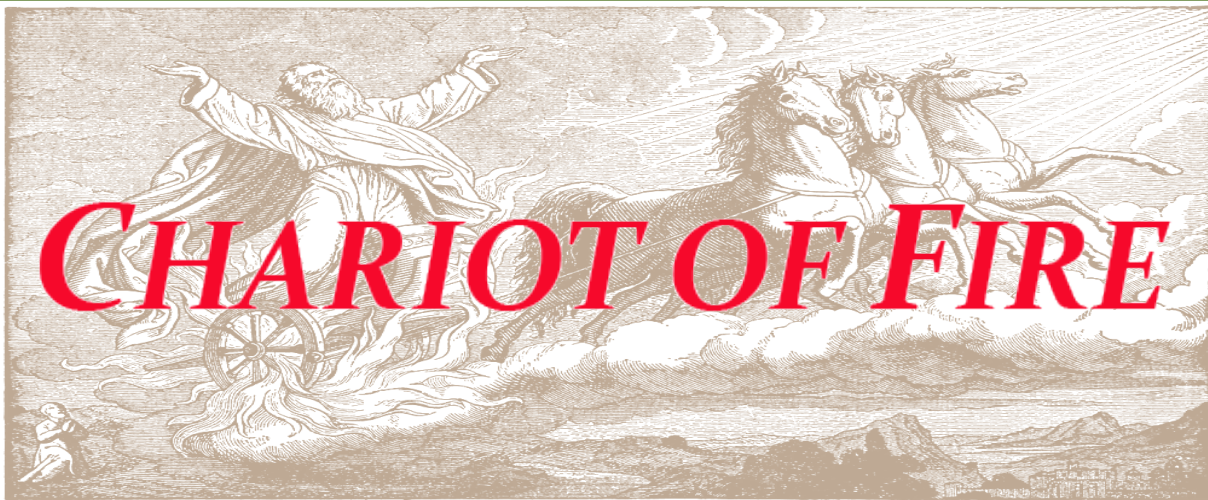




# CHARIOT OF FIRE



*"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."*

*Spring 2021*





## *Desk of the Vocation Director Spring 2021*

Greetings in the Lord,

On December 8, 2020, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, proclaimed a "Year of Saint Joseph" December 8, 2021. The Carmelite logo design on this issue of the Chariot of Fire celebrates the Year dedicated to Saint Joseph. Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Letter, *Patris Corde*, (With a Father's Heart), describes Saint Joseph, a beloved father, who is tender and loving, and obedient father, an accepting father, a courageous father, a working father, and a father in the shadows.

Our Carmelite tradition sees Saint Joseph as the protector of the Order. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Joseph was celebrated in Liturgies in Carmelite Pories throughout the Order. A Carmelite mystic of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, "In paradise Joseph's purity joins with the purity of Mary, and in that exchange of splendor, Joseph's purity shines a light on the even greater glory and splendor of Mary's purity. Saint Joseph is in the middle of Jesus and Mary as a resplendent star, and he takes particular care of our monastery because we are under the care of the Virgin Mary." Saint Teresa of Jesus called Saint Joseph her "lord and father." She saw him as the custodian and protector of her new Carmelite foundations.

Saint Joseph is an excellent guide to help you in their discernment of the Lord's call. Joseph teaches us about faithfulness, courage, resolve, and trust in God and the path to fulfill His will. He responds to the message of the angel immediately. In the Gospel of Matthew 1:24, we read: "When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord directed him." Also, in Matthew 2: 13-14: "...an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Herod is looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt ..." Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt."

In both scenes from the gospel, Joseph immediately does what God asks of him. It almost seems without thought or reflection. Joseph does not say it is too difficult or impossible to what God wants him to do. Joseph does not complain. He does not hesitate, and he acts on what he has heard from God. Joseph takes charge and makes the angel's command his own. This response to God takes faith, trust, and courage., regardless of the consequences or what the future will hold in the saying yes to God's call.

May we depend upon Saint Joseph's intercession to help us understand the meaning of vocation. The Christmas story teaches that Joseph got up and did what the angel told him to do.

God Bless,  
Father Francis

*Cover Design: The official logo of the Carmelite Order to celebrate the Year of St. Joseph.*



Brother Jonathan Steele, O.Carm.

