

Victim Adorers Of The Holy Face Of Jesus



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

Website: vahff.com

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“The life of man upon earth is a warfare....” Job 7:1

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

As Lent is particularly a time of warfare, and the time when the battle against our threefold enemies- the world, the flesh, and the devil – is more intense than any other time, we would like to share with you in this newsletter a few thoughts on war.

Which of us could deny the fact that we are engaged at this very moment, in the most ferocious battle, probably in the whole of Church history. Both the Old and the New Testament speak much of wars, and battles. St. Paul uses the image of “wrestling”. (Greek *pálē*).

“For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.” (Eph. 6:12)



St. Paul uses this example to illustrate the contest we face against the invisible spiritual realms. Our battle is very real; it's actually against an organized system of power and influence in the heavenly realms, and we are fighting it today both in the Church and in our own lives. It is as though he were a living witness of the situation in which we find ourselves!



*God did not call you to
a playground but a
battle ground*

In order to defeat the enemy, we must study carefully his traps and strategies so we are not taken by surprise and we must go on the offense, rather than take a position of defense and weakness. Another similarity of the spiritual war we fight today in the 21st Cent., can be found in Crusades to the Holy Land in the 11th-13th Cent. The Crusaders fought a war against *visible enemies* using with *physical weapons*. We too are warring against our enemies. Yet as St. Paul points out, our fighting is not against flesh and

blood but against *invisible enemies* on the spiritual level and hence we must employ *spiritual weapons*. What motivated the Crusade wars in the middle age also motivate us. Like them, our aim is to drive the infidel from the Holy Land in order to reclaim, and give back to God, what is rightfully His. Like them, we fight under the **banner of the Cross**; like them our cry is *“Deus vult!”- God wills it!”*

The Holy Land in the time of the Crusades was Palestine, with their chief goal being the Holy City, Jerusalem. The Holy Land we seek to reclaim today is our soul and the souls of all mankind- the spiritual grounds of Holy Mother Church. No infidel in those days was a more formidable enemy than the one we face today- namely Satan himself, with modernism as his chief weapon. The Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem, is our goal and our prize. Like the Crusaders, we seek to gain it not for ourselves alone, but to open the way to all fellow Christians and pilgrims.

By the end of the 12th Century, Christian Knights were weary of fighting and the majority had lost the enthusiasm and zeal of the 1st Crusaders. So also we find ourselves in the same situation today. Once again, Christian Knights are weary of fighting a seemingly losing battle. The enthusiasm and zeal which Catholics had fifty plus years ago has diminished considerably. More and more Soldiers of Christ are laying down their arms eager for a truce..Indeed, to all appearance it seems pointless to keep fighting.



Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood



As true Catholics, however, we know that we must “walk by Faith and not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). “Now Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not”.(Heb.11:1) Though the situation appears hopeless from a human point of view, by Faith we know that this very fact means the victory is drawing nigh. In fact, the victory is already ours through Jesus Christ and His Immaculate Mother and ours. The Triumph of Our Lady has been foretold. It will come, but in God’s own good time and in His own way. As the greatest triumph of all time was accomplished upon Calvary through the “folly” of the Cross (cf. 1.Cor.1:23), and through death – the destruction

of every human hope – we must not expect Our Lady to triumph in any other way than by imitating her Divine Son and bringing victory through apparent defeat. As followers and imitators of Christ, the triumph within our own souls must come about in the same way, for it is only by dying – dying to self, that we shall possess the true life of Christ Jesus.

Back in the late 12th Cent., after the failure of the Crusades to reclaim Jerusalem, a group of men (including former Crusaders and pilgrims), had realised the great need and importance of spiritual warfare. Accordingly they



Crusader prays before setting out to war

left the physical battle against the Saracens, to take up residence in the caves on Mt. Carmel. They devoted themselves to a life of penance and prayer, making the Prophet Elias and the Blessed Virgin Mary their contemplative ideals. As their numbers grew, they sought to organise themselves into a brotherhood with a common rule of life and a prior. Hence, they asked Saint Albert (Avogadro), the Patriarch of Jerusalem (1206-1214), to write for them a rule of life which laid down certain guidelines based on the previous way of life of the hermits. Since the Crusade spirit was everywhere, it is not surprising that Albert made use of St. Paul's image of the soldier or knight in armour in writing his Rule (cf. Eph.6:11-18), which has been adopted by all Carmelites ever since. Thus he preserved for us the aims and ideas of these early spiritual

Crusaders- namely, a) that we are engaged in a lifelong battle to reclaim sacred ground – our own souls and the souls of humanity which have been invaded by the devil, and b), that our greatest weapons are to be found in our hidden lives of prayer, penance and contemplation.

