

APOSTOLATE OF THE LITTLE FLOWER



Walking Thérèse's Little Way

Thérèse's impact on the life of the Church
and the depths of God's merciful love

Thérèse aux Roses

Small treasures and old traditions
in the grandeur of the Basilica

Conversion & Charity

A childhood story revealing that there
is nothing soft in the flowery Thérèse

Little Flower School

The bells from Little Flower Basilica
chime in the 95th school year

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In this issue

ON THE COVER

- 4 Thérèse aux Roses
5 Love's Call
By Tim Bete, OCDS

CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY

- 6 Discovering the Little Way of St. Thérèse
By Fr. Jorge Cabrera, OCD
- 10 Conversion & Charity
By Joshua Clemmons

ILLUMINATING THE BASILICA

- 11 Tomb Chapel Highlight
By Theresa Doyle-Nelson
- 12 95 Years of Little Flower School
By Marc Chavez
- 14 Restoration Update

NOVENA TO ST. THÉRÈSE

Daily Prayer for the Novena (September 22-30):

O God, made man for love of us, we prostrate ourselves in Your Presence, and give You thanks for having raised up in our days Your beloved servant, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, by whose example we may admirably learn to arrive at true sanctity so easily. Together with all the Blessed in Heaven and all the just on earth, we rejoice over the innumerable graces you have bestowed on this model of innocence and evangelical humility.

Grant us, we beseech You, O Lord, the grace to walk steadily on the sure way of love and self-surrender, as traced out for us by the Little Flower and in particular, grant us the favors we now ask, if they be according to Your Holy Will, so that we may love You with our whole heart here, and rejoice with You forever hereafter. Amen.

Submit your prayer intentions at
littleflowerbasilica.org/novena



Child Thérèse Print available at
littleflowerbasilica.org/fundraisers

DEAR FRIENDS,



Anyone who has made a sincere attempt to follow Christ wholeheartedly has experienced the challenge and mystery of the interplay regarding God's call to holiness, our weak human condition, the need for human effort, and God's grace. Not even the great St. Paul was spared from this struggle. After pleading with the Lord to take away his fragility, He responded: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12: 9).

A saint particularly prominent in shedding light on this mystery is St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Few saints have had her profound impact in the life of the Church. The significance of her life and message is her ability to take us to the very heart of the Gospel in a simple and direct way: "the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's mercy to sinners." Thérèse bears powerful witness that in giving us his Son, God didn't come for the righteous but for sinners (Lk 5: 32), for the weak and broken, those in most need of redemption.

Therefore, this Doctor of the Church reminds us redemption is, first and foremost, a gift from God and not a task to be achieved to prove our spiritual muscle. Her message is a corrective to the frequent mistake of being too absorbed in ourselves, thinking Christianity is mainly about us: what we do or don't do and how well we do it. This attitude makes us completely self-referential instead of God-referential. Thérèse shows us not to be preoccupied with measuring our spiritual progress or lack of it, but to love freely and selflessly, doing the best we can while humbly accepting our poverty and imperfections with a constant and confident appeal to God's merciful love. She places the universal and timeless human struggles with sin, weakness, feelings of guilt and shame in the light of God's love. The quest for truth and meaning in the midst of life's circumstances can give us the sensation of being existentially adrift. This is why this young woman's witness has become so prophetic in our times.

It is the life and message of this simple and yet most remarkable woman we want to share with all in our present issue of our magazine. We invite you to join us in getting to know her whom Pope Pius X called "the greatest saint of modern times" and explore with us new depths of the ocean of God's merciful love.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jorge Cabrera". The signature is stylized and includes a small circular mark at the end.

Rev. Jorge Cabrera, OCD
Superior

ON THE COVER

THÉRÈSE AUX ROSES

*“When I die, I will let fall a shower of roses
from the heavens, I will spend my heaven
doing good on earth.”*

Three of the altars of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower stand behind a Communion rail embellished with small mosaics of the Life of St. Thérèse. These small treasures are easily missed when the grandeur of the high altar dominates the view.

One unforeseen gift of the pandemic is the return to the use of the Communion rail in the Basilica. Mass goers today have the opportunity to echo past traditions as they show reverence for the Eucharist. In approaching the sanctuary for Communion or prayer, visitors may note the details of these several small mosaics. Even here, care was taken to share the beauty of Thérèse.

The last of these can be found at the far right, near the altar of St. Joseph. St. Thérèse’s promise to shower roses is a common theme in the design of the Basilica, displayed prominently in the Gloria altarpiece and stained glass windows. Here we find a much more intimate depiction of the graces Thérèse shares. Where the Gloria and windows are beautiful in their grand size, the altar rail is one of the few places in the Basilica where the art can be touched and known more intimately. This small Thérèse kneels amidst the clouds of heaven and glory and shares these tokens of Love with us.

