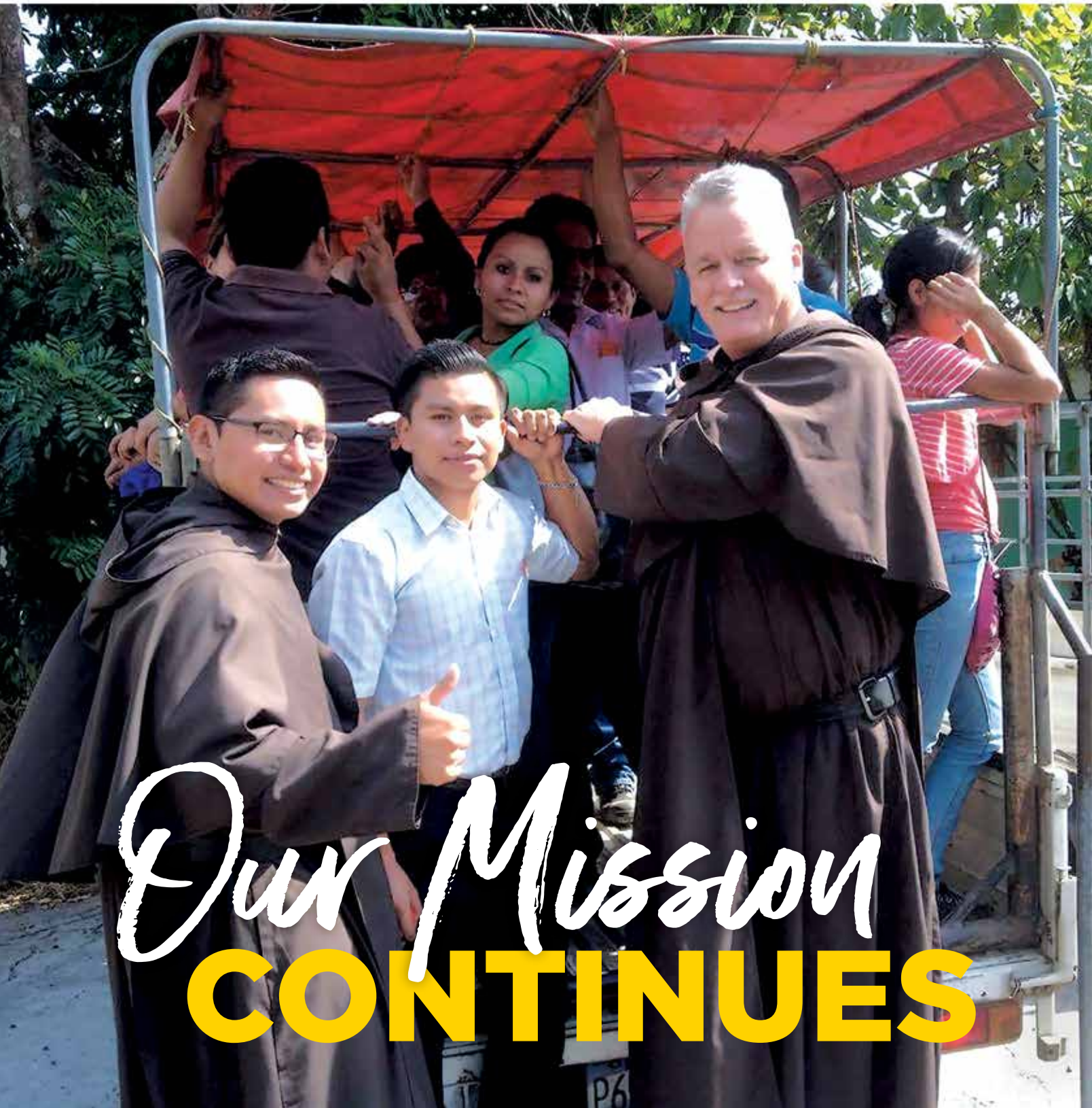


Between Friends

A publication for the Friends of the Society of the Little Flower, Darien, Illinois, and Canada



Our Mission
CONTINUES



Our mission continues

>> Rev. Thomas Schrader, O. Carm. Director

Dear Friends,

I pray that you are experiencing good health and much happiness as you receive the latest issue of *Between Friends*.

In this issue, you will read some exciting news of Carmelites in formation, testimonials from Don S., a World War II veteran on his faith for our beloved St. Thérèse, and so much more! I also have been busy with trying to meet many of our faithful friends of the Society of the Little Flower and listen to all the wonderful

stories. Don't be surprised if you receive a phone call from me!

