



# CHARIOT OF FIRE

We, the Carmelite Friars of the North American Province of Saint Elias, are vowed religious who seek union with God through prayer, fraternity and service to the Church. We strive to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ. Our models are the Prophet Elijah and the Virgin Mary, who listened to and acted on the word of God.

Fall 2021

*"A CHARIOT OF FIRE APPEARED AND ELIAS WENT UP TO HEAVEN IN A WHIRLWIND."  
(2KINGS 2:11)*







# From the desk of the Vocation Director

Fall 2021

Greetings in the Lord,

On September 17<sup>th</sup>, the Carmelites celebrate the feast of Saint Albert of Jerusalem, the lawgiver of the Order. This Rule of Saint Albert has been the spiritual guide for Carmelites since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the Rule, Chapter 8, we read "Each one of you is to stay in his own cell or nearby, pondering the Lord's law day and night and keeping watch at his prayers." and in Chapter 15, "The sword of the spirit, the word of God, must abound in your mouths and hearts."

The emphasis and importance of the Word of God, the scriptures, is a necessary way we discern what God is asking of us. Hearing the Word and praying on the Word results in living the Word. There are times we may wonder whose voice am I listening to, my own or society? To know or to become familiar with the voice of God, we need both to listen and pray as Teresa of Jesus, Carmelite of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, says: pray as if you are talking to a friend, and we pray to the one who already loves us.

In the Gospel, Matthew 8:18-22, there is an encounter of two people who want to follow Jesus, "When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.' Jesus replied, 'Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.' Another disciple said to him, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus told him, 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.'"

These encounters with Jesus show us what happens when we do not listen to God but listen to someone else. Before they approached Jesus, they have specific requirements or defined what discipleship is before they even hear what Jesus has to say. I will do this, Lord but, as we listen to God, we experience the strength he gives us to respond and say yes. It may seem, at times, a leap into the unknown. But prayer, the response from listening, assures us of his continual guidance toward that yes. When we ask the Lord to show the way, we must also listen to what he says. God always answers our prayers, and sometimes we do not hear the voice of God because we are not listening or we have decided what the voice of God should say.

Let us pray that we open our hearts and minds to the voice of Jesus, who says: "Follow me."

God Bless,  
Father Francis



# Saint Albert of Trapani



In 2007, our Prior General wrote a letter to the Carmelite Family on the occasion of the VII centenary of the death of St. Albert Trapani, the image of whom you find on the cover of this Fall issue.

St. Albert was born in Trapani, Sicily, in the XIII century. He governed the first province of the Carmelite Order since the hermits coming from Mount Carmel in the Holy Land arrived in Europe. As the first Provincial of the Province in Sicily, he was famous for his penitence, his passionate love of purity and prayer, and his profound devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus. St. Albert of Trapani was the first saint that was honored by the Carmelite Order. There was a custom from the 16<sup>th</sup> century that every Carmelite Church is to have an altar dedicated to St. Albert of Trapani. The Carmelites who came from Ireland, known as the Province of St. Elias, to the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century dedicated their first House of Studies to St. Albert. Two famous Carmelite Saints had a special devotion to St. Albert: St Therese of the Child Jesus and St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi.

In paintings and stained glass, the saint's life is represented through symbols. For example, a lily, symbolizing the purity of life, an urn symbolizing death to self, or holding in his hand an open or closed book to indicate his widespread activity as a preacher of the Gospel, or holding a crucifix or the Infant Jesus in his arms to express his tender devotion to the humanity of Christ.

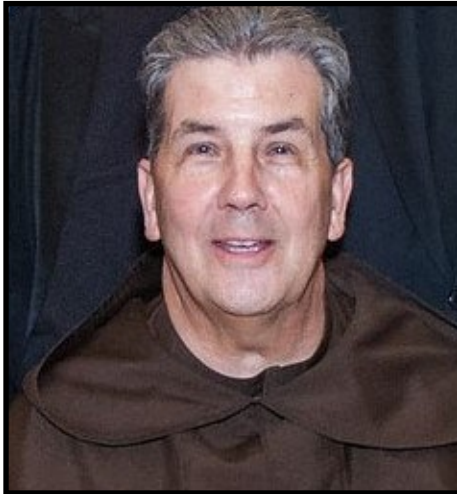
In the letter, our General suggests five fundamental traits to help us on our spiritual journey. They are a man of God, a religious Carmelite, a preacher of the gospel, a performer of miracles and benefactor of the people. St. Albert's dedication to prayer and love of the scripture inspires us to use these spiritual tools to grow in our intimacy with the Lord. A great preacher reminds us that what we say and what we do can influence others to build