The traditional iconography in depictions of Thérèse includes the crucifix intertwined with roses. A visitor to the Basilica may be surprised to note that though Thérèse is portrayed many times in the Basilica, only in this mosaic and in the choir loft window can she be seen with her traditional accoutrement. In the tomb chapel windows we find Thérèse similarly illustrated, but carrying instead a cross.

The iconography of Thérèse’s roses and crucifix seems to be entirely due to the stylistic choice of Sister Geneviève of the Holy Face (Marie Céline Martin). ‘Thérèse aux Roses’ of 1912 is the first time we see Thérèse with her attributes of crucifix and roses. Claiming inspiration from an occurrence during which “lying in bed in the



‘Thérèse aux Roses’ of 1912
by Sr. Geneviève of the Holy Face

infirmery, [Thérèse] unpetalled roses on her crucifix,”¹ Sr. Geneviève produced a sketch that would become the definitive image of St. Thérèse.

Where Thérèse’s attributes, as created by Sr. Geneviève, can be said to share insight into her spirituality, “the crucifix all but concealed by roses symbolising suffering and trials patiently borne,”² the passive aspect of ‘Thérèse aux Roses’ is here happily ignored. The power of the mosaic artform allows the sweep of Thérèse’s mantle to show a figure in the midst of action. Similarly, the crucifix cradled in her arm is displayed prominently, the corpus catching the eye as true to life, only upon close examination revealing itself as assembled bits of tile.

While the influence of the image of Thérèse as promulgated by the Carmel of Lisieux can be seen in many aspects of the Basilica, it is in details like those found in this small artwork that the independent spirit of the Discalced Carmelites and artisans of San Antonio can be seen and appreciated.



Communion Rail in the Basilica highlighting the Life of St. Thérèse through mosaics.



Love's Call

I do not long for death,
Though I was born to die.

Each day, closer I creep
Toward my union with Love.

I'm very like my Love,
Who, too, was born to die.

Yet death He nimbly smashed,
Like a fragile earthen vase

And called out to His souls,
"come through this death to Me."

I hear Him call my name,
Bright silence in my soul.

For Him and Him alone,
A bit more falls each day.

I do not long for death,
Though I was born to die.



Tim Bete, OCDS, has two collections of poetry, *The Raw Stillness of Heaven* and *Wanderings of an Ordinary Pilgrim*, both of which are available on Amazon. He is a member of the Our Mother of Good Counsel Secular Discalced Carmelite Community in Dayton, Ohio. You can read more about him at GrayRising.com.

CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY

DISCOVER THE LITTLE WAY OF ST. THÉRÈSE

By Fr. Jorge Cabrera, OCD

St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus is among the most popular and most beloved saints in the Catholic Church. However, many have the mistaken idea that her life was easy and romantic and that her message can be reduced to the cute slogan: “Do little things with great love.” This view is far from accurate. St. Thérèse experienced life as all of us do, facing moments of joy, but also moments of profound crisis and pain. Sometimes she responded well to life’s challenges and other times she failed in her attempt. This is precisely why she is such a reliable witness to the Good News of God’s mercy and grace manifested in Jesus Christ, who came not to seek the just, but sinners. Thérèse reminds us that in his Son, God came to look for the weak and imperfect, and that He desires to be present and at work especially in the midst of our brokenness and sins, in the areas where we need Him the most.

Thérèse’s desires and her weakness

Thérèse entered Carmel at the age of fifteen with very intense desires and the firm resolution to bring about her ideal of sanctity, whatever the cost. “I want to be a saint... I am not perfect, but I want to become perfect” (LT 45). “To become a great saint” was the goal on which her eyes were fixed (LT 52, 80).

In entering Carmel Thérèse encountered suffering rather quickly. When she was sixteen years old, her beloved father Louis, who was a reflection of God’s fatherhood to her, became mentally ill due to brain arteriosclerosis. Her father, a holy, wise, and gentle soul (now canonized), began behaving in incoherent and dangerous ways to the point that he was admitted to a psychiatric hospital (the “lunatic asylum”) where he had to stay for more than three years. Given the fact that in many cases mental illness

People gossiped, saying that Thérèse’s entrance into Carmel was the cause of [her father’s] condition.

can be hereditary, this brought about a stigma which affected the whole family. People gossiped, saying that Thérèse’s entrance into Carmel was the cause of his condition.

