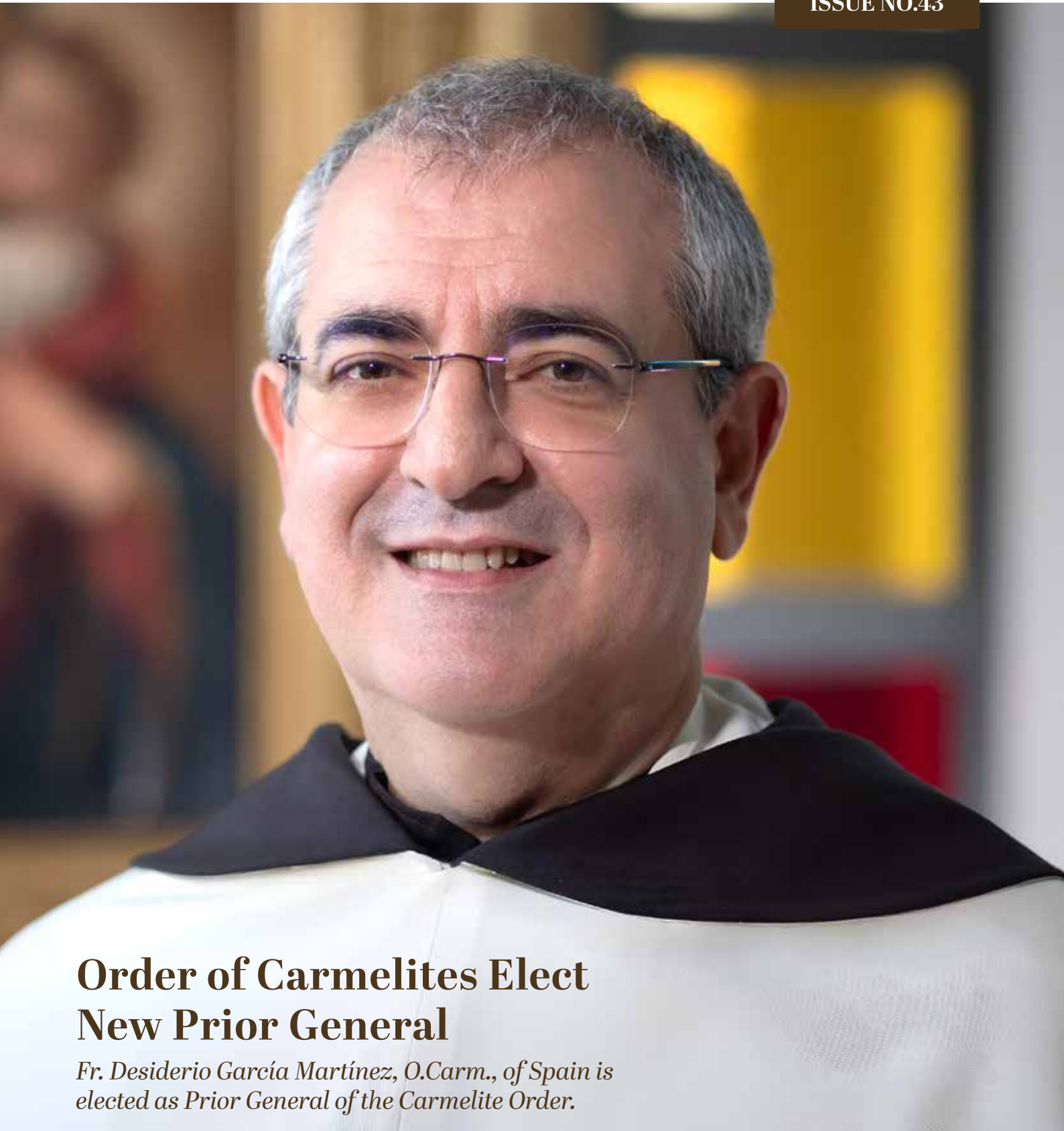


CARMELITE CONTACT

Newsletter of the Irish Province of Carmelites

ISSUE NO.43



Order of Carmelites Elect New Prior General

*Fr. Desiderio García Martínez, O.Carm., of Spain is
elected as Prior General of the Carmelite Order.*



L to R: Fr. Desiderio García Martínez, Fr. Franciscus Xaverius Hariawan Adji, Fr. Rolf Nepomuk Willemsen, Fr. Robert Thomas Puthussery, Fr. Richard Byrne, Fr. Eric Chrisostome N'Do

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR THE CARMELITE ORDER

With gratitude and confidence in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Carmelite Order joyfully announces the election and confirmation of Fr. Desiderio García Martínez, O.Carm., as Prior General of the Order.