Another example from history which has many relevant lessons for our own time is that of our holy Founder, the Prophet Elias. The situation in which he found himself in the days of King Ahab and the wicked Queen Jezebel, is, in many ways, similar to our own. Under the influence of these wicked rulers, most of the people had turned away from the true God to serve idols; just as in our own times, idolatry is widespread. In those days, idols were simply lifeless objects made of wood or stone. Today's idols however, are far more alluring and not so easily recognised for what they are. *They "served their idols, and it became a stumbling block," (snare) "to them." (Ps. 105:36)* For many people today the greatest idol is "ME" and "SELF". For others it is money, sport, honour, animals or material things. Those who have remained

faithful are few, and like Elias, doubtless we have all felt at times, “I alone am left.” (3 Kings 19:10,14)

What is the remedy to this spiritual drought and widespread famine—“not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the Word of the Lord” (Amos 8:11)? What or whom will bring deliverance from these unseen, but deadly foes, assailing all of humanity? And what can we do on our part?

Again, let us look back to the example of Elias. He “went up to the top of Carmel” [note that this is the very same Mt. Carmel which in later centuries was to become a place of spiritual warfare!] “and casting himself down” he prayed. Though 6 times there was “nothing” — no visible sign that his prayers had been heard — he persevered.

“And at the seventh time, behold a little cloud arose out of the sea like a man’s foot” (3 Kings 18:44). Carmelite tradition, together with many of the Fathers of the Church, sees in this cloud a figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a promise of the coming Redemption, and a reminder of God’s words to the Serpent:

“I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.” (Gen.3:15)



Elijah’s prayers reflected his earnest desire to see God’s will done

From the very beginning of their existence, Carmelites have cherished a special devotion to the Virgin Mary. But the message which this history teaches is not for Carmelites alone. It contains the solution to the problems of every Catholic. Firstly, prayer; prayer with perseverance. Pray with prostrations and humility; *“He shall put his mouth in the dust, if so be, there may be hope.” (Lament.3:29)*; Pray with confidence and with uplifted arms. *“Hear, O Lord, the voice of my supplication, when I pray to thee; when I lift up my hands to thy holy temple.” (Ps.27:2)* Secondly look to the remedy God has provided; the Immaculate Virgin Mary; the Woman “clothed with the sun” who will crush the head of the Serpent, the deadly enemy we fight today. Honour her as our Queen and powerful leader of our army. Serve her faithfully as her loyal subjects by praying the Rosary every day, wearing her Scapular and fulfilling her requests. Do all in your power to promote her glory and hasten the hour of her triumph. Though your prayers seem to go unanswered and your labours unrewarded, persevere in her service for she is

the one whom God has appointed to defeat the Enemy of mankind and lead her legion to victory.

And so, dear fellow soldiers of Christ, continue to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12), knowing that the day of triumph is approaching. Be assured we are with you in this war, seeking to obtain for you by our hidden lives in Carmel, the spiritual weapons so necessary in today’s Crusade. May “Deus Vult –the will of God!” remain our battle cry, and may we continue to fight zealously as His loyal soldiers for His greater honour and glory, for the salvation of souls- the possessions of our Holy Mother Church, and for the Triumph of the Immaculata.

Labour as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” even until death “for if we be dead with Him, we shall live also with Him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” (2 Tim.2:3,11,12)

Poem

Although Crusades, as they were known
In days of old are gone;
It’s time to rally round the Cross,
And fight, for war is on.

This greatest war in history,
Requires courageous Knights;
The cause remains - as it was then,
For God and Church’s rights.

The Holy Land from infidels,
They struggled to reclaim;
And after many centuries,
Our fight remains the same.

To win back, heedless of the cost,
The church’s holy grounds;
From Satan who with cunning snares,
The hearts of men surrounds.

This war we wage has lasted long,
And many in despair;
Lay down their arms and cease to fight;
Forgetting God is there.