This brought her great suffering and an intense purification of her faith. She says: “Our dear father would drink the most bitter and most humiliating of all chalices. Ah! On that day I didn’t say I was able to suffer more” (A 73r). “At the time, I was having great interior trials of all kinds, even to the point of asking myself whether heaven really existed” (A 80v).¹ She often experienced pain and confusion and many times reacted to these trials poorly, weakly, without joy, courage, or strength.

Jesus alone must give her Jesus.

Thérèse later found some meaning to her father’s and her own suffering in contemplating the Holy Face of Christ, bruised, humiliated, and covered with wounds and tears. She pondered how much the resurrected Christ had first to suffer. As with his beloved Son, God doesn’t prevent suffering and death. For Thérèse, the incomprehensible mystery of suffering was no longer absurd nor a contradiction to God’s goodness. In the Holy Face, she saw how Jesus accepted his own death with a love that gave, forgave, and abandoned itself to God in redemptive confidence.²

Thérèse had to devote more than seven years to the religious life before understanding that to love as deeply as she desired, her own efforts were not enough. Jesus alone must give her Jesus.³ After years in Carmel, trying her best to love God as much as He loved her and trying to face suffering like the saints did, Thérèse admitted defeat. She always fell short and continued to experience her faults and weaknesses. “All our justice is stained” (Pri 6; SS 277), “no human life is exempt from faults” (LT 226), even “the most holy souls will be perfect only in heaven” (C 28r).

Discovering the Little Way

Finding themselves in such a dilemma, most people would become discouraged and give up their ideal of sanctity or at least significantly lower their desires and aspirations. Thérèse, however, decided to take a different approach: *“Instead of becoming discouraged, I said to myself: God cannot inspire unrealizable desires. I can, then, in spite of my littleness, aspire to holiness. It is impossible for me to grow up, and so I must bear with myself such as I am with all my imperfections. But I want to seek out a means of going to heaven by a little way, a way that is very straight, very short, and totally new”* (C 3r).

There had to be “an elevator,” as Thérèse put it, which could help her climb the steep stairs of holiness.

She proceeded to look for an answer to this dilemma, reasoning that there must be a way since it was God himself who put those holy desires in her heart. There had to be “an elevator,” as Thérèse put it, which could help her climb the steep stairs of holiness.



Mosaic Roses in the Basilica to the left and right of the main altar, under the statues of St. Teresa and St. John

“I searched, then, in the Scriptures for some sign of this elevator, the object of my desires, and I read these words coming from the mouth of Eternal Wisdom: ‘Whoever is a little one, let him come to me’ (Prov 9:4). And so I succeeded. I felt I had found what I was looking for. But wanting to know, O my God, what you would do to the very little one who answered your call, I continued my search and this is what I discovered: ‘As

one whom a mother caresses, so will I comfort you; you shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you’ (Is 66: 12-13). Ah! Never did words more tender and more melodious come to give joy to my soul. The elevator which must raise me to heaven is your arms, O Jesus! And for this I had no need to grow up, but rather I had to remain little and become this more and more” (C 3r).

She felt our Lord addressed those words to her personally. Littleness, which was precisely her difficulty on the way of becoming a great saint, suddenly appeared before her as the means to attain the goal. At last she had found her answer! The way that was very straight and short to become a great saint, her elevator was the arms of Jesus.

*... to become a great saint,
her elevator was the arms of Jesus.*

Thérèse’s discovery was, in reality, a rediscovery of the very heart of the Gospel: “the revelation in Jesus Christ of God’s mercy to sinners” (CCC 1846). As Fr. Michael Gaitley says: *“It’s the Good News that Jesus didn’t come for the righteous but for sinners... It’s the Good News that God doesn’t love us because we’re so good but because he’s so good, that he loves us not because we deserve it but because we desperately need it. It’s the Good News that God’s love is like water, which always goes to the lower place. It’s the Good News... that God isn’t attracted to our gifts, virtues, and talents, but rather to our weakness, brokenness, and sin.”*⁴

The Little Way, therefore, is about the compassionate heart of Jesus who, in seeing a weak and little soul sincerely trying in vain to love and serve Him in holiness, stoops down to her, picks her up and places her in the heights of the rough stair case of holiness. What lies at the very core of the Little Way is a profound awareness of and trust in the Merciful Love that overflows from the Heart of Christ. Let’s hear St. Thérèse again: *“I have only to cast a glance in the Gospels and immediately I breathe in the perfumes of Jesus’ life, and I know on which side to run. I don’t hasten to the first place but to the last; rather than advance like the Pharisee, I repeat, filled with confidence, the publican’s prayer. Most of all I imitate the conduct of the Magdalene; her astonishing audacity which charms the Heart of Jesus also attracts my own. Yes, I feel it; even though I had on my conscience all the sins that can be committed, I would go, my heart broken with sorrow, and throw myself into Jesus’ arms, for I know how much he loves the prodigal son who returns to him”* (C 36v).



