

THE SHRINES
OF
WHITEFRIAR STREET CHURCH,
DUBLIN

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THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

The Sacred Scriptures speak of the beauty of Mount Carmel where the Prophet Elijah defended the faith of Israel in the living God. There, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, under the title of “Saint Mary of Mount Carmel” the Order of Carmelites had its formal beginning. From the fourteenth century this title, recalling the countless blessings of its patroness, began to be solemnly celebrated, first in England and then gradually throughout the whole Order. It attained its supreme place from the beginning of the seventeenth century when the General Chapter declared it to be the principal feast of the Order, and Paul V recognised it as the feast of the Scapular Confraternity.



Each year a Triduum takes place in Whitefriar Street Church leading up to the solemnity on July 16.

THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF DUBLIN

Ireland is fortunate in that she still possesses a number of ancient wooden sculptures, including several of Our Lady and a few of the Irish saints. The oldest of these figures is the twelfth-century Madonna and Child from Kilcorban, Co. Galway. The figure venerated in the Carmelite church today under the title of "Our Lady of Dublin" has been compared in style to some of the early sixteenth-century sculptures in the Henry VII chapel at Westminster, and is probably of this period. It is a life size figure in oak, showing Our Lady holding her Child. Originally brightly painted, the figure had been later whitewashed over, unfortunately, the removal of the whitewash in 1914 also took off the ancient polychrome surface as well. The extended arm of the Child is a modern restoration.



It is said that this statue originally belonged to St. Mary's Cistercian abbey on the north bank of the Liffey in Dublin. This abbey was frequently visited both by the English nobility and by royal officials from England who stayed there when in Dublin. Thus it would not be surprising to find the Dublin Cistercians in possession of a statue belonging to the same school of art as some of the sculptures in Westminster Abbey. St. Mary's was surrendered in 1539, at the Reformation, and the statue is said to have been used as a trough in an adjacent inn yard. It was common practice to hollow the backs of such wooden figures, both to reduce weight and prevent the wood warping and splitting; thus laid face down, the figure could form a shallow trough for pigs.

It is first mentioned in an account of the Catholic chapels of Dublin written by an unnamed Protestant in 1749. This states that "In Mary's Lane is a parochial chapel whose jurisdiction extends from one side of Boot Lane to one side of Church Street. It is a large and irregular building. On the Epistle side of the altar stands a large image of the Blessed Virgin with Jesus in her arms, carved in wood; which statue at the dissolution belonged to St. Mary's Abbey". Mary's Lane chapel was served by the Jesuits; its site is now occupied by a block of flats called St. Michan's House. In 1816,



the old chapel was converted for use as a school and a new church erected in St. Michan's parish. The whitewashed figure appears to have been discarded, and found its way into a secondhand shop in Capel Street. Here, Father Spratt of Whitefriars saw it in 1824 and immediately went in and purchased it, for a nominal sum.

Although Dr. Spratt saved the figure, the ancient silver crown that went with it was sold for the value of the metal and melted down. The last account of the crown is given by the distinguished archaeologist Petrie, who saw it in a jeweller's window waiting sale. He said that "it was a double arched crown such as appears on the coins of Henry VII and on his only: a circumstance which marks with exact precision the age of the statue which it had adorned". Petrie's dating of the crown, and

thus the statue, corresponds with the dating of the statue on stylistic grounds by comparison with the work in Westminster Abbey. But if the crown really belonged to the statue, it raises a grave doubt of the truth of the story of the use of the statue as a trough, and suggests rather that crown and figure were concealed together in some hiding place at the Reformation and subsequently restored for Catholic veneration to some Catholic chapel as soon as it was safe to do so. It may well have been venerated elsewhere before it appears in the Mary's Lane chapel.

Dr. Spratt placed the statue on the Epistle side of the high altar in the new Whitefriars church. In 1915, after the figure had been cleaned, the shrine of Our Lady of Dublin was formally erected in the Carmelite church.

Taken from: *Whitefriar St. Church: A Short Guide*, by Daphne Pochin Mould. Dublin: Carmelite Publications: 1964.

THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

The Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes is located on the left as one enters the main body of the church at Whitefriar Street. It extends from floor to ceiling and depicts the young Bernadette kneeling and looking up at Our Lady as she appeared to her.



THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

The Shrine recalls the apparition of Our Lady to three children in Fatima in 1913.



CALVARY

The Calvary Shrine is to be found in the entrance hallway to the Church coming in the main door from Aungier Street. The scene depicts life size statues of Our Lord upon the Cross with his Mother and the disciple he loved looking up at him. At the foot of the Cross kneels Mary of Magdala. The scene is raised up on a stone plinth upon which people place their lighted candles.



THE SHRINE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

The Shrine is located to the left of the main altar and contains its own altar.



THE SHRINE OF ST JOSEPH

St Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Protector of the Child Jesus. Little is known about Joseph except that he was of the line of David which was essential in order for Jesus to be legally of the house and line of David in fulfilment of the Scriptures. What is more important for us is the example which Joseph left us. He was a man of faith who played his role in God's salvific plan for us; he was obedient to the will of God; he had a love for the Law and its fulfilment; he showed piety and fortitude in times of trial; he had a chaste love for the Blessed Virgin Mary and he exercised his paternal authority with due care. He is therefore a true example of Christian living and is the Protector of the Church and of the Carmelite Order. Joseph is also the patron of carpenters and manual workers.



THE SHRINE OF ST VALENTINE

Throughout the centuries since Valentine received martyrdom there have been various basilicas, churches and monasteries built over the site of his grave. Many restorations and reconstructions took place at the site, therefore over the years. In the early 1800s such work was taking place and the remains of Valentine were discovered along with a small vessel tinged with his blood and some other artefacts.

In 1835 an Irish Carmelite by the name of John Spratt was visiting Rome. Apparently his fame as a preacher had gone before him, no doubt brought by some Jesuits who had been in Dublin. The elite of Rome flocked to hear him and he received many tokens of esteem from the doyens of the Church. One such token came from Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846) and were the remains of Saint Valentine.

On November 10, 1836, the Reliquary containing the remains arrived in Dublin and were brought in solemn procession to Whitefriar Street Church where they were received by Archbishop Murray of Dublin. With the death of Fr Spratt interest in the relics died away and they went into storage. During a major renovation in the church in the 1950s/60s they were returned to prominence with an altar and shrine being constructed to house them and enable them to be venerated. The statue was carved by Irene Broe and depicts the saint in the red vestments of a martyr and holding a crocus in his hand.

Today, the Shrine is visited throughout the year by couples who come to pray to Valentine and to ask him to watch over them in their lives together. The feastday of the saint on February 14 is a very popular one and many couples come to the Eucharistic celebrations that day which also includes a Blessing of Rings for those about to be married. On the feastday, the Reliquary is removed from beneath the side-altar and is placed before the high altar in the church and there venerated at the Masses. At the 11.00am and 3.15pm Masses there are special sermons and also a short ceremony for the Blessing of Rings for those about to be married.



THE SHRINE OF ST JUDE

The widespread and rapid establishment of the Church is the monument to the work of the apostles; they are the foundation stones and, like many foundation stones, are themselves hidden from view. The twelve appear, with tantalising brevity in the Gospels and the Acts; we know that two of them were called Jude, the one who betrayed Christ, and another distinguished as Jude Thaddeus. This second Jude seems to have been the brother of James the son of Alphaeus, the first bishop of Jerusalem. The two were near blood relations of Our Lord, and both were authors of short Epistles, which today form part of the New Testament. St. Jude also makes a personal appearance in St. John's account of the Last Supper (ch. 14).



Our Lord was urging the apostles to remain true to the instructions he had given them and was promising the sending of the Holy Spirit. "It is only a little while now, before the world is to see me no more; but you can see me, because I live on, and you too will have life ..." Jude asked: "Lord, how come it that thou wilt only reveal thyself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him: "If a man has any love for me, he will be true to my word; and then he will win my Father's love, and we will both come to him, to make our continual abode with him; whereas the man who has no love for me, lets my sayings pass him by". (Mgr. Knox's translation.)

