

# *Apostolate of the Little Flower*

## LENT

A Season of  
Self-Reflection

*St. Teresa of Jesus  
Teacher of  
Self-Knowledge*

*St. Teresa of Jesus  
As a Mystic*

*2019 Spiritual Talks  
and Tours  
Continue at the Basilica*



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*"I will spend my Heaven doing good upon earth."*  
—St. Thérèse

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Your legacy will live on in our ministries for generations.

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# Dear readers,



Praised be Jesus Christ! With all the Discalced Carmelite Friars here in San Antonio at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower, we welcome you to our Lenten edition of *The Apostolate of the Little Flower*.

In this season of self-reflection, we invite you to discover the wisdom of St. Teresa of Jesus on this subject. “Self-knowledge is indispensable,” she tell us in *The Interior Castle*. “Nothing else, however elevated, perfects the soul, which must never seek to forget its own nothingness.

“Let humility always be at work, like the bee at the honeycomb, or all will be lost,” she urges us. “But remember, the bee leaves its hive to fly in search of flowers and the soul should sometimes cease thinking of itself to rise in meditation on the grandeur and majesty of its God. It will learn its own baseness better thus than by self-contemplation.”

St. Teresa is a great teacher on self-knowledge and humility. In this issue, we invite you to discover more of her instruction in the reflection by Fr. Luis Castañeda, OCD.

We have also included a guide to the Coat of Arms of St. Thérèse, news on the exposition of first-class relics of the Little Flower here in San Antonio, and a story of a family’s journey to find the evidence of their grandmother’s 1928 contribution to the Basilica’s construction.

In each of our journeys toward God in our interior castles this season, let us also remember St. Teresa’s reminder, so clearly echoed in the teachings of the Little Flower: “It is not so essential to think much as to love much.”

We wish you all blessings during this Lenten season and as we celebrate the Resurrection.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Luis Gerardo Belmonte" followed by "OCD" in smaller letters. The signature is stylized and includes a flourish at the end.

Rev. Fr. Luis Gerardo Belmonte-Luna, OCD  
Pastor & Rector



# ON THE COVER

## St. Teresa of Jesus as a mystic

One of a series of five stained glass windows in the Basilica that recall incidents in the life of St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), this window portrays the saint as a mystic. We see an angel piercing her heart, which St. Teresa relates in both her autobiography, *Life of Teresa of Jesus* (before 1567), and *The Interior Castle* (1577).

In 1559, while Teresa was praying, an angel appeared. "In his hands, I saw a golden spear, with an iron tip at the end that appeared to be on fire," Teresa recalls. "He plunged it into my heart several times, all the way to my entrails. When he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out as well, leaving me all on fire with love for God." Teresa is left in both severe pain and exquisite bliss.

"The sweetness of the pain was so surpassing that I couldn't possibly wish to be rid of it," she relates. "My soul couldn't be content with anything but God."

The series of rings on the left side of the window refers to Teresa's metaphor for the ascent of the soul toward God, as explained in *The Interior Castle*.

"I thought of our souls as a castle, in which there are many rooms, in the innermost of which dwells the king," Teresa explains. The seven circles in the window are the seven rooms of the castle. Each circle represents a distinct stage of the soul's journey.

Written in Spanish on the book in the lower right corner of the window is: "I thought of the soul as resembling a castle . . . containing many rooms, just as in heaven there are many mansions."

St. Teresa, like St. Thérèse after her, wrote in obedience at the request of her superiors. Also like St. Thérèse, Teresa wrote her biography primarily to benefit the other nuns. Named a Doctor of the Church in 1970, Teresa also wrote *The Way of Perfection* (before 1567).

In *The Interior Castle*, Teresa depicts the movement of the soul, starting in the Mansion of Humility. She describes the soul's transformation: entering the first door through prayer and meditation, under grace yet still intoxicated by sin. The journey through humility and self-knowledge leads the soul to the Mansion of the Practice of Prayer, where the soul continues to gain resistance to evil.

In the Third Mansion, the Exemplary Life, the soul continues through self-denial and prayer to attain discipline and charity. Still lacking vision and total immersion in God's love, the soul must persist through aridity to reach full submission.

In the Fourth Mansion, the Prayer of the Quiet, the soul becomes fully dependent on God, free from attachment to the world, and stalwart in the face of trials. Love flows from the source of living water as the soul attains deep prayer.

The Fifth Mansion, the Prayer of Union, brings the soul into an advanced level of contemplation in the presence of God and submits fully to possession by God. The Sixth Mansion brings Bride and Groom together. As the soul receives increasing blessings here, it also endures more afflictions.

The soul eventually reaches Spiritual Marriage as the Bride of Christ in the Seventh Mansion, the Mansion of the King, depicted in the window by the Holy Trinity in the highest circle. The soul's transformation is complete and the highest state attained.

"It may be called another Heaven," Teresa explains. "The two lighted candles join and become one; the falling rain becomes merged in the river."

