

Carmelites of the Holy Face

Holy Family Carmelite Hermitage O.Carm
Corran, Leap, Co. Cork, Rep. of Ireland.



Website: carmeliteshollyface.com

Issue 8 - September 2019

“O that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end!” Deut. 32:29

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

One of our most loyal friends and benefactors was taken from us recently. While remembering him in our prayers, we trust that he is already receiving a wonderful reward in Heaven for his outstanding charity. Thank God that, although it came so suddenly, death found him well prepared. He died so quickly and so unexpectedly, that it seems to be a good opportunity for us to share with you in this newsletter a few considerations on death.

All of us must die someday. Death is the price which everyone must pay for the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve. Many people today do not like to think about death, yet Our Lord tells us we must always be prepared; for it shall come at an hour we do not expect, “like a thief in the night.” (cf. Matt. 24:42-44). If we are living a good Catholic life and caring for our souls, there is no reason why we should fear death. For a soul in the state of grace, death is only the beginning of a new and better life. Our life on earth is simply a period of preparation for that time. Whether we use it well or not, this life is our only chance to prepare for eternity. Because of our free will, we have the possibility to secure for ourselves either joy or sadness forever. What our choice will be is determined by the way we prepare for death.



“Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him.” Eccles.15:18

For the Saints, the thought of death was an encouragement in the midst of their many trials because they knew that all sufferings, when endured for Christ’s sake, would soon pass away, while an eternal reward awaited them when their lives on earth were over. This is the reason why in some

monasteries and convents, it is a common custom to keep a replica human skull. Each Carmelite also has a replica human skull in her cell to remind her of the moment of death. “Remember this will pass away,” it seems to say when the cross weighs heavily upon her.

In fact, if we did not believe that life on earth is, more than anything else, a preparation for death and eternity, then our life of renunciation as Consecrated Religious or faithful Catholics would not make sense.

We were all created to be happy, but not with the goods of this earth which we must leave behind us when we die. Our Lady of Lourdes once said to Saint Bernadette: *“I do not promise to make you happy in this life, but in the next.”* The happiness we were created to enjoy is an eternal happiness which can be found in God alone. Think how small a price we have to pay to be happy forever: a few years of pain and trials; a few years of serving God, and in exchange, a whole eternity in which to rest and enjoy ourselves!

“The number of the days of man at the most are a hundred years: as a drop of water of the sea are they esteemed: and as a pebble of the sand, so are a few years compared to eternity.” Eccclus.18:8

The thought of death therefore, and of the eternity to follow makes it easier to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Christ to Calvary.

Because of our free will, we each have the possibility to live for this life or the next. Those who live for this life only are grieved by death, because they can take nothing with them of all their possessions. On the contrary, those who spend this life pleasing God and doing His Holy Will, will lay up for themselves



No matter what is one's station in life, the Dance Macabre unites all.

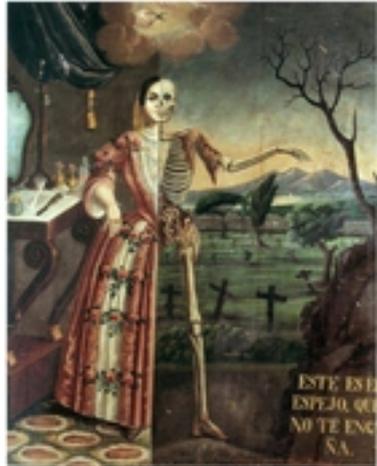
‘a treasure unfailing in Heaven’ (cf. Matt. 6:20); a happy death and an eternity of joy. Who would wish to forfeit this by the few years of empty pleasures which the world can offer?

The remembrance of eternity keeps before our minds the fact that in this life on earth, the salvation of souls – our own and those of others – is the only thing which really matters. Everything else will pass away sooner or later: money, food, a fine house, a good job... and then only souls will matter. The souls we have helped to save will be our treasure in Heaven. It is only after death that we will be able to see

the value of our prayers, good works and sacrifices, but then it will be too late to do any more. After she died, Saint Teresa of Avila revealed to some soul that she would willingly come back to earth and endure all the pains imaginable until the Last Day in order to gain the merit of one more Hail Mary well said! In this we have an advantage over the Saints in Heaven: we call still gain merit, while they can no longer do so. Let us make good use of this advantage!

“And in doing good, let us not fail. For in due time, we shall reap, not fail. Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.” Gal.6:9-10

Death will come for us at an hour appointed by God, regardless of anything we can do — separating us in time from loved ones and all we possess. Consider this however, it is far better to be separated from family and friends for a short time with the hope of meeting again in Heaven, than to neglect to prepare for death and perhaps find ourselves separated forever, or together in Hell for eternity. If we truly love God and have Our Lady, the angels and saints as our friends, we will look forward to meeting them. The approach of death would have no sting for us. It would rather fill us with great joy and expectation of a re-union with loved ones.