### **The Work of Silent Obedience**

“The Apostle would have us keep silence, for in silence he tells us to work (Carmelite Rule, 21).” St. Joseph, Protector of the Carmelites, is a great model of this; his silent work echoing throughout eternity. In silence, he fostered holiness (Rule, 21) and became known as a righteous man. He was merciful, in righteousness wanting, to spare his betrothed public disgrace. In mercy, he heard the voice of the Most High spoken by the angel, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid... (Mt. 1:20).”

His work was the work of obedience. In obedience, he protected the innocence of the Most Blessed Virgin. By obedience, he protected the Innocent One. His silent obedience, perfected by Christ on the cross, serves as a model for our liberation, for our strength lies in silence and hope (Rule, 21). In silent obedience to God, the cloud of fear disperses, and all that remains is the loving gaze of the Father. In a world where fear clouds our eyes and our hearts, may the silent obedience of St. Joseph serve as a guide to clarity and light that we too may hear the angel say, "Do not be afraid." St. Joseph, pray for us.





"A Letter from the Prior General, O.Carm. and Superior General, O.C.D. to the Carmelite Family on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church."

Most. Rev. Miceal O'Neill, O.Carm.

The ancient liturgy celebrates St. Joseph as the first among his contemporaries in Nazareth, the one chosen by Divine Wisdom to be the Spouse of the Virgin Mary, so that the Son of God might enter the world with honour, but without fanfare. Carmelite Preachers insisted that just as Mary the Virgin conceived the Incarnate Word in her womb through the work of the Holy Spirit, so Joseph, through the work of the same Holy Spirit, conceived the Word through contemplation, and became the father of Jesus on this earth. The liturgy celebrated the nuptial union between Joseph and Mary the Virgin, and presented him as the protector of her virginity and of the life of the incarnate Son of God. With the sensitivity that is typical of the Carmelite contemplative charism, the ancient liturgy celebrated the purity of the Blessed Virgin and of St. Joseph, by highlighting their openness to God, which made it possible for them to welcome the mystery of the Incarnation. Formed by this Liturgical spirituality, St. Mary Magdalen de'Pazzi would see Joseph's protection as a consequence of his purity: "In paradise Joseph's purity joins with the purity of Mary, and in that exchange of splendour, Joseph's purity shines a light on the even greater glory and splendour of Mary's purity. Saint Joseph is in the middle of Jesus and Mary as a resplendent star, and he takes particular care of our monastery because we are under the care of the Virgin Mary."

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



We can celebrate this year dedicated to Saint Joseph by praying the Litany of Saint Joseph. Pope Francis reflecting on the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, said, "[the flight in Egypt] shows us that God is there where man is in danger, where man suffers, where he runs away, where he experiences rejection and abandonment." As we pray the Litany of Saint Joseph, let us remember persecuted Christians.

The Church places before us the guiding hand of Saint Joseph, who led the Holy Family to Egypt, escaping persecution from King Herod. Saint Joseph, who is called the protector of the family and the protector of the Church guides those who are in danger. God hears the cries of the poor and those who suffer for the faith. Praying for our persecuted brothers and sisters forms a bond between the hearts of all believers. Just as God was with Saint Joseph as he protected Mary and Jesus from danger escaping into Egypt, so is God with those who suffer worldwide. As we pray the Litany of Saint Joseph, may those who suffer for the Faith feel our prayerful support so that they remain firm and steadfast.

# Litany to Saint Joseph

Lord, have mercy .

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

God our Father in heaven,

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God the Holy Spirit,

Holy Trinity, one God,

Holy Mary,

Saint Joseph,

Noble son of the House of David

Light of patriarchs,

Husband of the Mother of God,

Guardian of the Virgin,

Foster father of the Son of God,

Faithful guardian of Christ,

Head of the Holy Family,

Joseph, chaste and just,

Joseph, prudent and brave,

Joseph, obedient and loyal,

Pattern of patience,

Lover of poverty,

Model of workers,

Examples to parents,

Guardian of virgins,

Pillar of family life,

Comfort of the troubled,

Hope of the sick,

Patron of the dying

Terror of evil spirits,

Protector of the church,

Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

have mercy on us.

have mercy on us.

have mercy on us.

have mercy on us.

pray for us.

pray for us.

pray for us.

pray for us.

pray for us.