But "Deus vult! The will of God!"
Remains our battle cry;
We fight assured some day He will,
The victory supply.

The enemies we face today
Are on the spiritual plain;
We must fight with spiritual weapons,
Or we join this war in vain.

In prayer and penance on Carmel,
Following Elias's call;
With the Holy Rule of Albert,
And the armour of God for all.

The helmet of Hope; the shield of Faith;
Elias's flaming sword;
The Word of God in mind and heart;
A life lived for the Lord.

Living thus as today's Crusader, each faithful Carmelite,
Takes their place each day of battle;
A valiant and courageous Knight.

Through hidden lives in God's service,
We battle an unseen foe;
And the number of enemies vanquished,
God alone shall know.

An though the hour of triumph,
At present remains unseen;
It will come, and we'll march to victory,
Led by Mary, our Mother and Queen.

Hermitage News

Once again we wish to thank all of you, our friends and benefactors, for your on-going support. We are deeply indebted to each and every one of you. Without your help, we could not continue in our life of prayer and sacrifice, for the salvation of souls. Please be assured that you are in our prayers even if we do not contact you individually to thank you.



In our last Newsletter, Issue 1, we showed photos of our concrete foundation for some kind of a structure. We contacted a builder provider of prefabricated



steel frame buildings just after the Christmas. A meeting was held on 1st January, attended by several of the faithful. Unfortunately after three months of waiting, we have no images to share of building in progress. Yet we live in hope. For those who have a devotion to His Holy Face, Our Lord Jesus made this wonderful promise to Sister Mary of Saint Peter (Carmelite nun of Tours, France):- **“By offering My Face to My Eternal Father, nothing will be refused.”** We are therefore

confident that Our dear Lord and Saviour has heard our prayers. In fact, He has already sent us a wonderful sign of His good pleasure towards our little Carmelite Foundation. Here is the story:



About four years ago (2014?), Mother Irene made a weekend visit to Cork City for a Fatima Conference. One of the faithful met her and they both went for a cup of coffee in a small family restaurant. Just over the shop counter there was what looked like, a 3rd class relic image of the “Veronica” veil, which is in St. Peter’s in Rome. It had the usual display of Ecclesiastical red wax seals with a signed certificate. Mother Irene enquired from the attendant if she might make a charitable offering for the relic image. The attendant phoned up the owner but the news was not good. He said he would give it to her but wanted a considerable amount of money. Needless to say, Mother Irene was disappointed but comforted herself by saying “if God wishes me to have this Holy Face relic, then it will come to me...”

On Feb. 23th 2008, a lady from Longford, Kitty R., was visiting her family in Cork West. She requested to visit us as she said she had a great devotion to the Holy Face. She brought with her a small third class relic image of the "Veronica" veil similar to the one Mother Irene had seen in Cork in 2014 with a red wax seal. When she had left, Mother Irene wrote to Kitty requesting that she might consider Holy Family Carmelite Hermitage becoming the custodians of her Holy Face Relic Image, especially as we are hoping soon to build a new house with a new and larger Oratory of the Holy Face.



On Feb.24th a couple from Bandon, (close friends of Kitty R.), came to join us for Sunday afternoon prayers of Reparation to the Holy Face. What was our joy, when they presented to us the very same 3rd Class Relic Image of the Holy Face that Mother Irene had seen in Cork in 2014! Apparently the family restaurant in Cork had since closed down. Somehow, the Relic Image found its way to this devout Catholic home in Bandon. It was as if Our Lord was waiting for the arrival of our Carmelite Foundation in West Cork before He would entrust His Holy Image to our care and safe keeping. Laudetur Jesus Christus et Maria Mater!

Please do not hesitate to write to us with your prayer request for you and your loved ones. We shall place it at the Feet of the Divine Infant King. We will be more than happy also to send you a gift of a "Little Gospel Satchet of The Holy Name of Jesus", hand-made with much love by the Sisters, for Glory of God. May God bless you all and fill you with Joy in the Risen Christ!

Your Carmelite Sisters

West Cork



Arise O Lord, and let Thy enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Thee, flee before Thy Face!

HELP US CONTINUE OUR LIFE OF PRAYER AND SACRIFICE

Please PRAY FOR US. Please MAKE A DONATION

Our Website: <http://vahff.com/donations>