The series of windows were installed by the Emil Frei Company of St. Louis in 1955. They were designed by Rodney Winfield, who 53 years later created the Gothic-style windows depicting five scenes from the life of St. Elijah for the new St. Elias adoration chapel in the Basilica, and The Stella Maris window, over an exterior entry to the Basilica's undercroft. Mr. Winfield passed away in 2017 at age 92.





# CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY

## A walk to know yourself with St. Teresa of Jesus *Teacher of self-knowledge*

By Fr. Luis Joaquin Castañeda, OCD

In looking for the root of problems in my life and in the lives of those to whom I minister, I have realized that many of the issues are rooted in a lack of self-knowledge. As I have studied the writings of Holy Mother St. Teresa, I discovered that she has much to teach us about self-knowledge. This topic became even more relevant when I realized the extent that my work would focus on human formation.

As the formator of the Province of St. Thérèse, I am now responsible for our formandees (our young postulants in formation to enter our Order) and their personal and spiritual formation. Early on, I realized the need to help our formandees to know themselves from the very first stage of formation. Otherwise, it becomes more challenging to help them deal with their problems and those of the community.

In St. Teresa's teachings, self-knowledge and prayer go hand in hand; as we grow in authentic prayer, knowledge of God and his greatness will come at the same time as improved understanding of oneself. Self-knowledge is a particular gift from God, though, as she explains, sometimes attained at a great price. "I consider one day of self-knowledge a greater favor from the Lord, even though the day may cost us numerous afflictions and trials, than many days of prayer," she writes in *Foundations*.

### **God's Presence in the Past**

A primary goal in the first stages of initial formation of postulants in our Province is to help a young man to reconcile his personal history with his present. As formators, we try to guide a formandee to see, embrace, and live his personal plan of God's salvation. A key to reaching this goal is that we realize that all the different events, good or bad, that have impacted our lives until the present are part of God's plan for us.

An individual can find through self-knowledge how God has been present and active in his life even in the difficult times. Self-knowledge helps the formandee accept the negative experiences in his life and at the same time, find healing of the wounds from those negative experiences, with God's grace.



Taking stock of the positive experiences that the formandee has been given in his life will prompt him to thank God for all His blessings and by doing so become a more grateful person. He will gain the ability to experience and appreciate all that he receives in his years of formation from God and the formative community. Likewise, a formandee can discover through self-knowledge that the presence of God in his life is a Paschal presence, and in this presence he recognizes the loving mercy of God throughout his life.

### **Testing Motives**

Self-knowledge can also help those in formation better to discern God's call to the Consecrated Life. We realize that a variety of motives can lead a young man to join our formative community. We follow a process to help a formandee discern the true motives that God may use to call him to consecration to God in our Order.

Self-knowledge helps the person discover those motives and directs him in building his true vocation. Many times as the person gets to know himself, he comes to see that what brought him to discern his vocation to our Carmelite Order may not be exactly what he had thought. Nevertheless, in the process of self-knowledge and formation, he can focus those motives in a way that help him grow in his desire to give himself to God. In doing so, he finds the beauty and goodness of his true vocation.

### **In the Beginning**

In Genesis, we learn about God creating Adam and giving everything to him. Yet Adam deprives himself of all that God had given him and closes himself off to the goodness of God by attempting to be like God. Furthermore, in this passage we see Adam blaming Eve who, in turn, blames the serpent.

When we blame another for our decisions, like Adam and Eve, it is because we do not know ourselves. Many times we also do so to avoid facing our true ourselves. In our vocation as Christians, knowing ourselves can help us, in turn, understand how to relate better with others and with our Lord Jesus Christ and thus to grow in our spiritual life.

From the very beginning, we must invite God into our journey of self-awareness. Otherwise, we may get lost or stalled in our growth. God created us; who better than Him to help us to know how we are made?

### **As taught by St. Teresa**

For Holy Mother St. Teresa, self-knowledge begins with the knowledge of God. “In my opinion, we shall never completely know ourselves if we don’t strive to know God,” she writes in *Interior Castle*. “By gazing at His grandeur, we get in touch with our own lowliness; by looking at His purity, we shall see our own filth; by pondering His humility, we shall see how far we are from being humble.” If we do not know God, then we will never truly grasp the knowledge of ourselves.

She invites us to continually practice self-knowledge to grow in our spiritual life and development as a person. “Always, as long as we live, even for the sake of humility, it is good to know our miserable nature,” she writes in her autobiography. God has given many different gifts to each of us. At the same time, we need to know our limitation and our sins, as painful as facing them can be. Knowing this can help us to deepen our relationship with God and with others and can lead us to give ourselves more freely to the service of the people who live around us and of course, to give ourselves to the service of the church.

To know yourself is to discover a personal history that marks the beginning of a new relationship with God. As we discover the light and darkness in ourselves, we live in the truth of God.