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pray for us.

pray for us.

pray for us.

pray for us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world have mercy on us.

God made him master of his household  
And put him in charge of all that he owned



Let us pray.

O God, who in your inexpressible providence were pleased to choose Saint Joseph as the spouse of the most holy Mother of your Son, grant, we pray, that we, who revere him as our protector on earth, maybe worthy of his heavenly intercession.

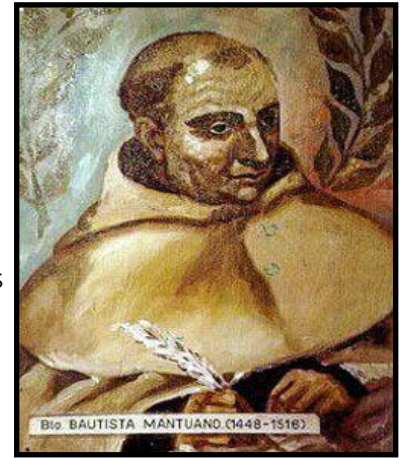
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

# Saints of Carmel

## Blessed Baptist Spagnoli of Mantua

Blessed Baptist Spagnoli was born in Mantua, Italy, on April 17, 1447. In 1545, before the Council of Trent convened, there was a desire for renewal in the Church and religious orders. The Carmelite Reform, known as the Mantuan Reform, named after the town where it started, was of interest to Baptist Spagnoli.



"This Mantuan Reform aspired to eliminate the shortcomings of Carmelite life as lived in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and return to the original spirit of the Order.

In the reform, silence and the respect of the cloister were stressed. Money was not kept private but placed in a community chest and disbursed from there." (*Joachim Smet, O.Carm., author, The Carmelites*) The idea of returning to the source of our beginnings on Mount Carmel is a constant challenge in any age.

Baptist was professed in the Carmelite Order of the Congregation of Mantua in 1464. He was ordained a priest about 1470 and received his Doctorate in theology at the University of Bologna in 1475. During this period of study, he developed his love of poetry in the style of classical ancient Latin. He composed poetry and prose works and was known among humanist writers where he developed many friendships. Erasmus of Rotterdam gave Baptist his nickname, the "Christian Virgil." Even Shakespeare refers to Baptist in Act IV of his play, *Love's Labors Lost*.

As Vicar General, he managed to get the popular Marian Shrine of Loreto entrusted to the Mantuan Carmelite Friars in 1489. He preached on reform, the holiness of life and, the condemnation of greed, violence, and sexual immorality. He was so powerful in his preaching and holiness that even Martin Luther and the Protestant reformers quoted him as one who knew what must be done to call the Church to renewal. He was elected Prior General of the Order of Carmel in 1513 and received a Papal invitation to attend the Fifth Lateran Council. He died at Mantua on March 20, 1516.

Here is an excerpt from a treatise on Patience by Blessed Baptist Spagnoli of Mantua. "You will find that reading of sacred scripture is a great remedy against bodily suffering and depression of mind. In my opinion, there is no other writing, no matter how eloquent and stylish it may be, that can bring such peace to our minds and so thoroughly dissolve our cares as sacred scripture can. I speak from personal experience for there have been times when I beset with anxieties, the worst of which came from the experience of my own weakness, and if on such occasions I sought relief in the scriptures, the hopes and desires that led me there were never disappointed.

"The real reason that Scripture has this persuasive power is that it comes from First Truth. Surely there can be no other explanation for such conviction. It seems as though Scripture has an inherent authority that compels us to believe. All truth has an inherent power to win our acceptance: the greater the truth, the greater the power."

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# Saints of Carmel

## Saint Teresa de Jesus “de los Andes”

Saint Teresa of the Andes was born in Santiago de Chile on July 13, 1900. She was deeply influenced by reading several times the autobiography of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus (Lisieux) and another French Carmelite, Elizabeth of the Trinity.

Teresa reflecting on her childhood, writes in her diary, "It was shortly after the 1906 earthquake that Jesus began to claim my heart for himself."