The Carmelites you support continue to do wonderful ministries, not only to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and devotion to St. Thérèse, but missionary projects around the world! We are forever grateful! But more importantly, I'm grateful to God and St.

Thérèse for you. You are an inspiration. Your prayers, devotion, and generosity make such a difference in the lives of so many. Fulfilling St. Thérèse's mission of "making God known and loved ... to the ends of the earth" and promoting her powerful spirituality with many of our friends continue to be a great joy of mine.

**Gratefully in her love,
Rev. Thomas Schrader, O. Carm.
Director** 🌹

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Between Friends

A publication for the friends of the Society of the Little Flower

SPRING 2020

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'We're on a mission from God'

MANY OF US WILL RECALL that famous line from a movie that debuted 40 years ago. The main characters were on a mission to raise money for an orphanage.

Today, those of us who love the Little Flower – you and I – continue on our own mission from God. Through the intercession of St. Thérèse, that mission includes bringing God's healing touch to those who are spiritually and even physically broken – the orphans of the world who have been forgotten or abandoned.

And thanks to you, our mission will carry on for many years to come!

Through your faithful support of the Society of the Little Flower, the Carmelites, who established our Society almost 100 years ago, are able to lift people up from some of the most dire of circumstances.

For example, because of you:

We are able reach out to those who are spiritually broken; each year, thousands from around the world visit the National Shrine of St. Thérèse in Darien, Illinois, to seek healing.

Carmelites are able to minister to children and families in the United States, Canada, and beyond – including those who are in need of some of life's basic necessities,

providing food, water, and education.

Our seminarians are able to answer God's call and pursue their vocations; these are men who will not only touch the lives of those who are looking to deepen their faith, but also those who have given up on their faith, bringing them back to the Church.



Mary Thérèse Lambert
Editor of *Between Friends*

It is not an exaggeration to say that lives are being saved in so many ways because of what you make possible.

This issue of *Between Friends* is entitled: "Our Mission Continues." And so it does, thanks to you. May God bless you for the many miracles you make possible through your support of the Society of the Little Flower!

Please continue to write to us. Though we cannot publish all of the wonderful letters we receive, we love to read them! Thank you for understanding. Let us know if there is some topic or subject you'd like to read about in *Between Friends*. 🌸

■ Send any suggestions or comments to: Mary T. Lambert, Society of the Little Flower, 1313 N. Frontage Rd., Darien, IL 60561-5340



■ Our Carmelite formation students are grateful for prayerful and financial support you provide for them. You are a significant part of their formation.

OUR MISSION CONTINUES – CARMELITES IN FORMATION

T HE GOD OF LOVE AND PRESENCE is always calling every one of us to reflect the image and likeness God created us with. Our vocation is to respond to the call to beloved intimacy and to unveil that to others.

In our Catholic tradition and history, groups and communities have arisen to live and proclaim the mission and God's kingdom. Among them is the Order of Carmelites, amid the rainbow of charisms to image God.

The original Carmelites were Crusaders from Europe, who were so disillusioned with the wars and violence associated with the Crusades. They were so disappointed that they decided not to return to Europe, but to stay in the Holy Land on Mount Carmel, the "garden of God," the mountain of Elijah, who sought intimacy with God and listened to the divine whisper of hope and presence. They settled in the *wadi-ein-Siah*, a dry river bed, which reflected the state of their disillusioned souls. They lived as hermits in caves for a while, but eventually needed the prayerful support of others in community. In the 1180s they built a chapel and named it after "Our Lady of this Place" – amid the darkness of disillusionment, they were aware that the Lady of Nazareth was so open to God's presence that she might rekindle the spark of faith and presence in them. Nazareth is just across the Jezreel Valley

from Mount Carmel. They believed Mary, Our Lady of this Place" would open them to experience Emmanuel, the God Who is with us!

Within 100 years, as Islam reclaimed the Holy Land, the Carmelites gradually migrated to Europe and became a more mendicant order, in service of and by the request of the Church. They continued to claim the "Lady of the Place" or "The Lady of the Mountain" to help them live in God's presence. She would continue to teach them that, wherever they are, God is with them. Carmelites understand Mary as "our Sister in faith" - she stands besides us, making us more aware that where we are is holy ground. Carmelites are officially called the "Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel."

In the 13th and 14th centuries, when the Carmelites, along with many other religious communities, were threatened with suppression, the tradition arose that St. Simon Stock had a vision of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, who told him that if the Carmelites wore their apron or habit in faith, that she would take care of them. The Carmelites survived and the tradition of the Brown

Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel developed and continues to invite people to live under Mary's mantle and know God's presence.

