

CARMELITE CONTACT

Newsletter of the Irish Province of Carmelites

ISSUE NO.46



St Thérèse of Lisieux

Feastday: 1 October



IRISH PROVINCE OF CARMELITES

invites you to

COME *and* SEE

For men aged 20-40 years who are
discerning a vocation.

A WEEKEND TO:



Explore *your* future



Explore *God's plan*
for your life



Explore becoming
a *Carmelite Friar*



WHEN:

September
11th to 13th
(Friday evening to
Sunday afternoon)



WHERE:

Gort Muire
Carmelite Community,
Dublin 16,
D16 EI67



FURTHER DETAILS:

Chat to
Fr Michael, O.Carm



EMAIL:

carmelitemoate@gmail.com



PHONE:

090 648 1160



Irish Province of
CARMELITES

Young Adults Gather in Paris & Lisieux for Carmelite Pilgrimage

Young adults from the Irish Province of Carmelites recently joined fellow pilgrims from across Northern Europe for a faith-filled pilgrimage to Paris and Lisieux, walking together in the footsteps of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and discovering anew the richness of the Carmelite tradition.

The pilgrimage began in Paris, where the group received a warm welcome at the Irish College. Their first day included the celebration of Mass in the college chapel before gathering for a group photograph at the historic Church of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, a place closely associated with the life of St Geneviève, patroness of Paris.

The following day, pilgrims celebrated Mass at the iconic Notre-Dame de Paris and visited the Church of Saint Francis Xavier, continuing their journey through prayer, fellowship and shared faith before travelling to Lisieux.

Upon arriving in Lisieux, the Irish group was warmly welcomed by young adults from across the North European Carmelite Region. United by a common desire to deepen their relationship with Christ through the spirituality of Carmel, the pilgrims spent several days praying, reflecting and building lasting friendships.

The programme offered many opportunities to encounter the life and spirituality of St Thérèse. Pilgrims

celebrated Mass in the Carmel where the Little Flower lived her hidden life of holiness, visited St Peter's Cathedral where the Martin family worshipped, and prayed in the magnificent Basilica dedicated to her memory.

Throughout the pilgrimage, moments of prayer were woven together with formation and community life. Participants took part in Lectio Divina, reflecting prayerfully on the Sunday Scriptures before gathering for Mass in the Basilica of Saint Thérèse. They joined the Corpus Christi Procession through the Basilica grounds, publicly witnessing their faith alongside pilgrims from around the world.

A highlight of the programme was a conference led by Fr Mícheál O'Neill, who explored key aspects of Carmelite spirituality and reflected on the enduring relevance of St Thérèse's "Little Way".

Pilgrims also participated in Eucharistic Adoration and celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation, taking time to encounter God's mercy and renew their commitment to following Christ.

Another memorable visit brought the group to Les Buissonnets, the beloved Martin family home where Thérèse spent some of the happiest years of her childhood. Walking through the family home offered a powerful reminder that

holiness is first cultivated in the ordinary rhythms of daily life and within the love of family.

Alongside the formal programme, there was ample opportunity for conversation, friendship and cultural exchange, allowing young adults from different countries to share their experiences of faith and discover the universal richness of the Carmelite family.

The pilgrimage concluded with a beautiful Closing Mass, during which thanks were given for the many graces received throughout the week. Each pilgrim received a blessing and a souvenir medal of St Thérèse, a lasting reminder of the Little Flower's invitation to trust God with the simplicity and confidence of a child.

As the pilgrims returned home, they carried with them not only treasured memories of Paris and Lisieux, but also a renewed appreciation of Carmelite spirituality and a deeper desire to live the Gospel in everyday life.

Inspired by the witness of St Thérèse, St Louis Martin and St Zélie Martin, the young adults leave Lisieux encouraged to continue their journey of faith, remembering that sanctity is found not in extraordinary achievements but in allowing ordinary moments to become extraordinary acts of love.



Highlights from the Northern Europe Young Adult Carmelite Pilgrimage to Paris & Lisieux, June 2026.

Formation and Growth in Carmel: Milestones from Zimbabwe

Graduations

Carmel in Zimbabwe continues to grow in all areas. On Saturday, 29 May 2026, four Brothers completed their Philosophy studies at Arrupe Jesuit University and graduated. Their names are: Cristino Chiveza, Tsepo Sande, Edward Mukomberanwa and Percy Kuka. A send-off dinner at the university preceded the graduation ceremony. The four Brothers will begin their theology studies in September 2026. We wish them well in this new chapter of their lives as they transition from the 'world of forms' to 'applied theology'.

