

# Carmelites of the Holy Face

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



Website: [carmeliteshollyface.com](http://carmeliteshollyface.com)

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*“Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” — Matthew 18:3*

Dear Friends & Benefactors,

St. Therese of Lisieux, whose feast we celebrate in October, is one of the most popular saints and at the same time one of the most misunderstood. Her doctrine of spiritual childhood is sound doctrine, for it is based upon the teaching of Christ Himself; but just as the Gospel can easily be misinterpreted, so can the “Little Way.” There is a kind of spiritual infancy which is good and praiseworthy, and another kind which is an impediment to perfection. Anyone who is familiar with the New Testament has certainly noticed this difference. In the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, for example, we find this passage: *“For whereas for the time you ought to be masters, you have need to be taught again what are the first elements of the words of God: and you are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that is a partaker of milk, is unskillful in the word of justice: for he is a little child. But strong meat is for the perfect...”* — *Hebrews 5:12-14* In other places, especially in Our Lord’s own words, we find the little child held up as an example for universal imitation. In order to reconcile these passages, we must bear in mind that there is a great difference between childishness and childlikeness, though the two things are often confused.

Childishness is the negative aspect of childhood; the one we ought to leave behind as we advance in wisdom, age and grace. Children have a natural tendency to attach too much importance to trifles and to get upset over the least little things. They prefer make-believe games to reality. Unless and until they have been taught otherwise, they are very much focussed on self, heedless of everything but securing their own happiness in the present moment, and totally unconcerned about the consequences. We can easily display the same tendencies in our spiritual life and in our relationship with God. We make too much of the little we do for Him and



get upset when He doesn't give us what we want. Why else do we get so frustrated or discouraged when His answer to our prayers is evidently "No" or "Not yet"? Of course He isn't being cold-hearted or mean – no more than parents are when they refuse to give their children what is inordinate or harmful – but that is the childish way of seeing things. It is not without reason that Holy Scripture says: *"Forsake childishness, and live, and walk by the ways of prudence."* – *Proverbs 9:6* St. Paul likewise saw the need to make a careful distinction between being childish and being childlike when he wrote to the Corinthians: *"Brethren, do not become children in sense: but in malice be children, and in sense be perfect."* – *1 Corinthians 14:20*

Until her mother died, St Therese had a very happy childhood. She was privileged to have a thoroughly Catholic home where she knew she was deeply loved. This made it easier for her to grasp the immensity and tenderness of God's love for His children and to approach Him with confidence in His own goodness rather than in hers. This realisation provided the foundation for the teaching of the Little Way.

None of us had any choice as to who our parents were, what kind of home we were born into and whether or not we had a happy childhood. We received whatever God chose to give us, and all the graces we needed to become a saint in precisely those circumstances. In the spiritual life it is quite different. We get to choose whether or not our life as a child of God is a happy one. In this life, happiness does not mean freedom from suffering. Generally, the two things are mingled together. Whether or not we are happy does not depend on how much or how little we have to suffer, but on our attitude towards God. Often we are inclined to find fault with God in the depths of our hearts and to blame Him for our unhappiness. Although we would hardly dare to admit it, even to ourselves, it is a fact confirmed by experience. In reality, it is we ourselves who are at fault because of our imperfect way of looking at things; because we let ourselves be guided by our feelings and our passions rather than by faith and right reason.

*"And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good..."* – *Romans 8:28* That means all things, without exception! The only condition is that we love God. If we love God, it is easier to believe – with a practical faith – that God truly has our best interests at heart. If He does not give us the good health, that better job, that perfect friend or whatever else it might be that we desire, then it is evidently for our good. Faith tells us that He is omnipotent and loves us dearly. Reason assures us that if it was good for us to have it, He would give it to us, and if not, He will replace it with something better. But it is hard, all the same, to trust Him when we cannot see things as He

does, in the light of eternity. That is why it is so important to cultivate a child-like attitude towards God, trusting Him to give us whatever is good for us.



The outstanding quality of being childlike is humility. It is precisely this virtue which made St. Therese “the greatest saint of modern times.” It is clear that it was this particular aspect of childhood which Our Lord wished us to imitate when He proposed a little child as our model, for He added: *“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.”* – *Matthew 18:4*

Humility is truth undisguised by self-love; yet not a mere cold acknowledgement of facts, but a loving and willing acceptance of our true place in relation to God. A little child takes it for granted that it is small and weak and in need of its parents. In all its little needs and difficulties, it confidently turns to Mummy or Daddy for help, and help is usually forthcoming. That is precisely the attitude we should cultivate towards our Heavenly Father. He would

be so much more prompt to assist us and we would be so much happier if our pride did not make us act so independently of Him.

