

Marylake Monastery

Discalced Carmelite Friars

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August 13, 2018

Dear Friends of Marylake,

Greetings in Our Lord Jesus Christ! The month of July, with its feasts of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16th) and Elijah the Prophet (July 20th) has come and gone, and now, as students prepare to return to the classroom, we in Carmel remember our great Carmelite philosopher martyr St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein, August 9th), Our Lady's Assumption on the 15th, and St. Mary of Jesus Crucified, our Palestinian Carmelite saint (August 25th). Our Marylake Mass on the 15th is being offered for all of you, our friends and benefactors.

Of course, these days of late summer also find our little community still mourning the loss of our beloved Fr. Raphael, who passed into eternal life the afternoon of Sunday, June 10th. During his nearly sixty years of priestly ministry, Fr. Raphael served in many different capacities: confessor and spiritual director to various communities of Carmelite nuns and Carmelite seculars, professor at Dominican College in Houston, Texas, and parish ministry in San Antonio and Dallas, Texas.

Most of you, though, got to know Fr. Raphael over the past 27 years as he served at Marylake as novice master, being responsible for the initial formation of numerous young men for the Order of Discalced Carmelites. Fr. Raphael was known also for his ministry to the Carmelite nuns and Carmelite seculars of Little Rock, as well as for his ministry of helping out at Catholic parishes all around the state of Arkansas.

Fr. Raphael was gifted with extraordinary talent as a classical pianist. He was an unpublished Biblical Scholar, one who never wrote any formal articles, as well as being a specialist in the writings of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross.

He had a great love for animals, especially his dogs, his cockatiels, and all the ducks and geese at Marylake. His wisdom, kindness, and gentle humor made him beloved of his brothers in his religious community and a treasured spiritual guide by those who benefitted from his priestly ministry. Many of you probably have your own "Fr. Raphael stories" that you could share.



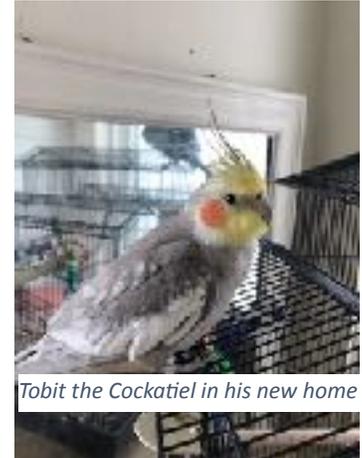
As many of you know, Fr. Raphael stumbled and fell in our kitchen at Marylake on Memorial Day, badly fracturing the bone in his upper right arm. While the surgery to repair the arm went well, Fr. Raphael, most likely weakened from his long battle with bladder cancer, suffered from complications from the anesthesia. In the days after his surgery, he experienced problems with his intestines and kidneys, which gradually led to his demise.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the many members of the Secular Carmelites who so generously kept Fr. Raphael company during his final week in the hospital, and to our friends the Pilkingtons, who likewise showered Fr. Raphael with kindness. The nurses and staff at St. Vincent infirmary, too, were wonderful in their care.

As his kidneys continued to fail, Fr. Raphael seemed to know that he would soon hear the Lord's call to "enter the kingdom of his Father." The morning of

June 10th, Fr. Raphael was visited by Bob Pilkington and told him that he was ready to go “home.” He asked Bob to find a good home for Tobit, his pet cockatiel, as well as asking him to take care of a few other things. That afternoon, surrounded by Fr. Sam, Fr. Gregory, and Carmelite Secular Mary Howard, Fr. Raphael peacefully breathed his last and made his Passover journey with our Lord from this life to his eternal dwelling place in the Father’s house.

Fr. Raphael’s Aunt Telka Jennings and his brother Ron Kitz, along with Ron’s family, were able to attend the funeral services at Marylake. While the unairconditioned large chapel afforded us all an opportunity to offer up some penance for our departed brother, the services were all lovely. There were eight Carmelite friars from our Province, along with several priests from the Diocese of Arkansas, who concelebrated the funeral Mass. Thanks to all who prepared the monastery and grounds for the services, as well as to our brother and sister Secular Carmelites and the Pilkingtons, who organized the receptions after the Vigil service and the Mass and burial. Our gratitude to Ken and Jan Swink, OCDS, who happily adopted Tobit the cockatiel and have provided him a loving and beautiful home. Thanks, also, to all our other friends who helped in so many ways with everything concerning our farewell to our dear Fr. Raphael.



Fr. Sam has been busy thanking and acknowledging all the memorials and Masses being offered for Fr. Raphael. He is getting us organized to continue celebrating these Masses on schedule, as well as continuing his ministry to the Discalced Carmelite nuns and Missionaries of Charity.

Fr. Gregory continues his classes with the Carmelite nuns in initial formation, as well as his ministry of vocation promotion. Thanks be to God, our Lord has blessed our Province with two postulants: Alejandro Vidaurre (21 years old) and José Chavez (22). Thank you for your prayers for vocations. Please continue to ask our heavenly Father to send laborers to the vineyard of Carmel!

We enjoyed a visit from Fr. Jerome during the month of July. He came to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel with us on July 16th, and remained about a week. He is recovering well from the injuries he suffered in his car accident last December, thanks be to God and to your prayers.

In other news, the “Marian House” on our property has been demolished and cleared away. This building had deteriorated over the years, suffering termite damage and other issues, becoming a liability. Thanks to the generosity of our friends, we have been able to cover the costs of this necessary project. We thank you in advance for any support you might be able to offer for upcoming projects, such as repairs to our kitchen floor and plumbing, as well as other projects related to the integrity of the lake and its shoreline.

Please be assured of the daily prayers and gratitude of us at Marylake. May God’s blessing and grace be with you and all your families in your every need.

Fraternally In Christ, on behalf of the Discalced Carmelite Friars of Marylake,

Fr. Gregory Ross, O.C.D.