Formation

Growth and a sturdy future can be measured to some degree by the vocations we have. Five Pre-Novices finished their Postulancy year in June 2026, and three new Pre-Novices, Delron Chikokonya, Nigel Mtunzi, and Dylan Tanaka Ziyera joined us on 22 June 2026. Taking their first steps in Carmel and learning more about the Order, they are settling in well into the welcoming atmosphere of Kriste Mambo.

On a related positive note, our Regional Novitiate continues to play a significant role in shaping Carmel in

Africa, with candidates hailing from five countries: Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. A total of twelve candidates were received into the Novitiate at the Prophet Elijah Priory novitiate in Nyazura in July. Their names are: Br Kassongo Herve (Burkina Faso), Br Hugo Arvai Lampeao (Mozambique), Br Joseph Gutu, Br Tarisai Chimhoga, Br Kudakwashe Nyamwandura, Br Ferdinand Mangombe, Br Takudzwa Blessed, Br Godfrey Christian Assenga, Br Kassiano Didas Sokoni (Tanzania), Br Denis Mutuku, Br Edwin Ouma and Br Geoffrey Nyabonga Nyakeyo (Kenya). We pray that our Brothers will be inspired not merely by putting on the Carmelite habit, but by the Carmelite charism, as they discern and deepen their vocation in Carmel through immersion and the building of a solid spiritual foundation.

Our Lady of Mt Carmel Celebrations

July remains a special month for Carmel in the world. In Zimbabwe, not only do we celebrate our professions but we gather every 16 July to celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mt Carmel. This year, the celebrations were split into 2: the Harare region celebrated the day in St Joseph Hatfield whilst the

Mutare region celebrated in St Simon Stock Rusape. Since our charism is a shared charism, the aspect of Carmel as a family was clearly witnessed on July 16. Members of the Order, First Order, Third Order and those who share our charism gathered to celebrate our special day. We continue to pray that the bonds Carmel strengthen in Zimbabwe as we share our charism with those we work with.

Professions

Professions in the Carmelite Order are a joyous occasion, as Brothers publicly express their commitment to the Order. They are also fraternal gatherings that bring the entire Carmelite family together. This year was no exception, with five Novices making their Simple Profession at the Kriste Mambo Mission on Saturday 4 July. Father Shelton Zimondi, the Commissary Administrator, received the professions of the Zimbabwean Brothers: Br Ernest Tonderai Mberikunashe, Br Laudare Takunda Maambe and Br Talent Chikono, and Fr Patrick Kitaka, General Delegate of the Delegation of Kenya, received the professions of the Kenyan Brothers: Br Samuel Ogaro Obwocha and Br Kelvin Ngovo Maithya. The



Scenes from the Reception into the Novitiate and the celebration of Simple Profession in the Carmelite Commissariat of Zimbabwe.

Kenyan Brothers have since returned to Kenya, while the Zimbabwean Brothers have started studying Philosophy at Arrupe Jesuit University. We wish them well as they transition from the spiritual life of the Novitiate to an extended Carmelite life immersed in study.

In May, three Brothers, Syprian Dzihwema, Obvious J. Mapfumo and Joseph Sami, travelled to Ireland, the Mother Province, for their spiritual month and returned home in July. This spiritual month was an opportunity to review and evaluate their personal vocational history in light of the Word of God. It was also a time for silence and prayer, during which they reflected on the fundamental themes of consecrated life, the vows, the charism, and Carmelite spirituality. All of this preparation culminated in their Solemn Profession on Saturday, 25 July at Kriste Mambo Mission. As always, the liturgy was both solemn and vibrant, accompanied by a choir composed of Kriste Mambo High School students and some lay people. On this solemn day, Fr Webster Chibvongodze, Prior and Parish Priest of Kriste Mambo, preached, encouraging the Brothers to remain committed to their calling. Our Students led the litany as the three Brothers prostrated themselves, fully committing to Carmel. Father Simon Nolan, the Provincial, was the main celebrant who also received

the vows. He was accompanied by Fr Vitalis Chiromba, the Provincial's assistant. The event was also attended by Fr Victor from Tanzania. Members of the wider Carmelite community were also in attendance. After studying Philosophy and Theology for several years, Brothers Syprian, Obvious and Joseph will leave Mt Carmel Student House to join smaller communities. We wish them God's blessing as they begin their ministry.