At the age of fifteen, on December 8, 1915, she made a vow "before the Most Holy Trinity and in the presence of the Virgin Mary and all the saints of Heaven, to not admit any other spouse but my Lord Jesus Christ whom I love with all my heart and whom I desire to serve till the last moment of my life."

Writing to a priest about her experience receiving communion. "Since I was about seven years old, there was a great devotion born in my soul to my Mother, the Most Holy Virgin. I told her everything that happened to me, and she spoke to me. I heard her voice clearly and distinctly in my soul. She advised me and told me what I must do to please Our Lord. I thought this was something natural, and it never occurred to me to speak of what the Most Holy Virgin was telling me. From the time of my First Communion, Our Lord spoke to me after Communion and told me things I'd never suspected; and even when I asked him, he would tell me things that were going to happen, and they really did occur. But I went on thinking that everybody who went to Communion was treated this way."

At the age of nineteen, she entered the Discalced Carmelite Monastery of the Holy Spirit on May 7, 1919. She made her profession, April 7, confined to bed, dying of typhus during Holy Week of 1920, and died April 12 of that same year. She lived as a Carmelite nun for only eleven months.

Teresa writing to her friend, Graciela, speaks about her vocation: "Get them to bring you for my habit reception because I'll be happy to see you. Most of all, you can see for yourself the happiness of being a Carmelite, which is striking me as a more and more significant and growing reality for me. If I used to consider my vocation as above all others, now I appreciate it doubly; because I have seen and experienced for myself that a Carmelite's holiness is greater than any other religious ideal. Our vocation's objective is love, the most incredible thing a human heart can possess. This love is a bonfire where the soul is consumed and made one with her God. This is why a Carmelite seeks solitude, that nothing may interfere with her union with the One for whom she left all things, when a soul truly loves-and this we see in human love- she wants only to be with the loved One, gazing always upon the beloved, sharing the intimacy of her heart, being ever drawn ever closer and closer."

People who are striving to grow in holiness and a profound encounter with Jesus can look to the Carmelite Teresa of the Andes. Thousands of pilgrims venerate her remains in the Sanctuary of Auco Rinconada of Los Andes, the first Chilean to be declared a Saint, by Saint John Paul II, March 21, 1993.





## Excerpts of Brother Marlon's First Homily as a Deacon The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord January 10th, 2021



"..today's feast (Baptism of the Lord) gives us an opportunity to go back to our roots... It is an opportunity to refresh our sense of identity of what it means to be baptized.

The Gospel tells us that when Jesus was baptized by John, the heavens were torn open, and the Spirit descended upon him. And a voice from heaven announced who Jesus is: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

This is what happened to each of us at our baptism: ...as the priest baptized us with water, our Father in heaven called our names and said to each one of us: "You are my beloved son, you are my beloved daughter, In you I am well pleased. This is the true identity of each of us...

We are each called by God's love, called by name to follow Christ in the spirit... remember the first time you heard the Father's call to follow Jesus. The joy of that moment is the foundation of your vocation.

...we celebrate today is that the Father's love for us empowers us to make a difference. Amen"





## Solemn Profession

August 29th, 2020

National Shrine of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel



(L-R)

Father Justin M. Cinnante, O.Carm.

Brother Henry Soto, O.Carm.

Father Jon Moore, O.Carm.

Brother Marlon Beharry, O.Carm.

“To pronounce solemn vows is a very sacred act, in which one gives his word before God and community to live the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity until death according to the Rule of St. Albert and our Constitutions of the Carmelite Order. As in the sacrament of marriage, the promise of our words expresses the movement of our heart and will, and God who is Word, unites Himself to us in this act. ... God makes his presence known, and His action felt, through words and symbols. ... As you Marlon, Henry, Jon and Justin commit yourself until death to an obedient, poor and chaste life, along with your scapular, wear the easy and light yoke of Christ with joy. In the moments of trial and when fleeing for your life seems appropriate, instead remember: the God who called you is always faithful. I ask Mary, the Faithful Virgin and Mother to pray for you always.”

Excerpt from Solemn Profession Homily given by Prior Provincial, Father Mario Esposito, O.Carm.



Brothers profess the evangelical counsels

obedience, poverty, chastity to the Prior Provincial Father Mario Esposito, O.Carm.





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