the Kingdom of God. To grow in attentiveness to the voice of God, we rely on the scriptures to nourish us and to instruct us to understand God's message. The language of the Word of God gives us direction clearly on how to respond to the Lord. Psalm 36: 30-31 is an excellent summation of the life of this first canonized saint in the Carmelite Order. "The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment; the law of his God is in his heart; his steps shall not falter."

O God, who called Blessed Albert, your Confessor, to the Order of your holy Mother, grant, we beseech you, that by his merits and example we may worthily serve you and, together with him, enjoy eternal goods. You who live and reign, world without end. Amen. St. Albert of Trapani, pray for us.

---

# Rev. John F. Horan, O.Carm.-Pastor St. Jude Parish



In the mid-1980s, I attended an international gathering of the Carmelite Family held at the Carmelite Monastery and Retreat Center in Niagara Falls, Canada. Friars, nuns and laity from the Ancient Observance (O.Carm.) and the Teresian Carmel (OCD) as well as people interested in Carmelite Spirituality came together to reflect on the Carmelite Rule. It was the first time that folks from the various expressions of Carmelite life, from all over the globe, gathered together for such an event. While the talks were profitable, it was the friendships formed and the experience of the Internationality of our Order that has stayed with me to this day. I will never forget a walk down to the majestic Niagara Falls with Sister Vilma Seelaus, OCD. As we walked, Sister Vilma asked me two questions—deep questions that one ordinarily might not ask on a first encounter. The first question was “Who is God for you?” and the second was “How is your ministry a Carmelite ministry?” So much for where are you from and what do you do!

Sister Vilma’s questions have stayed with me throughout the years. In a paragraph or two, I wish to share with those who read this brief article a bit about our Carmelite ministry here at Saint Jude Parish in Boca Raton, FL. The Parish is a little less than 45 years old and the Carmelites have been entrusted with the pastoral care of the Parish since 1994. Saint Jude Parish is composed of about 2,700 households. We are in the southern tip of the Diocese of Palm Beach. Here in Boca Raton we have five Catholic churches, two parish elementary schools (ours being one of them) and a Catholic high school which we friars were administrators of, and taught in, from its opening in 1980 until our departure in 2007.

The sign that identifies our property and welcomes people to our beautiful 15-acre campus identifies us as a Carmelite Community. I asked some of our parishioners what that means to them. Their answers were profound and inspiring. The responses they offered showed me that the Carmelite charism is alive and well here at Saint Jude. Each person spoke of the parish as a family, a community-- united in prayer, with a deep desire to know God, to live according to His will and to be of service in the world—especially to the poor and victims of injustice. As people spoke, I sensed what we refer to as the Elia and Marian dimensions of our life. It is obvious that here at Saint Jude we are all attempting to live “in allegiance to Jesus Christ”.

Each friar who has ministered here has brought his own unique gifts and talents to the parish. A comment often made is that our friars are prayerful men and this shows in our preaching, in the way we celebrate the liturgy and in our attention to the people. Father Richard leads a healing ministry and prayer group here, Father Michael (the first Carmelite pastor of Saint Jude) continues to hold a special place in the hearts and memories of the people and is seen as a good listener, Father Chris is extremely attentive to our Spanish speaking community and I find my greatest joy in our parish school and religious formation program. All four of us who make up the friar community at Saint Jude are bearers of an 800-year-old tradition that is forever young and relevant. Every Carmelite who has been assigned here can testify to the beauty and vitality of this parish. We all feel blessed by our life and ministry here.





# *St. Jude Church—Boca Raton, Florida*





# *Carmelite Formation*

## *From pre-novitiate to priesthood...*



The Carmelites are known most of all for prayer. Having their origins in the land of the great prophet Elijah gave the early Carmelite hermits the dual gift of an active apostolate zeal and contemplative prayer. The Constitutions of the Order of Carmel #15 states “Seeking the face of the living God in a contemplative attitude has shaped the Carmelite life from the very beginning.” Our Priors practice community prayer, which involves the recitation of the Divine Office and times where we meet and pray *Lectio Divina*, the practice of prayerful reflection on scripture. Also, the Constitutions of the Order of Carmel #16 sums up the attitude of the Carmelite: “Contemplation begins when we entrust ourselves to God, in whatever way God approaches us; it is an attitude of openness to God, whose presence we discover in all things.”

