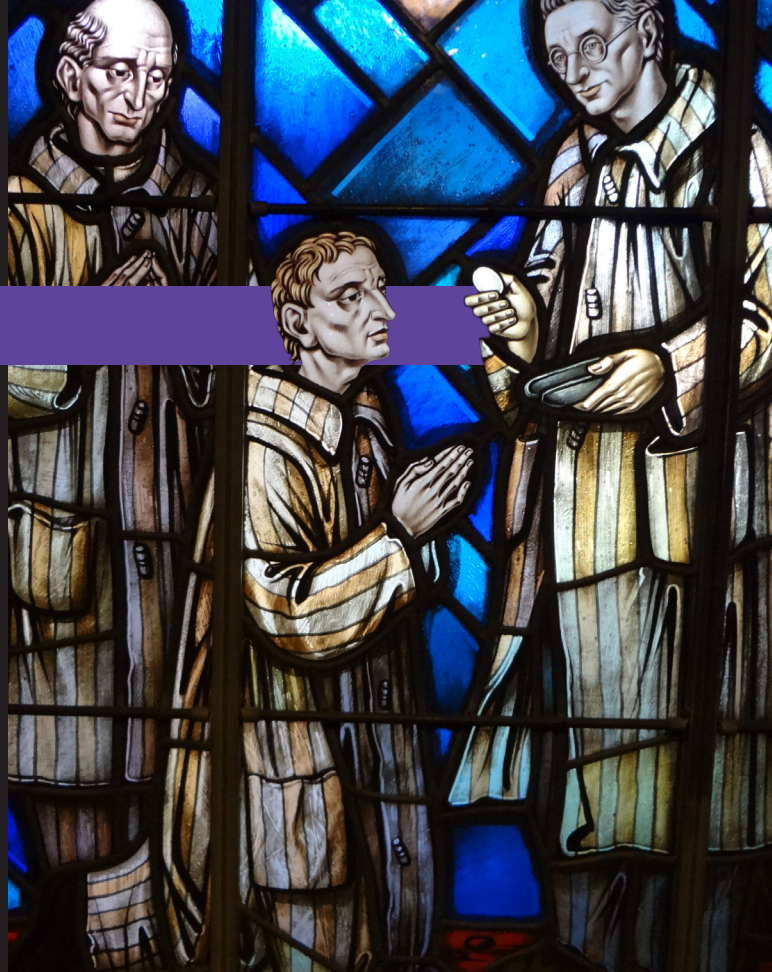


Titus Brandsma Carmelite and Martyr

ADORO TE - HIDDEN GOD

Anno Brandsma was born in the Dutch province of Friesland in 1881. He joined the Carmelite Order in 1898 taking his father's name, Titus, as his religious name. He made his First Profession in October 1899 and was ordained priest on 17 June 1905. As an academic Titus specialised in philosophy and mysticism. He helped to found the Catholic University of Nijmegen in 1923 and later served as *Rector Magnificus*.

In the years before the Second World War Titus was openly critical of the Nazi ideology. During the occupation of Holland, he defended the freedom of the Press and of the Catholic Press in particular. Titus was arrested in January 1942 and sent to Dachau Concentration Camp where he was killed by lethal injection on 26 July 1942. He was beatified as a martyr in 1985 and canonised on 15 May 2022.



Hidden God

Many of us experience God as hidden. There is nothing new in this. It is not something unique to our time. Already, two and a half thousand years ago, Isaiah sighed in exile: *"Truly, You are a hidden God"*. (Is 45:15). Throughout the centuries, people of faith have repeated such words to the Lord, up to and including Titus Brandsma. For Titus, the hiddenness of God was a deeply lived reality.



In his prison cell at Scheveningen, Titus prayed the well-known hymn *Adoro Te* after lunch. In his account of his time in prison, 'My Cell', he tells us about this: *"The Adoro Te has become my favourite prayer. Frequently I sing it softly and this helps me to make a spiritual communion"*.

Titus knew this song by heart. He prayed it daily and every Saturday evening he sang it with his fellow Carmelites during the Saturday Station of Our Lady. The hymn touched Titus deeply. He was familiar with it. He carried it with him into prison. There Titus sang it 'softly', on his knees, after his lunch of soup and bread. Prayerfully it dawned on him: really, God is hidden. Not now and then. Not here and there. Always and everywhere, God is hidden.

After this moment of worship, Titus lit a pipe, walked to and fro in his small cell, and filed his nails, which by now had become *"too long and I could not find the scissors."* God, for Titus, is hidden in the most ordinary things: a pipe of tobacco, walking to and fro, filing his nails.

God's hidden presence is hopeful for those who have come to know it and to live from it. Seeing his hiddenness can even become so familiar to us that it makes us happy. Our God does not come like a jack-in-the-box. He is not an Easter egg hidden somewhere or a magic trick.

In the Dachau concentration camp, Titus' hidden relationship with God is severely tested. *Adoro Te* drags him through it. When the camp guard has beaten him, he prays the *Adoro Te* together with his fellow Carmelite, Rafaël Tijhuis. Hurt in his frail body, he remained standing in God's hidden presence.



▲ Carmelite students visit Dachau Concentration Camp in 2018

Adoro Te

Godhead here in hiding whom I do adore
Masked by these bare shadows, shape and nothing more.
See, Lord, at thy service low lies here a heart
Lost, all lost in wonder at the God thou art.

Seeing, touching, tasting are in thee deceived;
How says trusty hearing? that shall be believed;
What God's Son has told me, take for truth I do;
Truth himself speaks truly or there's nothing true.

On the cross thy godhead made no sign to men;
Here thy very manhood steals from human ken:
Both are my confession, both are my belief,
And I pray the prayer made by the dying thief.

I am not like Thomas, wounds I cannot see,
But I plainly call thee Lord and God as he:
This faith each day deeper be my holding of,
Daily make me harder hope and dearer love.

O thou, our reminder of the Crucified,
Living Bread, the life of us for whom he died,
Lend this life to me, then; feed and feast my mind,
There be thou the sweetness man was meant to find.

Like what tender tales tell of the Pelican,
Bathe me, Jesus Lord, in what thy bosom ran--
Blood that but one drop of has the pow'r to win
All the world forgiveness of its world of sin.

Jesus whom I look at shrouded here below,
I beseech thee, send me what I thirst for so,
Some day to gaze on thee face to face in light
And be blest forever with thy glory's sight.

Attributed to St Thomas Aquinas; translation G.M. Hopkins.



Prayer

We ask you, Lord,
that, in the imitation of Saint Titus Brandsma,
we may know how to be close to you,
near to the cross, and that we may always feel you
near to us in our crosses, both large and small,
as our Friend, our Companion on the journey,
and our Redeemer.

May the cross always be for us a sign of love,
of generous and total surrender to the cause of life,
of solidarity and compassion for all.
May we always say, in all the circumstances of life,
with joy and full confidence in you...
Hail to the Cross, our only hope. Amen.

Mary, Mother of Carmel, pray for us.
Titus Brandsma, Carmelite martyr,
intercede for us.



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For further information on Titus Brandsma please visit:
carmelites.org.au/titusbrandsma

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