Stained Glass Roses in the Basilica scattered across the Basilica's Dome Window.

Practicing the Little Way

St. Thérèse invites all little souls to acknowledge that we are as weak and powerless to live the Gospel as a little child who is trying to go up a stairway with steps too steep for him to reach. We are to trust God who will take us upstairs himself. Is she then saying that we only need to trust and remain passive, just waiting for the Lord to do it all? Not exactly. She is not advocating for us to fall into the vice of complacency. This is how she explains it: *“Agree to be that little child. Through the practice of all the virtues, raise your little foot to the scale in the stairway of holiness. You won’t succeed in reaching the first step, but God requires you only to demonstrate your good will. Soon, conquered by your futile efforts, he will descend himself, gather you up in his arms, and carry you off to his kingdom for ever.”*⁵

In other words, we need to try, to make a sincere effort to practice virtue, to do the right thing, to act with love. Our efforts in themselves are useless, however, they are necessary because through them we show our good will, but most of all, our trust in God’s mercy.

This can be a true challenge for those of us who are impatient with ourselves and who want to see immediate and measurable results and signs of progress. This could be a sign of pride disguised as zeal and love for God. Thérèse says: *“And if God wanted you to be weak and powerless as a child, do you believe you would have fewer merits? Agree to stumble at every step, even to fall, to carry your crosses weakly; love your helplessness, your soul will benefit more from it than if, sustained by grace, you accomplished with enthusiasm heroic actions which would fill soul with personal satisfaction and pride.”*⁶

These words communicate a profound truth. Sometimes God allows us to continue struggling with certain weaknesses and sins in order to protect us from a more dangerous one; spiritual pride. It is crucial that we have a clear and profound awareness of our powerlessness to save ourselves and to grow in holiness without the aid

of grace. Let us not forget that during his public life our Lord was able to touch the hearts of countless sinners, even great public sinners, and bring them to conversion. But there was a group of people He was unable to touch: those who were spiritually arrogant, who thought of themselves as righteous, holy, and above others, such as many of the Pharisees. This hardness of heart is what prompted Christ to say to them: *“Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you”* (Mt 21: 31).

In this sense, Thérèse’s Little Way can be a way of darkness. We are to put up with ourselves and the darkness of our sins and brokenness without getting discouraged. Very frequently we will be unable to see and measure our progress. This is precisely why hope and trust in God’s mercy are essential. Walking the Little Way may require us to realize, without despairing, that our vices and weakness may be with us until we die. More importantly, we must also have the certainty that these are not necessarily an obstacle for us to become saints. On the contrary, they could even be a means of sanctification if we persevere in hope.⁷

... hope and trust in God’s mercy are essential.

Thérèse knew that within someone who appeared to be a hopeless case could lie hidden a saint. Persons such as this could be especially pleasing to God because of their humility, unseen efforts, and relentless hope in God. “What we think of as negligence,” Thérèse wrote, “is often heroism in the eyes of God.”⁸ Like the poor widow in the Gospel of Luke (21: 1-4) who put only two coins in the temple treasury, through their sincere and yet unsuccessful efforts such little souls may be giving all they can possibly give.

One such soul at the Lisieux Carmel was Sr. Marie of St. Joseph. She suffered from mental illness and lived in the margins of the community. Nobody was willing to put up with her very difficult temper, except for Thérèse who got to know her tormented soul well. She once shared with Sr. Agnes: *“If you knew her as well as I do, you would see that she is not responsible for all of the things that seem so awful to us... She is to be pitied... she is like an old clock that has to be re-wound every quarter of an hour. Yes, it is as bad as that... If I had an infirmity such as hers, and so defective a spirit, I would not do any better than she does, and then I would despair.”*⁹

Yet, Sr. Marie of St. Joseph did not despair, even after the death of Thérèse, her only friend in the convent, even after her mental illness meant she had to leave the convent at the age of 55 after 28 years of religious life, even after wandering aimlessly for years about the French countryside. Despite all this, amazingly, she could write the following words to Mother Agnes, through which she reveals her hidden sanctity: *“The work of sanctification which my beloved Thérèse began so lovingly in me before she died continues. And I can say in all sincerity that my house is at rest. And I live now in complete abandonment. As long as I love Jesus, and he and Thérèse are pleased, nothing else matters to me.”*¹⁰

Sr. Marie of St. Joseph’s case shows us how the Little Way is precisely for weak and poor souls: Showing them how to find a way to holiness not despite their poverty, but precisely in the context of their indigence.

... the Little Way is precisely for weak and poor souls...