The brief letter (Epistle) of St. Jude is the principal means by which we can come to know the saint. It seems to have been written to meet the same crisis in the early Church as St. Peter's second Epistle, the two letters contain similar material and warnings. Jude warns his correspondents – who were perhaps the convert Jews in Palestine – to beware of the false teaching of "godless men" who have found "their way secretly into your company, and are perverting the life of grace our God has bestowed on us into a life of wantonness; they even deny Jesus Christ, our one Lord and Master". Although written for a particular danger and to check the spread of one early body of heretical teaching, the danger is one that the Church has to face in every age, and in every baptized individual. We all come up against arguments against the faith that are not true and need St. Jude's reminder – "You have a battle to fight over the faith that was handed down, once for all to the saints ..." "It is for you to make your most holy faith the foundation of your lives, and to go on praying in the power of the Holy Spirit; to maintain yourselves in the love of God, and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with eternal life for your goal".

St. Jude goes on to say what should be the relationship between Catholics and the men who were spreading error. Some of them, he writes, you should listen to and then confute in argument; others you should be able to convert, but some you can only pity and avoid. It is still sound advice to the modern Catholic. He has nothing to fear in the encounter. “There is one who can keep you clear of fault, and enable you to stand in the presence of his glory, triumphant and unreprieved, when our Lord Jesus Christ comes; to him who alone is God, to him, who gives us salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, glory and majesty and power and domination are due, before time was, and now, for all ages. Amen”. (Mgr. Knox’s translation.)

Just because we know so little for certain about the careers of the different Apostles, legend and invention soon built up stories of their lives. There is a legend of St. Jude, purporting to give an account of his missionary activities and martyrdom, but it would be foolish to give much credence to it. There may, however, be a real tradition at the back of the stories about the different countries in which the Apostles worked – that these were the particular areas or directions into which each penetrated. Thus St. Simon and St. Jude are said to have travelled to Persia and to have suffered martyrdom there; they share the same feastday in the Church’s calendar, on 28th October. But nobody seems to know how St. Jude came to be the saint to whom people pray for apparently hopeless cases.

Taken from: *Whitefriar St. Church: A Short Guide*, by Daphne Pochin Mould. Dublin: Carmelite Publications: 1964.

THE SHRINE OF ST ANNE

We know nothing definitely about the parents of the Mother of God. One of the apocryphal gospels says that they were named Joachim and Anne, and goes on to relate that Mary was the child of old age and the prayers of parents who, till then, had not been blessed with children. But the account is so obviously a copying of the story of the birth of Samuel in the Old Testament, and to a lesser extent, of St. John the Baptist in the New, that it would be unwise to attach any serious belief to it. It is, of course, quite probable that the names of Our Lady's parents were well known and have been correctly passed on to us.



We do, however, venerate Joachim and Anne as the parents of the Mother of God, as the two individuals chosen by God for this very special vocation. Just as devotion to Our Lady first flowered in its fullness in the east and then spread westwards, so likewise did devotion to St. Anne. Even today, the Church in the east makes rather more of her than does that of the west. In the Latin rite, St. Anne has a single feastday, on 26th July. In the Byzantine rite (one of the several eastern rites) the Dormition of St. Anne is commemorated on 25th July. In addition, Our Lady's parents, Anne and Joachim, are commemorated, logically enough, on 9th September, the day following the feast of Our Lady's birthday. The feast of Our Lady's (Immaculate) Conception, was observed by the east long before the west, in the Byzantine calendar it is kept on 9th December and titled the feast of St. Anne's Conception of the Mother of God.

As the Carmelites came from the east to the west, it is not surprising to find that devotion to St. Anne is a feature of Carmelite life, and that they helped forward it in Europe. Her feast is included in the two earliest Carmelite ordinals, and the General Chapter of 1375 ordered a daily commemoration to be made of her in the liturgy.

In the western Church as a whole, the devotion spread slowly; taking root in some areas early, in some late. Probably under eastern influence, she appears in an eighth-century fresco in Rome in the ruined church of S. Maria Antiqua in the Forum. But it was not until 1382 that her feast was introduced into the general calendar of the Latin rite in the west.

The Normans seem to have been attracted to St. Anne early on, and brought the devotion to Ireland. It was strong in Dublin in the Middle Ages, and elsewhere in

Ireland some ancient holy wells were rededicated to St. Anne. A fine example is St. Anne's well at Tomhaggard in Co. Wexford, where, in recent years, the well has been made the centre of a beautiful shrine and the ancient pattern (pilgrimage) in St. Anne's honour, restored. Brittany too, was an early centre of devotion to St. Anne d'Auray (25-26 July) and Sainte Anne la Palud (23-24 August) are among the most famous and well-attended of the traditional Breton pilgrimages.