Ordination

One week after their Solemn Profession, on Saturday 1 August 2026, Brothers Syprian Dzihwema and Obvious Mapfumo were ordained as deacons, the first step in the sacrament of holy orders. During the same ceremony, Rev. Lloyd Champiruka was ordained as a priest. The ceremony was held at St Peter's Kubatana in Highfields, within the Archdiocese of Harare. The ordaining Bishop was Archbishop Christopher Ndhlovu. On the same day, several Diocesan and Franciscan deacons were also ordained as priests. Ordinations are joyful and solemn occasions, during which the ordinands publicly express their willingness to serve God's people. The following day, Sunday 2 August 2026, Fr Lloyd celebrated Mass to give thanks for his ordination at the Champiruka homestead in Tanda Village. This

vibrant celebration brought life and joy to the Tanda community, who gathered to support one of their own.

Ongoing formation

As Students are trained for various ministries and service, they joined our Communities for a community experience after their June holidays. This involved immersing themselves in Carmelite life in smaller Communities and participating in Carmelite ministries. This year, the community experience took place from 17 June to 26 July.

As part of their ongoing formation, the Student body participated in an annual Carmelite Week. This year, it was led by the Provincial, Fr Simon Nolan, at the Student House in Harare. Themes covered included Carmelite history and tradition, and the role of music (hymns) in Carmelite life. In an environment where Students engage with logic, epistemology, fundamental theology and eschatology, these discussions help them to stay connected to our Carmelite tradition.

Carmel in Zimbabwe continues to grow. As we celebrate 80 years of the Carmelite presence in Zimbabwe, we are grateful to all those who planted and nurtured the seed of Carmel. May Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Prophet Elijah, our Spiritual Father, continue to pray for us.



More images from the Reception into the Novitiate and the celebration of Simple Profession.

Joyful Celebration of Fr Jander's Priestly Ordination in Brazil

The Irish Province of Carmelites rejoices in giving thanks to God for the priestly ordination of Fr Jander Maria de Jesus, O.Carm, a member of the Irish Province, which took place on Saturday, 15 August, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in João Pessoa, Brazil.

The Ordination Mass was led by Dom Antônio Muniz, O.Carm, Archbishop Emeritus of Maceió, and brought together Fr Jander's family, fellow Carmelites, parishioners, and many friends to celebrate this important milestone in his vocation and ministry. The celebration was filled with prayer, gratitude, and joy as Fr Jander offered his life in priestly service to Christ and His Church.

Representing the Irish Province of Carmelites was the Prior Provincial, Fr Simon Nolan, O.Carm, who travelled to Brazil to take part in the celebra-

tions. He was joined by Fr Genildo DeQueiroz, O.Carm, Fr Brian McKay, O.Carm, and Bro João, O.Carm, whose presence reflected the close bonds of fraternity within the Province and the shared joy of welcoming a new priest into ministry.

The celebrations also brought together members of the Carmelite Province of Pernambuco, led by their Prior Provincial, Frei José Roberval Mendes Pereira, O.Carm. Their hospitality and prayerful support highlighted the strong relationship between the Irish Province and the Carmelite communities of Brazil, where Fr Jander first discerned his vocation before becoming a member of the Irish Province.

On the following day, Fr Jander celebrated his first Mass of Thanksgiving, surrounded once again by family, friends, and his Carmelite brothers. For every newly ordained priest, the first celebration of the Eucharist is a

deeply significant moment, marking the beginning of a lifetime dedicated to preaching the Gospel, celebrating the Sacraments, and serving the People of God. It was a joyful and prayerful occasion, filled with gratitude for God's faithfulness and the many people who have accompanied Fr Jander throughout his vocational journey.

As a Province, we give thanks for Fr Jander's generous "yes" to God's call and ask the Lord to bless him abundantly as he begins his priestly ministry. We also continue to pray for an increase in vocations to the Carmelite life and priesthood, trusting that God continues to call men and women to serve His Church with courage and generosity.

Please keep Fr Jander in your prayers as he begins this new chapter of his ministry. May Our Lady of Mount Carmel watch over him always, and may the Lord grant him many years of faithful and fruitful service.



Pictures from the Ordination and Mass of Thanksgiving for Fr Jander Maria de Jesus, O.Carm.

A HOMILY AT LOURDES

Homily of the Prior Provincial for the Annual Irish Carmelite Pilgrimage to Lourdes, 2005.

From the very beginning Lourdes has been a place of healing. Here in this holy place we can see the ministry of Jesus continued each day. In the Gospel of St. Mark, almost every time you meet Jesus he is healing, going to heal or has just performed a healing. The healing ministry of Jesus is well summed up in his words – I have come that you may have life and have it to the full.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, enters into situations of human need. He brings healing into our lives. At Lourdes we can be aware of much healing – even cures. We make a distinction, however, between healing and curing. We may say a person is cured when the actual illness disappears, for example, if a broken limb is righted or a cancer suddenly disappears. There are many remarkable cures at Lourdes, many

more cures than those accepted by the Medical Bureau.

