth of our Catholic faith. Every day this year we should place ourselves in the hands of our loving Father and ask Him to give us the graces we need in order to be people of faith, hope, and love. Being people of hope means that we are also grateful people: Thanking our God for being faithful to us during the times of uncertainty. Being aware of God's grace in our lives can help us to be people who live their hope through helping others grow stronger and better at fulfilling their call to live as children of God.

Though we are a small group of friars, each one of us dedicates himself to God and to serving His people. We continue restructuring and working to fulfil our Carmelite Vocation and the needs of our mission in the Church. These small steps are an

ongoing process of renewal toward building a stronger future. I invite you to pray for us and with us as we continue our reflection and discernment that will direct our way to renew our commitment to the service of our Church.

We always keep you and your needs present in our prayers and, in a special way, the need for good health. Today we continue our pastoral work applying what we have learned from last year's experiences and look forward to the new challenges related to the ongoing pandemic and its impact in our society, in our personal life, and in our spiritual life. We ask our God in our prayers to give you the hope you need in your life as you face these challenges.

This year our Province, with your support and collaboration, would like to be more present in your spiritual life with our daily prayers as well with our daily Masses and in any other ways we can. I encourage you to join and follow us in our different media platforms. Please remember that we value your love and support.

May the good Lord bless you and your loved ones with faith, hope, love, and good health!



Fr. Luis Castañeda, OCD



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On the Cover:

St. Joseph and the Christ Child
(1665) Bartolomé Esteban Murillo

THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH

Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD

With a father's heart: that is how Joseph loved Jesus, whom all four Gospels refer to as "the son of Joseph".

With these words, Pope Francis opens his Apostolic Letter *Pateris Corde*, in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the declaration of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. In conjunction with this anniversary, the Holy Father has also declared a "Year of St. Joseph" in the Church, extending from December 8, 2020 until December 8, 2021.

In this letter, Pope Francis ascribes many attributes to the fatherly figure of St. Joseph: beloved, tender and loving, obedient, accepting, creatively courageous, working, and fulfilling his mission "in the shadows." The Holy Father seeks to make his reflections on the foster father of Jesus and spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary relevant to the people of the world struggling to cope in this time of pandemic.

In his meditation on St. Joseph as an accepting father, Pope Francis writes:

Often in life, things happen whose meaning we do not understand. Our first reaction is frequently one of disappointment and rebellion. Joseph set aside his own ideas in order to accept the course of events and, mysterious as they seemed, to embrace them, take responsibility for them and make them part of his own history. Unless we are reconciled with our own history, we will be unable to take a single step forward, for we will always remain hostage to our expectations and the disappointments that follow.

The spiritual path that Joseph traces for us is not one that explains, but accepts. Only as a result of this acceptance, this reconciliation, can we begin to glimpse a broader history, a deeper meaning. [...]

Joseph is certainly not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive. In our own lives, acceptance and welcome can be an expression of the Holy Spirit's gift of fortitude. Only the Lord can give us the strength needed to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments.

In describing St. Joseph as a creatively courageous father in his manner of protecting Jesus and Mary from the dangers they faced, Pope Francis reflects:

A superficial reading of these stories can often give the impression that the world is at the mercy of the strong and mighty, but the "good news" of the Gospel consists in showing that, for all the arrogance and violence of worldly powers, God always finds a way to carry out his saving plan. So too, our lives may at times seem to be at the mercy of the powerful, but the Gospel shows us what counts. God always finds a way to save us, provided we show the same creative courage as the carpenter of Nazareth, who was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence.



The Holy Family with a Bird (1650) Bartolomé Esteban Murillo

If at times God seems not to help us, surely this does not mean that we have been abandoned, but instead are being trusted to plan, to be creative, and to find solutions ourselves.

In the history of the Discalced Carmelites, St. Joseph has also been the subject of reflection of our saints. St. Teresa of Jesus, in particular, had a tremendous devotion to St. Joseph and placed the first monastery of Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Avila under his patronage. The saint of Avila had suffered greatly from both a mysterious illness as well as from a treatment for this illness that only seemed to aggravate her sufferings, to the point that she was unable to walk. She attributed the return of her ability to walk to the intercession of this great saint.