The Rule of St. Albert Chapter 2 tells us “In many and various ways the holy fathers established how everyone, whatever his order or whatever kind of religious life he has chosen, must live in allegiance to Jesus Christ and serve him faithfully from a pure heart and a good conscience.”

**Pre-novitiate at Harrison, New Jersey  
St. Elias Priory**

**Simple Profession. Three years of temporary  
vows during which time Internship takes place.  
Whitefriars Hall, Washington D.C.**



**Novitiate at Brandsma Priory on the property of  
the National Shrine of Our Lady of  
Mount Carmel.**

**Solemn Profession. Vows taken for life.**



**Sacrament of Holy Orders**



# *On the journey, we discern the way ahead!*



As we journey towards Mount Carmel, God leads us to the desert, as he led the prophet Elijah. There, the living flame of God's love transforms us, stripping away all that is not of him and all that obscures his gift, allowing the "new creature" the new human being in the image of Christ, to emerge and shine forth in us. (*Carmelite Formation: A Journey of Transformation* , No.1)

---



# *Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel*



It is my particular desire this year to draw your attention to the bond that Carmelites have with the land of Jesus' birth and earthly life and the land in which the Carmelite Order and tradition was founded. It is the land that we continue to honor in our devotion to Mary, whom we recall and honor as Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Lady of the Place. It is that land that Pilgrims and crusaders longed to visit and to protect.

Our Marian tradition has its roots in the dedication to Mary of the first oratory built by the hermits in the midst of their cells, close to Elijah's spring, in one of the peaceful valleys on Mt. Carmel. This meant that they were acknowledging her, the Mother of their Lord, as the Lady of the Place. Both oratory and spring on that mountain in the Holy Land, continue to remind us that our forebears chose to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ, under the loving gaze of Mary and in imitation of her and of the prophet Elijah, whose solemnity we also celebrate in July.

Our forebears were among the many medieval pilgrims who flocked to the Holy Land. Like other pilgrims, they chose to remain there, and eventually sought to form an eremitic community on the slopes of Mt. Carmel. Together they led a life of penance, that is, of ongoing conversion, that they might "live in allegiance to Jesus Christ and serve him with a pure heart and a good conscience." (Rule #2). The notion of allegiance as conceived and lived out in the Middle Ages, meant that these hermit-brothers of Carmel would have developed a living bond with the Holy Land that was then considered to constitute the actual patrimony and kingdom of their Lord. They committed themselves to remain in this land, in their hermitage, engaged in a spiritual battle (Rule #18-19) in the service of their Lord.

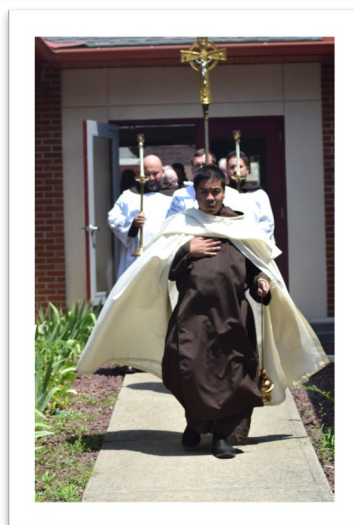
What does the Holy Land represent for the Order today? It certainly reminds us of our origins. Recalling the Holy Land, we are invited to keep alive the spirit that animated those men who left their counties in pilgrimage to the Holy Land and vowed to settle there, living in allegiance to Jesus Christ. These three aspects, being on Pilgrimage, remaining, and living in allegiance to Christ lie at the core of our vocation.