However, much more numerous than cures are the many healings that take place here. People come to Lourdes not only with physical problems but emotionally and spiritually crippled also. There are many ways in which people are held back from loving, from helping others and from being at peace with themselves and with others. The healings at Lourdes touch all areas of human need and misery.

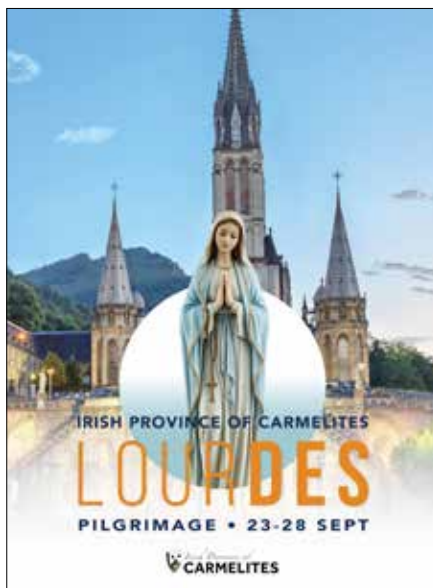
There are so many kinds of physical illness – some destroy the whole person, others only damage the body. Even if people cannot be cured they can still be healed. They can still find peace and serenity in illness. They are able to leave aside resentment against God, against others, against life itself. Attitudes can be changed here and real inner healing take place. Indeed, it is sometimes the relatives accompanying the sick person who are most in need of healing. Many of us carry emotional scars and problems which eat away at us. In addition to sickness, we can bear resentment, self-hatred, unforgiveness, addictions. These are not life giving. We need to pray for the healing to cope with these scars, to face them with courage and honesty and in a way that is life giving for ourselves and for others. Let us remember that no one escapes hurt on the journey through life. The cross is always with us.

Here in Lourdes we find many people bearing very heavy crosses. Some live each day with the pain and confinement of illness. They live with the daily strug-

gle against despair. They live each day with the heartache of broken relationships and the searing pain of betrayal. Sometimes the cross in a person's life is very visible and sometimes it is not visible but no less real. In Lourdes, we are invited to examine our crosses, to try and lay down false crosses, crosses we should have put down years ago. There is healing in following the crucified Christ. Jesus gave his life for us. Suffering and death was the price paid to announce God's love for us and for all humanity. For us as Christians it is only through Christ and in Christ that the mystery of suffering and death unfolds.

There will be plenty of quiet moments in Lourdes to reflect, quiet moments to share with Mary our painful memories and to walk away from those meetings, those encounters, healed and set free. Let us not be afraid to acknowledge our vulnerability to Jesus, to Mary, to one another. Let us not forget our own great capacity to accompany, to support and to heal one another. There will be an opportunity too to leave our sins behind in Lourdes.

Lourdes is a very special place – a place where we can find healing for body, mind and spirit, healing at every level of our being. Mary invites us to such healing. The first step is to surrender ourselves to her Son, Jesus. Today we say yes to God's plan so that his healing grace may be active and fruitful in us. We remember the promise of Jesus: I have come that you may have life and have it to the full.



KNOCK PILGRIMAGE

SUNDAY • 13 SEPTEMBER • 2026

2:30 PM Anointing of the Sick | 3 PM The Eucharist

Rosary Procession (follows the Eucharist)

Scan the qr code to find out more.

www.carmelites.ie

WHITEFRIAR STREET

Looking Ahead to 200 Years in the Heart of Dublin

As Whitefriar Street Church approaches the bicentenary of its consecration in 2027, there is a growing awareness that this anniversary is about far more than the age of a building. It is an opportunity to tell the story of a place deeply woven into the religious, social and cultural life of Dublin itself — a story of medieval friars, crowded tenements, Catholic Emancipation, poverty and resilience, migration and music, devotion and renewal.

For generations of Dubliners, Whitefriar Street has been far more than simply “a church”. It has been a place of refuge and familiarity in the middle of a constantly changing city. Workers stopped in on the way to factories and offices. Mothers lit candles for emigrating children. Students came before examinations. Families arrived in grief after the death of a loved one. Elderly parishioners found companionship. Young adults rediscovered faith. The poor came not only for prayer, but for practical help and human dignity.

