

Carmelites of the Holy Face

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



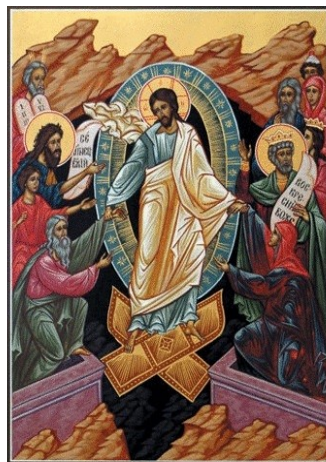
Website: carmelitesholyface.com

Issue 29 — April 2024

"I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." — John 10:10

Dear Friends & Benefactors,

Along with Holy Mother Church we have entered upon the fifty-day celebration of the Paschal Mystery — the most important event in the entire Liturgical Year — and naturally we rejoice at having left the penitential season of Lent. Because we live in the midst of a very secular society, there is a danger that our rejoicing will be influenced by worldly customs and will consist more in a feast for the body than for the soul. It would be a great pity to lose all we have gained during Lent, and so the legitimate relaxation we enjoy during Paschaltide needs to be accompanied by prayerful reflection on the spiritual reason for our rejoicing and the significance which Easter has for us personally. It is not merely a historical event which we commemorate; in celebrating the Resurrection of Our Lord we also celebrate our own deliverance from death and the inestimable gift of life everlasting.



It is fairly common to hear people speak of “living life to the full,” but that phrase is very seldom used in its truest context. Today very few people know what life really means because they do not acknowledge God as the Source of all life. They think, speak and act as if this present life were the only one, and so they try to get as much enjoyment as they can out of it, just like the animals do. It is sad when people aim no higher than this. God has offered us the possibility of gaining everlasting life — a life so perfectly satisfying that those who possess it are the only ones who can really be said to be living life to the full.

"Now this is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." - John 17:3

This present life, the life of the body, is something we have in common with all kinds of animals, but God gave us a more noble kind of life as well. He gave us the gift of reason and free will, and He imparted to us a supernatural life – something which animals do not have. As the Book of Genesis tells us, He breathed into Adam’s face *“the breath of life, and man became a living soul.”* The life of the soul is sanctifying grace. It is a divine life, a participation in the life of God Himself. It is this supernatural life (or the possibility of possessing it) which imparts a unique dignity to the human person. Without it we cannot possibly experience the fullness of life.

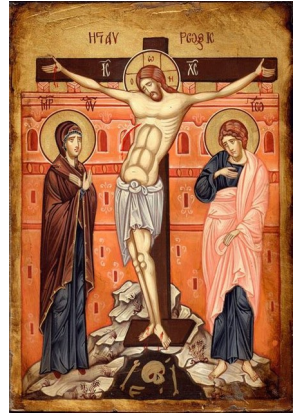
Those who attempt to live without God are deceiving themselves when they claim they are seeking the fullness of life. They try to bring everything down to the natural level, ignoring the supernatural destiny which we have been created for and attempting to make man the centre of all things in place of God. The global elite appear to enjoy the best things which this world can offer. They do not hesitate to stir up revolutions, create famines and diseases, divide families, and murder millions of innocent victims to win money, power and prestige for themselves. They employ the most skilled doctors to look after their health; they eat the best quality foods, occupy comfortable homes and travel in the most convenient ways. And yet, they are deserving of pity rather than envy or hatred. They call this life, but it is rather a kind of spiritual suicide, for they have sold their souls to the devil, and very shortly they will have to pay what they owe. If these oligarchs appear happy and content, it is only an illusion. It is impossible to experience true peace and happiness when one is separated from God and when everything one is doing is preparing to make that separation an eternal reality.

“But the wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest, and the waves thereof cast up dirt and mire. There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord God.” - Isaiah 57:20-21

The wicked are not the only ones who fail to live life to the full. Even we, who are sincerely striving to live as good Christians, tend to separate ourselves from the life of Christ in order to follow our passions and evil tendencies. This is the result of original sin. Adam separated himself from God by his disobedience. He lost the life of sanctifying grace and therefore a Redeemer was necessary to restore to Adam and to his descendants the possibility of a life of union with God. This mystery of our redemption found its climax in the Resurrection. It is this mystery which we celebrate during Paschaltide.



