

Carmelites of the Holy Face

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



Website: carmelitesholyface.com

Issue 15 — May 2021

“The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few.” Matthew 9:37

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

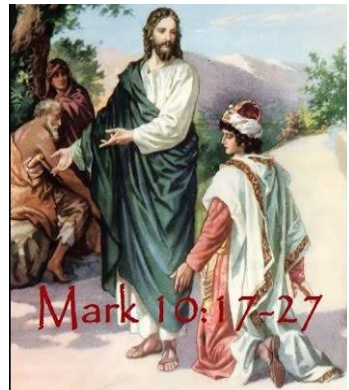


After many months of patient waiting, Saint Joseph's Hermitage is now a reality! A great deal of work remains to be done in repairing the tiny old house and developing the land, but even as we make every effort to accomplish this for the glory of God, we recall the words of the Psalmist:

“Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” — Psalm 126:1

When we think of how many monasteries and convents lie empty or in ruins all over Ireland – and indeed, all over the world – we realise very clearly that it takes more than mortar and stone to make a Religious Community. How often we say to one another, “If only we had more Nuns and Carmelite Brothers!” If only there were more vocations; more labourers to gather the harvest of souls waiting for those who respond to the Lord's invitation: “Come, follow Me!”

We are frequently asked why it is that there are so few vocations today. There are many reasons we could give: though the world today is a cesspool of sin, its novelties hold great attraction for the majority of the youth. Sad to say, all too few of our present-day youth know that their thirst for happiness can only be sated in drink from the Fountain of Living Waters, namely Christ Jesus Our Lord. Then there is the lack of a deep faith (for without Faith, religious Life would seem pointless); there is little understanding of the value of a Religious Vocation; so much noise



and hustle and bustle in the average person's life, that the gentle voice of God is drowned out. The reason is not that God does not call people any more as He did in the past. He still calls and invites, but there are so few who are able or willing to hear Him; and even fewer who are prepared for the self-sacrifice which religious life entails. Even among Catholics, there are many misconceptions of the Religious Life. That is why it seemed good to us to make this the subject of this newsletter.

The Religious Life, we may say, is simply the living out of our Baptismal vows to the full and with greater perfection than is possible or expected among those living in the world. Though it is by no means an easy life, it is perhaps the easiest path to sanctity. No one has more assistance in striving for perfection than the Religious who is guided by the Rule, the monastic customs and Religious Vows which are all directed to this end. On the other hand, there is no other state in life which demands so much self-sacrifice, detachment, and the readiness to renounce one's own will. That is why the saints say it is better to remain in the world than to become a lukewarm Religious. If much grace is given to the Religious, much will be expected from them in return. But if the priest, monk, or nun has given up all things for Christ, then what may they not expect in return?



“And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.” — Matthew 19:29

For what has been said, you may have the impression that religious life is rather dull and gloomy, or that it is out of touch with reality and the needs of those caught up in the busyness of the world. Nothing could be further from the truth! You see, one of the most important virtues for anybody, but especially for a religious, is Faith. Faith keeps us focussed on the reason we were created: to know, love and serve God and by this means to be happy with Him forever in Heaven. If we know that we are doing everything we can to live a life of virtue and to save our souls, then why should we be sad? We have Heaven to look forward to! Meanwhile we cannot be idle when we consider how many souls are being lost for want of someone to pray and make sacrifices for them; for Our Lady herself so sadly mentioned this need at Fatima. Since through our vow of chastity, we are free from the

responsibility of raising and supporting a family and do not have a regular paid employment to distract us, we can devote ourselves more completely to the all-important Work of God — i.e. securing the salvation of the souls of mankind. In the monastery we have regular times for prayer and for work, for meals and for recreation, doing all for the sake of pleasing God and drawing down His graces upon the world. There is a peace and harmony in Religious Life which is seldom found elsewhere and which enables us to think of God more easily and more frequently — to strive for that unceasing prayer and union with God which makes the Christian life a kind of paradise on earth.