In many ways, the story of Whitefriar Street is also the story of Dublin itself.

The Carmelites first arrived in Dublin in the thirteenth century, establishing a friary just outside the medieval city walls. The area became known as “Whitefriars” because of the white cloaks worn by the Carmelite friars. Medieval maps and historical studies show the original Carmelite precinct, including the friary and Whitefriars Gate, forming part of the southern edge of medieval Dublin.

Like many religious houses, the medieval Carmelite foundation was suppressed during the Reformation. In 1539 the friary was surrendered and much of the complex dismantled. Yet even after suppression, the memory of the Carmelites remained deeply attached to this part of the city. The street names themselves preserved the memory of the friary long after the buildings disappeared. The Carmelites survived the penal era in a much humbler form, moving through different locations in Dublin before eventually returning to Whitefriar Street in the early nineteenth century.

To understand the significance of

Whitefriar Street, it is important to understand the Dublin into which the Carmelites returned. The city of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a place of enormous contrasts. Georgian Dublin possessed great architectural elegance, yet behind many of those fine façades lay overcrowding, poverty and deep social inequality. Catholics, though forming the majority of the population, still lived under the lingering effects of the Penal Laws. Catholic churches were tolerated, but often hidden away in lanes and back streets. Public Catholic visibility remained politically sensitive.

This was the world into which Fr John Spratt, O.Carm., emerged.

John Spratt was one of the most remarkable religious figures in nineteenth-century Dublin. Born in Cork in 1796, he joined the Carmelites at a young age and quickly gained a reputation as an exceptional preacher. But Spratt was much more than an eloquent speaker. He became widely known throughout Dublin for his tireless charitable work among the poor, especially during periods of severe hardship in the city.

Spratt ministered in a Dublin marked by overcrowded tenements, widespread disease, unemployment and social instability. He became deeply involved in practical works of mercy: establishing schools, supporting charitable organisations, caring for the

sick and visiting prisons. During the cholera epidemics and later during the Famine years, clergy like Spratt occupied a crucial role in the social fabric of the city. In many working-class areas of Dublin, churches were not simply places of worship — they were centres of stability, education and survival.

Spratt also possessed a deep historical imagination. He strongly desired that the Carmelites would return to the footprint of their medieval foundation and visibly reclaim their historic place within Dublin’s urban landscape. The move to Whitefriar Street therefore carried symbolic as well as practical significance. It linked the renewed Catholic confidence of the nineteenth century with the pre-Reformation history of the Order in Ireland.

In 1825 the foundation stone of the present church was laid by Archbishop Daniel Murray. The architect chosen was George Papworth, who would later also design St Mary’s Cathedral. The church was consecrated in 1827, though construction and fundraising continued for years afterwards. The laying of the foundation stone itself reveals much about the social and political climate of the time. The ceremony included public expressions of loyalty to the Crown and references to religious toleration — language typical of Catholic communities seeking civil acceptance during the final years before Emancipation. Donations came from people across religious di-



vides, reflecting the gradual emergence of a more confident Catholic middle class in Dublin.

Papworth's design for Whitefriar Street was both elegant and ingenious. The site itself was narrow and awkward, bounded by York Row (now Whitefriar Place) and Whitefriar Street. Rather than conceal this difficulty, Papworth transformed it into one of the church's defining architectural features. The long southern façade, with its repeated arched windows stretching down the street, created what contemporary writers described as a graceful and dignified public presence.

In nineteenth-century Dublin — a city marked by rapid population growth, poverty, overcrowding and political uncertainty — Whitefriar Street Church became deeply embedded in the everyday rhythms of urban life. For many ordinary Dubliners, especially the poor and working classes, the church was one of the few stable and accessible institutions in the city. The streets surrounding Whitefriar Street were filled with lodging houses, workshops, markets and increasingly overcrowded tenements. Families often lived in cramped and unhealthy conditions, with illness, unemployment and early death shaping ordinary experience. In such an environment, churches provided not

only religious practice, but familiarity, continuity and human connection.

Whitefriar Street occupied a particularly important place because of its city-centre location. People encountered it constantly as part of daily life. Workers passed it on the way to employment. Market traders and domestic servants stopped in briefly for prayer. Mothers came to light candles. The sick sought comfort. The grieving came after funerals or periods of loss. In an era before widespread social services, clergy and religious houses often formed part of the informal welfare structure of the city.

This emotional attachment to the Church was strengthened by the ministry of figures like Fr John Spratt. Spratt was not simply known as a preacher. He became widely respected throughout Dublin because of his direct involvement with the struggles of ordinary people — particularly the poor, prisoners, the sick and children in need of education. His charitable work during periods of social distress helped establish Whitefriar Street as a place associated not only with liturgy, but with practical compassion.