The true discovery is finding out how much God loves you. We are created in the image and likeness of God. Discovering the divine in yourself, together with Jesus

you participate in the divinity of God. We are all born with infinite potential and equal worth as human beings. That we are anything less is a false belief that we have learned over time. We are children of the living and merciful God.



**Fr. Luis Joaquin Castañeda, OCD**, is a native of Mexico. He began his religious formation in the Discalced Carmelite Order in the US after meeting the Discalced Carmelite Nuns in New Caney, Texas. Fr. Luis completed his postulancy and novitiate in the Marylake formation house in Arkansas. After making his first Vows, he began his theology studies in New Orleans and finished them in San Antonio, where he also completed his formation for the priesthood. Ordained in 2003, Fr. Luis continued his studies in religious formation. Fr. Luis has also served as vicar for the Carmelite Nuns of the Province and is immediate past Provincial Superior of the St. Thérèse Province. He is now serving the in Oklahoma City community as superior, Province formator, and parish vicar in the Little Flower parish there.

### **St. Teresa on Self-Knowledge**

This Lent, I invite you to reflect on the teachings of St. Teresa, specifically as she draws us into the process of self-knowledge in the following passages (from her autobiography, except #4, marked with chapter and paragraph numbers).

1. Prayer (7, 17)
2. Christ pushes us to know ourselves (12, 6)
3. Have friendship with persons of prayer (7, 20)
4. Learn from criticism and feedback (*Way of Perfection* 15, 3)
5. Help with personal limitations (7, 19 )
6. Recognize the mercy of God (4, 10)
7. Recognize false humility (4, 10)

# ILLUMINATING THE BASILICA

## First-Class Relics of “The Little Flower” Exposed for Veneration Every Tuesday at Carmelite Community Mass



Relics of St. Thérèse visited the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower Dec. 2-6, 1999, at the end of a five-year tour of 80 cities around the world. The relics arrived at the Basilica from the Chancery in an 1850s vintage horse-drawn hearse, the driver and attendant in formal attire.

During the relics' visit, an estimated 70,000 individuals passed through the Basilica, thousands waiting in line for hours to see and touch the reliquary holding the relics of St. Therese. The Discalced Carmelite friars, six or eight at a time, spent countless hours hearing confessions.

Pope Pius X declared her to be the greatest saint of modern times.” In 1997, Pope John Paul II declared her a doctor of the church. Canonized in 1925, “The Little Flower,” St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face is one of the Church’s most beloved saints. She has inspired millions around the world with her teachings of the “little way” and her simple yet profound trust in God.

A best-kept San Antonio secret is that the Basilica has its own first-class relics of the Little Flower. Every Tuesday evening after the 6 p.m. Carmelite community mass, a reliquary is brought out for all who desire to touch and venerate.

First-class relics are contained within a ring on the left

hand of the statue of Thérèse in the tomb chapel, open for visits daily from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The Shrine also possesses a first-class relic of the saint’s parents, St. Louis and St. Zelig Martin, who were canonized in 2015 by Pope Francis. Declared “venerable” by Pope St. John Paul II in 1994 and beatified in 2008, the Martins are believed to be the first parents of a saint to be canonized. The relics of the Martins are a treasured gift to the Basilica and the Discalced Carmelite Friars of San Antonio from the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Lafayette, La.

*“I discovered that she didn’t build a palace, didn’t build convents, didn’t build universities. What’s so outstanding about her is that every little thing she did, she did it with a lot of love. Love for Jesus and for the church.”*

*She made one promise—that she was not going to rest in heaven; she was going to be praying for the rest of us on earth, which is why we ask her now to pray for all of us in San Antonio.”*

— San Antonio Archbishop  
Patrick Flores, 1999

Pope John Paul II declared the National Shrine of the Little Flower a Basilica in 1998. It meets certain conditions described in the 1968 decree “Domus Dei” from the Sacred Congregation of Divine Worship and Sacraments. The shrine is of “notable size and beauty,” a “consecrated church” that has special “prestige in the life of the diocese, and is a place containing “special relics of a canonized saint.”



# Symbols of Love Repaid in St. Thérèse's Coat of Arms

By Theresa Doyle-Nelson

When St. Thérèse—at the age of 22—wrote down her childhood memories by order of the prioress (who happened to be her sister Pauline), she painted an intriguing piece of art at the end—a specially designed Coat of Arms to express her heart's feelings and inspirations. This thought-provoking Coat of Arms design is nicely replicated in the St. Thérèse Tomb Chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower. This Coat of Arms is full of insights that can help pilgrims to the Basilica better understand the soul of the Little Flower.