Before she died, Thérèse expressed her burning desire that her little doctrine be known by all, so that God’s mercy may be glorified by an army of little souls like hers. She somehow knew that from heaven, her mission of making God loved would become more fruitful than ever. Three months before her death she wrote: *“What attracts me to the homeland of heaven is the Lord’s call, the hope of loving him finally as I have so much desired to love him, and the thought that I shall be able to make him loved by a multitude of souls who will bless him eternally.”*¹¹



Roses in iron found throughout the Basilica.

God calls us to do our part.

Sometime later, seeing that her entrance into eternity was approaching, she expressed these prophetic words: *“I feel especially that my mission is about to begin, my mission of making God loved as I love him, of giving my ‘little way’ to souls. If God answers my desires, my heaven will be spent on earth till the end of the world. Yes, I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth.”*¹²

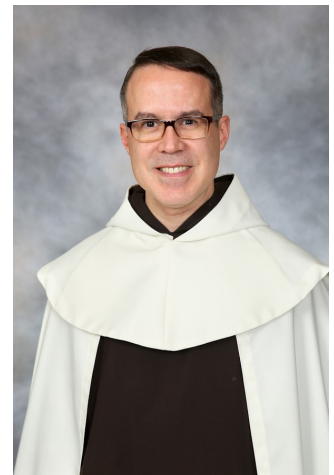
Thérèse had received and developed a liberating view of God, one that turned into an invitation to all to never stop believing and hoping in his merciful love. As Scripture tells us: *“We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him”* (1 Jn 4: 16).

Through her life and teachings God reminds us that we can never trust too much in his love and mercy. He calls us to do our part, as insufficient and inadequate as it may be, and confidently surrender the rest to him who is always faithful and who will never leave nor forsake us (cf. Deut 31: 6).

In summary, those of us who follow the Little Way are called to do three things:

1. Recognize our weakness, sin and our powerlessness over them.
2. Keep trying to grow in holiness through prayer, the sacraments and in the constant and sincere attempt to practice virtue, such as doing little things with great love.
3. Keep trusting and hoping in God’s mercy, that he will satisfy our desires for holiness, even if we don’t understand how, even if we don’t see it in this life, but in heaven.

Fr. Jorge Cabrera of Mary Immaculate, OCD, was born and raised in Puerto Rico. He entered the Discalced Carmelites in 2001 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2009. Fr. Jorge has a Master’s Degree in Divinity from Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, Louisiana, and a Licentiate in Spiritual Theology with concentration on Carmelite Spirituality, from CITeS (International Center for Teresian and Sanjuanist Studies) in Avila in conjunction with Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid, Spain.



CONVERSION & CHARITY:

A Lesson from the Childhood of St. Thérèse

By Joshua Clemmons

When I was first introduced to *The Story of a Soul*, I expected the spirituality of St. Thérèse of Lisieux to be... well, a little soft. I thought it would be a bit overly flowery. As assigned reading from my spiritual director, I did what I was told, but with some rapidity. I wanted to get back to the spiritual rigor that I had found in the works of St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila. It was with this attitude that I missed just how challenging this little flower from France could be and as providence and good direction would have it, I was told to read it again. And thanks be to God, because without a better acquaintance with this saintly friend, I would've missed the concrete example of Carmelite spirituality and the stark and happy heights of Christian charity.

In a profound passage, St. John of the Cross urges his spiritual children to such love with this advice:

God is more pleased by one work, however small, done secretly without desire that it be known, than a thousand done with the desire that people know of them. Those who work for God with purest love not only care nothing about whether others see their works, but do not even seek that God himself know them. Such persons would not cease to render God the same services, with the same joy and purity of love, even if God were never to know of these.¹

It is as if there were mini-martyrdom available to us in every good work. Jesus says that “whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it” (Mt. 16:25). Without the self-interest of wanting at least God to see our serving him, we gain our lives in losing ourselves, loving God with an abandon that only faith could tell us is not reckless.

And what does this insight of St. John of the Cross look like in practice? After all, are we not children of our age, an age in which even the most mundane of works, like ordering lunch, could end up on a social media post for the world to witness. A hidden life of love? How countercultural.

One needs look no further than the patroness of mission, St. Thérèse, who so humbly relays the story of her “complete conversion,” during the Christmas of 1886.

