

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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“Let nothing hinder thee from praying always...” Ecclus. 18:2

“Pray without ceasing” 1 Thess. 5:17

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

What does it mean to ‘pray always’? Does it not seem to be an impossible thing to expect? Granted it may be a special calling for a few privileged souls, for Religious in the silence of the cloister, but surely it is hardly able to be realised by the ordinary Christian living in the midst of a busy world! Such at least seems to be the common opinion today. Yet the words of Holy Scripture are not addressed to Religious alone, but to every Christian soul! Therefore in this newsletter, we would like to look more closely at what it means to pray always and how this can be realised in the ordinary day to day life of each and every one of us, priests, religious and laity alike.

To put it very simply, **every effort to please God is a prayer**. Now there is no better way of pleasing God than by performing all our daily duties well with a pure intention of pleasing Him alone. This is of far more value than the greatest penances or a multitude of vocal prayers performed at the expense of the duties of our state of life. It is important to remember that God does not regard what we do so much as the love and the intentions with which we do it.

Saint Therese of Lisieux, clearly understood the value of the smallest actions when done for love of God as her “Little Way” gives ample proof. She did not perform any great penances; she kept no fasts or vigils besides those observed by the common rule of her Carmelite community. Instead she looked for little ways of pleasing God: a smile or a pleasant word when inclined to be silent or show weariness; or if no other opportunity presented itself, she would



People seek methods of learning to know God. Is it not much shorter and more direct to simply do everything for the love of Him? There is no finesse about it. One only has to do it generously and simply. - Brother Lawrence

simply tell Him again and again of her love for Him. These are every day opportunities which each of us can imitate. But Saint Therese was not the first soul to follow the Little Way as we shall see in the life of another Carmelite, who lived over two centuries before her...

Nicholas Herman entered the Carmelite Order in Paris in the year 1666, and took the name **Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection**. He was 55 at the time, and before leaving the world, he had served as both a soldier and a footman. His superiors assigned him to work in the monastery kitchen, a task which was naturally repugnant to him, as, due to a bad limp, he could only get about with difficulty and he was inclined to break everything.

But realising the will of God in this duty assigned to him by holy obedience, Br. Lawrence gladly served the monastery as cook for 15 years. Indeed, he soon found great delight and tranquillity in his new life, having discovered what it meant to pray always. In his own words: *"the time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clutter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees before the Blessed Sacrament."*

What was his secret? Instead of doing great and big things to "earn" God's love, Br. Lawrence made use of the small things. When he was cooking a meal, he thought of himself as cooking for God and with God. When he scrubbed the pots and pans or cleaned the floors, he was doing it for God and with God. Recalling God's presence in this way, Br. Lawrence spoke to Him familiarly as to a friend, in which practice he found great happiness. He would offer to God the duties which awaited him, begging His assistance to perform them well. In this way, in whatever he did, he strove to please God and by doing so he realised in practice what it means to pray always.

"In the ways of God thoughts amount to little whereas love accounts for everything... I flip my little omelette in the frying pan for the love of God, and when it's done, if I have nothing to do, I prostrate myself on the floor and adore my God who gave me the grace to do it, after which I get up happier than a king. Our sanctification depends not on changing our works, but on doing for God what we would normally do for ourselves."

Such an attitude takes an ordinary, routine moment and makes it worshipful: *"we should not weary of doing little things for the love of God who looks not at the grandeur of these actions but rather at the love with which they are performed."* Imagine how such an attitude could transform doing the dishes, driving the daily commute to work, taking care of the laundry, putting up with a boring or stressful job, studying for that exam!

*“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy face?
If I ascend into heaven, thou art there: if I descend into hell, thou art present.
If I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of
the sea:*

Even there also shall thy hand lead me: and thy right hand shall hold me.”

Psalm 138:8-11

Brother Lawrence’s goal in life was brilliantly simple: to become the most perfect adorer (and, rememberer) of God that he could. But once again, he found it more a matter of delight than obligation: *“We are to be pitied for our willingness to be satisfied with so little. God has infinite treasures to give us and still we are satisfied with brief passing moments of piety.”* Brother Lawrence discovered that *“there is no mode of life in the world more pleasing and more full of delight than continual conversations with God.”* He became such an enthusiastic practitioner of God’s presence that he said, ***“If I were a preacher, I would preach nothing else but the practice of the presence of God.”***

“We do not have to be in church to be with God. We can make of our hearts an oratory where we can withdraw from time to time to converse with him, gently, humbly, and lovingly. Everyone is capable of these familiar conversations with God, some more, some less...” -- letter to a lay woman

Month of the Precious Blood!

Next month, July, being the month of the Precious Blood, let us make every effort to offer all our prayers, works, and sufferings to God with a pure intention of pleasing Him alone. Holy Scripture tells us that the blood of Christ cleanses our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. (cf. Heb. 9:14). Our most basic actions, when done in union with and for the love of God alone, will gain infinite more value when covered with the veil of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Dear Jesus, moved by an impulse of love, and with purity of intention, I wish to cover my humble labors with Your merits and bathe them in the supernatural gold of Your Precious Blood. I desire to consecrate my life to the saving of souls and the extension of Your glory, and I beg the Heavenly Father for as many souls as You shed drops of Blood during Your Passion.” – Sr. Josefa Menendez

Brother Laurence

“We ought to pray always and not to faint”;
These are words for all Christians, and not just the saints!
But how does one do so? To many it seems,
As though it were possible only in dreams.