## The Double Shield

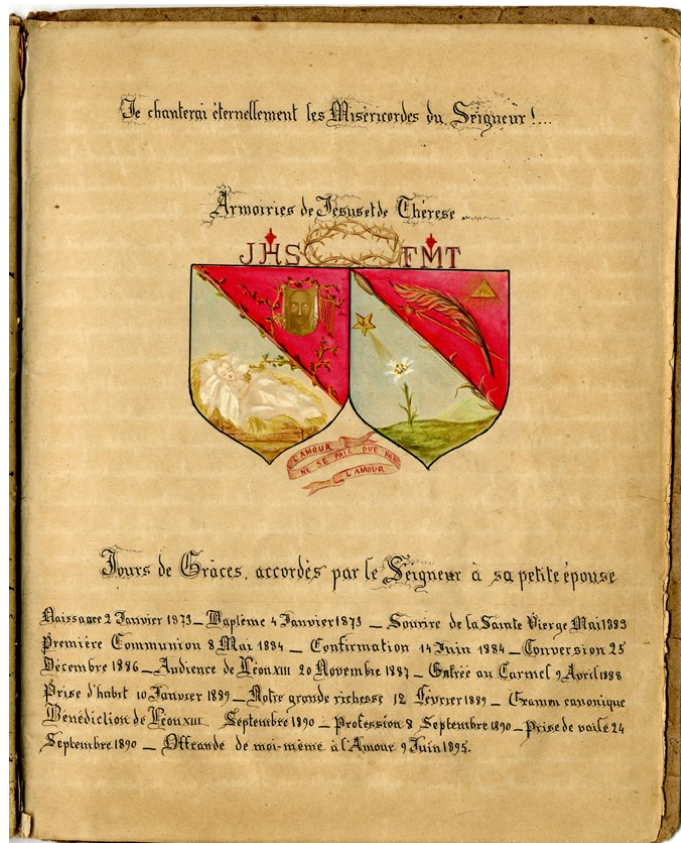
Interestingly, St. Thérèse, like her sister Céline (Sr. Geneviève of the Holy Face), felt inspired to design a Coat of Arms with a double shield. If you look closely at the image, you will see that the shield on the left honors Jesus, while the right shield represents Thérèse herself. Another point to note on these two shields is that each side starts at the bottom with illustrations representing the childhoods of Jesus and Thérèse, and on top are images that represent the two adulthoods.



The personal Coat of Arms of St. Thérèse as replicated in her Tomb Chapel in the Basilica in San Antonio.

## Left Shield

Starting at the bottom left, you can see the baby Jesus in



The page from St. Thérèse's manuscript showing her original drawing of her Coat of Arms, followed by a list of special events in her life. From the online Archives of Lisieux: <http://www.archives-carmel-lisieux.fr/english/carmel/>

His manger. This image points to the first part of the Little Flower's religious name: Sr. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, which she calls the "titles of nobility, her wealth, and her hope." St. Thérèse had a particular devotion to the infant Jesus that was reflected in her Little Way—her desire to love God in a trusting, unquestioning, child-like manner.

In the upper portion of the left shield is the Holy Face of Jesus—representing the second part of her religious name. The devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus through the imprinted-veil of St. Veronica was popular in 19th century France—a French Carmelite nun named Sr. Marie de Saint-Pierre received revelations from Jesus in the 1840s promoting this devotion. The devotion was recognized by Pope Leo XIII, and it captured the heart of St. Thérèse.

The vine dividing the shield diagonally represents "the image of Him who deigned to say to us: 'I am the vine and, you are the branches, I want you to bear much fruit,'" Thérèse's paraphrase of John 15.





Thérèse explains in her description of the Coat of Arms how the grapes in the hands of the baby Jesus represent her desire to amuse and delight the Child Jesus by offering herself as grapes to him and to “let herself be pressed by Him according to his whims.” The vine also winds up toward the Holy Face of Jesus with another cluster of grapes. Thérèse explains that this second cluster was to symbolize her wish to relieve the thirst of the adult Jesus during His Passion.

The harp to the right of the Holy Face displays another symbol of the great love Thérèse had for Our Lord in her desire to “sing eternally melodies of love to Jesus.”

### Right Shield

The bottom portion presenting green grass depicts the holy and nurturing family in which the Little Flower was raised. Her parents, Louis and Zélie Martin, the parents of four Discalced Carmelite nuns, were canonized in 2015.

The white lily represents Thérèse herself, growing sturdy from the rich soil of her family. The glowing star with the “M” in its center and extending its rays toward the lily of Thérèse represents Mary—“Morning Star” and “Star of the Sea” are among her titles. Thérèse had a great love for Mary and credited her for cherished help in life.

To the right of the lily is a mountain symbolizing Mount Carmel in Israel—the birthplace of the Carmelite Order. The reed creating the diagonal line between the two sections of the shield signifies the saint’s heavy reliance on Jesus: her awareness “that she is only a weak reed.”

In the upper right section of the shield, we see symbols of The Little Flower’s deep burning love for Christ and desire to give her life for Him, as He had done for her. Here she depicts a “flaming dart of love” intersecting a palm branch, “to merit for her the palm of martyrdom,” until such a time as she might have the opportunity to shed her own blood for Christ.

The triangle at the top right represents the “Adorable” Holy Trinity from whom Thérèse felt special graces and “inestimable gifts.”

