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Carmelites of the Holy Face

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



Website: carmeliteshollyface.com

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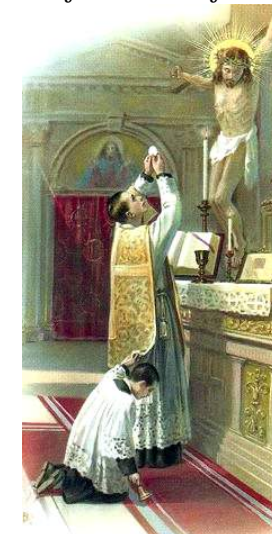
“Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

In our last newsletter we saw how the word ‘icon’ has a far more sacred meaning than the context in which it is generally used today. This time we would like to look at the true meaning of ‘victim’ – another word which is commonly used in a different context than it was formerly used. Today we hear of victims of abuse, victims of war, of violence, and so on. But what is a victim in the traditional sense?



In the Old Testament, a victim was an animal offered in sacrifice to expiate for sin, in thanksgiving, or as a peace offering. In the New Testament, Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself became the most perfect Victim, the fulfilment of all the former sacrifices. He was offered up in sacrifice to atone for our sins,



appeasing the just wrath of God and drawing down graces from Heaven upon mankind. As St. Paul puts it:

“He hath appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” Heb. 9:26

This Sacrifice of Calvary is renewed and continued in every Mass and we are particularly reminded of this during the holy season of Lent.

The Mass ought to be the centre of the spiritual life of every Catholic. We ought to identify ourselves with the little white host which becomes transformed into Christ Himself. This is exactly what each one of us is called to: union with Christ; to have Him truly present within us just as He is truly present within the Host.

“For to me, to live is Christ; and to die is gain”, “with Christ I am nailed to the cross. And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me.” Phil. 1:21, Gal.2:19-20.

Next to Our Lord Jesus, Our Lady was the most perfect victim. It is true she was not physically crucified with Christ on Calvary, nor did she shed her blood for God as the martyrs did. Instead she suffered a martyrdom of heart by her love and compassion with the sufferings of her Divine Son.

“..attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow..” Lament. 1:12

She is therefore truly called the Queen of Martyrs, because none of those who shed their blood for Christ suffered as much as she did. She suffered in silence, perfectly conformed to the will of God, and offered this martyrdom in union with the Divine Victim for the salvation of souls. Jesus and Mary therefore are the model for all victims of the New Law.

We are all called in some way to follow the example of Jesus and Mary. We are all called to be victims, and to live the sacrifice of the Mass in our daily lives. But many people have the wrong idea of what it means to be a victim. It does not require anything more than accepting and enduring with love, all the sufferings which God in His Wisdom, sends us. He knows our weakness and does not ask of us more than we are able to bear.

Religious, particularly those of Contemplative Orders, are able to live the life of a victim to a greater degree than persons in the world, because they have little to distract them from the spiritual life. The Little Way of St. Therese is well known. She offered herself as a victim of love in the cloister of Carmel. But her Little Way of doing everything with great love and offering it for other members of Christ’s Mystical Body, is open to everyone, – priest, religious, laity, young and old alike.

To be a victim soul today, one does not have to go looking or praying for great sufferings. It is sufficient to be a good Catholic in the midst of this modern world – no easy task! To obey the ten Commandments and keep the Faith today in all its fullness, means to stand out from the crowd at the foot of the cross and be despised by the world. Our Lord has warned us:



- ✦ On one of our recreational walks we discovered that we are living just a stone’s throw away from the former home (now a ruin) of a very humble uncanonised Franciscan Saint, Bro. Paschal Burke OFM., who died in 1958.

- ✦ Besides receiving commissions for the writing (painting) of sacred Icons, we have been kept busy trying to keep pace with demands for our Organic Herbal Cough Syrup and other Herbal remedies.



Dear friends and benefactors, we give thanks to God continually for your charity and we always mention you in our prayer offered to God the Father through Christ Jesus. We live our life of unceasing prayer for your family and the whole Church. Each day we do what we can to try and make ends meet by our humble works of art and crafts as you have seen in this and other newsletters. The only reason we can get by on a low budget income is because we are living in great simplicity without electricity, piped water, central heating, car expenses etc. Please in your charity, continue help us so we can save up enough money to move to a new country and purchase a modest size property for our future Carmelite Hermitage.

Your financial and moral and spiritual support and that of our Bishops have encouraged us to persevere. In the coming months we must decide on a suitable chaplain for our Religious Community once we have decided on a suitable country.

Please do not hesitate to write to us and send us your prayer request. We do love to receive letters via regular post in the old fashion way. God bless you all and grant you every blessing in the Risen Christ.

Your Carmelite Sisters

Mother Irene of the Holy Face. O.Carm

Hermitage News

- ✦ We have updated our website because we have changed our title. As the word “Victim” seems to make some people uncomfortable, we have decided to rename ourselves “Carmelites of the Holy Face of Jesus, O.Carm” We also have removed the word “Hermits” since again this seems to give people the impression that we live a very lonely and isolated life which couldn’t be further from the truth. While we certainly do not live the intense community life of a Discalced Cloistered Carmelite or Benedictine Nun, our life is also more gentle than that of a Carthusian Nun who must remain in her Cell except for the Liturgical prayers shared in common three times in 24 hours.



