



Between Friends

A publication for the Friends of the Society of

the Little Flower, Darien, Illinois and Canada

www.littleflower.org

Fall 2012

Where Holiness Found

Her Voice

National Shrine dedicates replica of
St. Thérèse convent room



Growing in Dedication

>> Mary Therese Lambert is editor of *Between Friends*

There's an old saying: God writes straight with crooked lines. If any life is a testament to that saying, it is mine.

Growing up in the rough and tumble Taylor Street neighborhood on Chicago's south side, I didn't have many opportunities to show my "softer side." You had to be tough to survive in my neck of the woods, and I perfected that trait. I simply had no choice.

Those who knew me then would never have guessed that my entire life would be devoted to serving my beloved patron saint, Thérèse. Even as a child, I admired her; after all, my middle name is Therese. But a child can't really understand what it means to model one's life after a saint.

So I grew in that understanding over time. As St. Thérèse taught, I learned what it really means to surrender one's life to God and to believe with all your heart that "everything is grace." To live these beliefs is not easy, especially when the chips are down. But I don't think I'd be here today if I didn't live those beliefs. Maybe, like Thérèse, I learned the hard way, but I thank God for the lesson.

So here I am at the Society of the Little Flower, more than 15 years after I walked in the door. I am here for many reasons, but primarily because I want to "live my thanks" in gratitude to the saint who has watched over me from the day I was born.

I have seen the Society grow so much over that time, and I am thrilled to see how we have made St. Thérèse's Shrine become what it has. If your travels ever bring you near Darien, Ill., I hope you'll set aside some time for a visit. You absolutely must see our re-creation of St. Thérèse's cell; it's truly inspirational.

This issue of *Between Friends* is devoted to stories of faith and how that faith has changed people's lives. I hope you find those stories as touching as I have.

>> For your comments or questions, please write to Mary T. Lambert: Society of the Little Flower, 1313 N. Frontage Road, Darien, IL 60561



from the editor



Paths of Dedication

>> Father Bob Colaresi, O. Carm., director

Dear Friends of St. Thérèse, Thérèse was such a wholehearted, dedicated person. We recently dedicated the replica of her Carmelite religious cell in Lisieux, France, with authentic pieces of the original. Dedication and wholeheartedness is such a key Christian virtue, which Thérèse exemplified for us. So we focus this edition of *Between Friends* on "Dedication."

Enjoy articles on the dedication of her room, dedication to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the dedication of the Carmelites you support, and dedication to prayer, as well as articles on how you can further dedicate your resources to help fulfill St. Thérèse's mission and dream.

The Carmelites and the Society of the Little

Flower are awed, humbled, and grateful that we have learned so much about dedication from you, her generous friends. We dedicate part of our prayer each day to thanking God for you and asking Him to respond to your intentions, through the intercession of St. Thérèse.

Thank you for being her/our friends.



Saint of the Month

>> Our Lady of Mount Carmel



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from the director

inside this issue



View of Mt. Carmel

stands by us, inviting us to be present to our life and listen deeply as God comes to us disguised as our life. So we need to listen carefully to the whispers of our life and within our hearts.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel leads us to seek deep intimacy with God, Who loves us and walks with us through every moment of life, and in faith to work for the justice of God's Kingdom by living the beatitudes and embracing the poor. Our Lady of Mount Carmel always points us to

Jesus. True to Mary's contemplative spirit, Carmelites do not primarily teach people "prayers," but, rather, to pray by listening to the Divine Whisper within that we might see the Divine everywhere. As Thérèse taught us: "everything is grace!"

The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel has been celebrated on July 16 since the 14th century. It is the second most used title for Catholic Churches in the world, after "St. Mary." Like Thérèse, we are dedicated to her! 🌹

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Dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Carmel is Hebrew for "garden or vineyard of God." Mount Carmel is part of a well-known mountain range in the northern Holy Land. Its rich soil, rain from the Mediterranean Sea, and high peaks allow the mountain to be fertile with forests and vegetation. Its volcanic origin has created many caves.