Whether or not we are willing to admit it, we are as completely dependent upon the grace of God in our spiritual life as a new-born infant is dependent on its mother’s milk. Our pride is the only obstacle to God’s grace and to our spiritual growth – nothing else! If our spiritual life is not progressing as it ought to be, we have only ourselves to blame *“for God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace.”* – *1 Peter 5:5*

It is pride which causes us to make-believe we are grown-ups in our attitude towards God, as though we thought we could somehow achieve sanctity by our own efforts and had no need of His help. Fr. Faber remarks that discouragement is always the result of pride, for it shows that we trusted too much in ourselves. The attitude of a little child is just the reverse. It is therefore the most effective remedy against pride.

*“A child is weak, and feels his weakness; this is what makes him so dependent, so distrustful of himself, and so full of trust in those whom he knows take an interest in him. The spiritual child feels, in like manner, that he is weakness itself; that he cannot support himself or make a single step without stumbling. Therefore, he never leans upon himself, he never relies upon his own strength, but he puts all his trust in God... For the same reason, as he feels himself to be so weak, he is not astonished at his falls; his self-love is not annoyed by them,*

*but feeling his powerlessness to rise of himself, he calls upon God and implores His assistance.” – ‘Manual for Interior Souls,’ by Fr. Jean Nicolas Grou, S.J., Chapter L: On Spiritual Childhood*

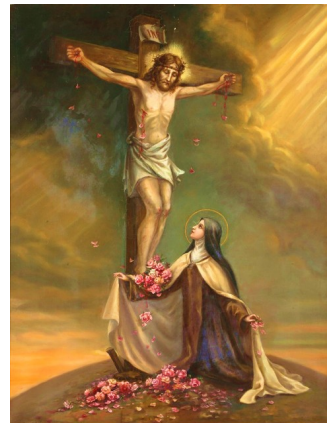
Far from being a cowardly pusillanimity [*literally: littleness of soul*], the child-like spirit demands really heroic effort. It consists in doing our very best to please God, while acknowledging at the same time that it is not much, and confiding in His goodness to make up for whatever may be wanting.

There are thorns beneath the roses which St. Therese is holding – thorns which she felt very keenly. We must not overlook that fact, otherwise our understanding of her “Little Way” will lead to shallow sentimentality rather than practical and solid devotion. The thorns are there, though all we are accustomed to see are the roses and the crucifix. This prompts us to consider the value of concealing our personal sorrows and sufferings from others beneath a smile. At first this practice can be incredibly difficult, but it becomes easier with time if we persevere in it. There is a wonderful peace and joy in serving God at our own expense – something which childish souls do not experience because they are too focussed on themselves. The childlike disposition makes us more agreeable to those around us and reaps untold benefits for souls, including our own.

God does not need our gifts; He wants our love. This is what St. Therese understood so well: *“I can prove my love only by scattering flowers, that is to say, by never letting slip a single little sacrifice, a single glance, a single word; by making profit of the very smallest actions, by doing them all for love.” – Story of a Soul, Ch. XI*

The childlike spirit is the perfection of love of God and neighbour. It leads to a holy and humble forgetfulness of self. It helps us be detached from our own personal rights and glad to be of help to others in any way we can. The success of our striving for sanctity does not depend on our ability to do great things but on our fidelity in little things, and on our readiness to become as a little child, carried in the arms of God’s Providence.

Dear Friends, we are all called to be saints, and God is giving us all the help we need to be faithful to that calling. Let us be practical in pursuing this aim. There are no childish saints in Heaven; nor are there childlike souls in Hell. Let us accept to be what we are: children of God; for then we shall certainly find happiness, both in this life and in the next.



# God's Children

God's children need training; and prudence demands  
We cease from complaining at what He commands.  
When we have no mind to relinquish earth's bliss,  
He sees what we're blind to and remedies this.

It's the Heart of a Father which governs God's hand,  
Though often we'd rather escape what He's planned.  
Not prizing perfection, the viewpoint of God,  
We shrink from correction, resenting His rod.

Because we're mistaken in most of our views,  
He tries to awaken our power to choose  
What faith clearly tells us is good, right and just.  
Pure reason compels us to deepen our trust.

God has our best interest forever in view.  
Though nature will protest, we ought to have too.  
The cross brings us nearer to good which is real,  
But childish error ignores this ideal.