As for the grief which our death may cause to those we love, it will be greatly lessened if we have lived a good Christian life and if they have reason to hope we have been saved. Therefore the greatest kindness we can do for both them and ourselves, is to save our soul and die in the state of grace. “As you live, so shall you die” is a well know saying. (cf. Romans 8:13)

A suicide is truly more heartbreaking than the sudden death of a devout Catholic. That is because it is a mortal sin to take one’s own life and to die unrepentant with a mortal sin on one’s soul means we will go to Hell. However, even in the case of those who have committed suicide, we should still pray for their souls because, however unlikely it may be, it is possible they may have repented at the last moment. This is shown by the following incident from the life of the Cure of Ars, Saint John Maria Baptist Vianney. A certain woman, whose husband had committed suicide by jumping off a

bridge, came to Ars to seek the advice of St John Vianney and to find help in coping with her grief. The saintly priest told her that because her husband used to bring home a bunch of flowers every Saturday for Our Lady's altar, she had obtained for him the grace to make a perfect act of contrition before he reached the water. He was therefore in Purgatory and waiting for the prayers of his wife! This true story should give us hope and encouragement to keep praying, even for souls whom we think might be lost.

We hope, dear friends that these considerations will help you in some way to look upon death and eternity as most consoling realities rather than as something to be feared, and that they will, at the same time, prompt each of us to continue in our efforts to save souls. We conclude with an old verse which it would be well for everyone to ponder:

*“Life is short, and death is sure;
The hour of death remains obscure.
A soul you have, and only one –
If that is lost, all hope is gone.
Waste not time, while time shall last;
For after death 'tis ever past.
All – seeing God your Judge will be,
And Heaven or Hell your destiny.
All earthly things will speed away;
Eternity alone will stay.”*

Reverend F.X. Schouppe S.J



Recommended reading:

- ✦ Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell: Meditations on the Four Last Things, St. Alphonsus Liguori
- ✦ Preparation for Death or Considerations on the Eternal Maxims, St. Alphonsus Liguori
- ✦ The Dogma of Hell, Illustrated by Facts Taken from Profane and Sacred History, Fr. Francois Xavier Schouppe, S.J
- ✦ Purgatory: Explained by the Lives and Legends of the Saints, Fr. Francois Xavier Schouppe, S.J
- ✦ Stories About Purgatory And What They Reveal, Compiled from Traditional Sources by An Ursuline Nun of Sligo, Ireland

Busy Leisure ! *

“What good are nuns who only pray?
They are no use to man.”
Such is the mindset of today
For few can understand.

They think of nursing, teaching nuns
“Ah, these at least,” they say
“Performed a useful task for us,
Though few are left today.

“But you who live a silent life
Of sacrifice and prayer,
How do you help your fellow men?
What use are you in there?”

There is one truth, belief in which
Provides an explanation:
We all must die and then we face
Salvation or damnation.

And since there are so many souls
Neglecting to prepare,
We want to save them by our lives
Of sacrifice and prayer.

Few men today have understood
The value of a prayer,
Or what it means to save a soul,
And why we even care.

But here is why: this life is short;
We all must die someday,
And find a Heaven or a Hell
Which will not pass away.

*: Busy Leisure (Latin) *Negotiosissimum otium* -
The occupation of the monk, according to St.
Bernard, is a very busy Leisure.

O God, what is the use of riches, possessions and kingdoms at death, when nothing remains but a wooden coffin and a simple garment to cover the body ?

What good are honours, when they all end in a funeral procession and pompous obsequies, which will not profit the soul if it be in hell ?

Preparation for Death by St. Alphonsus Liguori

Hermitage News

- ✦ After months of waiting, we still have no news to share with you regarding our future location. We are currently making a Novena to St. Joseph for the sale of our property. We are confident this most powerful Saint will soon send us a buyer.
- ✦ 22nd June, we made a pilgrimage to the grave of Little Nellie of Holy God, who is buried in the cemetery of the Good Shepherd Sisters in Cork City. Recalling that God is especially attentive to the prayers of innocent children, we asked this little saint to obtaining a chaplain for us. Where this priest lives, will determine where God wills us to put down roots and grow. As an assurance that our prayer will be granted, Mother Prioress asked for a secret particular sign. Almost one month later the sign was given. We are confident, therefore, that we shall soon obtain a chaplain.
- ✦ 24th August, our most loyal friend and benefactor, Denis O'Leary died suddenly of a heart attack. Since he was so good to us while on earth, we trust that he will not forget us now and in the future. Our trust was soon rewarded... Having nearly used up all the apples which he used to give us to make our jams and vinegars; we asked him to send us some more. Several days later, two large boxes were left by a generous benefactor outside our gate!
- ✦ We would like to say a very special thank you to all our benefactors who enable us to continue in our life of prayer and sacrifice. To those who



have contributed directly into our bank account, we say thank you with all our heart. Unfortunately since Bank of Ireland bank statements only display a collection of numbers next to the donation and not the name of the contributor, we are unable to acknowledge your kind gift unless you let us know via email or snail mail that you have made a contribution. Many continue to assist us also via PayPal on our website. Please forgive us if we have again failed to thank you each time. We keep a careful account of all gifts and never fail to pray for your needs and intentions. May God bless and reward you for your charity.

Your Carmelite Sisters

Mother Irene of the Holy Face O.Carm and Community



Little Nellie & St. Pius X

“...Pray one for another, that you may be saved. For the continual prayer of a just man availeth much.”

James 5:16

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**

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- ✓ **By a PayPal donation to monabyrne@rocketmail.com or via our web site:**

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