For more than 800 years, Carmelites have tried to live in and unveil the presence of God amid the human reality. We practice an "earthly mysticism" that seeks and sees God in the ordinary details and experiences of life. The hiddenness of God is the place of revelation – so we practice the quiet prayer of listening, going to our inner room, as Jesus asked us - and living attentively and intentionally in faith.

The Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel have gone through many ups and downs in the last 800 years. At present, the Order of Carmel is growing around the world, even as it seems to be shrinking in the Northern Hemisphere.

Our Carmelite Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary was begun in the USA in the 1860s by some German Carmelites who sought to continue the mission in the new world mission. We have grown in many ways and gone through many transformations.

The Society of the Little Flower began in 1923 when our province was getting many vocations and the Carmelite nuns in Lisieux needed financial support for the canonization of St. Thérèse. The members of the Society of the Little Flower have supported this vocational growth and ministries for almost 100 years.

Generous people like you continue to support men in formation and ministry. You hold a special place in our heart!

Our Provincial Formation Program is done in conjunction with the St. Elias Carmelite Province on the East Coast. At present, there are 50 men in our Formation Program, which involves: one-year Pre-Novitiate Program; the one-year canonical Novitiate Program, which can lead to First Profession of Simple Vows for three years, followed by a first year of theology in Washington, D.C.; and then two years of Internship experiencing one of our

active community and ministries. It is a time of serious mutual discernment. Through agreement, the young Carmelite returns to Whitefriars Hall in Washington, D.C., for three years of theology at the Catholic University of America, which culminate in a master's degree in divinity. During these three years, there is continued discernment for Profession of Solemn Vows for Life and then for ordination to the diaconate of service and the priesthood. is a long and intense process of serious and responding to God and each other.

The goals and value of this formation process are emotional maturity, genuine spirituality, empathy, and the ability to share life with other men in community and listen to people and the signs of the times. It involves their philosophical and theological education, an immersion into the richness of Carmelite Spirituality and charism, learning to live in a multicultural community and experiencing the internationality of the Carmelite charism. We want people grounded in real life experiences who are seeking and unveiling God's presence in everything and everyone, including themselves.

Our Carmelite formation students are grateful for the prayerful and financial support you provide for them. You are a significant part of their formation. They are continuing the mission by giving their lives to God working in human history. 🌹



Father Bob Colaresi, O. Carm.



Giving Warmth

It was a very special day at the Society of the Little Flower when Father Tom Schrader opened a box addressed to him from Elizabeth (pictured above), who lives in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and found 60 hand-knit baby hats packed carefully inside. “I was astonished at what I saw, imagining the care, work, and time that our friend Elizabeth poured into creating the beautiful hats,” Father Tom recalls.

On the note to Fr. Tom she included, Elizabeth wrote, “I am enclosing about 60 baby hats that I made, hoping you can use them in your missions. I enjoy making hats and please let me know if you could use or want more. I am 90 years old and can’t do much else. I would love to hear from you.”

Since then Fr. Tom and Elizabeth have exchanged more notes and Elizabeth has knitted 32 more baby hats for our Philippine missions. “These expressions of God’s love are giving warmth and comfort to babies in need and joy to the hearts of their families. We are so grateful to Elizabeth for her precious and generous gifts,” Father Tom shares. 🌹

2020 PILGRIMAGES

of FAITH Led by Father Bob Colaresi, O. Carm



Carmelite and Colonial Spain

April 26-May 7, 2020

The focus of this pilgrimage is on **Teresa of Avila** and **John of the Cross**, the great Carmelite Doctors of mysticism and spirituality. It is of special interest to those who follow Carmelite spirituality of the Divine Indwelling Presence Who creates an enchanted world of grace. We also celebrate the history and heritage of Spain, including the Islamic and colonial elements, which takes us to **Seville, Cordoba, and Granada**, along with the central and northern cities of **Madrid, Toledo, Salamanca, Fontiveros, Avila, Alba de Tormes, and Segovia**.

Cost: \$4,500 for double occupancy.

Holy Land

November 1-12, 2020

We return to our spiritual home and reflect on the Scriptures. Starting in **Jerusalem**, we visit the **Mount of Olives, Bethlehem, Ein Karem, Way of the Cross, Western Wall, Masada, Judean Wilderness, Ein Gedi, Emmaus**, and then to the **Galilee**, visiting **Mount Carmel, Jaffa, Nazareth, Cana, Caesaria, Sea of Galilee, Capharnaum, Mount of Beatitudes, Caesaria Philippi, and Mount Tabor**. A powerful experience into the heart of Christianity, the life of Jesus and our Jewish heritage. Cost: \$4,500 (double occupancy).



