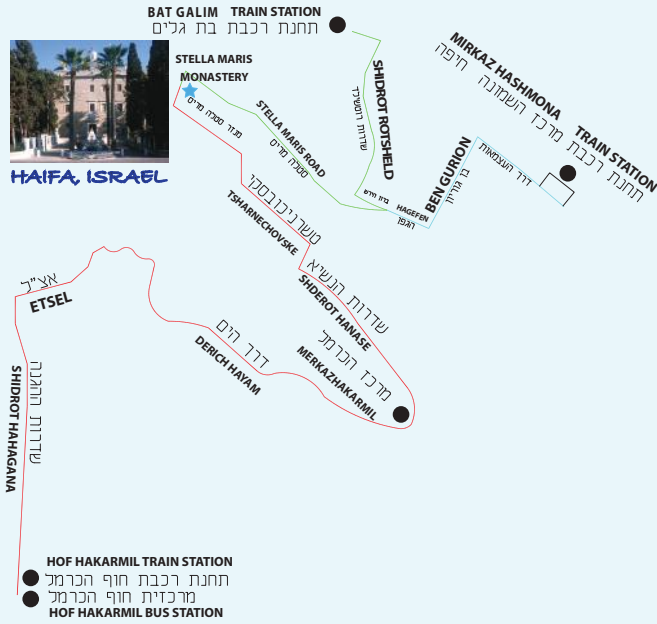


**“THE SACRIFICE”**

The Carmelites have a small monastery at the place of Elijah’s Sacrifice, “El-Muhraqah”, about thirty kilometres from Haifa. There in the days of Ahab and Jezebel, Elijah erected an altar and invoked fire from heaven on the victims (I Kings. 17 - 19). The Kishon river, where the massacre of the prophets of Baal took place, flows by near the mountain at this point.



The Bible describes how, after the Sacrifice, Elijah’s servant saw a cloud from the top of the mountain which brought rain and broke the long drought. Carmelites see in the cloud a symbol of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whence arise their simultaneous devotion to Elijah and to the Virgin.



**Stella Maris Monastery**

P.O. Box 9000

31090 Haifa - Israel

Tel: +972 4 831 1016

Fax: +972 4 833 0081

e-mail: [stellamarischurch@gmail.com](mailto:stellamarischurch@gmail.com)



**THE CARMELITES  
AND  
MOUNT CARMEL**



**STELLA MARIS**

### **A brief notice for our Pilgrims and Visitors**

The Carmelites are a group of religious of the Catholic Church who derive their name from Mount Carmel where their Order took its origin.

Toward the end of the 12th century, a number of Crusaders settled on the western slopes of Mount Carmel desirous of imitating Elijah the Prophet by living a hermit-like life in the grottoes of the mountain.

Sometime between 1206 - 1214, their Prior St. Brocard, solicited a written rule of life from the Patriarch of Jerusalem, St. Albert. This act incorporated them into the diocese of Jerusalem and initiated the history of what was to become the Carmelite Order.



The hermits who later took the name of Carmelites then constructed a chapel for themselves in Wadi es-Sia. The site was excavated by Fr. Bagatti O. F. M. and the original chapel brought to light.

In 1254 St. Luis conducted six Carmelites back with him from Mount Carmel to France, at the end of his first Crusade.

From 1238 onwards, the Carmelites began to found monasteries in Europe, but when St. John of Acre fell in 1291, they had to abandon the Holy Land.

In 1631 the Venerable Fr. Prosper returned to Mount Carmel to restore the cradle of the Order in the name of the Discalced Carmelites. He built a small monastery on the promontory near the lighthouse, where the Carmelites lived until 1767. They were then ordered by Daher el-Omar to quit the site and demolish their



monastery.

The Carmelites moved to the present site, where they constructed a large church and monastery over a grotto in which



Elijah was said to have lived. To do so they had to clear the site of the ruins of a medieval church of the Greeks, known as "the Abbey of St. Margaret" as well as of an ancient chapel, most likely going back to byzantine times.

The campaign of Napoleon (1799) led to the new church of the Carmelites being seriously damaged. Sick and wounded French soldiers had been placed in the monastery. When Napoleon retreated they were massacred by the Turks and the religious driven out. When they could return they gave the dead an honourable burial in their garden and elevated over the tomb a monument to their memory in the form of a pyramid. The sailors of the "Château-Renaud" forged an iron cross which was placed on top of the pyramid. In 1821, Abdallah Pasha of Acre ordered the ruined church to be totally destroyed.

Bro. Casini undertook to build a new church and monastery, which was opened in 1836. Three years later Pope Gregory XVI bestowed on the new sanctuary the title of Minor Basilica. It now goes by the name of " Stella Maris".



The head of the beautiful statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel above the High Altar is the work of Caraventa of Genoa (1820). It was crowned in the Vatican, in the presence of Pope Pius VII in 1823. About a hundred years later, a body was sculptured out of Cedar of Lebanon wood by Riedi and the statue blessed by Pope Pius XI before being sent back to the Holy Land.

The paintings in the dome were executed by Bro. Luigi Poggi (1924 - 1928), lay-brother of the monastery. They show Elijah elevated in his Chariot of fire, King David playing his harp, the Saints of the Order the Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the Holly Family. Below them are depicted the four Evangelists. The base of the cupola bears two texts from the Mass of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The stained-glass windows portray Elijah in the desert and his Elevation in a fiery chariot.



After the First World War, the monastery was enlarged to house the International College of Philosophy of the Order, but this had to be closed down on account of the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. Today it houses an extension of the International College of Theology of the Carmelites in Rome. The old college has been transformed into a Pilgrim Center.