

# The Scapular

The monthly newsletter of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel



Vol. One Issue 10 - February 2025

70 Carmelite Drive, Middletown, NY 10940 - 845-343-1879


## Prayerful Start to New Year at the National Shrine

Despite the frigid temperatures that greeted us early in the New Year, the joyous celebration of Christmastime at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel continued to warm the hearts of the faithful in January. The Jubilee 2025 Year began with the Feast of Mary, Mother of God on New Year's Day. Less than a week later, on Epiphany Sunday (January 5), the Shrine was filled not only with faithful worshipers, but with hearts filled with hope for what many believed would be a challenging year. In keeping with an age old tradition, Fr. Gerard Tang Choon, O. Carm, the Shrine's Rector blessed and distributed chalk that the faithful would use as part of a blessing for their homes. People would then use the blessed chalk to write 20+C+ M+B over the outside doorways of their homes.

The day before the Feast of the Epiphany, the monthly Saturday Spanish Mass embraced the day we celebrate the arrival of the Three Wise Men in Bethlehem with a traditional Ecaudorian procession.

A joyous January will be followed with an equally joyous February. We encourage you to join us for some great events!

Celebrate the  
*Feast of Mary, Mother of God*  
at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel



Tue., Dec. 31, 2024 @ 4:00 pm  
Wed., Jan. 1, 2025 @ noon

70 Carmelite Drive, Middletown, NY 10940 (845) 343-1879



## Getting to know our friend, Fr. Maurice Cummings, O. Carm.



People who attend daily Mass at the Shrine on Mondays have become accustomed to seeing Fr. Maurice on the altar. He's much more than a familiar face. He's an integral part of the Carmelite fabric that makes up the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. He's kind, approachable and a man who has lived the life of a Carmelite Friar since he was ordained in 1971.

Rather than provide Scapular readers with a profile of Fr. Maurice Cummings, O. Carm. that reads like a resume, let's take a look back on the Carmelite journey of Howard Norbert Cummings from Our Lady of Lourdes (OLL) parish in Malverne, NY.

While his parish was served by priests from the Brooklyn Diocese, his Irish pastor had an "old sod" connection with the Carmelites from 28 th Street. Legendary Carmelites like Frs. Thomas McGinnis, Timothy Donohue, Ambrose Boyd and Norbert Hansen would often celebrate Mass at OLL on weekends. As an altar boy Father had the opportunity to learn first-hand what it meant to be a Carmelite. "Although I didn't have a defined vocation as a young altar-server, I was open to learning about God's plan for me" Fr. Maurice said.

Little did young Howard Norbert know the role his parents would play on his journey. "My parents would take my family to visit nearby religious sites. On one occasion we made a trip to Graymoor in Garrison. I purchased something at their gift store and back home I asked Fr. Norbert to bless it, which he did. As odd as this might sound, he was the first person I knew who shared the name Norbert with me. It was that simple connection that got me thinking about living life as a Carmelite." (Footnote: Fr. Maurice's parents were married on June 6, the Feast of St. Norbert, hence the reason for his middle name.) *Fr. Maurice's story continued on page two*





## The Shrine Joins in Saluting the Faithful Men & Women in Uniform

February 8th and 9th have been designated as Jubilee 2025 Days for all Members of the Armed Forces - Police - Firefighters - Security Officers - First Responders and Medical/Emergency Technicians. As an Official Pilgrim of Hope Site, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel will celebrate the current men and women who protect and serve all of us, with a special Mass on Sunday, February 9 at 4:30 pm. Prayers will be offered for these men and women and their families. The Mass will be followed by a reception in the Eidth Stein Conference Room.

## A few words about the Jubilee indulgences being offered in 2025



An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven. The gaining of an indulgence requires certain prescribed conditions and the performance of certain prescribed works. To gain indulgences, whether plenary or partial, it is necessary that the faithful be in the state of grace at least at the time the indulgenced work is completed which means, for example, that the individual must be a Catholic, not excommunicated or in a schism.

A plenary indulgence can be gained only once a day. In order to obtain it, the faithful must, in addition to being in the state of grace have: the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin; sacramentally confessed their sins; receive the Holy Eucharist; and pray for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff.

It is appropriate, but not necessary, that the sacramental Confession and especially Holy Communion and the prayer for the Pope's intentions take place on the same day that the indulgenced work is performed; but it is sufficient that these sacred rites and prayers be carried out within several days before or after the indulgenced act.

Indulgences can always be applied to oneself or to the souls of the deceased, but they cannot be applied to other persons living on earth.

### Fr. Maurice Cummings, O. Carm. continued from page one

As one of eight boys in his class from OLL to consider the priesthood, Fr. Maurice spent the summer before eighth grade at Camp Carmel in Middleton where he was exposed to the Carmelite lifestyle. After reaching out to Fr. Gregory Smith, O. Carm., the Vocation Director, Fr. Maurice enrolled at St. Albert's in Middletown. His decision to consider the Carmelites was heavily influenced by the fact that Fr. Maurice wanted to teach, and since the Carmelites offered that path as a Friar, his mind was made up.