The devotional culture of Whitefriar Street also mattered enormously. Nineteenth-century Irish Catholicism was deeply tactile and devotional. Shrines, candles, relics, confraternities, novenas and processions all created forms of participation that connected faith to everyday life and emotion. Whitefriar Street excelled in this atmosphere of accessible devotion.

The arrival of the relics of Saint Valentine in 1836 only deepened this connection. The church became a place where people brought deeply personal hopes and anxieties — relationships, illness, grief, loneliness and family struggles. Importantly, this was not simply private devotion detached from the wider city. Whitefriar Street helped shape a growing Catholic identity within Dublin during and after Emancipation. Catholic churches in this period were negotiating how visible Catholics could be within public urban space. Whitefriar Street became part of the emerging confidence of Dublin Catholicism while still remaining rooted among ordinary people rather than elite society. Over time, the church entered into the memory and habits of the city itself. People developed emotional attachments not

only to the liturgy, but to the building, the shrines, the priests, the atmosphere and the rituals associated with life's important moments. Whitefriar Street became one of those places Dubliners instinctively "carried" within them — a church visited before hospital appointments, before job interviews, after bereavement, during crises or simply in moments when life became difficult.

No part of Whitefriar Street's story captures the imagination quite like the arrival of the relics of Saint Valentine.

In 1835 Fr John Spratt travelled to Rome, where his preaching attracted enormous attention. Deeply impressed both by his eloquence and by his charitable work among the poor of Dublin, Pope Gregory XVI presented Spratt with relics believed to be those of Saint Valentine, the third-century Roman martyr later associated throughout the world with love and marriage. The relics arrived in Dublin in November 1836 and were brought in solemn procession through the streets to Whitefriar Street Church. In the years following Catholic Emancipation, this was an enormously significant moment. Public Catholic devotional life was re-emerging after centuries of restriction, and the arrival of relics from Rome carried profound symbolic importance for Dublin Catholics.

Over time, devotion to Saint Valentine became woven naturally into the life of the city. Couples came seeking blessings on marriages. Families prayed for loved ones. People struggling with loneliness, grief or broken relationships lit candles quietly at the shrine. The devotion endured because it touched something deeply human within the life of ordinary Dubliners.

Alongside Saint Valentine, Whitefriar Street is also home to one of Dublin's oldest and most significant devotional treasures: the medieval statue known as Our Lady of Dublin. This beautiful wooden image of the Virgin and Child dates from around the fifteenth century and is one of the oldest surviving devotional statues in the city.

Tradition holds that the statue was hidden during the Reformation period to protect it from destruction and was rediscovered centuries later before eventually finding a permanent home at Whitefriar Street. The presence of Our Lady of Dublin creates a powerful link between the contemporary church and



the medieval religious life of the city. Long before modern Dublin emerged, generations of ordinary people prayed before this image seeking comfort, protection and hope. Today the shrine of Our Lady of Dublin continues to attract people from every background. Office workers pause there during lunch breaks. Visitors light candles quietly. Parents pray for children. Elderly Dubliners return to familiar devotions learned in childhood. In an increasingly transient city, the shrine offers a striking sense of continuity with Dublin's past while remaining deeply connected to the emotional realities of the present.

The church itself continued to evolve physically across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Enlargements in the 1840s and 1850s transformed Papworth's original narrow church into a much larger and more complex building. The distinguished architect J.J. McCarthy later added major Romanesque elements to the interior, while substantial rebuilding and reordering took place during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.

The modern sanctuary with its baldacchino, blessed by Archbishop John Charles McQuaid in 1956, reflected a new confidence in Irish Catholicism during the mid-twentieth century. Yet despite all these architectural changes, the essential atmosphere of Whitefriar Street endured: prayerful, devotional, urban and deeply human.

Today Whitefriar Street remains one of the busiest city-centre churches in Dublin. Office workers, tourists, migrants, students, homeless people and long-standing parishioners continue to pass through its doors every day. The church remains especially associated with confession, devotional life, music and welcome.

As Whitefriar Street approaches its bicentenary in 2027, there is a strong sense that the anniversary should become not simply a celebration for the Carmelite Order, but a celebration for the city of Dublin itself and for the generations of people whose lives have been intertwined with the church across two centuries.