St. Anne, grandmother of Christ, is, of course, very specially the patron of all Catholic wives and mothers.

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THE SHRINE OF ST THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

St. Thérèse was born in 1873, at Alençon in France, the youngest of a family of nine girls, four of whom died in infancy. After their mother died of cancer, the family moved to Lisieux, and there the girls came to know the Discalced Carmelite nuns there. Four of them entered the Lisieux convent, Thérèse at an abnormally early age in 1888. In 1893, Thérèse was appointed assistant mistress of novices. She died of tuberculosis on 30th September 1897.

The whole Martin family, parents and children, were quite extraordinarily devout, both in the good sense and the bad, for they clothed their very real love of God in all the sentimental extravagances of nineteenth-century bad taste. Young Thérèse was very much a child of her times and her environment, she expresses herself in sugary language which both puts off the modern reader and disguises the actual toughness and austerity of her teaching.

The Lisieux convent, and especially Thérèse own sisters in it, became convinced, even before Thérèse died, of her holiness. They had made her write a brief autobiography and an account of her spiritual teaching. Thérèse told her sister, Pauline (Mother Agnes), to cut and edit her writing as she judged fit. Mother Agnes did considerable rewriting on' the saint's original texts—which, published as they stood, would have made no appeal to the literary taste of the contemporary public. In 1898, the Lisieux Carmel had 2,000 copies printed of *The Story of a Soul*; a bold venture, for how would they ever sell them? Even with Mother Agnes's editing, some Carmelite convents did not like the new book! But in twelve years, it sold 47,000 copies, and the demand went on rising. The unknown Thérèse from a French provincial convent was acclaimed as a saint, and a great spiritual teacher—of her “little way”. Thérèse had said that she wanted to spend her heaven doing good on earth—it seemed those who prayed to her for help were finding that her wish had been granted. Thérèse cause was introduced in 1914, she was beatified in 1923, and canonised in 1925. One of the most popular, if not the most popular, saints of modern times, she has been named, with St. Francis Xavier, patron of Catholic missions.

Today we can get to know the real Thérèse behind the sentimental facade, of her own language, and of the highly retouched pictures that were first published of her. The original text, as she actually wrote it, of Thérèse's manuscripts has been published; an



English version by Monsignor Knox is available, giving Thérèse thought in modern idiom. The original negatives of the photographs of Thérèse have also survived, since the retouching was done on prints, and a large number of these too has been published. No longer is the picture of Thérèse one of sentimental sweetness, but of a young girl with a sad look in her eyes.

For Thérèse was an extraordinary person and one of great strength. Her ambitions to do great things for God were boundless, she wanted to be a priest, a missionary, a martyr, a crusader, all at once. Joan of Arc was her heroine, and a Russian Orthodox writer has claimed that they resemble each other closely, almost alone among saints, these two do not see holiness as an ascent from earth to heaven, but the reverse; they try to bring heaven down to earth. For others, Thérèse's "little way" is the little way of ordinary folk, it is not a teaching confined to the routine of a Carmelite convent, but a teaching for the routine of daily life everywhere.

Her flowery language conceals too the spiritual trials through which Thérèse lived. Most of her life in Carmel seems to have been spent in a desert of aridity; in the last months of her life she faced intense intellectual attacks on her faith, especially on her hope of heaven. Whilst she continued to write verses about the happiness of heaven for her sisters, she herself felt all belief in it had gone. Thérèse survived the desolation and temptations—which were of a kind all of us may have to face in these days—and she fought them alone, for there was nobody in the Carmel capable of helping her—indeed she writes that she is afraid to say too much of her troubles for fear of upsetting the other nuns.

Taken from: *Whitefriar St. Church: A Short Guide*, by Daphne Pochin Mould. Dublin: Carmelite Publications: 1964.