"Keep in mind," Fr. Maurice went on to say, "my life philosophy at the time was that if I could be a priest, I should be a priest. My time at St. Albert's and as a seminarian made me think that if God led me here, I should be here."

Fr. Maurice's path to ordination differed from the traditional Carmelite in that he wanted to continue his education and earn a doctorate. After graduating from Catholic University in 1965, Fr. Maurice was given permission to enroll at Georgetown where he continued his studies. He was ordained a Carmelite in 1971. He was awarded his doctorate in Comparative Literature in 1977.

And that's only part of the life story of the Carmelite you see on the altar saying Mass on Mondays at the Shrine. His life as a Carmelite is the story of a man who is where he should be. And for that, generations of faithful have been most fortunate.

**JOIN US THE FIRST SATURDAY  
OF EVERY MONTH FOR OUR  
MASS IN SPANISH**







## All About the Presepio at the National Shrine

For the second year in a row the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel has been blessed to have a **Presepio** display for visitors to gaze upon in awe and wonder. Originally to be dismantled on February 2, a growing number of people who heard about the **Presepio** but couldn't come to the Shrine to see it with their own eyes, asked if the "closing date" could be extended. And it has been, for at least through the end of February.

The Shrine has to thank its creative and hard-working Anthony Annunziata, for not only supplying the over 200 figures on display, but for his amazing talent in transforming a section of the Shrine into a **Presepio** that rivals other sites' displays. (Anthony is pictured in the upper right holding a **Presepio** figure.)

The **Presepio** (meaning manger) can be traced back to 18th century Naples when artisans came up with the idea of celebrating the birth of Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem by blending it with scenes from Neopolitan life as lived by everyday people at the time. The baker, the farmer, the shepherd, and the women washing their clothes and hanging them to out to dry in the warm Italian sun, came to life in these amazing figures. Each finely crafted miniature is a work of art. The entire range of emotions of these figures spring from the faces, the eyes and the gestures of the replicas of Neapolitan life.

You only have to spend a few minutes with Anthony as he explains what the figures mean to him. "I grew up in a house where the **Presepio** was at the center of our life at Christmas. The display at the Shrine features only a portion of my family's collection of 750 figures. Who knows, in time, and with a larger space, I can increase the number of figures on display from the current 200 to say 300, 400 or..." He smiles as you can see the display he imagines in the look in his eyes.

If you haven't come to the National Shrine to feast your eyes on our **Presepio**, mark a visit to us on your calendar before it's too late



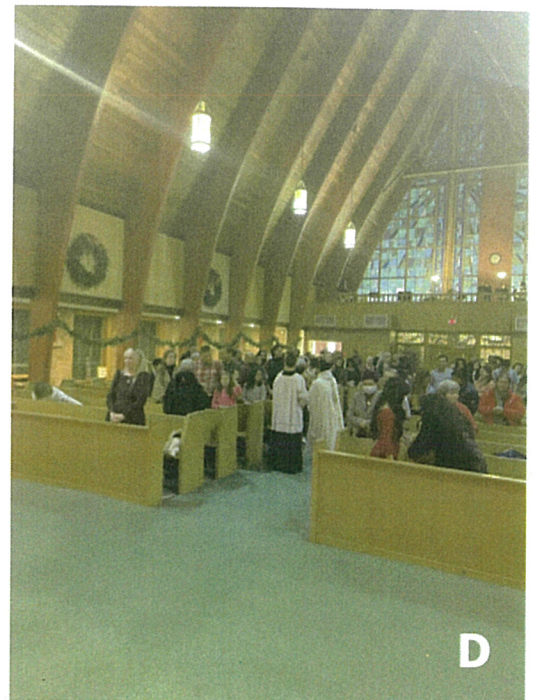
## The Carmelite Spirituality Series at the National Shrine

Having featured over a dozen speakers since the series began, January's presenters were the Shrine's Rector, Fr. Gerard Tang Choon, O. Carm. (L) whose talk was on the life of St. Andrew Corsini. Later in the month, the Prioir Provincial Fr. Mario Esposito, O. Carm. (C) gave a presentation on "The Spirituality of Mother Angeline." Fr. Mario is the Vice-Postulator on the case for the canonization of Mother Angeline.



# January Album

A) The Corsini family join Fr. Gerard and Carol after the St. Andrew Corsini Mass  
(B) A family visits the Shrine for the first time.  
(C) January 22 - Day of Prayer  
(D) The Feast of Santo Nino

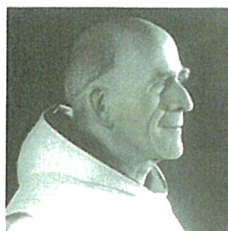




# Blessed Carmelites for the month of February



A



B



C

(A) **Bl. Candelaria of St. Joseph** was born Susana Ramirez in 1863. Encouraged by Father Sixto Sosa, later bishop of Cumana, she consecrated herself to the service of the sick of San Antonio Hospital, he founded in 1903. Later, she began the foundation of a new religious congregation, dedicated to serving the poor. The congregation was definitively established in 1910 with the name "Congregation of the Sisters of the Poor of Altagracia de Orituco." Afterward, the congregation was affiliated to the Carmelite Order, and was called the Third Order of Regular Carmelites. Today they are known as the Venezuelan Carmelite Sisters or Carmelites of Mother Candelaria.