Mount Carmel is associated in the Jewish Scriptures with the prophet Elijah. It was there he called the people of Israel back to faith in the One God of freedom and life, in the confrontation with the 450 prophets of Baal. Fire came from heaven to affirm the divine spark of Yahweh, the God of Israel. Elijah had to listen to God in the quiet whisper of a breeze, amid the earthquakes and thunderstorms of life.

According to tradition, there was a succession of holy people and hermits living on Mount Carmel, in the spirit of Elijah, seeking intimacy with God and to work to the justice of God's reign. The present Carmelites began as disillusioned Crusaders in the 12th century. They gathered on Mount Carmel at the spring of Elijah, rather than return to Europe, to seek God amid the disappointment and disillusionment of war. Despite trying to be lone-ranger hermits, they learned they needed each other and needed a woman to soften their hardened warrior hearts. By 1180, these hermits built an oratory on

Mount Carmel where they would pray together. They dedicated it to "the Lady of this Place," knowing that Mary of Nazareth, the Lady of the Holy Land, would open them to God, as she was so absolutely open to God coming into the world. This "Lady" was their sister in faith, reminding them that God, as Emmanuel, would be wherever we are. Those Carmelites became men of prayer, living in God's presence wherever they are.

When they were driven from Mount Carmel by 1291, they continued to call on the "Lady of this Place" as Our Lady of Mount Carmel. In times of trial, when the Order almost died, Our Lady saved them, as in the vision of St. Simon Stock at Aylesford in England. Mary took Simon's brown scapular and told him that if they wore this in faith, she would protect them. Thus

began the powerful sacramental of the Carmelite Brown Scapular, as a symbol of the total openness of Mary to Jesus. Popular piety led people to believe that Mary would help them into heaven, if they died wearing the Brown Scapular as a reflection of living a life of faith in God. The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is not a magic charm, nor an automatic guarantee of salvation. It is a reminder to live the Gospel, follow Jesus, and to prayerfully walk through life. Salvation is a free gift of God's love.

Our official title is "The Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel." She is not our Queen or Mother – but rather our Sister who



Where holiness found “Her Voice”

“It is overwhelming to see such a large, overflow turnout – Thérèse has so many friends!

As we bless and dedicate this exact replica of St. Thérèse’s convent cell, we must, first of all, thank God, Who gave us this Carmelite saint who has brightened our lives and opened spirituality to so many. We are grateful to you for being here and for the legions of her friends whose prayer, devotion, creativity, and generosity help her Carmelite brothers continue her mission – our Carmelite mission in the Church.”

For 90 years, the Society of the Little Flower has worked to spread devotion to St. Thérèse, as well as support the Carmelites in our life and ministries, here in North America and throughout the world. Carmelite Father Albert Dolan made the first contact with her and her sisters in Lisieux. As a prophet of her spirituality, we popularized her – and mobilized people to help the Sisters at the time of her beatification and canonization. This long association has continued for 90 years – the Lisieux Carmel and the Society of the Little Flower have been partners in prayer and spreading her Gospel message. This precious

“A dream was born, that as the first step of the renovation of this Shrine/Museum, we would build an exact replica of her room, ‘where holiness found her voice.’”

relationship has deepened as the Carmelite Nuns have shared with us items and relics of St. Thérèse to make them available to more people here at her National Shrine in Darien. We, with your help, have helped them with their recent necessary renovation and restoration. At present, you see at the shrine the wedding shoes she wore when she entered the Carmel, as well as the vestments made of her bridal dress. All the relics and artifacts we have here are from them. The Carmelite Nuns of Lisieux do not want to possess Thérèse, but share her.

The story of this room began after a tough time. The Vatican Archives recently opened up letters of Thérèse’s older sister Pauline (Sister Agnes of Jesus), who became the prioress for life, complaining to Pope Pius XI about Father Albert Dolan raising money, with a concern about this and whether they were getting enough help. Eventually it was all cleared up and they became very good friends, in a partnership to spread the word of The Little Flower.