Jesus, the Son of God, took upon Himself our human nature. As the new Adam, He suffered and died on behalf of all humanity, and thus He regained for us the life which Adam had lost. Without the Passion and Death of our Saviour, there would have been no Resurrection. We would have remained dead in our sins. But as the Preface for Easter says so beautifully, *“He is the true Lamb Who took away the sins of the world: Who, by dying destroyed our death and, by rising again, hath restored us to life.”*



The ceremonies of the Easter Vigil help us to grasp something of the meaning of life and the importance of the supernatural life of sanctifying grace. *“Our birth would have been no gain, had we not been redeemed... O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the Death of Christ! O happy fault that earned for us so great, so glorious a Redeemer!”* If only we fully appreciated this gift of God! If only we really understood what it means to be a true Christian and to live life to the full!

The Resurrection of our souls began at Baptism and so did the mystical death to self which the Christian or Christ-like life demands. *“For we are buried together with him by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.”* - Romans 6:4 Baptism is only the beginning, however. Like all life, the spiritual life of our souls is meant to grow and develop. Like all life, it requires nourishment. The Sacrament of Penance is there to restore the life of sanctifying grace when it has been lost by mortal sin. It restores health to the soul when life is already present by cleansing our souls of venial sins and imperfections. The other sacraments assist and safeguard the life of our souls too. They impart to us an increase of sanctifying grace; they make our supernatural life grow in strength, beauty and perfection.

There is also something sacramental about the present moment. A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Every duty, trial and event with which our days are filled is permitted by God and can be a source of grace. How much we profit from it will depend on our dispositions, our faith, our acceptance and our docility to God's will. By welcoming it as the will of God, we unite ourselves to His own life and draw from it the nourishment which we need to grow in holiness. Our Lord Himself referred to this fact when He said: *“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me...”* - John 4:34

The perfect fullness of life is found nowhere except in union with God. This is our great and final destiny unless we renounce it by following the example of Lucifer, abusing our free will and choosing not to serve God. To be united to God, to be admitted to an intimate and eternal participation in the life of the Most Holy Trinity – this is the source of all happiness. This is the fullness of life which alone can satisfy us; nothing less! Although such a life will reach its perfect consummation and fulfilment only in Heaven, it is possible for it to begin already in this mortal life. It is meant to. That is God's desire. The spiritual life we lead here and now is a beginning of the future life. Already Our Lord has promised to grant us a hundredfold recompense for the pains we take and the sacrifices we make to grow in the life of grace. There is no one who practices detachment from temporal things for God's sake *"Who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time... with persecutions: and in the world to come life everlasting."* - Mark 10:30

All those who live their spiritual life in earnest will experience this: the persecutions as well as the reward. Just as the pains of the soul far exceed those of the body, so do the consolations of God far surpass all the pleasures of earth. The Passion of Our Lord lasted but a few days, while the joy and the glory of His Resurrection will endure forever. His life is our life; His way is our way, for we are united to Him as members of His Church, His Mystical Body. In one sense our entire earthly life is our passion, for the cross is never very far away; but there are also moments when the delights of Thabor refresh the soul, and these enable us to continue with renewed courage to the summit of Calvary. It is there, on the cross, that we begin to experience the fullness of life. In another sense, we have already begun to live the Paschal mystery and to participate in the Resurrection of our Saviour exactly in the measure in which we possess sanctifying grace. The more we die to self, the more He lives in us. It is only by His Passion and cross that we are brought to the glory of His Resurrection. There is no other way.



The Fullness of Life

*It is a fact that, as a rule,
We do not live life to the full;
Nor find the happiness we could
If life were rightly understood.*

*The natural life of man and beast
Is short, and shortly will have ceased;
But there's a better life than this –
A life of everlasting bliss.*

*So often, by the way we act,
We show we overlook this fact.
We tend to make this world our goal
And please the body, not the soul.*

*No wonder that we sigh and grieve
When death is all that we achieve!
How miserable a destiny
So far beneath what it should be!*

*True life is found within the soul,
Which with the body forms one whole.
The soul needs life which grace supplies;
Without the soul, the body dies.*

*This life is lost by mortal sin
In which death had its origin;
While lesser sins drive life away,
As sickness hastens life's decay.*

*Outside of God all things are dead,
For He is Life; He is our Head.
Without Him we cannot survive,
Nor would we even be alive.*

*This much is plain in any case:
We live by sanctifying grace
Which, like all life, is meant to grow;
Yet can be hindered, as we know.*

*Our inner life needs drink and feed.
The sacraments supply that need.
The present moment also brings
Us constant access to those things.*

*The trials which beset our way
With each occurrence of the day
And all the duties we fulfil
Provide our meat – God's holy will.*

*If we accept them for His sake
And of this nourishment partake,
His life within us shall increase,
And fill our souls with joy and peace.*

*Until the life of self is lost,
We have to do this at our cost;
But even now we are consoled,
For God repays a hundredfold.*