“O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet: blessed is the man that hopeth in Him.” — Psalm 33:9

Of course, we religious still have our crosses to carry, but when we truly love God and when we have understood that the crosses He sends us are the surest proofs of His love, it makes it easier to accept them with resignation and even joy. After all, a true lover is anxious to prove their love to the beloved, and shall we do less for God?

There are several qualities which Our Lord is seeking in those whom He calls to Religious Life: generosity, faith, love, perseverance and courage. Perhaps this last quality is the one which is hardest to find in these present times. How frequently have those on the point of answering God’s call hesitated to launch out into the deep for fear of the consequences! “What will become of my family, my parents, brothers and sisters?” “What if I realise that it is not my vocation?” “What will people say?”

To these souls Our Lord says:

“He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me...” — Matthew 10:37

Truly there are many called, but few are chosen, because they have not the courage to step out of the crowd as tradition tells us St. Veronica did in order to wipe the Face of Jesus. Of course we could not do it either if we did not also keep our eyes fixed upon Our Lord and His Holy Face. Saint Teresa of Avila desired her nuns to be “manly women”, women of strength who are prepared to follow the Master even to the heights of Calvary, ignoring the cost to themselves. These are the kind of Religious we need; souls who are prepared to give themselves to God without reserve.

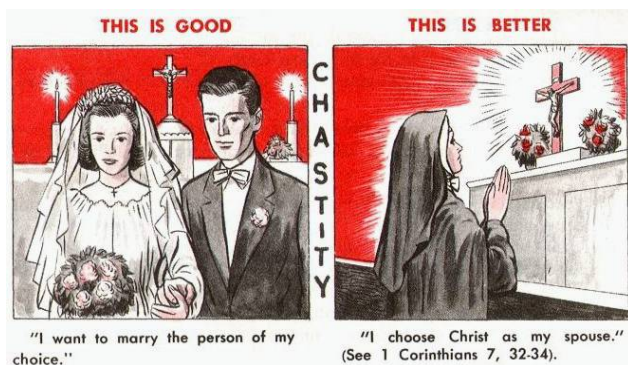


“So likewise every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple.” — Luke 14:33

It may be that some of our readers have been called to “the better part” and if so, be assured that God Himself is offering you all the graces you need to respond with a wholehearted “yes!” For the greater majority of our readers — no less loved by God! — who are following God’s Holy will for them in the Sacrament of matrimony or in the lay apostolate, we beg you to contribute to the increase, both in the quality and the quantity of priestly and religious vocations by your prayers, your example, and your encouragement. Prayer is one of the most powerful means of obtaining vocations; likewise, your own piety and esteem for the Consecrated life will have a positive influence on those around you, especially if you have young children. How many priests and religious owe their religious vocation to a mother’s prayers and a father’s encouragement! The apostolate of prayer is one in which we are all called to participate.

“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest.” — Matthew 9:38

And pray for us also, beloved in Christ, so that we may be faithful to our holy vocation and thus help to pass on to the nuns of the future the true spirit of Religious Life.



COME, FOLLOW ME

The Lord invites, "Come, follow Me."
What means this loving call?
"If My disciple you would be,
You must make Me your all."

All Christians to respond are bound,
But to a high degree
Are those few whom the Lord has found
From earthly lovers free.

These few He warns in words quite plain:
"Seek not an easy road;
My steps are filled with grief and pain;
The cross will be your load.

"The path I took shall be yours too;
It leads to Calvary.
The death of self must conquer you,
And I your new life be.

"My will must guide your steps from hence,
My ways become your own;
My power be your sole defence;
Your heart be Mine alone.

"Before you come, consider well,
From My chalice can you drink?
In loneliness you too must dwell;
Can you bear this, do you think?

"For no man who has once begun,
And looks behind is fit;
Of these deserters, few or none
Shall in My Kingdom sit.

"No honours nor earthly pleasures
For My followers are assured;
But in Heaven I keep My treasures
And there you'll receive your reward.

"Is perfection your great desire?
Do you respond willingly?
Will you give all I require?
Then come, follow Me!"