I’ve been the Director of the Society for more than 20 years. I was deeply moved the first time I entered that Lisieux Carmel in 1994 and felt her presence in a very personal way. I remember sitting in her room, on the small bench, holding her lap desk where she wrote *The Story of a Soul* – trembling that I would break it. I was surprised by how old the Carmel was and saw the deterioration. They began a major renovation around the Millennium – and eventually they sent out signals that they needed help from her North American friends. So a serious dialogue began. Eventually we committed to raise

needed funds for the preservation and restoration of the old monastery. How could we say “no!” But progress was slow and our U.S. economy collapsed. Unfortunately, a member of my staff, with reckless enthusiasm, had promised the Sisters this money would be there real soon, so they went ahead and started this major reconstruction program. By 2009, while visiting the Carmel, I received a major dressing down from the new prioress, Sister France-Marie, that the money was coming in much slower than they needed. Why did I promise!? Do you know how humiliating and strange that felt? History was repeating itself. The SLF heightened our effort and people responded. The Sisters, in turn, were very happy and grateful – by 2010 and 2011, they were opening their doors, allowing us to have on loan items from her life for display here. During one visit, Sister Camille, the Archivist, took us on a tour of their archives. Wow, all their Thérèse memorabilia. Sister made us a promise that we could borrow some of them over the years. As we were leaving, she opened a huge closet downstairs and said, “Father Bob, here is the door to her original room. Can you use it?” She even pointed out the saved door frame. They had saved everything! I thought for a minute and said, “I’m not sure what we would do with it!” At that point, my trusted assistant, Mary Therese Lambert, blurted out – “No, we’ll take it.” Her creative wheels were spinning because we had talked of renovating this Shrine and making it more interactive.

Within weeks and months, we had the door Thérèse touched several times a day, the door frame, the window from the Chapter room where she made her vows, and the tiles outside her room that she walked on every day. A dream was born, that, as the first step of the renovation of this Shrine/Museum, we would build an exact replica of her room, “where holiness found her voice.” It would not only draw people closer to her, but invite them to find that sacred space in their lives and hearts to listen to God.

It is so exact, I wonder, at times, if Thérèse herself could distinguish which is the original room. Ours includes an exact copy of the prayer she scratched into the wood frame of the inner door: “Jesus is my only love.”

This happened because of the generous hearts of many people, some of whom we want to thank and publicly acknowledge:

- The Carmelite Nuns of Lisieux, France (who said they might try this idea if it worked here).
- Father Carl Markelz, our provincial, who represents the Carmelite Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary and who was behind this project all the way.
- Mary Therese Lambert, the International Development Director of the Society the last 12 years. She was the driving and creative force behind this. Little did her Mom know that when she named her Mary Therese 45 years ago that St. Thérèse would have a replica name-sake

person with Thérèse’s artistic, creative, and tenacious spirit of getting to the heart of things – and getting it done with great attention details!

- Our construction carpenters Ed Reiner and his son, Jake Reiner. Their sense of passion and precise devotion to this project are seen in all its details.

There are so many others, donors, friends, and staff members who went out of their way to help in the extraordinary spirit of her “little way.”

**Presentation by
Father Carl Markelz, O. Carm.**

Ribbon Cutting

“In the name of St. Thérèse and the Carmelite, I hereby open this replica of St. Thérèse’s convent cell, “where holiness found her voice,” so that friends who visit it may be inspired by her “little way” and carve out and reverence their own inner space to listen to God’s voice within them and understand and share the story of their own souls.”

