

# Monastery a refuge of prayer and peace in Wyoming

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intercession fervently beseeched. "We offer thee, o Lord Jesus this Chaplet of Divine Mercy..." begins Father Prior and the many intentions are brought to the Cross. The monks turn to God's Mercy and gaze upon their suffering Lord on that infamous gibbet. The Diocese of Cheyenne and its dear Bishop are remembered most especially, as are all of the Diocese's priests, deacons, religious, seminarians and laity.

Work is once more begun as the lawn is mowed, vegetables prepared for dinner and guests welcomed at the gate. The words of the psalms and the monastery's special intentions dwell in the monk's mind, as an ardent love of God inflames his young heart. Many come to the monastery during these visiting hours to encounter the peace of the monks, to witness their love, share God's blessings and often to be clothed in Carmel's brown Scapular of protection. The monastery is a refuge of prayer and peace for all who draw near and share in its founding in the solitude of northern Wyoming.

At last the day's work must end with the ringing of the bell for prayer. The monks wash and prepare for Vespers, Holy Mother Church's Evening Prayer. Once more the psalms are chanted as they arise from the heart and the Magnificat of the Blessed Mother is sung by Her Carmelites. Evening meditation is made in that great tradition of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. For this hour of silent contemplation, the monks retire to the solitude of their own rooms where they find God. There, in those poor and austere bedrooms, the monk's sole duty is to occupy Himself with the Lord God of Hosts. In the interior of his soul, the monk converses freely

with God. He is reminded of the sweet yoke promised by Christ to those who leave all to follow Him into the desert.

In the rhythm of monastic life, this treasured time of prayer too must end with the Angelus being prayed. Then the monks process to the evening meal. Supper is hearty and simple, once more taken in silence with the slow, calm reading sounding forth. When the meal is finished and the prior knocks, each of the monastery's benefactors, from the neighbor who donated food to the woman who made new habits is prayed for by name. This powerful apostolate of prayer is the monks' poor gift of thanksgiving in return for such generosity. Dishes are done as the sun starts to hide away amongst the clouds and the monks are reminded that one more day in the paradise of the cloister is coming to a close.

The bell summons the community to the chapel where the Most Holy Rosary is prayed in common as the wooden Rosary beads softly clatter and each monk takes his turn at leading the recitation. The voice of each monk is strong and filled with love for his Heavenly Queen as the needs of our Diocese, the Church and the world once more are poured forth in the presence of God. Each intention is carefully tucked under the white mantle of Mary that She may in turn bring the monks' prayers to Her Divine Son.

Now at last, the Carmelites are exhausted from a day of prayer and penance and the work of founding a monastery. The day has drawn to a close and so must the Church's Liturgy with the chanting of Compline. In the darkening dusk each night, the monks conclude their prayers with the day's last psalms, hymn and reading.



Photo by Dan Cepeda

Father Daniel Mary watches as the freshly roasted coffee pours out of the roaster.

With Simeon, the monk does pray, "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace." The Carmelite Monks fix their gaze upon their august Queen, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel whose statue beautifully adorns their chapel and chant Her prayer, the Hail, Holy Queen. The day that has passed, the night and the morning to come are left in Her Immaculate hands, as is the monk who is the servant of God's Mother.

Each monk in turn comes forward to kneel for his night blessing, to depart in silence as darkness covers the earth. The Great Silence is now observed, the monks' beloved time for prayer, reading and study. The door to each bedroom is shut and all is seemingly still, but in each room a monk is ever at work in loving God and in praising His loving kindness.

With a last glance upon the clock and prayer complete, the monk retires to his straw bed in peace. Often the miracles of the day and the goodness of God fill the mind; the monk is reminded that he is the Lord's, even in his sleep.

Many do not know there is a monastery in Wyoming where the Carmelite life is kept alive in a tradition at least a thousand years old, but this is that hidden life of prayer and penance. The Carmelite life is ultimately one of praise of the Lord, for the Carmelite desires nothing other than that God and His Immaculate Mother might be more praised.

Night and day this ancient life of loving praise continues behind the monastery walls, a wellspring of peace and grace for the entire Diocese and its many labors.



Photo by Dan Cepeda

Brother Joseph Marie, wearing his work clothes, eats lunch in the guest house before heading to the field to work on the new chapel.

## NOW AND FOREVER

By PAULA GLOVER  
Editor

Praised be Jesus Christ!

I'm ready to answer "now and forever" when I call on the phone to the Carmelite Monastery in Clark, because that's how the monks answer the phone. I've been disappointed to

get the answering machine. I leave just a regular, old message.

Now and forever!

I love these guys. The love of Christ just flows from them — locked away in what amounts to a little tract house in the middle of nowhere, mountains in the distance and sagebrush up close — these are

the happiest people I know. OK, the sisters in at the Abbey of St. Walburga are pretty darned happy, too.

One conversation with Brother Simon or Father Daniel Mary and you just know that everything will be alright — the monks are praying for you and that counts for a lot. The monks have generously been

praying for Wyoming Catholic Register readers for several years now, in the Need a Prayer? ad that runs in each issue.

To contact the monastery, you can write to Carmel of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at 35 Road AFW, Powell WY 82435 or use their post office box in Cody — PO Box 2747,

zip 82414. Although they have no internet in the monastery, they are on line at [www.carmelitemonks.org](http://www.carmelitemonks.org). Recently, they've taken to selling coffee, roasted on site, and they have a chant tape that is marvelous.

But, if you just need a prayer, fill out the form in the newspaper — we'll forward it on to them for you.