



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

"As Carmelites of the North American Province of St. Elias, our primary mission is to follow Jesus Christ through prayer, fraternity, and prophetic service and presence in the spirit of Mary and Elijah. Our chief means for fulfilling this mission is by our lives and ministries."

Fall 2020



The Desk of the Vocation Director

Greetings in the Lord,

In this fall issue of the Chariot of Fire, I have asked some of our student friars to share their experience in formation. As you read their formation stories you will notice common themes which speak to what we call, Carmelite Formation: A Journey of Transformation.

There are two themes I wish to identify as you read their stories:

The first theme speaks about formation as a process, a spiritual journey, as Bro. Dan has stated with its ups and downs. Living in community helps to face these obstacles and to see them as graced moments where God is calling the person to trust Him more and come to a clearer understanding of His will. Our Formation Document of the Carmelite Order states: “We journey with others who have received the same gift and the same calling.” (no.2)



The second theme that emerges as one enters into the stages of Carmelite Formation is the awareness of the action of God. One realizes that the search for God to hear and listen attentively for His voice is essential in this journey of transformation. The recognition of the voice of God clarifies who I am and what a Carmelite is called to be. Relationship with self with God and with the community is the means to understand and articulate the vocation one has received. As Bro. Gregg has written: “... the Carmelite formation program as a journey, one that transforms and continually asks you to look deep inside.”

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, in his message for the 57th World Day of Prayer for Vocations spoke about four key words when we speak about the priesthood. These four words are: pain, gratitude, encouragement and praise. “Every vocation is born of that gaze of love with which the Lord came to meet us, perhaps even at a time when our boat was being battered by the storm. We will succeed in discovering and embracing our vocation once we open our hearts in gratitude and perceive the passage of God in our lives. ‘ Take heart, it is I; have no fear’ (Matthew 14:27)”

I pray that these reflections by our student friars inspire and assist you in your vocation discernment.

In Christ and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel,
Fr. Francis



Cover Picture:- A copy of one of the most famous paintings of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was reproduced for the Carmelite Province of St. Elias in 1946. It is now hanging in the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Brother Daniel Schuler, O.Carm.
Simple Profession of Vows
Whitefriars Hall
Washington DC



My name is Br. Dan and I've been with the Carmelites for almost four years. I am originally from Northern Minnesota from the Diocese of Duluth. I moved to Harrison, New Jersey, St. Eliseus Priory, our pre-novitiate, January of 2017 to start my philosophy studies at Seton Hall University. A year and a half later I entered the Novitiate, Brandsma Priory, Middletown, New York and professed my Simple Vows on June 10th, 2019. For the past year, I have been in Washington, DC, our house of studies, called Whitefriars Hall, studying theology at The Catholic University of America and involved in pastoral ministry at a local parish in Maryland.

This summer, the plan was to study the Spanish language in Peru. Since COVID-19, the plans had to be adjusted. Currently, I am taking an intensive Spanish course in DC. I am learning Spanish in order to be a better minister so that I may serve the Hispanic people on a more personal level. At the end of this summer, I will be moving to the Bronx for a year of internship at our parish and school, St Simon Stock. I will be putting the Spanish I learned this summer into good use.

Brother Jonathan Steele, O.Carm.
Simple Profession of Vows
Whitefriars Hall
Washington DC



What God wants and what I want are ultimately the same thing – my happiness. Formation has not been the same since this revelation. Formation for me has been a joyful journey of becoming who I am called to be in God. I have found freedom in faith, knowing that God is forming me in secret ways that no one can disrupt but also in natural ways that I may work alongside Him. Of course, there have been difficult moments, but in those moments, I trust in His love and once I remember that we are on the same team, those difficult moments are turned into joy.

In community also: we are on the same team. In the brothers I have found the wisdom of God who chose each of us from all eternity to be part of this Carmelite family. In community, I have found support and challenges, sometimes tangled together in a single experience. We share our joys and sorrows, grow in friendship and learn from each other. Formation has made me grateful for each community, for family, for the ones who keep us humble.



Father Mikhail Woodruffe, O.Carm.

I had the honor to serve as deacon for the first time at Holy Thursday Mass at our Carmelite Community in Washington, DC . My first Holy Thursday as a deacon was without a public gathering and without the washing of feet given the COVID- 19 pandemic. I experienced God’s invitation to see the many ways that I was called to “wash the feet of others.” The liturgy was comprised of our Carmelite brothers from various countries and livestream viewing was made accessible for the public. I was reminded that charity begins at home, in our religious community.