Blessing with Holy Water and Incense

Presentation of Prayer Intentions

Dedication Prayer, said by all:

.....
St. Thérèse, Flower of fervor and love, Doctor of Spirituality and Divine Intimacy, thank you for being our friend, inspiration and intercessor. Fill our hearts with your pure love of God. As we dedicate this replica of your Carmelite cell, which includes your original door, window and floor tiles, sensitive to your love of the little details, make us more aware of the mercy of God in our lives. In this room, holiness found your voice as you wrote *The Story of a Soul* – revealing that powerful insight into your heart, journey and holiness. Being here and following your “little way” may we too listen more carefully to the voice within calling us to transformation and love. Instill in us your “little way” of doing ordinary things with extra-ordinary love. Give us the heart of a child who wonders at life and embraces everything with loving enthusiasm. Teach us your delight in God’s ways so that divine charity may blossom in our hearts. May all who visit this replica of your room be inspired to reverence the sanctuary of our own hearts and homes, the living church where God dwells within and among us. 🌹

- Dedication Address,
by Father Bob Colaresi, O. Carm.



National Shrine Dedicates

Replica of St. Thérèse Convent Room

>> **Sal Lema** is Director of Communications for the Society of Mount Carmel

“I ask Jesus to draw me into the flames of His Love, to unite me so closely to him that he live and act in me. I feel that the more fire of love burns within my heart, the more I shall say ‘Draw Me,’ ... for a soul that is burning with love cannot remain inactive.”
(*Story of a Soul*, 257)

“Draw me ... become childlike, with reverence and awe; being dependent on God and doing things with extra-ordinary love.” These words, heard during the homily from the Very Reverend Carl Markelz, O.Carm., prior provincial of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Province at the dedication Mass, say best what being called to be like the “Little Flower” means. “We have a call to holiness; a call to fall in love with God as Thérèse did,” said Father Carl. That call was the very reason so many were drawn to the National Shrine of Saint Therese in Darien, Ill., on June 5, to witness the dedication of their newest museum display: a recreated replica of St. Thérèse’s Convent Room.

Through the generosity of the Carmelite Nuns of Lisieux, France, a wonderful gift now is preserved within the National Shrine of St. Thérèse — the gift of a simple window, door, door frame, and floor tiles. Not just any common materials, but the actual items from the Little Flower’s room, where she lived for nine years and where she wrote *The Story of a Soul*. As Father Bob Colaresi, O.Carm., Director of the Society of the Little Flower, stated about this authentic replica, “If Thérèse was on earth today, she would have trouble telling the copy from the original.” Through precise direction, a replica of her room using these sacred pieces was created. Now friends of the “Little Flower” have the ability to see back in time; to see and experience the gift of Thérèse.

Her friends came from every direction. The parking lots were full to capacity and

the crowds bubbled with excitement as they filed into the chapel of National Shrine. All were here to see for themselves what the living quarters of the St. Thérèse’s Convent Room were really like. “I am here to celebrate the Thérèse in my life - as my friend, my prayer partner, my muse, my daughter, my granddaughter, my foremother. If I had a room dedicated to me, she would be one of the first loved ones to enter, notice, bless, and leave roses of remembrance before gently closing the door,” said Barbara Santillo, who traveled from Teaneck, N.J., with her cousin Linda, just to be here for this occasion. Through her kindness, Barbara donated the lantern and sewing basket in the room.

During the Mass, all present were



asked to write an intention to St. Thérèse that would be placed on the pillow of her bed in the room as part of the ceremony. Before the dedication, Father Bob spoke about how the nuns in Lisieux donated these items to the National Shrine. “For 90 years, the Society of the Little Flower has worked to spread devotion of St. Thérèse, as well as support the Carmelites in our life and ministries, here in North America and throughout the world,” said Father Bob. “This precious relationship has deepened as the Carmelite Nuns have shared with us items and relics of St. Thérèse to make them available to more people at her National Shrine in Darien. A dream was born, that, as the first step of the renovation of this Shrine/Museum, we would build an exact replica of her room, ‘where holiness found her voice,’” he said. When thinking about the people who would visit this room Father Bob remarked, “It would not only draw people closer to her, but invite them to find that sacred space in their lives and hearts to listen to God.” May all who see this replica also feel the presence of Thérèse.