Because of her ardent love for God and her generous and selfless surrender to the poor, under the direction of the bishops and in the company of the religious of her congregation, this new Venezuelan blessed is today an example of virtues, standing out among them, her living and intense faith in Jesus Christ, our only saviour; her union with and love for the Church, particularly the Venezuelan bishops, and her lively charity for the poorest. The beatification of Mother Candelaria of St. Joseph took place on April 27, 2008, in Caracas, Venezuela.

(B) **Bl. Marie-Eugene of the Child Jesus** (Henri Grialou) was born in Aubin, in Aveyron (France), on December 2, 1894. After his priestly ordination on February 4, 1922, he was captivated by the doctrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus and St. John of the Cross and decided to join the Discalced Carmelites. After serving as superior in France, in 1937 he was elected to serve as a General Definitive of the Order in Rome. In 1948, he was appointed Apostolic Visitor of the Discalced Carmelite nuns in France and religious assistant to their federations. From 1955 he was able to devote himself full-time to the secular institute Notre Dame de Vie, which he started in 1932. He died in Venasque on March 27th, 1967, the feast day of the institute. He was beatified in 2016 by Pope Francis.

(C) **Bl. Josepha Naval Girbés**, was born on 11 December 1820, in Algemesi, Valencia Province, Spain. Although schools were not available, she learnt to read and write. At thirteen, her mother died. She helped her father raise her younger brothers and sisters. At 18, she entered the Third Order. In an age when spirituality in Third Orders endeavoured to replicate the way of life of the religious, Josepha seems to have lived out her Carmelite spirituality in her secular condition. She invited young women to her house, taught them embroidery, prayer and the evangelical virtues, sharing her wisdom and spiritual understanding. She died on 24 February 1893, having received the last sacraments. At her request, she was buried in the Carmelite habit.

His Holiness Saint Pope John Paul II proclaimed the Decree for her heroic virtues on 3 January 1987. On 1 September 1988 the proposed miracle for her Beatification was accepted.

## A January Album of Some Shrine Events...



It takes a selfless community to make the National Shrine of OLMC work.

Fr. Gerard, Carol and Anthony hosted a dinner to recognize the people who give so much of themselves for the Shrine.



**The National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel**

**MASSES**

Monday-Friday: 11:30 am  
Saturday & Sunday: 12 Noon

**CONFESSIONS**

Saturdays: 10:45 - 11:45 am

**EUCHARISTIC ADORATION & BENEDICTION**

Every Friday: 10:00 - 11:20 am

**SHRINE HOURS:** Mon-Fri: 7 am to 4 pm

Sat: 10 am to 4 pm Sun: 10 am to 3 pm

**GIFT STORE:** Mon-Sat: 10 am to 4 pm

Sun: 10 am to 3 pm

**FEBRUARY SHRINE EVENTS**

For complete February schedule, go to <https://www.ourladyofmtcarmelshrine.com/>



*The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord*  
Candles will be blessed  
The National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
**Sunday, February 2 @ Noon**  
70 Carmelite Drive - Middletown, NY 10940 - 845-343-1879

Join us at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel for our Mass in Italian

*Santa Messa Italiana*  
Gloria a Dio  
**Saturday, February 8 4:30 pm**



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845-343-1879



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AS AN OFFICIAL PILGRIMAGE OF HOPE SITE, THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CELEBRATES THE CURRENT & RETIRED MEN AND WOMEN WHO PROTECT AND SERVE ALL OF US, WITH A SPECIAL MASS PRAYING FOR THEM & THEIR FAMILIES

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9 MASS @ 4:30 PM**

FOLLOWED WITH COFFEE/TEA & REFRESHMENTS IN THE EDITH STEIN CONFERENCE ROOM

70 Carmelite Drive - Middletown, NY 10940 - 845-343-1879

Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes  
The National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel



**Tuesday, February 11**  
Daily Mass - 11:30 am  
Special Mass for the Sick - 4:30 pm

O ever immaculate Virgin, Mother of Mercy, health of the sick, refuge of sinners, comforter of the afflicted, you know my wants, my troubles, my sufferings, look with mercy on me.

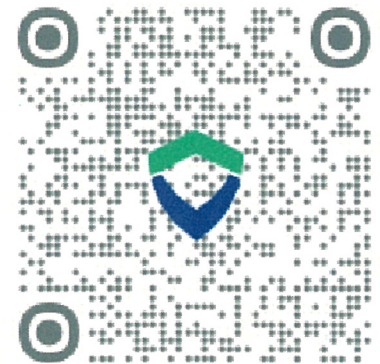
70 Carmelite Drive - Middletown, NY 10940 - 845-343-1879

**misa de sanacion** SABADO 15 DE FEBRERO 7 PM

The Spanish Healing Mass at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel



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To make a donation to the National Shrine of OLMC



**The National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel invites you to join us in February for an array of events!**