Prior to this conversion, she had tried to please God by doing chores around the house, but she still awaited the gratification of a “thank you” from her family. When they failed to take note of her efforts, she would cry. She would even cry because she was crying, since she sincerely wanted to do her works from the purest of charity. Still, she kept getting in her own way. “It was necessary for God to do a small miracle in order to make me grow up in one moment, and He did that miracle on the unforgettable day of Christmas.”²

After Midnight Mass, it was then the custom to find Christmas presents magically in one’s shoes which had been left by the fireplace. On this Christmas, however, little Thérèse overheard her tired father murmur with some annoyance at seeing the shoes, that it was fortunate that this was the last year of such practices. She ran upstairs, away from her father’s sight, and though her tears had begun, she nonetheless remarks:

“Thérèse wasn’t the same any longer; Jesus had changed her heart! Forcing back my tears, I ran quickly back down the stairs, and, restraining my pounding heart, I took my shoes, and, placing them in front of Papa, joyously I took out all the objects, looking happy as a queen.”³

It was a mini-martyrdom, but also a breakthrough to another kind of happiness—a gratification available to the spiritual palate touched by grace.

St. Thérèse speaks of the quality of this experience in terms of charity. After this complete conversion, she says: “I felt a great desire to work for the conversion of sinners, a desire that I had never felt so strongly... In a word, I felt charity enter into my heart, the need to forget myself in order to please others, and ever afterward I was happy!”⁴ This is exactly what gaining one’s life looks like after losing it.

There is nothing soft in the flowery Thérèse. Even if subtle, hers is the rigorous solidity of Mount Carmel and the happiness of charity, hidden. If you don’t yet see it, read her story, perhaps even again and again.

Joshua Clemmons works as a Pastoral Associate at Christ the King Catholic Church in Dallas, TX. He received his M.A. in Theology from the University of Dallas where he is now an adjunct professor of theology. A convert to Catholicism, Joshua loves the Carmelite spiritual tradition, and is probably a little too inclined toward discussions pertaining to religion and politics.



ILLUMINATING THE BASILICA

TOMB CHAPEL HIGHLIGHT:

A Pope with a Devotion to St. Thérèse

By Theresa Doyle-Nelson

Above each cluster of windows within the Tomb Chapel in the Little Flower Basilica is a decorative circular window; four display flowers, while the central circle window presents three colorful shields. The crest on the left belongs to Pope Pius XI, who authorized building the National Shrine of the Little Flower (Proclaimed in 1998 as the 49th Basilica in the U.S.).

Following the death of St. Thérèse in 1897, three of her notebooks were compiled and published under the title *Story of a Soul*. This unexpected masterpiece seized the hearts of multitudes—including Fr. Achille Ratti, an Italian priest who would later become Pope Pius XI. As Pope, he would both beatify (1923) and canonize (1925) the Little Flower. This first shield represents his Papacy.

Ambrogio Damiano Achille Ratti was born in 1857 in northern Italy (part of the Austrian Empire at the time); he was ordained a priest in 1879, and elected Pope in 1922. His life overlapped St. Thérèse's, but he likely never knew of her until *Story of a Soul* became so popular. He developed a special devotion to the Little Flower, perhaps due to their shared interest in missionary work. Thérèse's deep admiration for missionaries is evident in her writings, while Pope Pius XI, known as the "Missionary Pope," heavily promoted missionary work within the Church and doubled the number of Catholic missionaries during his papacy.

The specific meaning behind each detail of Pope Pius XI's shield seems to have fallen deep into the archives of Papal trivia. At the top is an eagle—a bird known for being able to soar with heavy loads, and considered to symbolize

salvation and renewal in Christianity. Eagles also represent the Gospel of St. John. The three "roundels" at the bottom appear rather purple in the window, but are red in color representations of the shield found elsewhere. Circles in Christian symbolism are considered by some to stand for continuity and wholeness; the number three often represents the Holy Trinity.

These elements of the crest and its placement in the stained glass of Little Flower's Tomb Chapel offers a fascinating glimpse of the Basilica's past and its place in the history of the Church.

Theresa Doyle-Nelson has a great devotion to her patron saint, St. Thérèse, and enjoys mini-pilgrimages to the Little Flower Basilica whenever she is in San Antonio. Theresa attends St. Stanislaus Church in Bandera, TX. You can find more posts on St. Thérèse and the Little Flower Basilica on Theresa's blog: TheresaDoyle-Nelson.blogspot.com.



Stained Glass Window
Collection: The Life of
St. Thérèse



LITTLE FLOWER SCHOOL

95 Years of Catholic Education

The bells from the tower at Little Flower Basilica chime at the quarters of the hour and can be heard across the west side neighborhood and Woodlawn Lake. Across the street, another bell rings, signaling the start of a new day at Little Flower School.

Little Flower School (LFS), celebrating its 95th year educating the children of San Antonio, has been a member of the Little Flower Family since its beginning as the parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Thérèse. Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD, pastor and rector of Little Flower Basilica, considers providing childhood Catholic education a blessing: “It’s a tremendous gift to give to a child to be formed in the Faith and to be educated in a Catholic environment. It helps us to see the whole world within the context of God and our relationship with God, and it’s a gift you can give to a child that’s going to stay with them for the rest of their lives.”