After an opening prayer, Father Carl, donning a pair of ceremonial scissors, cut the rose ribbon officially opening the room to her guests. Entering the room he blessed it with water and incense, then he placed the bag of intentions on her pillow and all present read a prayer

of blessing for the room.

When you see the room for yourself, the first thing you may say is how small it is. While most of us would be rather uncomfortable in this space, the “Little Flower” was probably very much at home. It was modest; very typical of what a Carmelite nun would experience.

Our first view of the room begins in the main area of the Shrine, where a beautiful, yet understated, stained glass window gives the interior portion of the room subtle light. That space also receives natural light from the transom windows on the separation wall within the cell of two rooms of her space. The floors were common wood and the windows large, with both privacy and light shutters. In her bedroom area is a simple, small wood-framed bed, much shorter than we are accustomed to; a side table; a tiny corner shelf; and a simple cross. This was where our “Little Flower” rested and prayed.

If you have the privilege to walk inside her room, you will feel like you are walking on hallowed ground. Yes, the room is a replica, but it does have parts from her actual convent cell. Touching her door latch, you might feel a “tingling” as DuPage, Ill., visitor Carol Smith did. She stated that this awesome experience was a comfort to her. Mary Binsfeld, from Chicago, came to thank St. Thérèse for interceding for her husband Jim, who had a near-death experience. Jim said that others need to know that “you can always trust in her to come through in her ‘little ways.’” You may also want to write her a note to say thank you for all the gifts she continues

to share with you. Florence Wire came to the Shrine because of her devotion to St. Thérèse. Florence said she “came to be filled with the gladness of the day, and to support the Carmelites.” As the celebration came to a close each family received a third-class relic — a small bottle containing wood shaved from the actual door.

The National Shrine in Darien, Ill., that is home to an extraordinary collection of personal effects and memorabilia of St. Thérèse outside of France now includes this beautiful replica of her Convent Room. If you haven’t had the opportunity to visit lately, you will be in awe

as you view this replica of her cell and the many other new items on display. See the magnificent chapel that houses the largest religious wood carving in the United States. The carving depicts events in the life of Thérèse. It was hand-carved in Italy of linden wood. The chapel also contains a magnificent antique reliquary made in France, containing five first-class relics in cases made in the form of roses.

Visitors are welcome every day from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. when the shrine, gift shop, and bookstore are open to the public. Come join your friends Monday through Friday for daily Mass in the chapel at 11:30 a.m. For more information on visiting the National Shrine of St. Therese, please call the Carmelite Visitors Center at (630) 969-3311. 🌹



The Velvet Days

I had the privilege of attending the dedication of the replica of St. Thérèse’s Cell at the National Shrine of St. Thérèse in Darien, Ill., June 5. Two of us travelled from New Jersey to Illinois. How I wish all my friends could have attended this awesome event and soft experience of grace. I share my reflections that you might share what I and so many others experienced.

How I wish I could have driven all of you in a minivan to Darien! I know your prayers and good wishes went with Linda and me, so I wrote these words with you as my muses. Please enjoy the wonderful time with Thérèse and her pilgrims.

Who are all these people? Why are they here? I was wondering if everyone was free on Tuesdays in Illinois? I know why I am here, but I am both delighted and timid about the experience. Thérèse, master of so many roles in my life, has become my travel guide: first to France, then to Lisieux, then into Carmel, and now to her newest jewel – Darien.

Getting to the front door of her Shrine, to touch the beautiful, life-like Thérèse statue, requires deftness of movement and a constant, “Excuse me, please.” Courtesy abides in Darien; people respond graciously. I want to ask them if they could possibly love Thérèse as much as I do. I want to show them my plaque (safely at home, alas!): “Thérèse loves you, but I’m her favorite.” Perhaps this is not the most propitious time for such truthful humor.