The bicentenary is envisioned not as a single event, but as a year-long programme of liturgical, historical, musical, cultural and social initiatives that will invite people to rediscover Whitefriar Street's place within the life of the city. Plans currently under development include exhibitions, concerts, lectures, public conversations, outreach projects and opportunities to recover the social history of the surrounding area — especially the lived experience of ordinary Dubliners who shaped and sustained the church through periods of hardship and change. Particular emphasis will be placed on telling the story not only of friars and buildings, but of people: the workers, migrants, families, market traders, students, clergy, musicians,

poor and pilgrims who made Whitefriar Street part of the emotional and spiritual fabric of Dublin life.

From the beginning, Whitefriar Street has always stood at the meeting point of contemplation and city life. The challenge facing the church today is remarkably similar to the one faced by Fr John Spratt and the Carmelites in the nineteenth century: how to remain rooted in prayer, welcome and human dignity while responding creatively to the changing realities of urban life.

In many respects, Whitefriar Street has always succeeded because it has never separated devotion from humanity. Its history is not simply about architecture or ecclesiastical milestones. It is about people. It is about generations of Dubliners who found here consolation in grief, hope in difficulty, forgiveness in confession, companionship in loneliness and moments of stillness amid the noise of the city. That is why the bicentenary matters. It is not simply the celebration of a church that has survived for two hundred years. It is the celebration of a relationship between a city and a sacred place that have helped shape one another across centuries. Because ultimately the story of Whitefriar Street is not only the story of Carmel in Dublin. It is the story of Dublin itself: layered, resilient, compassionate and always evolving.



The Carmelite Church and Old Priory in 1914.



Images from the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel celebrations in Kildare on 16 July.

Celebration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Kildare

By Fr Johnson Digal, O.Carm. (Prior)

The Carmelite community at White Abbey, Kildare, celebrated its annual Novena to Our Lady of Mount Carmel from 7–15 July 2026. These nine days of prayer brought together the friars, the Third Order Carmelites, parishioners, pilgrims and friends of the Carmelite family.

The Novena was officially opened by Bishop Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Throughout the nine days, different Carmelite friars celebrated Mass and shared reflections on Mary, prayer and the Carmelite way of life. Each evening, the Third Order Carmelites led the Rosary and Evening Prayer, helping everyone to prepare spiritually for the feast.

The celebrations reached their joyful conclusion on 16 July, the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The principal celebrant was Fr Simon Nolan,

O.Carm., Prior Provincial of the Irish Province. During the Mass, we gave thanks for Mary's maternal protection and renewed our desire to follow her example of prayer, faith and faithful service to Christ.

A special grace during the celebrations was the presence of the relics of St Thérèse of Lisieux. Many people came to venerate the relics and to ask for the intercession of this much-loved Carmelite saint. A special exhibition also offered visitors an opportunity to learn more about St Thérèse and her "Little Way" of love and trust in God.

The celebrations were enriched by processions, music, prayer and warm hospitality in Carmel Hall. The Lourdes Group, the Two Hearts Prayer Group and the Third Order Carmelites took an active part in the liturgies and processions. The choir, musicians, altar servers

and volunteers contributed greatly to the prayerful and joyful atmosphere.

We sincerely thank Bishop Denis Nulty, Fr Simon Nolan and all the Carmelite friars who celebrated with us. We also thank the groups, volunteers and everyone who worked quietly behind the scenes. Our gratitude extends to all who attended the Novena, joined us online or supported us through their prayers.

The Novena and Feast Day were a beautiful expression of faith and Carmelite fraternity. They reminded us that Mary always leads us closer to her Son, Jesus Christ.

May Our Lady of Mount Carmel continue to protect our Carmelite family and guide us along the path of prayer, service and love.

THÉRÈSE: A SAINT FOR TODAY

By Christopher O'Donnell, O.Carm.

There are several kinds of saints. There are any number of great saints and mystics buried in cemeteries throughout the land. On the Last Day we will learn with surprise the holiness of people buried there, their greatness now known only to God. There is a much smaller group whose holiness is more public: they are people beatified and canonised, the official saints set before us as examples. There is a much smaller group of saints who have a special mission to write and to teach the Church. St Thérèse, who had no serious secondary education, belongs to this last category. She has been called by Pope Pius XI, "The greatest saint of modern times." At her canonisation, the same pope said that she had a new message, a new mission, and a new model for holiness. In recent years she has been named one of the doctors of the Church; these are thirty-three saints regarded by the Church as its greatest teachers.

The basic facts of her life are well known. She was born into a bourgeois family in late 19th century France. She became a Carmelite nun at the age of fifteen and died nine years later. One way of looking at her would be to say that it was easy for her: comfortable home; cut off in a contemplative convent; an early death. What if she had to face the real world?