The Shrine of St Thérèse in Whitefriars Street Church was blessed in September 1955 by the Rt Rev Mgr Vernon Johnson of St James', Spanish Place, London. The statue of the saint, designed in marble, is a replica of the statue of the saint over the High Altar in the crypt of the Basilica in Lisieux. It stands above the altar with an impressive background which depicts, in mosaic, a statue of Our Lady of the Smile, which was originally designed for the Church of St Sulpice, Paris, by Bouchardon in 1750.

THE SHRINE OF ST ALBERT OF SICILY

St. Albert of Sicily is one of the many famous saints, of whom very little is known, the so-called “Lives” being merely collections of pious legend. He belongs to the thirteenth century and to the first period of Carmelite settlement and expansion in the west. He was born in Trapani in Sicily. This island was an obvious choice for the Carmelites, coming west from Palestine, in which to make a foundation. Young Albert appears to have been attracted by the newcomers, and entered the Order at Trapani.



After his ordination, Albert was sent to the priory at Messina, also in Sicily, and this was the main centre of his life's work. St. Albert typified the new kind of Carmelite that adaptation to the west produced, a man of prayer and penance, a lover of solitude, but also a man engaged in study and in the active apostolate. There were many Jews living in Sicily at this time, and Albert seems to have made them a special object, and been successful in making converts. He is also said to have written books, though none survive, and he is regarded as patron of Carmelite studies. The order recognised his many and outstanding abilities. He was elected Provincial of Sicily and attended the General Chapter at Bruges in 1297, in that capacity. However, he spent the last years of his life before his death in 1306, living in hermitage near Messina. Recognised as a wonder worker during his lifetime, miracles and cures continued to be attributed to Albert's intercession after his death. His cult spread quickly through the whole of the Order. The celebration of his feast, on 7th August was introduced into the Carmelite rite in 1411.

Like the Dominican, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Albert is one of the saints to have blessed water in his honour. A legend attributes the custom to St. Albert himself. A relic of the saint is dipped in the water and a prayer said in which St. Albert's intercession is asked for all who use the water, that they will gain healing of body and soul thereby. Dr. Spratt who had lived in a priory dedicated to St. Albert in Spain, brought the devotion back to Ireland, and the new Whitefriars Street church, in which he inaugurated the well of St. Albert.

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THE SHRINE OF BLESSED TITUS BRANDSMA

Born at Bolsward (The Netherlands) in 1861, Blessed Titus Brandsma joined the Carmelite Order as a young man. Ordained priest in 1905, he obtained a doctorate in philosophy in Rome. He then taught in various schools in Holland and was named professor of philosophy and of the history of mysticism in the Catholic University of Nijmegen where he also served as Rector Magnificus. He was noted for his constant availability to everyone. He was a professional journalist, and in 1935 he was appointed ecclesiastical advisor to Catholic journalists. During the 1930's he visited Ireland and stayed in Kinsale with the Carmelite Community there to improve his English before giving a series of lectures in the United States. Both before and during the



Nazi occupation of The Netherlands he fought, faithful to the Gospel, against the spread of the Nazi ideology and for the freedom of Catholic education and the Catholic press. For this he was arrested and sent to a succession of prisons and concentration camps where he brought comfort and peace to his fellow prisoners and did good even to his tormentors. In 1942, after much suffering and humiliations he was killed at Dachau. He was beatified by John Paul II on November 3rd, 1985.

THE SHRINE OF ST ANTHONY

June 13 is the memorial of St Anthony of Padua, Priest and Doctor of the Church. Anthony was born in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1195. He first joined the Augustinian canons regular but later left to become a Friar Minor of St Francis. He was known to his contemporaries as “The Hammer of Heretics” for his dedicated preaching of the true faith. He has a reputation for retrieving lost objects of careless people. He died in 1231 and was canonized a year later in 1232, and was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1947.



THE SHRINE OF THE INFANT OF PRAGUE



THE SHRINE OF POPE ST PIUS X

August 21 is the memorial of Pope St Pius X. Joseph Sarto was born in 1835 and was ordained priest in 1858. He was made Bishop of Mantua in 1884 and eight years later was created Cardinal Patriarch of Venice. In 1903 he was elected Pope. During his pontificate he urged daily communion and facilitated the communion of children and the sick. He encouraged Bible reading and tackled Modernism. He died in 1914 and was canonized forty years later.

