

Carmelites of the Holy Face

St. Joseph's Carmelite Hermitage, O.Carm
Inchincurka, Dunmanway, Co. Cork, Rep. of Ireland



Website: carmelitesholysface.com

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“...They that serve her, shall be servants to the holy one: and God loveth them that love her.” — Ecclesiasticus 4:15

Dear Friends & Benefactors and all of you who are the beloved of God,

Advent is approaching once again, and it is a good opportunity for us to reflect on the Mystery of the Incarnation, together with its practical application in our personal lives. We are, in many ways, in a similar situation to the Jews of old – awaiting the fulfilment of a promise and the restoration of the Faith of our fathers. However, we have one great advantage over them, for our Messiah has already come and redeemed us. When rightly understood, this fact makes all the difference.



The Blessed Mother of our Redeemer has an important role in these latter times, even as she had then. We know the prophecies indicate that it will be through Mary that the Triumph over the devil and his followers will take place. It is she who will bring about the reign of Jesus Christ on earth, just as it is she who, by her Spiritual Motherhood, causes Him to live and reign in our souls.

There have been many throughout the centuries (and they are still to be found today), who claim that Catholics honour Mary too much. *“But these men blaspheme whatever things they know not.” (Jude 1:10)* Mary unites us to God. She is our “Skopos”, our immediate goal, the way we take in order to reach our “Telos”, our final end, our eternal destination. She herself is so closely united to God and her will is so completely one with His, that it is unthinkable that she could lead us away from Him or be an obstacle to our love for God. At the wedding feast of Cana, she said to the waiters: *“Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.” (John 2:5)* This is precisely what she

says to us: “Do whatever He tells you.” She leads us both by word and example to accomplish God’s will as perfectly as possible; and this is the essence of all sanctity.

Almighty God could have become Man without Mary, but He did not do so. It is His will that Mary should likewise be instrumental in uniting the humanity of each one of us to His own Divinity. As we are members of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, Mary is the Mother of us all. Her greatest desire is to renew in us, personally as well as collectively, the mystery of the Incarnation, and thus to continue her own Divine Motherhood.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” John 1:14

St. John used these sublime words to describe the Incarnation. But this was not just a once-off occurrence – it is renewed and continued every day in the members of His Mystical Body here on earth; for in uniting the Eternal Word to a human nature, God willed to include us all. And He will do so if we let Him. He will do so through Mary, who is at one and the same time our Mother and our model.

Of course Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our Model and the Supreme example of perfection – why, then, do we need any other? St. Pius X explains that Christ’s example can be somewhat frightening, His image too dazzling and the imitation of His patience and sanctity something hard to attain. After all, He was Divine as well as human, God as well as man.



“Divine Providence, therefore, has given us another model. This model, who is the Mother of God, is at one and the same time closer to our weakness and also the most perfect reproduction of Christ’s image that can be found in human nature.” – Encyclical of Pope Pius X, “Ad Diem Illum”

The Fathers of the Church further illustrate this truth by comparing Mary to the moon which reflects the light of the sun, making it possible for us to gaze at it without harming our eyes. Of itself the moon has no light, just as Mary derives all her splendour from her Divine Son. Others describe her as a pure and spotless mirror; a faithful reflection of Jesus Christ; even as His living monstrosity. Mary therefore brings us to Jesus and Jesus to us.

As mentioned above, Mary is our model. How can we possibly imitate her? We can, of course, never equal her in sanctity, but our means of reaching the degree of sanctity God expects of us is the same as it was for her. Our Lady spoke very little, but that little which the Bible tells us of her is full of significance. Perhaps the most significant word of all was her “Fiat” - that word by which she gave her consent to the Incarnation. Her entire life was a continual “Be it done” – an unbroken harmonising of her will with the Divine will. This demanded, at times, a heroic faith.



“She had to believe contradictory things: for instance, that her Son should sit on the throne of David when, in the very City of David, they refused to receive Him... She had to believe that He would reign forever even when she saw Him die on a cross of ignominy. She had to believe that He would attract all to Him, even though His followers formerly so enthusiastic, fled from Him, and His very Apostles lost confidence and abandoned Him.” – ‘Life of Union with Mary’ by Fr. Emil Neubert, p.147

In practice, we imitate Mary’s Faith by firmly believing, in spite of appearances, that *“all things work together for good to them that love God.”* All that Providence arranges or even permits to happen to us is for our eternal good; and when we firmly believe this truth, it makes it much easier to accept all the trials, difficulties and disappointments we encounter in daily life.

Such Faith demands a deep humility, for it means renouncing all our own ideas in order to accept the will of another as being better than our own. It leads us to place more confidence in God than in ourselves, trusting that He sees the bigger picture in the light of eternity and will make everything work for our benefit.

Conformity to the will of God – this was the keynote of Our Lady’s life, and it is the way in which we are all called to imitate her, regardless of our state in life. Union with God is a matter of will, not of emotions. When God clearly wills something, He makes it known to us by messengers; for example, by circumstances we can’t change, obedience, duty, and inspirations. This is *our* Annunciation; these are our opportunities to say *“Fiat mihi – Be it done.”*

When our will unites with God’s will, when we consent to all He proposes to do with us and to us (even without understanding why), at that very moment the Word is made flesh; the mystery of the Incarnation is renewed, continued and

repeated in us; our human nature, our entire person becomes united to the Divinity. Jesus Christ descends to earth once again. Through Mary we give Him a body – our body – with which to continue His work of Redemption. He lives in us, and we cooperate in bringing Him to others, even as Mary did.

Outwardly we may live very ordinary lives, but that is no hindrance to holiness. Mary teaches us that. Her own life must have appeared very ordinary and commonplace to all who knew her, and yet how precious in the sight of the Lord!