Born in Spain in 1970, Fr. Desiderio is a member of the Province of Aragon, Castile and Valencia. Fluent in English, Spanish, and Italian, he has served the Order in numerous capacities: as Novice Master in Aylesford and Salamanca (1997–2009 and 2011–2017), Prior Provincial (2017–2023), Parish Priest and Counsellor for Religious Life (2009–2011 and 2023–2025). A scholar of Biblical theology and Hebrew philology, he brings both pastoral depth and academic insight to his new role.

As Prior General, Fr. Desiderio now assumes the ministry of leadership for the worldwide Carmelite family, continuing the Order's mission of prayer, fraternity, and service to the Church.

The Carmelite family extends its sincere gratitude to Fr. Míceál O'Neill, O.Carm., for his six years of dedicated service as Prior General, marked by wisdom, generosity, and a deep commitment to the charism of Carmel.

Alongside Fr. Desiderio, the following have also been elected and confirmed:

- Fr. Franciscus Xaverius Hariawan Adji, O.Carm. (Indonesian Province) – Vice Prior General
- Fr. Michael Farrugia, O.Carm. (Maltese Province) – Procurator General
- Fr. Christian Körner, O.Carm. (German Province) – Bursar General

The New and Returning General Councillors

The General Chapter further elected and confirmed the following brothers to the General Council:

- Fr. Rolf Nepomuk Willemsen, O.Carm. (Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary) – Councillor General for the Americas
- Fr. Robert Thomas Puthussery, O.Carm. (Indian Province) – Councillor General for Asia, Australia, and Oceania
- Fr. Richard Byrne, O.Carm. (Irish Province) – Councillor General for Europe
- Fr. Eric Chrisostome N'Do, O.Carm. (Baetica–Burkina Faso) – Councillor General for Africa

Together, this newly formed General Council is entrusted with guiding the Order for the next six years, fostering unity, collaboration, and fidelity to the Carmelite charism across diverse cultures and regions.

As the Order enters this new chapter of leadership, we give thanks for the faith and generosity of these brothers who have accepted this responsibility of service.

May the Lord, through the intercession of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, bless their ministry and strengthen the bonds of fraternity within the global Carmelite family.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pray for us.



Fr Michael Troy, O.Carm.

At a meeting of the North European Region during the General Chapter of the Carmelite Order, Fr Michael Troy, O.Carm. (Irish Province) was elected President of the North European Region for a two-year term.

He assumes this role as key regional initiatives in formation, pilgrimages, youth ministry, and mission continue to grow and strengthen across Northern Europe.

Sincere thanks are extended to Fr. Brendan Grady, O.Carm. (British Province) for his dedicated leadership and service in this role over recent years.

A SEASON OF PILGRIMAGE AND RENEWAL FOR THE IRISH CARMELITES

This year marked a season of deep faith and community for the Carmelite Family in Ireland, as members of the Province participated in three significant pilgrimages — to Rome, Lourdes, and Knock — each one offering a unique opportunity for renewal, reflection, and encounter with God through the charism of Carmel.

Youth Pilgrimage to Rome

Fifty young pilgrims from across Ireland joined the European Carmelite Pilgrimage to Rome for the Jubilee of Youth, led by Fr. Simon Nolan, O.Carm., Prior Provincial. The group's days were filled with prayer, celebration, and encounters that strengthened their faith at the heart of the Church.

After stepping through the Holy Door at St Peter's Basilica, the young pilgrims were enrolled in the Brown Scapular by Fr. Simon in the chapel of the Carmelite Centro Internazionale di Sant'Alberto — a profound act of devotion and commitment to live under Our Lady's protection.

Fr. Simon later served as celebrant and preacher at the Jubilee of Youth Mass in the Basilica of San Martino ai Monti, where he encouraged the young people to open their hearts to God's transforming grace, reminding them that "this pilgrimage is not just about

"You realise you're not alone in your faith — there's so much hope in the world; we just have to look for it."

Mary from Dublin

being in Rome, it is about starting a new path in your heart."

The pilgrims also took part in the Jubilee Vigil in St Peter's Square, joining hundreds of thousands of young Catholics in prayer and song. For many, it was a moment of joyful encounter and renewed hope. As one participant reflected, "You realise you're not alone in your faith — there's so much hope in the world; we just have to look for it."

