

Birkenhead, Sunday 16th July 2023

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

7th Sunday after Pentecost

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

We are celebrating today the major feast of the Carmelite order, which is the first the first order to officially bear the name of Mary in papal bulls. In Mary, the Hermits of Saint Mary of Mount Carmel saw their Sister, because of her virginity, and their Mother who had given life to their Order; thus they professed the cult of Mary, the imitation of Mary and total consecration to Mary.

“Our Lady wants us to resemble her not only in our outward vesture but, far more, in heart and spirit. If we gaze into Mary's soul, we shall see that grace in her has flowered into a spiritual life of incalculable wealth: a life of recollection, prayer, uninterrupted oblation to God, continual contact, and intimate union with him. Mary's soul is a sanctuary reserved for God alone, where no human creature has ever left its trace, where love and zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of mankind reign supreme. [...] Those who want to live their devotion to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel to the full must follow Mary into the depths of her interior life. Carmel is the symbol of the contemplative life, the life wholly dedicated to the quest for God, wholly orientated towards intimacy with God; and the one who has best realized this highest of ideals is Our Lady herself, “Queen and Splendor of Carmel”.¹

The religious life is a life of renouncement following the teaching of humility. Who better than Our Mother in Heaven could show us this way. Even at the first reading of the Gospels, we can see how she is not mentioned that much aere the 4 version of the sacred text, although being the Mother of the Lord, and present at all stages of His Life on Earth. But this supposed absence makes her shining even more through her humility. It is said amongst the Scripture scholars, that he would have asked, or suggested not to be mentioned more than necessary, to disappear more and more before her divine son. As she told her elf to the Archangel Gabriel, she is the “handmaid of the Lord.”² Throughout Her life, She never ceased to serve God with humility, in silence, and obtained many graces for the poor sinners that we are.

Even being the purest creature, Mary proclaimed herself the handmaid. How should we consider ourselves if Our Mother said this about herself? Less than nothing, especially because of our indignity and our constant condition of sinners.

But, in his merciful bounty, God has given Our Lady the privilege to have all her prayers and demands immediately granted. She will present our requests to Her Son, and He will pour His grace because She asked Him. Because of Her humility, she was placed at the highest place

¹ Bede Edwards, OCDS. “St. Simon Stock—The Scapular Vision & the Brown Scapular Devotion.” Carmel Clarion Volume XXI, pp 17-22, July–August 2005, Discalced Carmelite Secular Order, Washington Province.

² Luke, I 38.

in the court of Heaven, to be our model and intercessor. Being within an order especially dedicated to Our Lady, this path of salvation is yours. Follow Mary in her silence and humility, as it is through these two virtues she especially blossomed.

“Let’s listen to our Mother’s voice and show ourselves docile to her wise lessons. Let’s withdraw from the spirit of the world and embrace wholeheartedly the spirit of Mary. Like her, let us face reality. Let’s see who our great God is, that we are in relation with him, and place ourselves in the rank we deserve. Let us firmly believe that all our glory, like our happiness, can only come from our union with him and his infinite goodness towards us. Let’s accustom ourselves to ruthlessly rejecting any thought that might diminish God in our eyes and exaggerate our personality.

“O Virgin Mary,” I would say with Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, “may the light of your faith dispel the darkness of my mind, may your profound humility take the place of my pride; finally, if possible, may I have no mind other than yours to know Jesus Christ and his divine will; may I have no other soul than yours to praise and glorify the Lord. If you still see something in me that does not belong to you, I beg you to remove it now and make yourself the absolute mistress of my soul, to destroy, uproot and annihilate everything in it that is displeasing to God, and to plant, elevate and work in it whatever pleases you.”

Destroy the spirit of the world in me. Go to all the roots, even the smallest ones, that it has planted in my being, tear them out without pity and put in their place your spirit of humility and absolute dependence. With you I would like to be able to always say and in all circumstances: “I am the Lord's slave. I submit myself entirely to him. I have only one ambition, only one desire: to do his will on earth, as the angels and saints do it in heaven.”³

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

³ R.P. J.-M. Texier, Préparation à la Consécration à la très Sainte Vierge, 3^e jour. Translated with www.deepl.com.