I find a seat in the second row, and practice the difficult art of discipline of the eyes. Not easy for me. I want to strain my neck and see if I know anyone in the ever-streaming crowd of almost 1,000. There should be noise, yet there is a respectful almost-silence. I think we all feel we are in the presence

of holiness – not only Thérèse’s, but our own alone and with each other. Thérèse gives this rose to those she loves.

I watch as countless guests pause at the showcase of relics, which house her beautiful wedding shoes – still

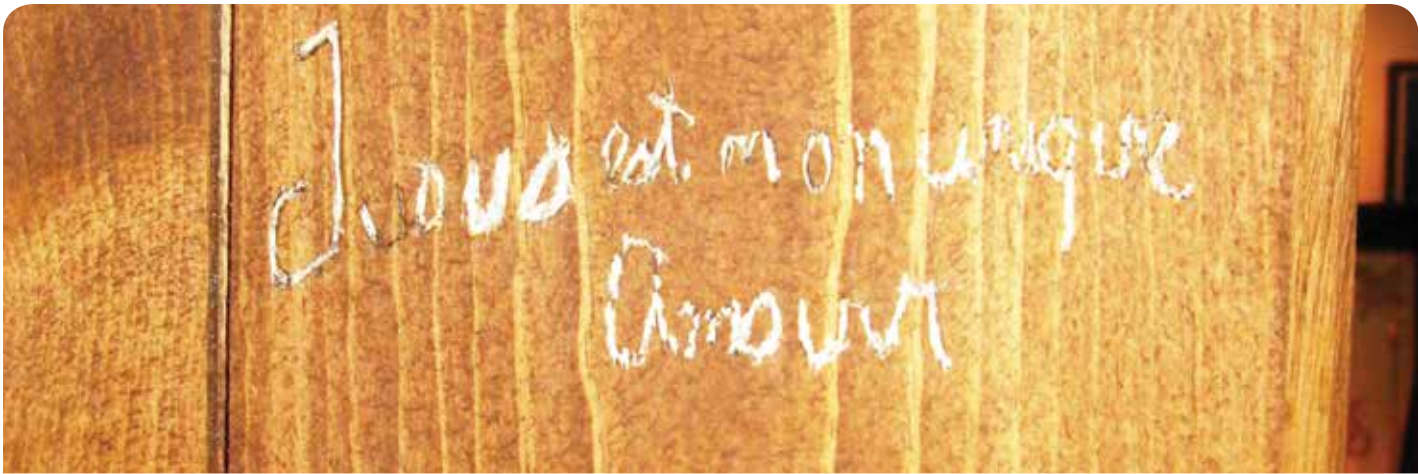
stylish, elegant and feminine in a Cinderella “mignon” size. How could they have held “all that truth,” to paraphrase the words of those who knew Emily Dickinson? Our bride was shod in these exquisite satin and velvet shoes on the same day she was to wear the Carmelite alpergates for the rest of her life. For her, the Holy Face was that of her Prince Charming.

Maybe today is all about the fabric of our lives as well as hers – not only the satins and velvets, but the straw of her chair, the wool of her rug, the smoothness of her door, the aged metal of the handle, the brocade of the chasuble, the multi-rosed ribbon guarding the soon-to-be-opened holy room of America’s Carmel.

Thérèse has touched these items, as surely as she touches everyone here and beyond, whom she calls to her special friendship – for she indeed does the inviting. It is the touch of her hand that we have experienced: linked together heaven-to-earth, continent-to-continent, country-to-country, Lisieux to Darien. To little Thérèse, so terrified of spiders,



“The scent of roses seems to be everywhere, but **the invisible ones sent to earth today are more redolent than the ones in vases...**”



the irony is magnificent. We are all arm-in-arm with her and each other in her lacy web of the “Little Way.”