And yet Our Lord’s words have been fully realised,
By a Carmelite Brother who’s un-canonised.
He made prayer so simple, his only delight;
His sole occupation by day and by night.

With a loving awareness of God always near,
His work was no different than set times of prayer.
Brother Laurence, the humble monastery cook
Learned this great practice without any book.

He delighted himself in each occupation,
Speaking to God in familiar conversation.
The faults he committed he hastened to own:
“Lord, what can You expect when You leave me alone?”

Begging God’s pardon, then troubling no more,
He carried on praying just as before.
Brother Laurence found joy in his duties each day,
Doing all things for love – that was his ‘Little Way.’

In the busiest moments the cooking entailed,
His sense of God’s Presence always prevailed.
And this is the way to pray as we should,
Delightful and simple when well understood.

Oh dear Brother Laurence, from your place of true rest,
Look down on our struggles and hear our request.
Teach us to follow your own ‘Little Way.’
To seek God and find Him- to constantly pray;

To speak to Him lovingly as our Best Friend,
And in His dear Presence, our whole lives to spend.
Then for us, good Brother, one last favour secure;
In His visible Presence to abide evermore.

Hermitage News

In our last newsletter we mentioned our plan to erect a modular building on site to serve as a main building. On 23rd April this modular two story building arrived piece by piece. We had been told it was about 20ft high so we confidently told ourselves that it would be hardly visible from the road. As it turned out, it was much higher than we expected. This unfortunately has caused issues with one or two local non-residential holiday home owners and the local County Council. We ask your prayers that they will continue to be lenient towards us, and we trust that God will grant us a favorable outcome.



Between each row of Cells we are planting a flower garden and erecting a shrine to a Saint. A local farmer very kindly donated some farm yard manure for our vegetable and flower gardens, all of which are doing wonderful. Deo Gratias!



New concrete footpaths to each Cell make all the difference in helping to keep our Cells clean and tidy.

April 26th. In view of this, we inserted two advertisements in the local newspaper. One was to announce an “OPEN DAY” to invite as many people to visit our Hermitage, and the other to make our need known for a suitable property to build a permanent Hermitage in line with local planning regulations.

On 13th May, Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, we held the **OPEN DAY** which was attended by approx. 50 people, local and non-local alike. It turned out to be a wonderful day in every respect. We decorated the walls of the modular building with posters to explain our Carmelite vocation, gave an introductory talk and offered refreshments. Most of the people who attended, offered us their support both



Our Novice enthusiastically painting stain glass window for our new garden shrine to Saint Jude

financially and morally by signing a petition to the local County Council on our behalf. With God and so many good people on our side, we await with total confidence whatever Divine Providence has in store for our Hermitage here in Leap, West Cork. Though we are very happy here in Corran South, and we have built a beautiful Garden for God, yet we abandon ourselves to His Holy Will. God never closes one door without opening another.

Thanks be to God we can confidently say that next to no monies have been wasted in the building of our Hermitage here in West Cork, (which incidentally, came from the sale of Mother Irene's last privately owned house). All our buildings are non-permanent fixtures. This means when

we have managed to raise sufficient funds to buy more suitable land with planning permission, we can either re-sell or re-locate all our buildings.

Our chickens are all thriving this year. Most of our Bantam hens have gone broody and given us many baby chicks which we sell. Our larger hens are giving us up to eight eggs per day. After a very long wet winter, Ireland finally got a heat wave in the end of May which allowed us to plant the vegetables. We are still enjoying our "canned" vegetables and jams from last year's wonderful harvest.

During the month of May, Rev. Fr. MacDonald very kindly made us a "pallet board walk" from the cabin to the chicken coop. After a long winter of heavy rain, it was very mucky



to walk down to the chickens without slipping in the mud. This board walk was a wonderful help.

Please pray for our chaplain, Father MacDonald that he may be issued with a visa and may be allowed to return in July to serve our Hermitage. We miss him very much.

Now we humbly and urgently appeal to St. Joseph to send us generous benefactors so that we may purchase a suitable property in County Cork. We have already told Cork County Council that we are seeking a suitable property elsewhere with planning permission. The newspaper advertisement was proof of this. As yet we do not know the final decision of the County Council. We are however confident they will give us time to raise the needed funds to buy a house with some acres of land that will be conducive to our contemplative way of life. We are all the time receiving vocation enquiries and we are hoping two more ladies to join us in August for a live-in experience.

We offer our sincere gratitude to Our Lord Jesus Christ, Our Lady and Saint Joseph and ask that they will reward you with many graces and blessings in this life and the next for your charity. We offer a monthly Mass for all our benefactors and remember them daily in our prayers before the Tabernacle.

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 Sachet of The Holy Name of Jesus", hand-made with much love by the Sisters, for Glory of God.

Thank you and may God bless you!

Mother Irene of the Holy Face. E.Carm

Carmelite Sisters, West Cork



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**

NSC: 903998

Bank of Ireland. A/C No 27746013

IBAN NO: IE34 BOFI 9039 9827 7460 13

- ✓ **By a PayPal donation to monabyrne@rocketmail.com**
or via our web site: <http://vahfj.com/donations>
- ✓ **By a cheque or Bank draft made payable to:**

Sister Irene Gibson

(Please note, foreign cheques take up to five days to clear in our banks.)