National Pilgrimage to Lourdes

Soon after, the Irish Carmelite Province gathered once again in faith during the National Pilgrimage to Lourdes, led by Fr. Éanna Ó hÓbáin, O.Carm. Joined by a large number of young helpers, the group spent five days in prayer, service, and reflection at the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Highlights included Mass in the Underground Basilica, the Stations of the Cross at the Espélugues, and the Marian Torchlight Procession, where pilgrims walked by candlelight, singing Ave

Maria in a moving expression of unity and devotion. The pilgrimage offered all participants a chance to renew their trust in God's healing presence through the intercession of Our Lady.

Carmelite Pilgrimage to Knock

The season concluded closer to home, as the Carmelite Family — both O.Carm. and OCD — came together at Knock Shrine on 14 September, Ireland's National Marian and Eucharistic Shrine. Presided over by Fr. James Noonan, OCD, with Fr. Vitalis Chiromba, O.Carm., preaching the homily, the day was one of prayer, fraternity, and thanksgiving.

The gathering reflected the deep bonds within the wider Carmelite family and the enduring role of Our Lady of Knock as a source of unity and grace for all who seek her intercession.

Across Rome, Lourdes, and Knock, these pilgrimages served as living reminders of the Carmelite call to contemplation, community, and service. Whether walking through the Holy Door, carrying candles through Lourdes, or praying at Knock, the Irish Carmelite family continues its journey of faith — strengthened by shared prayer, renewed hope, and the unifying love of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.



Members of the Irish Province of Carmelites along with the group of Irish pilgrims pose for a group photo while in Rome for the Jubilee of Youth.

WHEN THE NIGHT LEARNS TO GLOW

On Waiting, Watching, and the Hidden Glow of God's Coming

By Fr Vitalis Chiromba, O.Carm.

Advent is the season when God teaches the world how to wait. It is the Church's quiet beginning, resting between darkness and dawn, listening for the first heartbeat of grace. In the ancient rhythm of the Christian year, Advent stirs like the first light beneath the horizon. It is the gentle awakening of hope in all creation.

From the Latin *adventus*, meaning "coming," this sacred time began as preparation for baptism. Over the centuries it became a season of longing, for the Child once born in Bethlehem and for the Lord who still comes to us. Advent brings together remembrance, hope, and readiness. It calls us to wait in love for what is always being born anew.

When we light the first candle, a small trembling flame in the dark, we glimpse the mystery of waiting. The light seems fragile, almost uncertain, yet this is the wonder of Advent. Even the smallest light is enough for those who choose to watch and trust. The Church wraps

herself in twilight colours of violet and deep blue, the shades of mystery before sunrise, and she whispers again her ancient promise: He has come, and He is still coming.

In the Carmelite spirit, light and silence belong together. The gentle flame teaches us how to pray: to burn quietly, to give warmth without calling attention, and to stay faithful through the long night. Waiting, for the contemplative heart, is never wasted time. It is love leaning forward, a silence that listens and endures.

Ours is a world that has forgotten how to wait. Our days rush by, and our hearts grow restless for results. Yet the God of Advent does not hurry. He comes quietly, not in the storm but in the whisper, not in brilliance but in the small glow that shines through ordinary things: a kind word, a patient act, the courage to hope again. Advent invites us to slow down and notice the light already shining within our days.

Mary waited. Joseph trusted.

The prophets hoped. The shepherds kept watch through the night. This is our Advent rhythm: to wait in hope, to trust in love, to stay awake to grace. The Carmelites call Mary Our Lady of Expectation, the woman whose waiting became a home for the Word. She shows us how silence can blossom into incarnation and how patience becomes the cradle of God's promise.

Yet Advent is not only our waiting for God. It is also God's waiting for us. The Creator is patient, not because He delays, but because He loves. He waits as a gardener waits for a seed to open, as a friend waits to be welcomed. The mystery of the Incarnation shows us a God who does not hurry but nurtures, whose patience is the slow rhythm of redemption, whose light grows quietly in the dark.

So we keep our vigil, candle in hand and peace in heart. We wait, we watch, and we trust that even now the night is learning to glow.



Carmelites leaving St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, following the Evangelium Young Catholic Apologetics Conference on April 26.

LAY CARMEL ASSEMBLY AT GORT MUIRE

On Saturday (18 October), members of the Lay Carmel/Third Order gathered at Gort Muire for a day of prayer and reflection.