### Top and Bottom Extras

In the original illustration of the Little Flower’s Coat of Arms, you can find a few extra details. The top of the left shield has the Christogram: JHS (often written as IHS), representing the first three Greek letters of the name Jesus.

At the top of the right shield is the Little Flower’s monogram: FMT, for Marie-Françoise-Thérèse. Above the Coat of Arms is the crown of thorns, recalling Jesus’ Passion. Below the double-shield is a banner with the words: “Love is repaid by Love alone”—a quote of St. John of the Cross that resonated with Thérèse, for she included this motto both in her Coat of Arms and within the text of *Story of a Soul*.

**Theresa Doyle-Nelson** and her husband are parishioners at St. Stanislaus Church in Bandera, TX. Theresa is the author of *Saints in Scripture*; she also enjoys writing about St. Thérèse, and visiting the Little Flower Basilica when she can. You can find Theresa’s blog, “The Hill Country Hermit” at: [TheresaDoyle-Nelson.blogspot.com](http://TheresaDoyle-Nelson.blogspot.com).



# Celebrating 90th Anniversary of the Blessing of the Cornerstone Basilica in Preparation Phase for Restoration Project

On October 15, 1929, a vision was set in motion with laying of the cornerstone for what would become a great national historic landmark in San Antonio. The first National Shrine in the United States dedicated to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the Basilica was completed in 1931.

San Antonio, a city of Spanish missions, had at that time already become the religious center of south Texas. The Basilica's history begins at a time when our neighbors in Mexico were experiencing religious persecution and political upheaval during the 1913-30 revolutions. The resulting influx of immigrants was forming San Antonio's first suburb. Among those immigrants were Discalced Carmelite friars who escaped execution by Pancho Villa's forces.

At the same time, a revival of faith was spreading through the country. The teachings of the newly-canonized Thérèse of Lisieux, a Discalced Carmelite nun known as "The Little Flower," were inspiring thousands worldwide. It was then that the vision was fulfilled to express the spirituality of the Little Flower through a National Shrine in her honor in the heart of a flourishing Westside San Antonio.

The Basilica's notable size, beauty, architectural character, and spiritual significance led to the Shrine's placement on the National Register of Historic Places and its elevation to the status of Minor Basilica in the Catholic Church, both in 1998.

## Capital Campaign

### To Preserve and Restore the Basilica

The Basilica is showing its age, with structural cracks and other deterioration. Water infiltration from all directions is destroying the Basilica, according to a full engineering assessment completed in 2016. The water is causing extensive damage to below-grade walls and foundations, adding to the destruction of interior walls, floors, ceilings, and the finishes. Structural repairs are necessary immediately to adequately address the problems of water infiltration and inadequate site drainage, to be followed by restoration and interior remodeling.

### The Solution

Efforts have been made in past renovations to mitigate water infiltration, including a 1999 exterior rehabilitation



of the Basilica and monastery. Between 2005 and 2007, the undercroft of the church floor plan was remodeled and refinished, with the addition of the St. Elias Adoration Chapel. An elevator was also installed with service to the basement, the main floor, and the choir loft, along with a marble stairwell leading down from the narthex to the basement, and new restrooms.

The 2016 assessment indicated that those renovations did not address all the issues currently observed. These proposed final phases take a proactive approach and will ensure that the Basilica suffers no further deterioration. Phases of work will be completed as funds are available.

### Plans Now Going Forward

Right now, we are in the midst of a planning study for the capital campaign to raise the funds for the repairs needed. We are working with fundraising consultants who are helping us gather information that will help us plan the campaign and build our list of potential donors.

The project is divided in three phases: 1) Stop water infiltration by regrading the site and installing drainage systems. 2) Repair the damage to the structure caused by water infiltration. 3) Restoration and remodeling, with an endowment fund to ensure ongoing maintenance. This study will ascertain whether to seek funding for one or two phases initially or all three at once.

Our building committee met on March 8, and is now selecting the architect who will design the project. The next step will be to acquire bids from contractors, which will solidify cost estimates.