Let us therefore, not only during this coming Advent, but everywhere and always, prove our love for Mary by echoing her Fiat; imitating her total surrender to the will of God. This is the meaning and purpose of true devotion to Mary. This is how we too can participate in the mystery of the Incarnation.

“Our Lady said yes for the human race. Each one of us must echo that yes for our own lives.” – ‘The Reed of God’ by Caryll Houselander, p.18



Mary's Role

Some people rather falsely claim
That Catholics tend to err
By honouring Our Lady's name
And praying much to her.

They say our prayers should be
addressed
To Christ and not another,
As if we really loved Him best
When we ignore His Mother.

But Jesus Christ has plainly said
That none may tear apart
What God has joined; and we are led
To Him through Mary's Heart.

His Heart and hers are as if one,
So joined to one another
That none can truly love the Son
While loving not His Mother.

Through Mary's "yes" was God made
man,
For she was full of grace;
And in the Lord's eternal plan,
She has a central place.

A Mother she became for us;
Our Model here below.
Through Mary Jesus came to us;
Through her to Him we go.

Whenever Mary's "fiat" finds
An echo in our hearts,
Within our hearts and souls and
minds
A transformation starts.

Through Mary Christ is formed again,
According to His plan;
The Word becomes incarnate then,
Uniting God and man.

Let us respect and venerate
Our Lady's hidden role,
In spite of those who underrate
Its value to the soul.

For Mary leads us to consent
In every situation;
To put in practice what is meant
By this, Christ's Incarnation.

Cf. Luke 1:38, Mark 3:35, 10:9; Hebrews 10:36

Hermitage News

- + August – At last we found a suitable buyer for our former land. The kind new owner arranged to remove the 3ft shrine statue of Our Lady and transport it to St. Joseph’s Hermitage.
- + September – This summer we had a wonderful harvest of vegetables. We were busy preserving them for the winter using our home-made apple cider vinegar.

We received a most encouraging telephone call from His Grace, Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, who assured us of his moral, spiritual and paternal support, and bestowed on us his apostolic blessing. He has very kindly appointed a canon lawyer to review our Constitutions. (Please note. We do not have contact details of the Archbishop, so please do not write to us asking for his contact details).



- + October – For the month of the Holy Rosary, each of us attempted to pray all 15 decades daily in which you and your intentions were included. In addition, we held several rosary processions to honour Our Lady of the Rosary.

We began the process of applying for a one-year visa for our two postulants, Ivena & Hilary. Despite being assured by two different immigration officers that they could apply from within Ireland, the immigration headquarters informed us that all applications must be made from outside Ireland. Sadly, therefore, Ivena & Hilary have departed in order to apply for this visa. Please pray they will persevere in their vocation and return to us soon.

We continue to receive vocational enquiries, and hope to receive more thanks to a new video recently made by a kind benefactor who is a professional photographer. This video is available on YouTube and is entitled *A Glimpse into the Life of Traditional Carmelites*. One very promising young lady from the USA is



currently waiting for her new passport and visa before booking a one-way ticket to Ireland — hopefully at the end of this year or early next year.

Thank you once again for your loyalty and generous support, and for continuing to help us in whatever way you can. As some of you may know, Our Lady promised St. Peter Thomas that the Order of Carmel would last until the end of time. While we are blessed to be a part of the fulfilment of that promise, we are sure that you will likewise be blessed for all you do and have already done to help us maintain the spirit of Carmel in this Hermitage of St. Joseph.

Mother Irene of the Holy Face O.Carm and Community

Available from our Carmelite Shop:

Christmas Cards.....	€3.00 ea or €10.00 for 4
Cord of St Joseph (with explanatory leaflet and holy card).....	€5.00
Hand-made Wooden Holy Face Chaplet Beads (dark green/dark orange).....	€6.00
Miraculous Medal, Standard Size (silver).....	€1.00
Miraculous Medal on Coloured Leather Necklace (var. colours avail.).....	€5.00
Blessed Oil of the Holy Face.....	Free
1 Decade Chaplet Rosary Beads.....	€4.00
Hand-made blue plastic Rosary beads with Miraculous Medal.....	€6.00
Hand-made wooden Rosary beads with Miraculous Medal (brown/purple).....	€6.00
Hand made Greeting & Mass Cards.....	€3.00 each or €25.00 for 10
Brown wool Scapulars of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.....	€3.00
Large Ornate St. Benedict Medal (silver).....	€7.00
St. Christopher & St. Anthony Bronze Medal.....	€4.50
Heavy Copper-Coloured Crucifix Key Ring.....	€9.50
St. Benedict Copper- Coloured Crucifix.....	€2.00
St. Benedict Medal, Gold-coloured, oval, standard size.....	€1.00
Holy Face Medal (Shroud Image).....	€1.00
Holy Face Medal 3D (bronze/gold/silver).....	€2.00
Pardon Crucifix (gold/silver/bronze).....	€7.00
Blessed 100% Beeswax Candle.....	offering, €0.50
Blessed Salt.....	Free

HOW TO HELP US?

- ✓ **By your prayers**, especially that Our Lord will send us good vocations, courageous “Veronicas” to wipe and honour His Adorable Face and make reparation for poor sinners.
- ✓ **By your generosity**: bank transfer made payable to
Mother (Sr.) Irene Gibson
Carmelite Nuns of the Holy Face
St. Joseph's Carmelite Hermitage
Inchincurka, Dunmanway,
Co Cork

Bank Name: **Bank of Ireland**
Bank Address: **Westport Co Mayo**
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Branch Code: **90-39-98**
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