For further information, full brochure, and registration form, please contact: Carmelite Spiritual Center, 8419 Bailey Rd., Darien, IL 60561 - 630.969.4141 - retreats@CarmeliteSpiritualCenter.org

Days of *Renewal* with Fr. Jack Welsh, O. Carm.

For further information and registration please contact the Carmelite Spiritual Center
8419 Bailey Rd., Darien, IL 60561 - 630.969.4141 - 630-969-4141- retreats@CarmeliteSpiritualCenter.org

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Saturday, April 25, 2020 | 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

► In telling the story of her life, Carmelite St. Thérèse said she was singing the mercies of the Lord. In her Christmas conversion, she learned to let go of herself, and to think of others. She said Jesus was able to extricate her from the “narrow circle in which I was turning.” St. Thérèse was convinced that God is not looking for people to punish; God is looking for people who will open their lives to God’s transforming love. The saint’s “Little Way” is a way of confidence and trust in God.



OVERNIGHT RETREAT:

Mary, Mother of God, Our Sister in Faith

**May 8-9, 2020, Arrive Friday, 5 p.m.;
depart Saturday, 3 p.m.**

► Vatican II situated Mary within the community of believers, not above it. Mary is the preeminent saint within the community of saints. We pray that what God’s grace did in Mary’s life, God is doing in our life. In celebrating the work of the Spirit in her life, we have to celebrate that same work in our life. She is blessed, and we are blessed. Her memory challenges us to cooperate with God’s grace and promote the reign of God through deeds of compassion and justice, including justice for women.



REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS 3 DAYS PRIOR TO EACH EVENT.

Day retreat includes coffee/rolls, lunch, (after lunch, explore campus, museum, book store, gift shop), daily reflections, Eucharist, and time for personal recollection. Two-day retreat also includes meals and overnight lodging.





BY FATHER BOB
COLARESI,
O. CARM

Our Mission CONTINUES

**ONE OF
THE GREAT
WAKE-UP
CALLS OF
MY LIFE
WAS ABOUT
30 YEARS
AGO.**

As a young priest, I assisted at an Italian ethnic parish on weekends, even as I taught at a Catholic high school. One Sunday, a family came late and was forced to sit in the front row of the crowded church – Mom, Dad, and three girls. After Communion, I was standing in front making some announcements about parish activities. One of the girls was hanging out of the pew looking at me. At first, I was distracted, thinking she would fall – but she looked upright and reached out her hands toward me. Being the extrovert I am, I reached down and she ran toward me and jumped into my arms. The congregation awed with delight. So she and I made the rest of the announcements together – and then she ran back to her mom and dad with a big smile. Leaving church, so many people said: “Thank you for being so human for us!” I was touched and I realized that my action was more powerful than the “profound” homily I had given them earlier.



I was gone the next week. Two weeks later, I was rushing to get there and encountered the same family, now knowing we all would be late. The mother asked, “Where were you last week?” I told her I was out of town. She informed me that when Mass started, Amy asked her, “**Where is God?**” She told me she pointed to the tabernacle and the giant crucifix of Jesus. But Amy said: “**No, God in the green dress!**” I laughed because in late January we wear green vestments. But the mom looked at me intensely and said: “You’ll always be God for Amy, because you hugged her at a sacred time!” I was humbled and embarrassed! Yet it awakened me to the simple difference actions make. I thought I was there to speak profound truths. Amy knew better. Actions speak louder than words. **Amy helped free me early on in my ministry to appreciate that my extroverted nature was more important than my smooth words.**

Amy taught and awakened me to be **more aware of the Divine Indwelling Presence within me and allow it to flow freely, intuitively.** It was Thérèse’s “Little Way” without reflection or intention – just letting the Spirit flow through me!

Everyone and everything makes a difference in our mutually interconnected universe. This is essential to our belief as Catholics, Carmelites, and the body of Christ.

Each and every person, group, or organization has a purpose in God’s plan. This includes St. Thérèse, the Carmelites, and you! Our impact on others makes a difference and is part of God’s plan. Little 5-year-old Amy was making a significant difference in my life – that eight years of seminary training had not taught me.

