

PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & ST SIMON STOCK, CARMELITE CHURCH
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22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – 28 August 2022

Humility will Win You a Place in God

Humility is the ‘sound bite’ for our reflection today. It is a word that denotes a quality in a person that makes the person lovable and indeed much loved. The opening of our first reading confirms this when it says, “My son/daughter, be gentle in carrying out your business, and you will be better loved than a lavish giver.” In other words, “behave humbly and you will find favour with the Lord.” We see from this that humility is a quality valued not only in our relationship with God but also in our dealings with the secular world. We all want leaders that are humble; as we say, ‘down to earth.’ And for us Christians, humility is a make or break quality when it comes to our relationship with God and the hope of uniting with God in heaven.

Let us hear what St Teresa of Avila says about humility as the secret to our spiritual life: She teaches that humility is the foundation of our spiritual life without which nothing in our life can grow. It is the direct means through which we offer ourselves to God. And the more we give ourselves to the Lord, the more He surrenders Himself to us. You might be surprised to know that St Teresa compares what our humility is capable of achieving to the ingenious character of the queen on a chessboard. St Teresa was an expert in chess in her youth, and so brings this image of the game of chess to her analysis of our relationship with God. She compares how the king on a chessboard is cornered (checkmated) to how God surrenders Himself to us when we approach Him with perfect humility. She says that if we practice this virtue frequently, we will quickly checkmate our Divine King; He will not be able to move out of our check nor will He desire to do so. And, *It is the Queen which gives the King most trouble in this game and all the other pieces support her. There is no queen who can beat this King as well as humility can; for humility brought Him down from Heaven into the Virgin’s womb and with humility we can draw Him into our souls by a single hair. Be sure that He will give most humility to him who has most already and least to him who has least.*

St Teresa stresses humility so much because it is the basis for, and is intricately connected with, other two important virtues: love for others and detachment. She says, *“I cannot understand how humility exists, or can exist, without love, or love without humility, and it is impossible for these two virtues to exist save where there is great detachment from all created things.* She describes these threesome virtues in these words: *O sovereign virtues, rulers over all creation, emperors of the world, deliverers from all snares and entanglements laid by the devil, virtues so loved by our teacher Christ who never for a moment was seen without them. Those who have them can easily go out and fight with all hell together and against the whole world and all its occasions of sin. Such persons have no fear of anyone, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. They have no one to fear because they don’t care if they lose everything, nor would they consider this a loss. The only thing they fear is displeasing their God, and they beg God to sustain them in these virtues lest they lose them through their own fault (The Way of Perfection 10.3).*

In order not to delude ourselves in thinking we already have these virtues, St Teresa says that *these virtues have the characteristic of so hiding themselves from the persons who possess them that these persons never see them or manage to believe that they have them even though there are told they do. But they esteem them so highly that they always go about striving to obtain them, and they gradually bring these virtues to perfection within themselves. Yet these virtues are so manifest in the ones possessing them that without their desiring it, the virtues are at once recognized by others (10.4).*

The parable in our Gospel today highlights what St Teresa has said. In the banquet of heaven only the truly humble persons can participate. Those who think themselves worthy of it because they merit it by their own uprightness, those who assume they deserve it, will be embarrassed as they will be thrown out of the banquet. But those who in spite of their virtues (which they are not even aware of) think they do not deserve a place, will be honoured by the Lord at that banquet. For everyone who exalts himself/herself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself/herself will be exalted.

NOTICES

Teresian Prayer Group

The aim of the Group is for its members to grow in prayer following the teachings of St Teresa of Avila. Meetings have a talk by a distinguished Carmelite speaker, a time of quiet prayer, and small group discussion and sharing. Membership of the Group is open to all and is free. Monthly meetings will run from October 2022 to May 2023, at two venues: here at Kensington on a Saturday 10.45 am to 12 noon; and at the Notting Hill Carmelite Monastery on a Sunday from 11.00 am to 12.30 pm. Find out about the Group and register at the Introductory Meetings at Kensington 11.00 am on Saturday 24 September and at Notting Hill at 11.00 am on Sunday 11 September. Further information is on our website at <https://carmelitechurch.org/activities/teresian-prayer-group/> and on posters at the back of the Church.

Relic Tour: St Bernadette

Between September 3rd and 5th the veneration of the relics of St Bernadette will take place at the Cathedral. On that Saturday the 3rd, the service of Anointing of the Sick will be held in the Cathedral at 2.30pm. **Those who requested for an entry ticket to this service of Anointing of the Sick may collect their ticket throughout the week from any of the priests.**

Registration for First Holy Communion

We are also now accepting registrations for the next group of children to prepare for First Holy Communion. Classes will commence in September. If you have children for first holy communion, please do register them ahead of September. Children must be 7yrs old by 31st August. The registration form is on our website www.carmelitechurch.org/activities/catechism-classes and at the back of the church.

<u>Collections Last Sunday</u>	Offering	£1135
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£91

Thank you for your generosity

Fr. Thaddeus, OCD