The school functions today as a Pre-K to eighth grade school and is starting its second year under the micro-school model. This model provides a richer learning experience by promoting academic, emotional, and social development, along with facilitating the formation of stronger relationships with peers and teachers through multilevel classrooms. In a world that is more connected and values collaboration and networking, students are getting an early start at developing increasingly important skills to succeed in their futures.

A high standard and commitment to education has always existed at LFS. It achieved Texas Education Agency accreditation in 1949, one of the first Catholic schools to do so. Adapting and updating to accommodate new teaching methods and emerging technologies is not new for the school. Periodic renovations and modernizations have marked the school’s history: Typing classes were



introduced when the school acquired its computer lab. Classrooms today are fitted with projectors and smart boards.

By far the most rewarding instruction the students receive is their spiritual formation. The school places a strong focus on living out the ten Gospel Values – Reconciliation, Justice, Courage, Community, Faith, Hope, Service, Love, Patience, and Humility – highlighting a different value every month. The Carmelite friars contribute an integral part of their tradition as they promote St. Thérèse’s Little Way. Students encounter Jesus by attending Mass weekly, serving at Mass as altar servers or readers, and through their work in parish activities and other community service projects.

Over the last near century, no matter the challenges, the Providence and intercession of St. Thérèse has guided the school over the last 95 years. LFS was founded in July 1926, four months after the arrival of the Carmelite fathers who founded the parish, in partnership with the Sisters of the Holy Ghost and Mary Immaculate (now the Holy Spirit Sisters), who would serve the school as teachers. The Sisters had been previously tasked by the Archdiocese to canvas the west side of San Antonio to identify the need for a Catholic school, which familiarized them with the area.



Funds were scarce and initially both the school and the church operated out of the same small wooden building. A set of folding doors would close the opening of a niche that housed the altar, and students would arrange their desks in the middle of two rooms that were created by closing another set of folding doors in the middle of the building. When school was over for the day, students would move their desks to the sides of the room and open both sets of doors making the space ready for Mass. In the 20 years that followed, the school would bounce between temporary arrangements: first, to hastily built classrooms at a house purchased as the Sisters' residence; next to the basement of the shrine upon its completion in 1931; followed by a rock-veneered building across the street from the shrine. In 1938, LFS opened a co-ed high school, with its classes located in the now former Sisters' residence. By 1942, the high school classes were moved to join the grammar school at the rock-veneered building.

In 1946, the present-day building that houses LFS was completed. Built from the same Indiana limestone that graces the façade of the shrine, the new school was the culmination of planning and efforts undertaken by the Carmelite friars since their arrival in San Antonio twenty years earlier. The original small wooden building that housed the parish and school was moved within the new school grounds to serve as the cafeteria.

Fr. Jim Curiel, one of our Discalced Carmelite friars, graduated from Little Flower School in 1979, "Back then it was a more neighborhood school; everyone knew each other from the area." Current times have expanded the school's neighborhood reach to one that encompasses the entirety of San Antonio. Faculty at LFS are cognizant of the unique needs this larger reach brings and offer listening ears and helping hands

in a way that echoes the work of the Sisters in the 1920s.

It is through this dedication that LFS has continued to form children into successful and faithful Catholic men and women. Teachers and Friars work together to help students know that they are loved and valued. This individualized attention is a reflection of St. Thérèse's Little Way, which is founded in the confidence of God's love for us all.

As students head home for the day and exit their school, the grandeur of the Basilica greets them, reminding them of their calling and instruction to be the living Church to those they encounter; its soaring bell towers reminding them of the lofty dreams they can achieve.

Support the Little Flower Legacy

This year Little Flower School is rolling out technology upgrades for students enrolled in the new micro-school program. You can help guarantee a quality Catholic education in the spirit of St. Thérèse by pledging a monthly donation for the rest of the school year! With your help and a pledge of as little as \$20 a month through May 2022 we can continue teaching the future leaders of our community to "*do the ordinary things with extraordinary love!*"

Visit littleflowerschool.net to schedule your monthly pledge today!



Marc Chavez is a student at the University of Texas at San Antonio interning with the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower. He is studying communication and plans after graduating to pursue a career in public relations. Always ready to learn new things, when he is not reading about history or architecture, Marc strives to learn more about being Christ-like to all through his service as a catechist and in retreats.



RESTORATION OF SAN ANTONIO'S BASILICA

Dear Devotees of St. Thérèse,

Praised be Jesus Christ! Since our last issue of the Apostolate of the Little Flower, our restoration plans have been proceeding apace, with several significant developments happening “behind the scenes.”