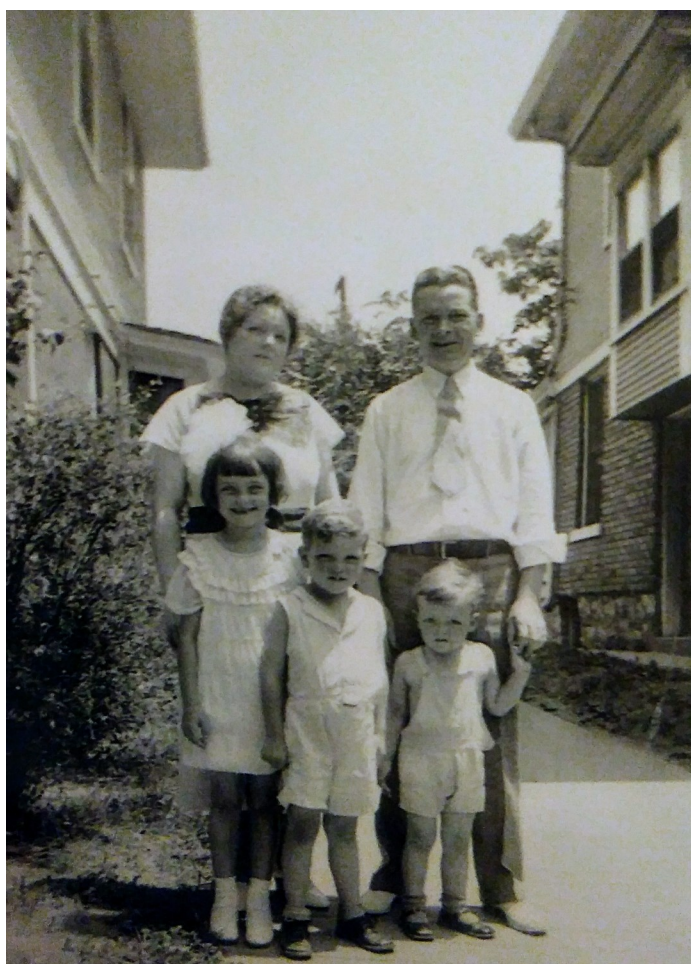
***"Love can accomplish all things. Things that are most impossible become easy where love is at work."***

*— The Little Flower, St. Thérèse of Lisieux*



# The Tale of Two Bernettas

## Family finds memorials from their grandmother in the Basilica



THE PHELAN FAMILY, around 1935 at their home in Kansas City, MO. Bernetta Regan Phelan and her husband, James Phelan, with Bernetta Therese (age 7), Joseph, and Joanna Phelan's father, John.

If you've visited the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, you've probably noticed the engraved marble plaques lining the walls. The names on these plaques are in honor of over 6,000 donors from 48 states who contributed funds to build the Basilica.

One of those individuals was Bernetta Regan Phelan of Kansas City. Her family told us that she sent in a donation to purchase a plaque engraved with the name of her infant daughter named Bernetta Therese.

The Discalced Carmelite friars settled in San Antonio in 1926, the year after the canonization of Thérèse of Lisieux, "The Little Flower." Subscriptions to the Little Flower magazine, the forerunner of the magazine you are now holding, reached 100,000 addresses in 1923. Seeing the tremendous popular devotion to this new Discalced

Carmelite saint, the friars then took as their mission to spread this devotion and to build a National Shrine in her honor in San Antonio.

To help raise money for the new Shrine, donors contributed \$25 to have a name inscribed in marble on the wall of the church. Names of donors in the Tomb Chapel supported the purchase of the windows by donations of \$10.

In those years, the average annual net income in the US was around \$6,000. The majority of the contributors were from the Midwest, like Mrs. Phelan, or the East Coast. With the support of so many, the cornerstone of the Shrine was laid on Oct. 15, 1929, just days after Black Tuesday, the great crash of the stock market.

### 90 Years Later

Last fall, 90 years after Bernetta Regan Phelan sent in her contribution, her granddaughter, Joanna Phelan of San Antonio, contacted the Basilica administration office. She asked for our help locating the plaque with the name of her aunt, Bernetta Therese Phelan, on the wall of the Basilica.

In the office is a vintage file cabinet holding the thousands of typed or handwritten cards recording the donations to the Basilica construction fund. A card dated March 13, 1928, was filed there noting Mrs. James Phelan of Kansas City, with two cryptic slab locations—one with the words "Tomb chapel"—and followed by "Bernetta Therese Phelan."

Joanna Phelan told us that her grandmother had a great devotion to St. Thérèse, "The Little Flower," who was canonized in 1925. Bernetta Phelan's daughter, Bernetta



The card from the Basilica's files recording Bernetta Regan Phelan's donations to the Discalced Carmelite Friars in 1928.

Therese, was born in December 1927. The family assumes that her middle name was given in honor of the Little Flower. It was just three months later that Mrs. Phelan sent in her donation to help build the new National Shrine and to memorialize her baby.

In 1952, Mrs. Phelan's youngest son, John, was drafted into the Korean War. Mrs. Phelan attended mass daily and said a novena to St. Thérèse to protect him, Joanna Phalen recounted. He survived to become Joanna's father.

**Lost: The Search Begins**

John Phelan came to visit his daughter in San Antonio in 2010. They came to the Basilica to search for the plaque with the name of his sister, Bernetta Therese. With no indications of its location, they were unable to find it. They had to report back to his sister that they had been unsuccessful, but they all still believed it had to be there somewhere. Bernetta Therese Phelan Stack passed away in 2016, and John Phelan in 2017.

**. . And Found**

A few days after Joanna Phalen's email to the Basilica office last September, she called back to say that she and her cousin, Kathleen Sessler, who is Bernetta Therese's daughter, would be at noon mass that day and were going to try again to find the plaque. Working from the information on the record card, and with the help of an office staff member, they started in the Tomb Chapel of St. Thérèse. High up on the wall, behind the tomb, among hundreds of others, the plaque bearing the name "Bernetta Theresa Phelan" was finally found.