Our new website domain is: carmelitesholyface.com

- ✦ On 24th February we began our annual Novena to the Holy Face of Jesus. In this novena we pray for our benefactors who have been generous to us in the last year. We also ask Our Heavenly Father, through the merits of the Holy Face of Jesus and Our Immaculate Mother Mary, to guide and direct us in discerning where God wills us to put down roots for the establishment of our Carmelite Family. Sadly, due to a lack of charity and selfish pursuits of certain individuals, two of our finest priests, who offered to serve as chaplain to our Carmelite Community, have been restricted from entering the country. Finding the right priest who is committed to serving our Carmelite Contemplative life, is a crucial factor for our future growth and stability. Every week we receive enquiries from potential candidates who would like to join us. Most of these young ladies are from the Philippines, from India or the USA. Please join us in praying for this intention.



“If the world hate you, know ye, that it hath hated Me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember My word that I said to you: the servant is not greater than his Master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” John 15:18-20

Being in the world but not of it – this is a great challenge for most of us today. But there is another important aspect of the Christian life which is so often forgotten. We must also suffer with love. To quote St. Paul:

“If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” 1 Cor. 13:2-3

On Calvary, Our Lord gave us the supreme example of love. He prayed for those who crucified Him:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34

He died for His enemies whom He regarded as His friends (see John 15:13) to show us, as St Gregory says, that by loving and forgiving we are able to win our enemies over, so that they who persecute us are our friends by anticipation. It is not always easy to put this into practice! However, we must remember that with God it is the effort which counts more than success; and that it is not necessary to like those whom we are commanded to love with Christian charity.

When we are persecuted it is sometimes hard to realise that it is really the devil making use of individuals to try to discourage us and make us stumble on the path of virtue. And he uses the most unlikely individuals – those of our own household or church – the *“white washed sepulchres”* is what our Lord called the apparently “holy” Pharisees (cf. Matt. 23:27)

“For even the man of peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, hath greatly supplanted me.” Ps. 40:10

To accept these trials in a Christ-like spirit and to offer them for those who persecute us, is the way which is offered to every one of us to become a victim soul, regardless of our state in life. This is how we can lay down our life of pleasing self for the love of God and our neighbour. This is how we can allow Christ Himself to live in us so that we may be able to say with St. Paul:

“We who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake: that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” 2 Cor.4:11

These persecutions and trials come in many different forms, all of them permitted by God for our sanctification. It may be the ridicule of those around us who see us holding on to Christian principles... the challenges of fulfilling our duties in an anti-Catholic society... being boycotted by our 'friends' because we put God's will first etc. Whatever the form our own trials may take, it is certain they will not be wanting if we are healthy members of Christ's Mystical Body. The Church is undergoing her Passion now and we must all share in it to some degree. Let us not only endure it, but willingly accept our share so that we may become true victims worthy of our Head and work with Him to bring back true Christian charity to those hearts around us which have grown cold.

In conclusion, we must inform you dear friends, that we have changed our name from 'Victim Adorers of the Holy Face of Jesus' to the more simplified name of "Carmelites of the Holy Face". This is not because we have changed anything in our charism or the spirit of our vocation. It is only because we have come to realise how easily the word 'victim' can be misinterpreted today.

By considering Our Bridegroom and all He suffered to redeem souls, the life of a victim has become very dear to us. It is, after all, only the fulfilment of the Christian life to live united (even here on earth!) to Christ and His Cross; and for us the Carmelite vocation of love is the means to live Christ's life – and hence the life of a victim – to the full.

We wish you all a holy and fruitful Lent. May it bring you to a deeper understanding and closer imitation of the suffering love of our Saviour so that you may share more fully in the glory of His Resurrection when the Passion is over in the everlasting rest of Heaven!



Our Annual Novena to the Holy Face of Jesus

(24 February – 5 March)

TODAY'S VICTIM

By a Carmelite Nun

To be a victim is to stand
With Mary at Christ' side,
To share the pain of Holy Church
As She hangs, crucified.

Around Her sounds the mocking cry,
"Come down, and we'll believe;
The Cross of Christ and Sacrifice
Are things which you must leave.

"Away with those outdated ways!
It's time for something new:
You must get with the modern ways,
And follow Vatican II."

But mindful of the words of Christ,
And St. Paul's admonition:
'Though anyone new doctrines preach
Be faithful to tradition.'

We stand our ground, and keep the Faith,
While to the Cross we cling;
Remembering no souls are won
Without great suffering.

Christ Himself laid down His life
That we, His friends might live;
And bade us all to do as He:
To love and to forgive.

Then we shall truly offer up
A sacrifice most pleasing;
By love regaining many souls,
And God's just wrath appeasing.

'Tis thus we shall be victim souls:
By martyring self-will;
That Christ Himself may live in us,
And His designs fulfil.

The Passion shall become our means
Of reaching great perfection,
And soon it shall be followed by
The glorious Resurrection.

So courage! Fellow Christian souls,
Let's suffer as we should;
That we may die to live with Christ
A life of victimhood.