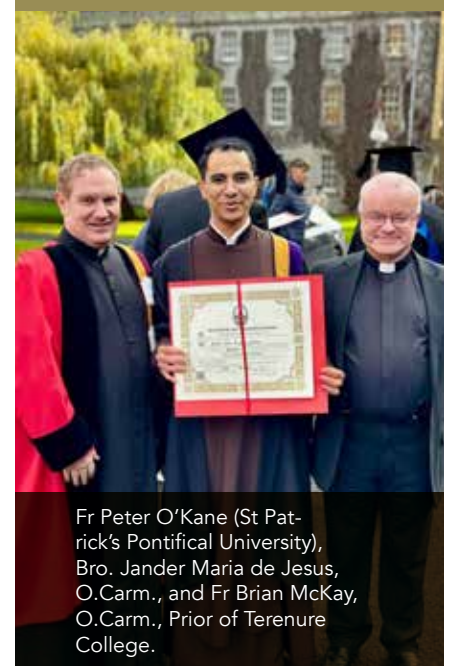
Presentations were given by Fr Joe Mothersill, O.Carm., Fr Brian McKay, O.Carm., and Bro. Jander Maria de Jesus,

O.Carm., with Fr Brian as celebrant for the Mass.

Over 25 people attended, representing Lay Carmel communities from Cork, Moate, Kildare, and Dublin — a wonderful representation of the Carmelite family across Ireland.



Bro. Paul Nayak, O.Carm. with Fr Martin Kilmurray, O.Carm., Prior of Gort Muire.



Fr Peter O'Kane (St Patrick's Pontifical University), Bro. Jander Maria de Jesus, O.Carm., and Fr Brian McKay, O.Carm., Prior of Terenure College.

Congratulations to Bro. Paul, who received a Huxley Biblical Greek Prize at the Maynooth Prizegiving, and to Bro. Jander, who graduated from St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth.

A wonderful celebration of dedication, study, and faith — congratulations to both brothers on these achievements!

Wait for the Lord
Advent Vigil Retreat
Young Adult

SPEAKERS

Fr. Seamus Nolan, O.Carm.
Fr. Vitalis Chiramba, O.Carm.
Jander Maria de Jesus, O.Carm.

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ADVENT FIGURES: JOHN & MARY

By C. O'Donnell, O.Carm.

Advent is with us once again. It comes around so soon. In its simplest expression it is a season of preparation for Christmas.

The origins of Advent show a twofold focus: it commemorates Christmas, which is the birthday of Christ; it anticipates his final coming at the end of time, the latter more associated with the Gallican Church. The core of Advent, from the 17 to 24 December marked by the 7th century "O Antiphons" is ascetical and penitential. This asceticism is part of an ancient Christian motif of preparing for the celebration of feasts by a fast, and also a counter to the ribald celebration of Saturnalia in early January. In time the parallel with Lent became more marked, especially though liturgical notes of Lenten purple, dropping the *Gloria, Te Deum, Alleluia*. It would seem that the Dies irae was an Advent chant before it became associated with funerals. Hence the penitential aspect was directed both towards the celebration of Christmas, and to the eschatological reflections that the first Coming of Christ gave rise to. Advent varied somewhat from Church to Church, but became standardised in the West by the 12th century.

The idea of Advent brings up the whole complicated issue of the meaning of the liturgical year and the issue of time. I am afraid that after reading literature on liturgical time, I am still in the position of Augustine when he says in his *Confessions*: "What is time then? If nobody asks me I know: but if I wanted to explain it to somebody that asked me, then plainly I do not know" (11:14). There are two main expressions of time in our lives: there is linear time as we progress from birth to grave, paralleled by the Church's pilgrimage from Pentecost to the Second Coming of Christ. There is also the cyclic time of the liturgy: there is a yearly repetition of feasts and celebrations. But simple as this sounds, it is more complicated as we look more carefully at it. There is the great Paschal feast that celebrates the death and glorification of the Lord. But this is celebrated each Sunday, which has a paschal character. But in daily Eucharist there is also a celebration of the

Paschal Mystery. Everything is present to God's eternal "now;" the liturgy always celebrates in the present, even as it commemorates and in a sense makes present the past and reaches towards the future.

What then are we to make of the seasons? They operate at a human level that needs anniversaries to recall key events of life. They also take account of the human problem with mystery: we cannot take in mystery; we can only take a small piece at a time. We remember, we reflect on the events in the life of the Lord and in the life of the Church. The cyclic liturgical year affords us this opportunity.