Everyone settles into a reflectively joyful mood. Strangers start to speak to each other: making room, smiling, taking care. Her charity has become contagious. There appears a seamlessness to the space, a virtue of different rooms becoming one. The walls are down; lights shine from without and within. Heightened anticipation causes our eyes to close in prayers, and there are tears, while our lips move in a susurrant holy whisper. There begins a rhythm of devotion.

No longer do we look at one another, but gaze at the two holy men of God, men of Mary, men of Thérèse who formally welcome us to this celebration. They, too, are obviously moved, by the strength of her presence, and our own. The scent of roses seems to be everywhere, but the invisible ones sent to earth today are more redolent than the ones in vases adorning this happy place.

Holiness is happening here, and we are breathing its air.

Following Mass, the berosed ribbon is cut. Thérèse is once again ours – just steps away. In the ensuing celebration of love, Thérèse devotees line up to enter her cell. It is so moving to see the outer door of her room close as we are given private time to savor the simple objects of Thérèse’s days in Carmel. Her bed is covered not only with a simple brown coverlet, but also with petitions written by each member of the congregation. All have been placed in a special pillow case on her own bed pillow, adorned with a single rose. Our prayers mingle with her dreams.

Everything is as it is in Lisieux: her own painting of Jesus knocking at the door. The symbolism of doors opening is magnificent. The lantern offers her small, but

steady, light. The half-hour glass teaches us her patience, her use of time. The water jug which had been borrowed by another nun without permission, comes back chipped, but Thérèse offers no word of reproach. It is, after all, of life, a lesson in abandonment. Even the purple ribbon Thérèse threaded through her sewing basket is here, as a reminder that beloved items turned inside out can become moments of spiritual enchantment. Her Goldilocks’ small bench knew the faithfulness each evening of her writing *The Story of A Soul*.

Next to her door, roughly carved for only Jesus to see, are the words, “Jesus is my only love.” Did she use a knife or a nail? What was she enduring that she had to write this affirmation of faith as a daily comfort? Wasn’t her act of faith, written in her own blood, enough? And then, as we turn to leave, the cross above her bed – always the cross.

Another image of the miraculous Our Lady of the Smile stands welcome sentinel in the outer room, the place where Thérèse met with her novices. Here they knew meditation, direction, all types of prayer, and even holy reprimands.

Outside, the line of pilgrims continues for hours. We all seem to be like children, reaching out to touch history, beauty, and holiness. When we finish touching the objects, we turn to touch one another. Grasped hands, blown kisses, shared prayers are offered to friends we met just hours ago, and will perhaps never see again. Ah, but we will remember all of this, and all of them always. Leaving from under her wall-wide cloak is not easy, but we are armed in grace by this velvet day. 🌹

- Barbara Santillo



Dedications



>> Daniel Pritchard is an Ambassador of the Society of the Little Flower

I'll never forget the whispering. Like clockwork, when Fahey Flynn was done with the news, the TV was turned off, quiet settled in, and the whispering began. First it was the rattling of the beads that accompanied the whispers. When they were laid to rest, the whispering grew fainter, until sleep finally settled in.

It was a ritual: years of prayers, committed to memory, poured forth each night with ease. These two friends – my grandmother and her Lord – were just happy to be together.

Certain things from childhood stick in your head. They have shaped you in unknown ways and have become part of who you are today. Such was part of my faith formation. I'll never forget those whispers.

Today, I do some whispering of my own: early in the morning, late at night, and occasionally during the day. Sometimes I get caught, and wonder if these "intruders" think I have lost my mind. How could they know?

As I look back over the years, many, many people have helped form my faith. The joys of life lift our hearts in gratitude, and certainly no one escapes the cross. In each of these events, God's hand is ever present. But unless we have had people in our life who have taught us to grab that hand, how would we know to reach out? It is through people that our faith grows and matures.

We have many opportunities to witness to our faith. But do we seize these opportunities, or put our hands in the air with a sense of hopelessness?

Children and grandchildren may have stopped going to church. Do we lecture or do we teach by example? Complaints about our country abound.