One could also paint a contrary picture: she was quite spoiled as a

child; her mother died when she was four; her father doted on her. As a child she was in many ways stubborn, self-willed, very self-centred, somewhat neurotic, living in a wealthy home. At school she was a bit of a dreamer, and she was quite unable to cope with the rough and tumble of other children's games. She could have turned out very selfish. Instead she struggled against these traits and became a saint.

She was cured of a strange, probably psychosomatic, illness when she was about ten. The Lord gave her a profound healing of self-centredness when she was thirteen, and almost immediately she asked her father's permission to enter the enclosed Carmelite convent at Lisieux. There was much opposition to her entering at such an early age. When she did join, her life was rather uneventful. Even her own blood-sisters in the convent did not realise until about a year before her death that she was in any way remarkable. She contracted a horrible form of tuberculosis which led to a death with terrible suffering at the age of twenty-four. The rest is history.

From her childhood she had wanted to be holy. About two and a half years before she died, she became somewhat desperate — time was slipping away, and she still did not know how she could be holy. She thought "if only I could find a lift to God!" Then she came across two scripture texts. The first was from Proverbs, "If anyone is a very little one, let him come to me" (Prv 9:4). The second was from Isaiah, "As mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; you will be carried at my breast and fondled in my lap" (Is 66:12-13). Thérèse took off: she had found her "Little Way," as she would later call it — the lift that would bring her to God.

In her time, and still today, there were three distorted ideas about holiness. One was that holiness consisted in doing big things for God. Thérèse's Little Way was to do ordinary things exceptionally well. Again, many people thought of God as an angry or demanding God. Thérèse's response was to act like a child before a loving God. A third distortion of holiness was to think of it

as primarily a matter of long times of prayer. Carmelite nuns do indeed pray a lot. But Thérèse often fell asleep and had many distractions. But she knew that she was a child in the presence of God, who loved her just the same.

The Little Way is a way of love and consideration in the smallest things. Some in her community were unkind; she replied by going out of her way to be nice to them. Her life was made up of thousands of small things. What made it heroic was that she kept it up. Any of us could live like Thérèse for an hour or two, but day after day — that is the stuff of saints. Her Little Way is simple, straightforward, but it is not easy.

She also found faith very difficult in the final eighteen months of her life; she lost her sense of God and of future life. But she held on. She tested her Little Way in a life that had much physical, psychological and spiritual suffering. All the time she held on to her sense of humour and refused to take herself too seriously. She joked about the medicines and strange often-painful remedies that were prescribed for her. She could put up with snail syrup, provided the horns were not visible. When the nuns thought she was dying, some of them thoughtlessly placed a palliasse in the next room to have it convenient for laying her out. She recognised the odour of the straw and joked about her acute sense of smell. She could liken her painful breathing to an old steam train. She amused herself and others by thinking of the problem with ropes that the gravediggers would have letting her down into the deep new grave that the convent had recently purchased.

Her superior asked her to write her life story, an account of how God had blessed her. This work written in three school copybooks became a great spiritual classic, *The Story of a Soul*. She never finished it. In the end she was too weak even to write with a pencil. The last words she wrote of her life story were "I lift myself to him with confidence and love." These words "confidence and love" sum up her life, her Little Way, her legacy to all of us in the Church.



CARMELITE SAINTS & BLESSED

SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER • NOVEMBER

————— *Pray for us* —————



St Albert of Jerusalem
17 SEPTEMBER



St Thérèse of the Child Jesus
1 OCTOBER

SEPTEMBER —————

- 1 St Teresa Margaret Redi, O.C.D.
- 17 St Albert of Jerusalem

OCTOBER —————

- 1 St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, O.C.D.
- 15 St Teresa of Jesus (of Avila)

NOVEMBER —————

- 5 Bl. Frances d'Amboise, O.Carm.
- 6 St Nuno Alvares Pereira, O.Carm.
- 8 St Elizabeth of the Trinity, O.C.D.
- 13 Bl. Maria Teresa Scrilli, O.Carm.
- 14 All Carmelite Saints
- 15 All Carmelite Souls
- 19 St Raphael Kalinowski, O.C.D.
- 29 Bls Denis & Redemptus, O.C.D.



St Nuno Alvares Pereira
6 NOVEMBER



www.carmelites.ie



[@carmelitesireland](https://www.facebook.com/carmelitesireland)



[carmelites.ie](https://www.instagram.com/carmelites.ie)



[carmelitesireland](https://www.youtube.com/carmelitesireland)