But the reflection is not any kind of consideration. It is one guided by the Church, which teaches, instructs, admonishes, and refreshes us through the Word of God. The key of each constituent part of liturgical time, be it a feast or a season, is to be sought in the readings proposed by the Church. Liturgical time can valuably be seen as various opportunities of recall and anticipation in which God's Word addresses us in the present to unfold part of the mystery to us, and invite our response in the "now" of our celebration.

Coming now to Advent the dynamic of the Word of God unfolds in prophecy and in memory. We stand with the people awaiting a Saviour announced by the prophets; we reflect on the coming of this same Saviour and we prepare to welcome him into our lives. The complex readings of Advent and their message are admirably summarised in the Second Advent Preface.

His future coming was proclaimed by all the prophets.

The virgin mother bore him in her womb with love beyond all telling.

John the Baptist was his herald and made him known when at last he came.

In his love Christ has filled us with joy as we prepare to celebrate his birth,

So that when he comes he may find us watching in prayer,

Our hearts filled with wonder and praise.

This marvellously succinct text directs our thoughts at the prophets, at John the Baptist, at Mary and at ourselves in the Church.

The Prophets

The prophets saw darkly the fulfilment of God's promise of redemption.

The people interpreted the prophets' teaching, often distorting it, so that by the time Chits came, man expected a political leader, a secular saviour.

The Church the guardian of the prophetic word has to exercise constant discernment lest it distort the Word and be conformed to the values of this world.

John and Mary

The two key figures of Advent are a man and a woman, John and Mary.

John the Baptist

John identified the Messiah and correctly interpreted his mission as a spiritual one that needed the preparation of repentance and baptism.

The rugged figure of John is surely a male, yang one, with a distinctive animus.

He preaches with clarity, the hard brightness of the yang:

He can work out appropriate behaviour patterns for society rejects like soldiers, "take no more than your pay."

He can see through the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders and challenge them to repentance.

His sense of uprightness and order tells him that Jesus ought to baptise him, not he Jesus.

He effaced himself before Christ, knowing that the spotlight was not to rest on him but on the Messiah (see John 3:27-30); ultimately he was not the light, but a witness to the light (see John 1:1:7-9).

He began a conversion movement that was so successful that even in the 80s New Testament authors, especially Luke, saw the need to play down his significance, lest he be a threat to the mission of Jesus.

All in all a fine example of left-hand brain at work.

But when it came to the crunch he was assailed by doubts. From prison he sends messengers to Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to await another?" (see Matt 11:2-6). John saw Jesus fulfilling part only of the Word that he John had received; there, was, however, no sign of discerning fire, and depressed in prison, John was disturbed.

God's word presents the person and message of John to us each year. We must hear his message of conversion. We as Church must be Christ's herald, making him known.

Mary

But the picture of John needs to be complemented by Mary. The study maleness of John must ultimately yield to Mary the female paradigm of the Church.

The Church is reminded each Advent that it must above all be contemplative, feminine, intuitive.

The hard Yang of John needs the corrective of the Marian Yin, the Church cannot live only by animus, it needs the anima, of heart and love.

The Church has many feasts of Mary, but the Marian season is Advent.

It is the contemplative Mary who ponders in her heart (Luke 2:19.51) and who stands at the foot of the Cross, who ultimately penetrates the meaning of her Son.

John points out the mystery; but only Mary was seized by it.

It is important that we gaze at the mystery, but it is more important that we surrender to its gaze.

Watching in Prayer

The conversion call of John is to prepare us for two dispositions: to be filled with joy, watching in prayer.

Shortly before his death in 1982, Karl Rahner spoke of the present time of the Church as a wintry time (*eine winterliche Zeit*). It is still with us. At times one senses that the present Holy Father's calls to Christian optimism are like the self-sustaining music of one who whistles passing a graveyard.

But he is still right. Times indeed may be wintry, but the coming of the Lord is a constant motive for joy.

But we are to be found "watching in prayer" our hearts filled with praise (*in orationis pervigiles et in suis inveniat laudibus exultantes*). "Watching" is an Advent word. Indeed to get the flavour of the Latin, we would have to say, "intensely watching" (*pervigiles*). Advent brings us to the depth of watching.