Not seeing things clearly, we've misunderstood  
That God loves us dearly because He is good.  
Yet discipline's needed to reach any goal;  
Great harm has proceeded from laxness of soul.

The heights of perfection cannot be attained  
Except by correction and order maintained;  
So that is exactly why God lends His aid,  
(Quite matter-of-factly) whenever we've strayed.

While always respecting our freedom to choose,  
He aims at correcting our childish views.  
If only we saw it as fatherly kindness!  
Yet oft' we deplore it through spiritual blindness.

There is one solution – the childlike way:  
A firm resolution to trust, come what may;  
To yield our whole being to God and His will;  
Not feeling, not seeing, yet confident still.

The childlike spirit brings joy and much peace;  
So let us pursue it and nevermore cease  
To bless and adore Him in all of His ways –  
Good children before Him, like dear St. Therese.

*Cf. Job 5:17-18; Proverbs 3:5-6, 11-12; Proverbs 13:24; Wisdom 3:9,11; Philippians 2:14-15; Hebrews 12:5-8*

# Hermitage News

- ✦ 20<sup>th</sup> July 2024 – Feast of St. Elias. We were blessed to have a visit from a Third Order Carmelite priest from the UK, Fr. Elias Mary of St. Michael. This was the very first time we were able to have the full liturgical celebration of the Feast of St. Elias and we were delighted to discover that he has his own proper Preface!
- ✦ August 2024 – Upon going out to harvest the potatoes, we found that the rats had been digging them up before us, and so we have literally had to go halves with them on our potato crop this year. The deer have discovered and stripped our young apple trees, so an electric fence around the orchard is one of the projects planned for the coming months. The rest of the vegetables and the wild blackberries gave us a good harvest, as if to compensate us for those losses. Deo gratias!
- ✦ 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – Feast of the Holy Name of Mary. Our new book on the Holy Face Devotion entitled “Beyond the Veil” was finally published. It is now available worldwide on Amazon, as is our previously published “Arma Christi” book of meditations on the Instruments of the Passion.
- ✦ 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 – 11<sup>th</sup> Prayer Meeting of the Holy Face took place at St. Joseph’s Hermitage. This month Fr. Elias Mary visited us again and gave a wonderful talk on the Sorrows of Our Lady. You can watch and listen to this prayer meeting and talk on YouTube under the title “Our Sorrowful Mother Mary & the Holy Face, 11<sup>th</sup> prayer Meeting.”
- ✦ 28<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – Our poultry run was finally completed after much effort to make it secure from foxes, mink, stoats, rats, crows and magpies. Experience has taught us the need for such precautions! Our builder, who kindly cared for them for several weeks, brought them to their new home. We now are enjoying our first free range eggs!
- ✦ 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 – Holy Mass was offered for all our friends and benefactors, both living and deceased. A commemoration of St. Joseph was included in the Mass, as we are currently making a novena to ask for the fatherly protection of our holy Patron, St Joseph, that we might continue to live our Carmelite life without hindrance from those who might wish us harm.



The assistance – prayerful, moral and financial – which you have given and continue to offer us is very much appreciated and will have an eternal reward. It greatly helps us in the much needed upkeep and development of St. Joseph’s Hermitage. Only in the next life will we fully realise the value and extent of all

you have done for us, but even now you are gratefully remembered in our prayers. May God bless you and may the light of His Face shine upon you!

***Mother Irene of the Holy Face O.Carm and Community***

## Available from our Carmelite Shop:

<i>Arma Christi: The Weapens of Our Warfare</i> (193 pages).....	€10.00
<i>Beyond the Veil: The Holy Face Devotion in ... Sacred Scripture</i> (328 pages).....	€15.00
Christmas Cards.....	4 or more €2.50 each, otherwise €3.00 each
Marie-Julie Jahenny's herbal teas.....	In stock - contact us for further info
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 Plastic Holy Face Chaplet Beads (turquoise).....	€6.00
Holy Face Prayer Booklet (44 pages).....	€2.50
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.....	Out of Stock
St. Benedict Medal, Silver-coloured, oval, standard size.....	€1.00
Pardon Crucifix (gold/silver).....	€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  
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St. Joseph's Hermitage  
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Co Cork, Ireland  
  
Bank Name: Allied Irish Bank  
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Bank Identifier Code (BIC): AIBKIE2D  
National Sort Code: 93-60-73  
Account Number: 09084069  
IBAN: IE 05 AIBK93 6073 0908 4069
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