The deacon is called to serve Christ and the Church, fundamentally all people. This ministry includes acts of charity, serving at the altar and service of the Word of God. I was ordained a deacon with two of my Carmelite classmates, on September



CHRIST WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET
PARIS, FRANCE - INTERIOR OF THE NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL IN PARIS

7th 2019 and to the priesthood on May 30th, 2020. I am humbled by God’s call to be a contemplative in God’s service. Preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Orders is a time of intensified prayer and a reminder that the Carmelite life is centered in contemplation from which flows our ministry. As a Deacon, I joyously presided at infant baptisms at my parish assignment. During the holiday of Thanksgiving I assisted in distributing food for the needy. Due to the pandemic, I prepared homilies for my community and recorded video homilies for online parish Masses. I found myself recognizing most importantly God’s presence and bringing to prayer those who need it most in this global pandemic. Since I cannot at this time travel to my ministry assignment in my country, Trinidad and Tobago, I am currently serving in our parish, St. Jude’s, in Boca Raton, Florida. I am humbled to receive this call from Christ.

Brother Gregg Durham, O.Carm.



I am Br. Gregg Durham, O. Carm., from Trinidad and Tobago, currently in the formation program in the United States of America. In June 2020, I completed my novitiate year, at Brandma Priory, Middletown New York, and professed my simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. I am now preparing to begin my theological studies at our formation house, Whitefriars Hall, Washington DC.

One question that I have gotten in the last few weeks since professing my vows: Do you feel any different? My simple answer at times is no, not really, or check back with me in a month when the dust has settled. Yet, spending some time pondering this question, I have reflected on the Carmelite formation program as a journey, one that transforms and continually asks you to look deep inside. The reason why I seem to feel no different after professing vows is that God has always been present to guide me with his peace. God continues to show me the right path that by his grace I follow. It was not an excitable moment since God has been working with me throughout the formation process.

Our profession day, June 8th 2020, for our class was certainly surreal, especially as we were in the midst of a global pandemic with so many restrictions. The latter half of our novitiate year was unique since many of the regular events in the novitiate had to be cancelled. Since we were home bound our novitiate class grew closer together and appreciated a deeper understanding of our faith and the value of community. It was time for me to look back and simply smile since no one would think we were in this situation. Somehow, I view it, with a thankful heart. Facing many obstacles, accompanied by my fellow novices and my formators that journeyed with me, makes this Carmelite path the blessing that it is.

LIFE IN THE PROVINCE OF SAINT ELIAS

“The author of our Rule, Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, addresses the hermits as “fratres,” This means that we are called to live out our contemplative vocation together, in community, not on our own”.

(Ratio Carmelite Formation: A Journey of Transformation no. 40)

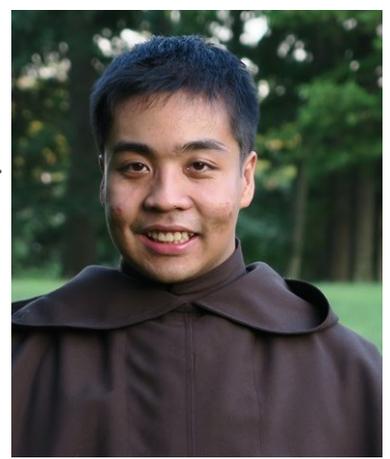


LIFE IN THE PROVINCE OF SAINT ELIAS

Brothers of The Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel



Brother Von Erick Sandoval, O.Carm.



In the month of July, the Carmelite Order celebrated the Feast of its patrons: the Prophet Elijah and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The various titles attributed to Our Lady are often associated with the place of Mary's apparitions. The title Our Lady of Mount Carmel is unique. This title is named after a place dedicated to Mary, not an apparition. The word "Carmel" or "Karmel" means a garden. When we think of a garden, we often think of a place of solitude and stillness and beauty. This solitude and stillness is found in our patron the Prophet Elijah. In the book of Kings, we read about the Prophet Elijah and his faithfulness to the one true God of Israel. The Prophet, who was fleeing in fear from Queen Jezebel, hid in a cave and stayed there until God spoke to him. In that encounter with God on the mountain, Elijah the Prophet exclaimed: (19:10) "*with zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of Hosts.*" This statement by Elijah has been the Carmelite motto since its original foundation on Mount Carmel. This motto of zealous zeal for the Lord God of Hosts is lived out by the Carmelite through prayer, contemplation, and listening to the Word of God.

