



# Pilgrims' Newsletter

## Summer 2022



Dear Friends,

### Visit to Norfolk and York

By the time the newsletter arrives with you it will be nearly summer. You may be looking forward to your holiday this year. I have fond memories of my holiday last year. I went to Norfolk and Yorkshire. I managed to travel to Walsingham. It has been some years since I was there. It is a charming place with several historical buildings, including the original Abbey. A mile away is the National Shrine to Our Lady and our sister shrine. Beside the ancient Slipper Chapel is the modern shrine built to resemble a Norfolk barn.

From there I travelled a few miles to Burnham Norton where there are the remains of a pre-reformation Carmelite house. There is little that remains apart from an impressive medieval Gatehouse. I was pleased to see the information boards that gave the history of the Priory and the Carmelites. It was one of the oldest and founded soon after Aylesford.

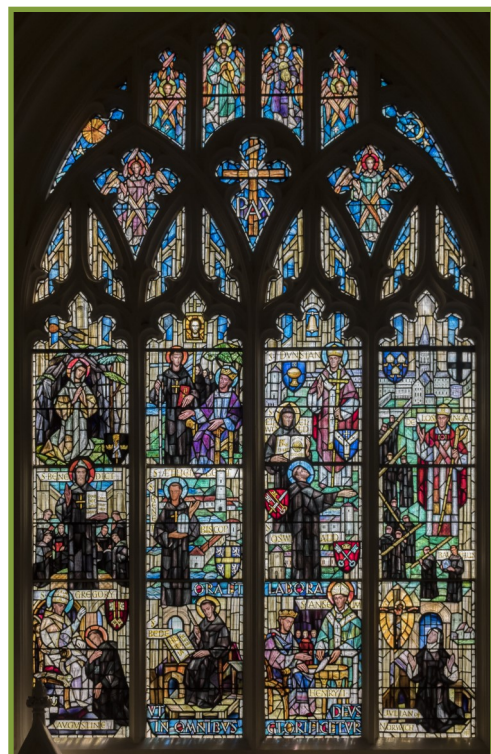
Another day I visited the city of Norwich where I visited the two Cathedrals. The 15th Duke of Norfolk built the Catholic Cathedral of St. John. He was a generous benefactor to the Church as he built two other churches that have subsequently become Cathedrals namely Arundel and Sheffield. The old Duke also paid for the Lady Chapel in my home parish church of St. Michael's, Chatham.

I was interested to read that the architect of St. John's Cathedral was George Gilbert Scott the father of Adrian Gilbert Scott who was the architect of the shrine here. The Cathedral was built in the Gothic revival style. The Gilbert Scots have been described as the family who rebuilt Gothic Britain. The founder of the architecture dynasty was Sir George Gilbert Scott who was famous for encouraging the revival of Gothic architecture in Britain. His most famous buildings were the Albert Memorial and St Pancras train station.

In the far older Anglican Cathedral, I saw some magnificent, modern windows by Moira Forsyth who is the artist of the little Flos Carmeli window in the Cloister Chapel here at Aylesford. The window in Norwich is a celebration of Benedictines who built the Cathedral. I could see similarities between our little window at Aylesford and the one in Norwich Cathedral.



Medieval Gatehouse at Burnham Norton

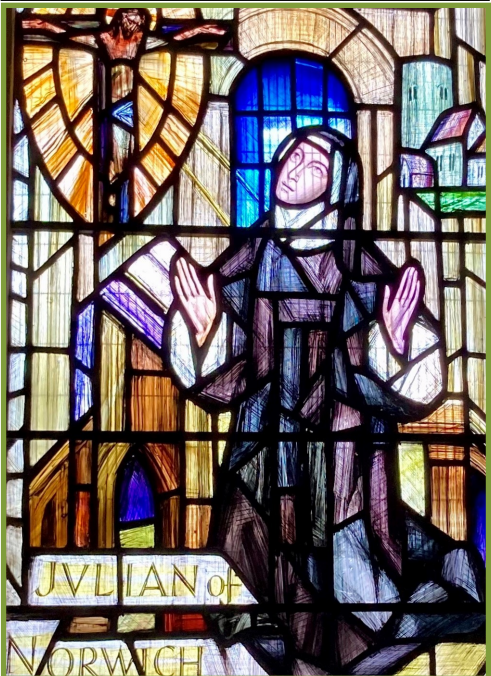


Benedictine Window by Moira Forsyth  
in Norwich Cathedral  
(with permission)





Flos Carmeli Window by Moira Forsyth  
in the Cloister Chapel



Stained Glass Window of Julian of  
Norwich at Norwich Cathedral by  
Moira Forsyth (with permission)