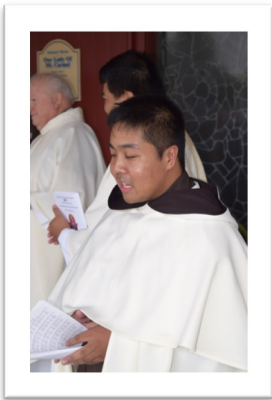
These aspects form the concrete way in which we, as Carmelites, are called to live our allegiance to Jesus Christ. He is and remains the foundation stone of Carmel that cannot be replaced. As we celebrate the solemnity of Our Lady of Mt Carmel and that of the Prophet Elijah, and recall our origins on Mt Carmel in the Holy Land, we are invited to commit ourselves to live in a renewed way the *propositum* of our founding community.

Our July celebrations take us back, as if on a spiritual pilgrimage, to Mt Carmel and the Holy Land.



*Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel*  
*July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021*





## *Solemn Profession of Vows of Brother Von Erick Maria Sandoval, O.Carm.*



**Brother Von professed his vows of obedience, poverty and chastity for life at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Middletown, New York on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021**

Brother Von, as with all Carmelites who profess the evangelical councils of obedience, poverty, and chastity, make a public commitment also to follow the Rule of Saint Albert, the guide on how to live this Carmelite vowed life.

### *Saint Albert of Jerusalem*

The Rule of Saint Albert was given to the Carmelite Hermits on Mount Carmel in the Holy Land by St. Albert Avogardo of Vercelli 1207-1214. Albert was the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. We celebrate the feast of the Lawgiver of the Order, September 17<sup>th</sup>.

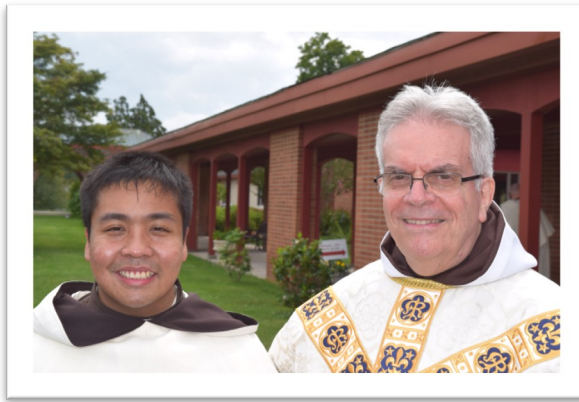


There are four Mendicant Orders in the Catholic Church: The Augustinians who follow the Rule of St. Augustine, the Carmelites who follow the Rule of St. Albert, the Dominicans who follow the Rule of St. Augustine, and the Franciscans who follow the Rule of St. Francis. The Rule expresses the essential spirituality and also emphasizes a

specific aspect of the life of Christ. Each Order has a charism which is expressed in their particular Rule of Life. The Augustinian charism is charity, the Carmelite charism is prayer, the Dominican charism is preaching and the Franciscan charism is poverty. The charism brings to focus an aspect of the life of Jesus which we find in the Gospels. Jesus showed concern for those in need, Jesus who preaches the sermon on the Mount or Jesus who went alone to the mountain to pray or, Jesus who had nowhere to lay his head. Each of these expresses a way of following Jesus as his disciple.







“Here then are a few points I have written down to provide you with a standard of conduct to live up to; but our Lord, at his second coming, will reward anyone who does more than he is obliged to do. See that the bounds of common sense are not exceeded, however, for common sense is the guide of the virtues.” (*Chapter 24 of the Rule of St. Albert*)

*St. Albert of Jerusalem, pray for us.*



Left to Right– Novice Class 2021-2022

Rev. Timothy Ennis, O.Carm., Novice Director

Very Rev. Carl Markelz, O.Carm.

Prior Provincial of the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary (white cloak)

Five New Novices: Jose Carlos Gordillo Garcia, Luis Felipe Ventura Medina,  
Jose Guadalupe Ayala Garcia, Schafer S. Knostman,  
Victor Hugo Andrade Aguilar

Very Rev. Mario Esposito, O.Carm.

Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Elias (white cloak)

Rev. Quinn Connors, O.Carm., Novitiate Director



*For information contact*

*Fr. Francis Amodio, O. Carm.  
Vocation Director*

*Fr. Nicholas Blackwell, O. Carm.  
Associate Vocation Director*

*Office Tel# (845)344-2225*

*Email: [vocations@carmelites.com](mailto:vocations@carmelites.com)*

*Website: [carmelitefriars.org](http://carmelitefriars.org)*



---

Carmelite Friars



Vocation Office

P.O. Box 3079

Middletown, NY 10940-0890

---