Watching

It is a major theme in the scriptures. In the preaching of Jesus there are frequent warnings to be alert and to watch, because we do not know when he will return. There is a double sense of his coming. At some unknown time, perhaps soon, he will return and we must be alert and watchful, our lamps burning as we await him. But even more urgent is the fact that probably much sooner he will call each of us to himself as we pass over into eternity. We are then in the words of Paul to avoid the works of darkness and to watch and be sober (see 1 Thess 5:6 and Rom 13:11-14).

It is this sense of watching that we find in the First Advent Preface: "Now we watch for the day, hoping that the salvation promised us will be ours, when Christ our Lord will come again in his glory." We watch for we know not the day and the hour of the Lord's coming.

But there is another aspect of watching: "Watch and pray that you do not invite temptation" were the words of Jesus to the sleeping disciples in the Garden (Matt 26:41); and sure enough Peter who slept and failed to be watchful was soon to betray the Lord.

We must be watchful because of the



Young Carmelite friars, studying at St Patrick's Pontifical University, pictured after the opening-of-the-academic-year Mass.

dangers of this present life, especially the ever-present menace of Satan: "Be sober and watch! Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion goes about looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet 5:8).

The early Church practices vigils (see Eph 6:18) as night-time was especially the time for evil. Our Rule is even more demanding, "pondering the law of the Lord day and night and keeping watch in prayers."

This Christian watchfulness is not only a way of avoiding evil, an Advent theme, but it is the way in which we will be most conformed to Mary, who penetrated the mystery in her watchful heart.

But there is a final note in this marvellous Advent preface: we are not only to be found "watching in prayer" but with "our hearts filled with wonder and praise." These are the right attitudes before the mystery.

If we rightly think of Christmas as a time belonging particularly to children, then Advent is time when we prepare most to enter that child's mind that is put before all disciples of Jesus: we must become small in wonder, so that we can expand in praise.



We share the joy of welcoming Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor, Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, on 8 July for the start of our Solemn Novena to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

ADVENT 2025

By Pat Mullins

During the liturgical year, the Church invites us to “re-live” the different stages of the life of Christ: looking forward to his coming during Advent, his birth during Christmas, the mystery of Christ’s life during Ordinary Time, and his death, resurrection, and ascension, during Lent and Easter. While the calendar year begins on 1 January each year, the liturgical year begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, with Advent (from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “arrival” or “coming”), a time of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Our Lord at Christmas.

During Advent, the colour of the celebrant’s vestments is violet or purple, reflecting the mood of preparation and expectation as we look forward to the celebration of the Incarnation and to Christ’s return in glory.

The readings at Mass during the first part of Advent (until 17 December) invite us to prepare for Christ’s return in glory at the end of time. In order that the full joy of the birth of the Lord is not celebrated prematurely, the use of flowers to decorate the altar, and the use of musical instruments to sustain singing, should be moderated during Advent.

In many churches, the period of waiting for the celebration of Christ’s coming is marked by an Advent Wreath, a garland of evergreens with four candles on its perimeter, three violet and one rose.

On the first Sunday of Advent, one of the violet candles is lit and on the second Sunday, the second violet candle is also lit. The rose candle is added on the third Sunday of Advent, known as *Gaudete* (“Rejoice”) Sunday, when rose-coloured vestments may also

be used. All four candles are lit on the fourth Sunday and, sometimes, a white candle is added, in the centre, during the Christmas season.

The liturgical year, 2024-25, which followed cycle c for the Sunday readings and cycle 1 for the weekday readings, ends on 29 November, 2025, and the liturgical year, 2025-26, which will follow cycle A for the Sunday readings, and cycle 2 for the weekday reading begins with the first Sunday of Advent, on 30 November.

During Advent, Carmelites celebrate the memory of Bl. Bartholomeo Fanti, O.Carm., on 5 December. Since the feast of the Doctor of the Church, St. John of the Cross, O.C.D., on 14 December, coincides with the Third Sunday of Advent this year, it will not be celebrated liturgically this year.



15 JUNE

The Carmelite Brothers of Ireland & Pernambuco (Brazil) celebrate the ordination of Jander Maria de Jesus, O.Carm. and Luiz Otavio da Silva, O.Carm. to the Order of Deacons!



16 AUGUST

At Carmelaram Priory, Vaniyakkad, North Parur, Rev. Br. Mathew Cheeramban Thomas, O.Carm., was ordained to the diaconate.



25 OCTOBER

The diaconate ordination of Bro. Lloyd Champiruka, O.Carm., conferred by Bishop Paul Horan, O.Carm., Bishop of Mutare, at the Parish of St Simon Stock, Rusape.