Later, St. Teresa encouraged all people to be devoted to St. Joseph. She reflects in Chapter 6 of *The Book of Her Life*:

I do not remember even now that I have ever asked anything of him which he has failed to grant. I am astonished at the great favors which God has bestowed on me through this blessed saint, and at the perils from which He has freed me, both in body and in soul. To other saints the Lord seems to have given grace to succor us in some of our necessities but of this glorious saint my experience is that he succors us in them all and that the Lord wishes to teach us that as He was Himself subject to him on earth (for, being His guardian and being called His father, he could command Him) just so in Heaven He still does all that he asks.

She goes on to recommend St. Joseph also as a teacher of prayer:

Those who practice prayer should have a special affection for him always. I do not know how anyone can think of the Queen of the Angels, during the time that she suffered so much with the Child Jesus, without giving thanks to Saint Joseph for the way he helped them. If anyone cannot find a master to teach him how to pray, let him take this glorious saint as his master and he will not go astray.

Continued on page 4 . . .

CHANGES IN OUR PROVINCE!



Little Flower Basilica

Little Flower OKC

St. Mary of Carmel

Mount Carmel Center

Marylake Monastery

Pastor & Rector:
Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD

Superior:
Fr. Jorge Cabrera, OCD

Community:
Fr. Sam Morello, OCD
Fr. Ralph Reyes, OCD
Fr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, OCD
Fr. Luis Castañeda, OCD

Superior & Pastor:
Fr. Luis Gerardo Belmonte-Luna, OCD

Parish-Vicar:
Fr. Jesus Sancho, OCD

Pastor:
Fr. Jenaro Gonzalez de la Cruz, OCD

Superior:
Fr. John Magdalene Suenram, OCD

Community:
Fr. Marion Joseph Bui, OCD
Fr. James Anthony Curiel, OCD

Superior:
Fr. Jerome Earley, OCD

Community:
Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD
Fr. Henry Bordeaux, OCD
Fr. Stephen Sanchez, OCD

Since our last edition of *Gentle Breezes*, much has happened in our community. From May 25 – June 4, 2020, the friars all gathered at Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas for our once-every-three-years Provincial Chapter. The Chapter acts as a legislative assembly for our region of the Discalced Carmelite Friars. At the Chapter, Fr. Luis Castañeda was installed as our regional superior. Frs. Gregory Ross and John Suenram were elected as his councilors. Also at the Chapter, our region adopted the designation “Semi-Province,” to reflect the way in which we are re-organizing our communities and our place within the worldwide Order of Discalced Carmelites. During the Chapter, all of the friars received their assignments for the 2020–2023 triennium.

Unfortunately, three of the friars left the Chapter with more than just a new assignment. Shortly after our meetings concluded, Frs. Ralph Reyes, John Suenram, and Luis Belmonte all tested positive for Covid-19. Fortunately, and thanks be to God, all of them recovered from their illnesses fairly quickly.



Br. Vladimir Guadalupe, currently at Holy Hill, WI.

In the spring of 2020, our current novice, Br. Vladimir Guadalupe of Sts. Louis and Zelig, was clothed in the Discalced Carmelite habit. Br. Vladimir is receiving his novitiate training at Holy Hill, Wisconsin, along with the novices from the two other Discalced Carmelite provinces of the United States.

During 2020, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of priestly ordination of four of our friars: Frs. Marion Bui, Jerome Early, Jim Curiel, and Gregory Ross. Congratulations to our Silver Jubilarians!



From left to right: Fr. Marion Bui, Fr. Jim Curiel, Fr. Gregory Ross, Fr. Jerome Early, & Fr. Luis Castañeda.

THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH

Continued from page 3 . . .

As we seek to navigate through these trying times with faith and trust in God’s providence as St. Joseph did, may this great saint help us to grow in the virtues that he himself practiced and to discern God’s loving will and grace in our day to day lives. May he intercede for us all in our every need.

Pope Francis concludes his Apostolic Letter on St. Joseph with the following prayer, which we now share with you:

*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.*

*Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil.*

Amen.