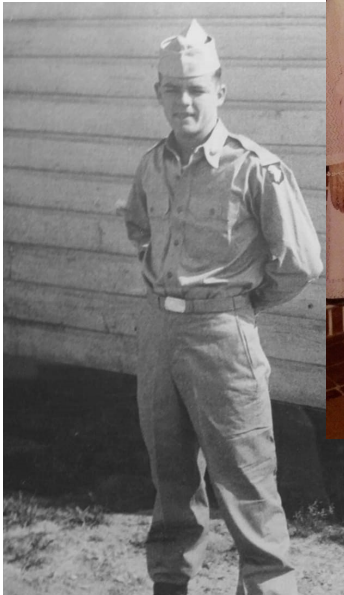
Then checking the next notations on the record card, they counted slabs, columns, and lines around the church until they happened upon another plaque, bearing the name of "Mrs. Jas. Phelan." It is on the south wall of the church under the St. Teresa windows.



Mrs. Phelan's plaque.

"The second location was an unexpected surprise," Joanna said, of discovering her grandmother's plaque. "The story that was told all those years was always about the plaque for Bernetta Therese; finding the second plaque was a wonderful bonus."

Right: Bernetta Regan Phelan, with her granddaughter, Mary Clare Stack, and daughter, Bernetta Therese Phelan Stack, in 1974.



Left: John Phalen in the Korean War, 1952. His mother prayed a novena to St. Thérèse for his protection.

**Retracing Our History**

If your loved one, like Bernetta Regan Phelan, purchased a plaque or two to support the construction of the Basilica, please contact us at [admin@littleflowerbasilica.org](mailto:admin@littleflowerbasilica.org). We'd love to help you locate your plaque and hear your story.

As the Basilica was built, with contributions of so many devotees to "The Little Flower" across the country, in the same way, it can be preserved.

Please consider being part of the next generation of supporters of Little Flower Basilica. A donation to the Basilica restoration project this spring will help continue the process of designing and planning the project.





# PROVINCE OF ST. THÉRÈSE

## 2019 Talks & Tours Continue at the Basilica

*In its renewal as a center for Carmelite charism of prayer*

The local chapter of the Discalced Carmelite Secular Order (OCDS) of the Province of St. Thérèse is continuing this year its series of guided “Get to Know Your Basilica” tours and talks to share the charism of prayer.

This year’s first talk, “Introduction to Praying the Liturgy of the Hours,” was held on March 9. The focus was on learning the spiritual significance of the Liturgy of the Hours and learning to pray Morning and Evening Prayer.

“**Learning to Pray Lectio Divina**” is the subject of the next talk, set for June 15, 9 a.m.-noon. *Lectio Divina* (“divine reading”) describes a way of reading and praying the Scriptures.

“It is a movement towards silence that progresses from reading, to reflection, to personal response and finally to rest in the Lord,” said Anna Peterson, OCDS, one of the presenters. The session will provide instruction and practice in “*lectio*.”

On Aug. 10, the topic of the talk will be “**St. Elizabeth of the Trinity and Teresian Prayer.**” It is scheduled for 9 a.m.-noon. The session introduces St. Elizabeth of the Trinity, a Discalced Carmelite nun canonized in 2016. It will explore how her life reflected Teresian prayer and Teresian spirituality.

A session on “**Teresian Prayer**” is planned for Oct. 12, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. This presentation on Discalced Carmelite prayer as taught by St. Teresa of Avila is based on the writings of St. Teresa and Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, OCD, author of *Divine Intimacy*, a classic work on Carmelite prayer and meditation.

Talks are held in the Little Flower Parish Hall. Registration is free and open to the public. Please call the Little Flower administration office to register (210) 735-9126.

### “Get to Know Your Basilica” Tours

Tours this year are scheduled for July 13, September 21, and December 12, 3–4 p.m. Members of the OCDS will be stationed around the church to provide information to visitors, who can circulate through the tour at their own pace.



The tours feature the stained glass windows, installed starting in 1930. The windows tell the stories of St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, St. Thérèse, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, and St. Elijah.

### Discalced Carmelite Secular Order

The St. Thérèse Province, based in San Antonio, is a community of 15 Discalced Carmelite priests and religious brothers with five communities in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. Along with the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, who live in six communities in four states, the friars serve the Church through a life of contemplative prayer. Sharing their Carmelite vocation are the Secular Order Discalced Carmelite (OCDS), who number about 880 members in 37 communities.

The six friars who direct the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower are the only contemplative religious order still active in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. To fulfill their mission, the friars collaborate with the local OCDS, a group of 43 members. Together, they are spearheading the development of Carmelite faith formation programs centered on the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower.

The goal of this collaboration is to renew the Basilica as a center for the evangelization and instruction in the Carmelite charism (prayer, silence, solitude, zeal for the Church).