Cf. Matt.19:21

Hermitage News

- ✦ Feb. 2021 – Through the providence of God we found a local trustworthy digger man and also a builder to enable us to prepare the groundwork for St. Joseph’s Hermitage.
- ✦ March 27th – Two men from East Cork donated and planted 10 young apple trees. Our new orchard promises to be very productive since barely two hours later we enjoyed an apple tart with a cup of tea as a reward of our labours!
- ✦ April 2021- On Good Friday we finished decorating our temporary Oratory (a converted shipping container), in time for Good Friday Adoration of the Cross which was followed by the Stations of the Cross. This was attended by a few of the faithful in the absence of a priest.



On Holy Saturday 8.30PM-12 midnight was spent in prayerful Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament attended by a few of the faithful.

A few days later we were privileged to have the visit of Rev. Fr. Paul Kramer.

Beautiful weather has enabled us to begin preparing the ground to plant some vegetables, shrubs and flowers for the altar. We hope in the not too distant future to find benefactors who might help us get started with a hive of honey bees. One of our Sisters has some rusty experience of keeping bees. Every monastery should keep at least one or two beehives. And with plenty of gorse in the mountains, there should be no shortage of sweet nectar for them and honey for us.

Dear Friends, we continue to see wonderful progress being made with the development of St. Joseph’s Hermitage, which fills our hearts with gratitude to God and to you who have made this possible. We hope within the next few weeks to have our polytunnel frame reassembled. We have already begun planting seeds for the garden,



taking advantage of the wonderful Spring weather. The cells have yet to be repainted to protect them from the Irish weather. Firewood needs to be cut and there is no shortage of work for any willing volunteers! The distance is a hindrance for many of you, but we rely on you all for your prayerful, moral and financial support and are deeply grateful for whatever you are inspired to give in this regard. We would not be where we are now if it were not for you! We are certain that we also owe a great deal to the patronage of St. Joseph and that God is blessing us on his account as well as on yours, even as “the Lord blessed the house of the Egyptian for Joseph’s sake: and multiplied all his substance....” (Genesis 39:5)

We welcome young (and not so young) ladies in good health to contact us if they feel they are called by Our Lord in these evil times, to a life of prayer and Reparation as a Carmelite Nun.

We also invite women who are single or widows who wish to donate their life as Lay Sisters to make contact with us. Such women would need to be single and in good health to perform basic manual labour and live under holy obedience. They would not, however, be required to follow such a strict timetable as Professed Nuns.

We stand in need of a Roman Catholic priest to serve as our chaplain. If you know of a priest who would like to retire to the hills of Co. Cork and live a quiet, prayerful life in a secure residence, please put him in touch with us. We welcome pilgrim R.C. priests who offer the Latin Rite Mass or the Eastern Rite liturgy to visit us as they pass by the way. God bless you.



With the assurance of our heartfelt gratitude and humble prayers for you all.

Mother Irene of the Holy Face O.Carm and Community

Available from our Carmelite Shop:

Hand made Greeting & Mass Cards.....	€3.00 each or €25.00 for 10
Brown wool Scapulars of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.....	€2.00
Large Ornate St. Benedict Medal (Colour: Silver).....	€5.00
St. Christopher & St. Anthony Bronze Medal.....	€3.50
Heavy Copper-Coloured Crucifix Key Ring.....	€9.50
St. Benedict Copper- Coloured Crucifix.....	€2.00
1 Decade Chaplet Rosary Beads.....	€3.00
Wooden Rosary Beads with St. Benedict Crucifix.....	€6.50
Heavy Chain Rosary Beads, Pink.....	€13.00
Holy Face Medal (Shroud Image).....	€0.70
Holy Face Medal 3D (Colours: Bronze, Gold, Silver).....	€1.50
Miraculous Medal, Small (Colours: Gold, Silver).....	€0.50
Pardon Crucifix (Colours: Gold, Silver).....	€3.50
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**
Bank Identifier Code (BIC): **BOFIE2D**
Branch Code: **90-39-98**
Account Number: **27746013**
IBAN: **IE34 BOFI 9039 9827 7460 13**

- ✓ **PayPal**: monabyrne@rocketmail.com
- ✓ **GiveSendGo**: <https://www.givesendgo.com/G22N8#>