*This death of self; this resurrection,
Is Christian life and high perfection.
Fidelity to grace and prayer
Shall ultimately lead us there.*

*There is no gain without some pain.
We seek for other ways in vain.
God's way is clear; He bids us: "Choose!"
We lose true life when we refuse.*

*The more our wills conform to His,
The more we'll realise what it is
To live the fullest life we can:
The life of Christ, of God and man.*

*Through self-denial let us strive
To rise with Christ; to be alive.
This is the only life that's real,
The Christian model and ideal.*

Cf. Deuteronomy 30:19; Ecclesiasticus 15:18; John 1:4, 10:10, 11:25; Romans 6:8; Colossians 3:3-4

Hermitage News

- ✦ 5th February 2024 – We received our first shipment of our newly published book: “Arma Christi: The Weapons of Our Warfare.” After sending out a general email to our friends and benefactors, we were inundated with orders which kept us extremely busy. Within a week, our first supply of 200 copies was nearly exhausted and so we put in another order with the printing company for a second edition and a larger amount of copies. A brief video made by one of our benefactors also brought in a lot of orders for various sacramentals, especially the Holy Face scapulars, medals and crosses as well as our little Holy Face prayer booklet. A second edition of this booklet is now available with some additional information on the Arch-Confraternity of the Holy Face, two extra hymns and a few more prayers. The publication of our second manuscript, “Beyond the Veil,” has unfortunately had to be postponed for the moment since it is difficult for us to keep up with the amount of work we have at present.
- ✦ March 2024 – We were extremely blessed this Holy Week to have no less than three priests visit our Hermitage, including our former chaplain, Fr. Edward MacDonald (who remained only a few hours). He is sorely missed but greatly needed in other parts of the world. A Traditional priest from the USA provided us with all the Holy Week ceremonies including the Sacred Triduum, a sung High Mass and Benediction on Easter Sunday. The Paschal fire was kindled with difficulty owing to the wet and windy weather, but on the whole the ceremonies went very well, and we count ourselves truly blessed to have had this opportunity when so many faithful are experiencing a spiritual famine.
- ✦ Early April 2024 – At long last we were able to get our potatoes and onions planted. It has been a mild but very wet Spring so far. Our milking goat, Rosie, is due to have kids in about two weeks’ time and has recently been spending even more time on her knees than we have! (It is more convenient for her to reach the grass that way since she is very fat and heavy.)

As always, we count on your prayers for our perseverance, and for a permanent chaplain and more vocations whenever God sees fit to send them to us. We, in turn, continue to keep you and your family in our prayers and intentions. Holy Mass was offered for you all on Holy Tuesday.

In the love of our Risen Lord,

Mother Irene & Community

Available from our Carmelite Shop:

<i>Arma Christi: The Weapens of Our Warfare</i> (193 pages)	€10.00
Holy Face (Painting) A4 Prints	€1.00 each, 10 for €5.00
Holy Face (Painting) 4x6 Postcards	€0.50 each, 10 for €4.00
Holy Face (Shroud Image) A4 Prints	€1.00 each, 10 for €5.00
Holy Face Protection Cross (silver-colour)	€3.00
Hand-made Wooden Holy Face Chaplet Beads (red)	€6.00
Holy Face Prayer Booklet (44 pages)	€2.00
Holy Face Medal (Shroud Image)	€1.00
Holy Face Medal 3D (bronze/gold/silver)	€2.00
Large Holy Face Scapular (white)	€9.50
Blessed Oil of the Holy Face	Free
Hand-made plastic Rosary beads with Miraculous Medal (var. colours. avail.)	€6.00
Hand-made wooden Rosary beads with Miraculous Medal (purple)	€6.00
Brown wool Scapulars of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	€3.00
Miraculous Medal, Standard Size (silver)	€1.00
Large Ornate St. Benedict Medal (silver)	€7.00
St. Christopher & St. Anthony Bronze Medal	€4.50
St. Benedict Medal, Silver-coloured, oval, standard size	€1.00
Pardon Crucifix (gold/silver/bronze)	€7.00
Cord of St Joseph (with explanatory leaflet and holycard)	€5.00
Greeting and/or Mass Cards	€3.00 each or €10.00 for 4
Thin Blessed 100% Beeswax Candle (290x8 mm)	offering, €1.00
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
Carmelites of the Holy Face
St. Joseph's Hermitage
Inchincurka, Dunmanway,
Co Cork, Ireland

Bank Name: Allied Irish Bank
Bank Address: East Green, Dunmanway, Co. Cork
Bank Identifier Code (BIC): AIBKIE2D
National Sort Code: 93-60-73
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Easter Vigil Mass — 30-31 March, 2024