



Dear Carmelite family, relatives and friends,

As this is being written our country is once again reeling from the effects of a major earthquake. This time our monastery did not experience any more damage, in spite of the violent shaking, but others further north were not so fortunate. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those suffering from this disaster. We get a sense more and more each day of how fragile our world is, and that the only security we have is in God.

Earlier in the year a large aftershock caused some damage, resulting in the spectacular cracking of the tiles in our refectory (sounding like machine gun fire). We now have a gap to cross over as we await repairs. After 6 years of looking at large scars on the walls of our Choir (our part of the Chapel), held together with tape, the Choir is once again intact. This is the central hub of our monastery and our lives and we are grateful to have it finally repaired. Most of our old building is now repaired, and it is just our main building which will hopefully be completed in 2017. We are very fortunate that we have not had to vacate the monastery for this work to be done. The tradesmen were very accommodating and have done a splendid job, transforming each area with great skill.

2016 has had its share of joys and sorrows, often intermingled. The Lord called to Himself our Bishop Barry Jones, and Sr Marie Angéline's father, Joseph, in February, and Sr Marietta's mother, Lesina, in July. They are all dearly missed. In winter most of us were hit by a bad flu, which stayed around for a long time. In the midst of this, we had the joy of Sr Catherine making her First Profession on 6th August.

We were blessed to have the Prioress and former Prioress of Wallis Carmel with us for a few weeks in February. Sr Mary Joseph entered our Carmel almost 7 decades ago, before founding both Samoa and Wallis Carmels. It was Mother Akenete's first visit to our country.

After more than a decade in the process, a documentary on our monastery was aired on 1st May. It was very sensitively and artistically produced, and brought many positive comments, including some very moving requests for prayers. After so much filming, we appreciate now a return to a more "hidden" life.

"Hidden Monastic Women" was the name of a display of ecclesiastical work and crafts held at our monastery in October, as part of the Christchurch City Council Heritage Week. Hundreds came to view this display. During these days a book of paintings done by our oldest sister, *Reflections in a Monastery Garden*, was launched. Sr Teresa painted these over several years, and a friend, now deceased, had suggested she get this printed, so as to share God's beauty with those who would see it.

Two Carmelite highlights this year were the Canonization of Elizabeth of the Trinity in October, followed by the Beatification of Father Marie-Eugene in November. To celebrate the former, our Bishop Emeritus Basil Meeking gave a beautiful talk in our Chapel. We didn't have a public celebration for the latter, but this spiritual master will be well remembered for his excellent writings *I Want to See God* and *I am a Daughter of the Church*. These two Carmelites inspire us with their deep love of God, and their call to recollection and prayer. In November we were blessed to have a retreat on St Teresa's *Interior Castle*, by our Carmelite Father Gerard Moran, to encourage us as we continue to make this journey within.

The Year of Mercy came to an end on the Feast of Christ the King. As contemplative nuns we were privileged to have our very own "Door of Mercy" to pass through within our part of the Chapel (well decorated for the occasion!). We hope that during this jubilee year many people will have welcomed God's bountiful mercy and helped to spread it through the world, and will continue to do so.

We thank all those who have helped us in so many ways this year. We pray that you and your loved ones will be filled with much peace and joy at Christmas and in the coming year.

Your loving sisters at the Carmel of Christ the King, Christchurch, New Zealand