Do we join the chorus or do we seek to find the good news and encourage others to do the same? Violence is on the news every night. Do we surrender to that relentless barrage of bad news or do we seek to create peace where we can?

“We have chosen to be teachers of hope. **“My little way is the way of trust and absolute surrender.”** With childlike faith, all things are possible.” -St. Thérèse



People of faith are also people of hope. We can't let opportunities to teach this good news pass us by.

At the Society of the Little Flower, following the lead of our beloved St. Thérèse, we have chosen to be teachers of hope. “My little way is the way of trust and absolute surrender.” With childlike faith, all things are possible. If only our faithful hearts could rest easy on those words!

We can't spread this message on our own. Your support is vitally important, not just for today, but for generations to follow. Where will our world be 10, 15 or 20 years from now if we don't have the Society of the Little Flower to proclaim Thérèse's message to the world? Where will our world be if the Carmelites who stand behind this Society must struggle to educate its seminarians or labor with great effort to feed and nurture the poor in its missions?

Yes, we need you now, and we need you for tomorrow.

With this in mind, might you consider a gift to the Society of the Little Flower in your Will or Living Trust? Not only will it help us continue our life saving work, such a gift will also be a wonderful lesson to the family you leave behind: your faith was much more than a whisper.

To help you in your planning, don't hesitate to call me or my colleague, Janice Rutecki, at 888-996-1212 to request a free copy of our booklet, “Techniques for Planning a Successful Will.” And please, if you have already made such a generous gift, let us know. It would be our honor to enroll you in the Rose Garden of St. Thérèse, with its many spiritual benefits. 🌹

- Daniel Pritchard

Visiting with Friends of Thérèse



>> Matthew Brasmer is an Ambassador of the Society of the Little Flower

As I have shared on these pages, I have the unique privilege of visiting with many friends of St. Thérèse and her Society of the Little Flower. When visiting, I try to practice real listening. When someone speaks deeply about how their life and the lives of loved ones have been touched by her continuing Shower of Roses, the experience deserves the art of truly being present and listening deeply. This is the one gift everyone truly wants in every circumstance and in every state of life – the gift of being understood.

Oftentimes, in return, I am asked, “What motivates you to do this work? From where does your dedication come?”

Fair question, particularly since I am often out the door at the crack of dawn with a full day ahead of travel, visits, and phone calls. Bad weather, traffic, flight cancelations, airport security, crying children, and cranky people often do tempt my patience. Suffice it to be said that on the bad days, I find myself praying with a focused intensity.

Yet, with a career behind me in government, business, and education, I find myself strongly attracted to assisting the work of Carmelites who are serving the Church, both behind monastery walls (as at the Carmel of Lisieux) and in the wider world in parishes, shrines, retreat centers, and schools. I want more people to know about St. Thérèse. Goodness knows the world needs, and our families need, more of her spiritual common sense.

The source of my dedication is really not at all about me, I tell people when they ask. Rather, it is all about St. Thérèse. I have learned a lot from her and I hope to continue to learn. Above all I have learned from her that love (and faith) is often not a feeling or an emotion, although the feeling of loving another is beautiful. Mostly in everyday life, love is an act of the will for the good of another. This love seeks to always make the best of everything. It is this “Little Way” then that can only be chosen moment by moment. It is not easy. I have come to deeply appreciate the incredible

strength and sanity of the Little Flower.

As she wrote in *Story of a Soul*, “When I act as charity bids, I have this feeling that it is Jesus who is acting in me; the closer my union with him, the greater my love for all the sisters without distinction.”

Her dedication to God allowed her to see herself as simply a pipeline for God and she thus willed, without ego, for God to work through her.

Yes, the more I learn from her, the more focused becomes my dedication. The “Little Flower” deserves to be known by many more. And this is our common mission together through the Society of the Little Flower. 🌹

– Matt can be reached at matthew.brasmer@littleflower.org, or at (630) 968-9400, X1421.

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– St. Thérèse

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