In collaboration with Douglas Architects of San Antonio, the friars have solidified a master plan for our Basilica Campus. We have envisioned a beautiful campus that will accentuate the strengths of our historical Basilica and monastery. We hope the campus will both better serve our parishioners and provide pilgrims with an environment conducive to a spiritual encounter with God in the spirit of St. Thérèse.

Douglas Architects have taken this master plan and developed what is called a “thirty percent schematic design.” This schematic design takes the vision of the master plan and shows how the plan will be realized engineering-wise, through such means as drainage systems, waterproofing, structural reinforcement, updated electrical wiring, plumbing, landscaping, etc.

This schematic design has been passed on to construction companies who, with this design in their hands, are able to calculate the costs of realizing our master plan. Once these costs have been calculated, we will be able to set our goals for our capital campaign and launch our formal fundraising efforts.

We are grateful for your continued support, both material and spiritual, of our efforts to restore St. Thérèse’s beautiful Basilica and National Shrine. With your help, we pray that God will bring to fruition this work we have undertaken for his glory and for the good of his people, through the intercession of our beloved Little Flower, St. Thérèse.

Fraternally,



Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD
Pastor and Rector



To learn more about the Restoration Project contact executive director, Susana Cantu:
scantu@littleflowerbasilica.org

You can help preserve Little Flower Basilica for another hundred years and know future generations will experience the beauty of Carmel.

Support the Restoration Project by scanning the QR code or visiting littleflowerbasilica.org/restoration



Celebrate St. Thérèse at the Basilica!

September 22-30
Novena

September 30, 5:30 pm
Transit and Vigil Mass

October 1, 6 pm
Solemn Mass of Roses



Citations

Dear Friends

1. CCC 1846

On the Cover

- 1 Note sur l'Audience d'Appel Jurisprudence, S24D, env. 2, ACL, p. 2.
- 2 Image, Authenticity and the Cult of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, 1897-1959, Sophia Lucia Deboick, p. 92.

The Little Way

by Fr. Jorge Cabrera, OCD

1. This trial of faith would eventually subside, but would return with full force at the end of her life.
2. Conrad De Meester OCD (ed.). St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Her Life, Times, and Teaching. ICS Washington DC 1997, p. 150.
3. Conrad De Meester OCD. St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Her Life, Times, and Teaching. ICS Washington DC, 1997, p. 147
4. Michael Gaitley MIC. 33 Days to Merciful Love, Marian Press, Stockbridge 2016, p. 53.
5. Procès Apostolique, 1915-16 (The Bishop's Process 1915-16), 1403
6. Procès Apostolique, 2129.
7. Michael Gaitley MIC. 33 Days to Merciful Love, Marian Press, Stockbridge 2016, p. 56-57
8. Procès de l'Ordinaire, 1910-11 (The Bishop's Process 1910-11), 1755.
9. Cited in Mark Foley, OCD. The Context of Holiness: Psychological and Spiritual Reflections on the Life of St. Thérèse of Lisieux (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 2008), p. 44.
10. Cited in Michael Gaitley MIC. 33 Days to Merciful Love, Marian Press, Stockbridge 2016, p. 181.
11. Letter 254.
12. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Her Last Conversations, tr. John Clarke, OCD, (ICS Publications, Washington DC). p. 102.

Conversion and Charity

by Joshua Clemmons

1. St. John of the Cross, "The Sayings of Light and Love." In Collected Works of St. John of the Cross, trans. and Kieran Kavanaugh & Otilio Rodriguez (Washington D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1991), 86-87.
2. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul*, trans. Robert Edmonson (Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, 2017), 102.
3. Ibid., 103-104.
4. Ibid., 104.



*Basilica of the
National Shrine of the
Little Flower*

APOSTOLATE OF THE LITTLE FLOWER
824 Kentucky Ave.
San Antonio, Texas 78201

PERIODICALS
POSTAGE PAID
SAN ANTONIO
TEXAS

A Student's Prayer

Dear St. Thérèse,
Help me to trust in Jesus' love for me,
just for today.
Help me to thank Jesus for loving me
and blessing me, just for today.
Help me to please Jesus
by doing all he asks of me,
just for today.
Help me to do my best in my classes
and to treat others with kindness,
just for today.
If I fail in any of these things,
help me to tell Jesus I'm sorry
and to trust in his forgiveness,
just for today.
As Jesus forgives me, help me
to forgive others, just for today.
With Mary as our Mother and you as
my sister, I offer all of today to Jesus
our Loving Savior.
Amen.

Official prayer of Little Flower School.



What's Your Miracle?

If you have a story about how St. Thérèse has
impacted your life, share it with us at:
media@littleflowerbasilica.org