Saint Titus Brandsma

Later I travelled to Yorkshire. There I visited the Carmelites Nuns, near York, at Thicket Priory. They have built a modern convent in the grounds of their original Priory. There they make altar breads for many of the churches up and down the country. In the City of York, I visited the little shrine to St. Margaret Clitherow in the Shambles. Much of the building would have been recognised by the saint, though there is now no trace of the original butcher's shop. In the Minster I saw the shrine of St. William of York in the crypt. Not far away is one of the most impressive tombs in the Minster. Built in Purbeck marble it is of Archbishop Walter de Grey who was the uncle of Baron Richard de Grey who gave his manor house to the Carmelites here at Aylesford in 1242. He was one of the longest serving Archbishops of York. He served as Lord Chancellor under King John. Much of the present Minster was built by him in the early English Gothic style. At the time of my visit the restoration of the St. Cuthbert window in the south quire was in process. It is an impressive fourteenth century window that tells the story of the saint.

### Julian of Norwich

One of the panels in the Benedictine window in Norwich Cathedral is that of Julian of Norwich. She was an English mystic who lived as an anchoress in the fourteenth century. Little is known of her personal life, but she lived during the turbulent years of the Black Death and the Peasant's Revolt. Her book '*Revelations of Divine Love*' is a spiritual masterpiece. Her revelations have survived down the centuries and tell of her love of Jesus. She records several revelations upon the suffering and passion of Jesus. She sees the suffering face of Jesus. He reveals His mother Mary to Julian. She also reflects upon the mercy of God and that God is present in all things and does everything. She focuses on grace and forgiveness rather than sin. For Julian God is Mother, Father and lover.

Her little book on her revelations have survived six centuries and is still being read which shows her importance today. When we are in pain or have turned away from God, Jesus shows us that we can have strength and support during challenging times. After the final judgement, the mystery of God that has been so far hidden from us will be revealed to us. I was struck by her love of Jesus and reminded that all of us are invited into a personal relationship with Him. We are all invited to become more like Jesus. One can still see her little cell which is part of the medieval church of St Julian's, Norwich.

### Titus Brandsma

It was with great delight that I heard that the Canonisation of Titus Brandsma took place on 15<sup>th</sup> May. Titus as you know was a Dutch Carmelite. He died of a lethal injection in Dachau, 1942. He is a modern martyr of freedom of speech. Titus had become a distinguished lecturer of Philosophy and the History of Mysticism, at Nijmegen University, eventually becoming the Rector. When the Germans invaded the Netherlands in May 1940, the Archbishop of Utrecht asked Titus to represent the Dutch bishops, asking the Catholics schools and the



editors of the catholic newspapers not to follow Nazi propaganda. In his letter to the Catholic Journalists Association, he wrote ominously: *"We are not sure if those responsible will resort to violence. But in case they do, remember, God speaks the last word He rewards His faithful servant."*

### Titus Brandsma and Mary

In a series of lectures given at the Catholic University, Washington, U.S.A., in 1935, Titus Brandsma spoke of the link with Mary and the cloud that the prophet Elijah saw at the end of the drought. The conflict with the false prophets of Baal had ended. Elijah travelled to the top of Mt. Carmel to pray. His servant called out, *"Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising out of the sea"* (1Kgs 18:44). Since the fourteenth century Carmelite tradition has linked 'the cloud' with the mother of Jesus. Titus wrote: *"It was on Carmel's summit that the Prophet after sevenfold prayer saw a little cloud – bearer of the rain which would deliver the parched earth. It is not necessary to give an authentic explanation of this vision. Still, I may say that many commentators of the Holy Scriptures have seen in this cloud a prototype of the Holy Virgin, who bore in her womb the Redeemer of the world."* This story of the cloud on Mt. Carmel brings together Mary and Elijah. Both are models for Carmelites. Mary is the cloud of pure rain rising from the salty sea. The salty sea is an image of sinful humanity. The fruit of the womb of Mary brings new life to humanity. Titus added that Carmelites by imitating Mary as Mother of Jesus, bring the Gospel of Jesus to the modern world.

### At the Foot of the Cross

The Gospel for Our Lady of Mt. Carmel takes us to the foot of the cross. We see two figures without personal names. They are the 'mother of Jesus' and 'the beloved disciple.' The nameless disciple is the model for all who wish to follow Jesus. At the cross Jesus makes his mother the mother of all believers. Mary conceived the Word of God in her heart before she conceived Jesus in her womb. Those who believe in Jesus and take His Gospel into their hearts are part of His spiritual family, while Mary is the mother of all His disciples. This is summed up in a beautiful poem by St. Theresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein).