From the beginning the early Carmelite hermits who lived on Mount Carmel in Palestine, echoed their two patrons. The rule of St. Albert describes that these hermits lived near the fountain of Elijah. We know from tradition that their church was dedicated to St. Mary who was the Lady of the place. Hence the title Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The hermits imitated both Mary and Elijah as they lived in solitude contemplating the Word of God. In the gospel of Luke, the Annunciation story (1:26-38), we hear Mary's response to the angel Gabriel "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word."



Formation House for Theology Students– Whitefriars Hall Washington, DC

Brother Von Erick Sandoval, O.Carm (continued)

There are three qualities of living in the presence of God that both the Prophet Elijah and Mary foster: silence, meditation and contemplation. We are told in the New Testament that Mary treasured these things in her heart. St. Teresa of Jesus once said, *“nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.”*

The Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel as mentioned before, live according to the Rule of St. Albert. Like all religious orders who profess the three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, each Order has a distinctive charism and habit that makes them unique. One of the pieces of the Carmelite habit is the brown scapular which was given to Saint Simon Stock from the Blessed Mother in 1251. The scapular is an important sacramental to the Carmelite Order and also in the Catholic Church. It is a “symbol of filial and grateful recognition of the mission that the Most Blessed Trinity willed to confide to Mary in the history of salvation.” Furthermore, the enrollment in the scapular fraternity calls each member to enter more deeply into the Carmelite spirit, to live its ideals and its history. Wearing of the scapular one cooperates as Mary cooperated with the will of God in her yes to the angel.

The Carmelite habit is a reminder as the rule of St. Albert states: “to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ.” The lay faithful who devoutly wear the scapular make this same promise. The scapular is also a reminder of our baptismal garment. Just as in Baptism when we put on our Lord Jesus Christ, so too putting on the brown scapular we put on the virtues and attitude of Mary the Mother of God. We strive to be open to God’s will and listen to his Word found in the Scripture.

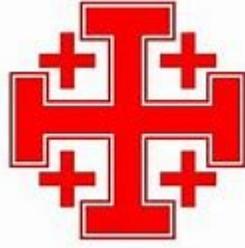
Perhaps the most important understanding of the scapular is the promise of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The promise is based on two elements: Mary’s maternity and her mediation of grace. By wearing the scapular, one is whole-heartedly acknowledging that Mary is the ‘spiritual’ mother of all humanity. At the foot of the cross, Christ told the beloved disciple “here is your mother” (John 19:27), we take to heart that Christ invites us to welcome the Blessed Mother and share in her love for us. This is one of the reasons why Catholics invoke the protection and prayers of the Blessed Mother in times of trial and tribulation.

The Prophet Elijah and Mary are the two models of the Carmelite Order. These two figures drawn from both the Old Testament and the New Testament exemplifies what it means to live in the presence of God. These spiritual models, Elijah and Mary are celebrated by the Carmelite Order within days of each other. The Prophet Elijah is celebrated annually July 20th and Our Lady of Mount Carmel July 16th. St. John of the Cross, 16th century Spanish Carmelite, in his writing, the Ascent of Mount Carmel, reminds us to grow in holiness and perfection. We look to the Prophet Elijah and Our Lady of Mount Carmel as the first models of holiness and perfection. May they help us to enter into the depths of God and to simply be in His presence.

**Year of Vocations
2019-2020**

“An oratory sufficiently large, shall be constructed in the middle of the cells, where you shall gather early each day to hear Mass, where this can be conveniently done.”

**The Rule of Saint Albert
Chapter 11**



The Carmelite Rite was derived from the Rite Of the Holy Sepulchre. Since the Carmelites began their existence on Mount Carmel in Palestine, they lived under the protection of The Diocese of Jerusalem which included the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



Father Lucian Beltzner, O. Carm. celebrated the ancient Carmelite Rite at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Middletown, New York.



Year of Vocations 2019-2020

By our lives of prayer, brotherhood, and service, may we inspire others to walk with us



**ORDER OF CARMELITES
NORTH AMERICAN
PROVINCE OF ST. ELIAS**



MISSION STATEMENT
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 work of God.



SAINT ELIAS PROVINCE OF THE CARMELITE ORDER

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