# THANK YOU to our 2018 Basilica Restoration Donors!

Your generosity makes our work possible.

You and your intentions are in the prayers of the Friars!

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We are in the process of implementing a new donor management system. If we inadvertently left you off this list, please pardon our oversight. We are most grateful to all who have contributed to the support of the Basilica Restoration Fund and value your support and partnership.



# Coming to Lent and Staying with Easter

By Ana Buentello, OCDS

In observing the 40 days of Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, we reflect on Easter and prepare ourselves to celebrate it. Christians reveal through our sacrifice and denial Jesus Christ's 40 days in the desert. We pray from the Gospels, as did St. Thérèse, to find meaning and help.

"I draw all that I need for my poor soul," writes St. Thérèse in *The Story of the Soul*. "I am always discovering in them new lights and hidden mysterious meanings. I know and I have experienced that the Kingdom of God is within us (Luke 17: 21). Our Lord has no need of books or teachers to instruct our souls. He, the Teacher of Teachers, instructs us without any noise of words."

We tend to view Lent as fasting and denial, that giving up candies, sodas, ice cream, or smoking is all that is to be done. What do we really need to do, though? What do we need to give up? We pray that we can sincerely search within ourselves for what is in us that keeps us from knowing Our Lord Jesus.

Are we impatient, angry, negative, unappreciative, careless, selfish? The list goes on. We know deep inside that these inner ways of being are what we truly need to resolve. Only by God's grace will they be removed, allowing us to continue to grow harmoniously in our lives with Him. It's hard to dig deep inside us, but let us pinpoint one area that interferes with relationships, from family and spouse to co-workers and community. This Lent, let us start to give up what keeps us from being more like Jesus, who "of his own free will he gave up all he had and took the nature of a servant" (Phil. 2:7). Let also the sacrament of confession be of utmost importance, cleansing us from within.

I heard a story about a family who couldn't decide what to give up for Lent. The mother suggested to her children to stop fighting or arguing with each other. One of the little boys in the family was asked how he was doing with the 40 days of Lent. "I can't wait until Easter," the child responded. Even though this was a child, these thoughts are also relevant to us as adults. Again St. Thérèse is an example.

"She accepts her weakness and fragile status, 'her littleness' with bold self-assurance," writes Fr. John Cleary in *Lent and Easter Wisdom of St. Thérèse of Lisieux*. "All is given in love of God no matter how small or routine." Let us not stop with these 40 days but continue for the rest of our lives. Jesus searches our heart. We keep

seeking and searching out who we are, to improve our sinful selves.

Lent prepares us to discover with gratitude and joy our unity with Jesus. During this time we are not just talking about what to do but putting words into action. Situations may arise that need to be addressed with truth and clarity, especially with our own families. We can bring out the reasons why we believe in Jesus, with love and peace.

When life is difficult, humility and sincerity are a big step for us. Let's reach out to someone in need, show God's mercy and compassion in action or call someone who needs to hear your voice. There are many ways you can share your Easter. These ways may be challenging and uncomfortable, but He is there to help us.

"God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in distress. Thus we do not fear, though the earth be shaken and mountains quake to the depths of the sea" (Psalms 37:39). When fail, we can call on our many helpers—Our Blessed Mother and all the saints—to bring strength and courage in our times of sorrow.

Let us be silent and listen to what we need to do. This Lent let it be about Jesus Christ and his beautiful love that helps us to grow and bloom in Easter. Let Lent not end for us!

Easter comes with great excitement. Easter—the Lord Jesus is risen! Rejoice! Let us remember the Little Way of St. Thérèse, experiencing the divine in every moment in everything we say or do.

**Prayer: O merciful Lord, let me know where I am weak and in need of much help. In recognition, I can also help others. Thank you for all you do for me.**



*Ana Buentello has been a member of the San Antonio community of the Discalced Carmelite of the Secular Order for seven years. A wife, mother, and grandmother, she attends St Thomas Catholic Church in Canyon Lake, Texas. She has been involved there as a lector and CCD teacher, and in ACTS prison retreats. Her desire was always to grow with Jesus, but when she began her journey as a Carmelite, "My life and all the struggles then made sense to me," she said. "Miracles of love from Jesus now seem clearer."*





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## *Little Flower's 2019 Fiesta Medal*

Little Flower parishioner Nicole Banuelos created the original art for Little Flower's fiesta medals this year and last. Nicole, who works part time for both Little Flower School and the Basilica administration office, was discovered as an artist by Fr. Luis, Basilica pastor, last year.

He noticed a t-shirt for a local youth initiative that she was wearing and asked her who designed it. When he found out Nicole had done it, he asked her to design the Basilica's fiesta medals. Nicole's only art class was in 7th grade.

Fiesta is San Antonio's signature event, an annual festival held in April in memory of the battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto. Fiesta brings some \$340 million of revenue to the city, with over three million individuals participating in over 100 events around the area. Fiesta medals are a popular staple of Fiesta.