*Today I stood with you beneath the cross  
and felt more keenly than I ever did before  
that you, beneath the cross, became our mother.*

So, Mary is the mother of the Church and is a model for all believers. She is an image of the Church in its perfection. All devotion to Mary leads us closer to her son Jesus. With her maternal protection she leads us to her Son. So, at the foot of the cross she becomes the mother of all believers.



Saint Titus Brandsma by Colette Mills,  
Carmelite Church, Kinsale



Lily dedications and displays in the  
Relic Chapel at Easter



**THE FRIARS  
SUMMER FAYRE  
SUNDAY 26TH JUNE 2022  
11 AM — 4.30 PM  
Adults: £4.50  
Under 16s: Free**

#### FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

STUNNING BIRDS OF PREY DISPLAYS from H&K FALCONRY •  
EXCITING SIDESHOW ENTERTAINMENT DR DIABLO • BBQ •  
BEER TENT • PIMMS & PROSECCO TENT • CREAM TEAS •  
CRAFT AND GIFT STALLS • CHILDREN'S GAMES AND RIDES •  
LIVE MUSIC • AND MORE ...

MASS 5.00pm

The Friars, AYLESFORD, Kent, ME20 7BX. 01622 717272  
www.thefriars.org.uk. Registered in England No 3487590, Charity No 1068518.

## Bro. Laurence Frost, R.I.P.

Many of you will remember Bro. Laurence who was a member of the Aylesford Community for many years. He was the Sacristan and M.C. here for much of that time. In his earlier years he kept bees. He is fondly remembered for his kind welcome to bishops and clergy who came here. He spent the final years of his life in Gort Muire, Dublin, where he was lovingly cared for until his death in February. His funeral took place at Aylesford and he was buried in the Community cemetery.

## News

Back in February Storm Eunice brought down seven trees in the grounds including an impressive Silver Birch along the Rosary Way. At about the same time I heard that the relics of St. Bernadette of Lourdes will be here from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October until Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October. This will be part of nation-wide tour of the relics. As so many people were unable to travel to Lourdes in recent years it will be Lourdes coming to Britain. I hope you will be able to join us during this time. As a community we are praying for peace in the Ukraine. The Carmelites in the west of the country of providing help and support to those who remain while our Polish Carmelites helping the refugees. We pray that our political leaders will work for just peace settlement.

Since Christmas, the Shrine had been one big building site. Just before Easter the Government funded work was completed. This involved the completion of new roofs and drainage of the Main Shrine. At the time of writing the Main Shrine and tribunes are being painted. Later the sgraffito work in St. Anne's Chapel will be restored. In the summer we will restore and regild the statue of Our Lady of Assumption on the Main Shrine.

The Lent talks on Saturday mornings and the Holy Week Retreat were both well attended. It was good to see so many people who came here for the Easter ceremonies. Though on Good Friday we had to navigate the scaffolding that had been erected on the Main Shrine for the painting that was taking place at the same time.

Thank you for your generous support. We would not be able to undertake such a major restoration of the Shrine without your help.

Please be assured of the prayers of the Carmelite Community here at Aylesford for you and everyone you love.

*Francis Kemsley. O. Carm.*

Prior



Bro. Laurence Frost



Scaffolding on Main Shrine while painting is being completed

## Upcoming Retreat - SUMMER SILENCE

Monday 15<sup>th</sup>—Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August

Felicity Young OSM, Trish Murphy & Francis Kemsley O Carm

A time to listen to the voice of God in silence. This is a personally guided retreat which involves a daily meeting with a director who has experience in spiritual accompaniment. Cost: £385.00 single; £350.00 shared.

Contact Reception to book your Retreat.  
01622 717272

## **\*\*Support The Friars\*\* Monthly Draw (100+ Club)**

Everyone who joins, at £12 a year, is issued a number which enters the monthly draw. The draw takes place on the second Sunday of each month after the 10.15am Mass and the winning number receives a prize of £50, except for the month of December when the prize is £100. Extra numbers can be added for another £12 a year. To renew your subscription which is due in August, or to join the Monthly Draw for the first time, please send your name, address and to save on postage costs please provide an email address, along with a separate cheque for £12 made out to The Friars. Thank you.



The Friars, AYLESFORD, Kent, ME20 7BX. Tel: 01622 717272

email: [newsletter@thefriars.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@thefriars.org.uk) web: [www.thefriars.org.uk](http://www.thefriars.org.uk)

A Registered Charity - Registered Charity No. 1061342