Our mission is how the Holy Spirit energizes and sustains us in our world. We are not just here for ourselves. As St. Thérèse’s Christmas conversion taught her and us: “It’s not about you! You are here for others!” As Thérèse was prone to preoccupation, hearing that whisper from Jesus changed her life.

There are no accidents or mistakes. God uses everyone and everything to bring His beloved creation to its fulfillment. The beautiful word that Jesus breathes on His disciples is “Shalom.” While we often translate this as “peace,” its Hebrew roots mean

“wholeness, connection, completion, fullness in an organic deep intimacy.” When we wish “Shalom,” we wish: “May you be whole.” It is the very definition of holiness: “That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (Jn 17:21)

Basically it comes down to believing that everything belongs, because everything is God’s. In the mysterious and powerful ways God works on our world, everything is graced – and somehow is part of God’s plan and presence. This is an enchanted universe, despite what pessimists and non-believers think.

Our beloved St. Thérèse teach us that **“everything is grace!”** Many of us would rather make dualistic judgments about what is good or bad, holy or secular. Our Christmas celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Word made flesh, celebrates divinity and humanity merging in an irrevocable way, because of “Emmanuel,” God with us, in faithful, unconditional love!

All the monastic and mendicant religious communities have charisms – gifts or perspectives of how we see, understand, and share God’s presence. Like a rainbow of colors, all are important in creating the beauty and glory! **The charism of the Carmelites,** the religious community, family and spirituality that St. Thérèse, I, and you belong to – you by your prayerful and generous financial support – **is about Presence – God’s presence!**

We strive to awaken people to the presence of God deep within them – and around them. Our mission is to spread the Good News, as Jesus asked us. Our Christian, Catholic, Carmelite mission is to awaken people to God’s unconditional presence and love. That we believe we are in Christ – the Universal Christ of all creation – and He mirrors who we are as God’s blessed and beloved daughters and sons, with the dignity, glory, and responsibility this entails. God really trusts us to continue the mission of His kingdom – and as Thérèse said: “to go to the ends





of the earth to make God known and loved!"

We all continue that mission, using the gifts, talents, treasure, hungers, and hopes of our hearts and lives. But first of all we have **to experience it ourselves: that God first loves us!** Our mission is to share what we have been given. Gratitude and generosity go hand in hand.

All the Carmelite saints, including St. Thérèse, teach us the interior life. How many of us live on the surface and have no depth of our experiences? We react to life outside us, but we don't live from life within us. Mysticism is to be aware of your experiences of God.

Last fall, at the General Chapter of the worldwide Carmelite Order, our beloved Pope Francis challenged the Carmelites to be a "school of contemplation." He stated: "Carmel is synonymous with the inner life ... becoming anxious about a thousand things, but not being rooted in God results in losing the way. Carmelites have taught women and men to live more 'inside' than 'outside' themselves, to go toward the deepest center, who is God!" Then he went on to state that people who are centered in God develop compassionate hearts; they overflow with caring and love for others in need. External actions of ministry and service flow from within – from God!

"Our Mission Continues" as we allow God's invitation to union and communion to embrace and define us as individuals. We pray in silent presence more than words; instead of telling God how to be God, we trust God knows what we and the world need.

Our Mission Continues in our Carmelite Spiritual Centers, where we provide places and programs for *people to respond to God's hunger for them and to expand their commitment to God's kingdom*. On their websites, you will see the inspirational programs offered at Darien, Illinois, and Niagara Falls, Ontario: www.CarmeliteSpiritualCenter.org or www.Carmelniagara.com.

Our Mission Continues as we humbly acknowledge our dependence on God as the source of all good – we place our petitions and hopes in God's hands, aware that St. Thérèse and her Carmelites are praying.

Our Mission Continues as we belong to this *community of prayer* – that we pray for each other within this faith community of the Society of the Little Flower, which is a dynamo of divine energy, faith, and goodness!

Our Mission Continues as we support Carmelites in ministries in more than 50 countries around the world – especially helping people in developing nations, enabling them to reclaim their God-given dignity and address the crippling effects of poverty, ignorance, violence, hunger, lack of health care, clean water, and job possibilities. You enable this Gospel mission to continue.

Our Mission Continues in our Carmelite ministries: *parishes, schools, places where we serve*. We are involved in ministries to help the people who fall through the cracks of society through

homeless shelters, food pantries, health centers, transitional housing, visiting senior homes, prison visits ... the list goes on and on. In the Canadian Corner, Father Gerard explains the life and ministries of the Carmelite Parish of St. Patrick's in Niagara Falls, Ontario. This is one wonderful example that is repeated in so many of our ministries.

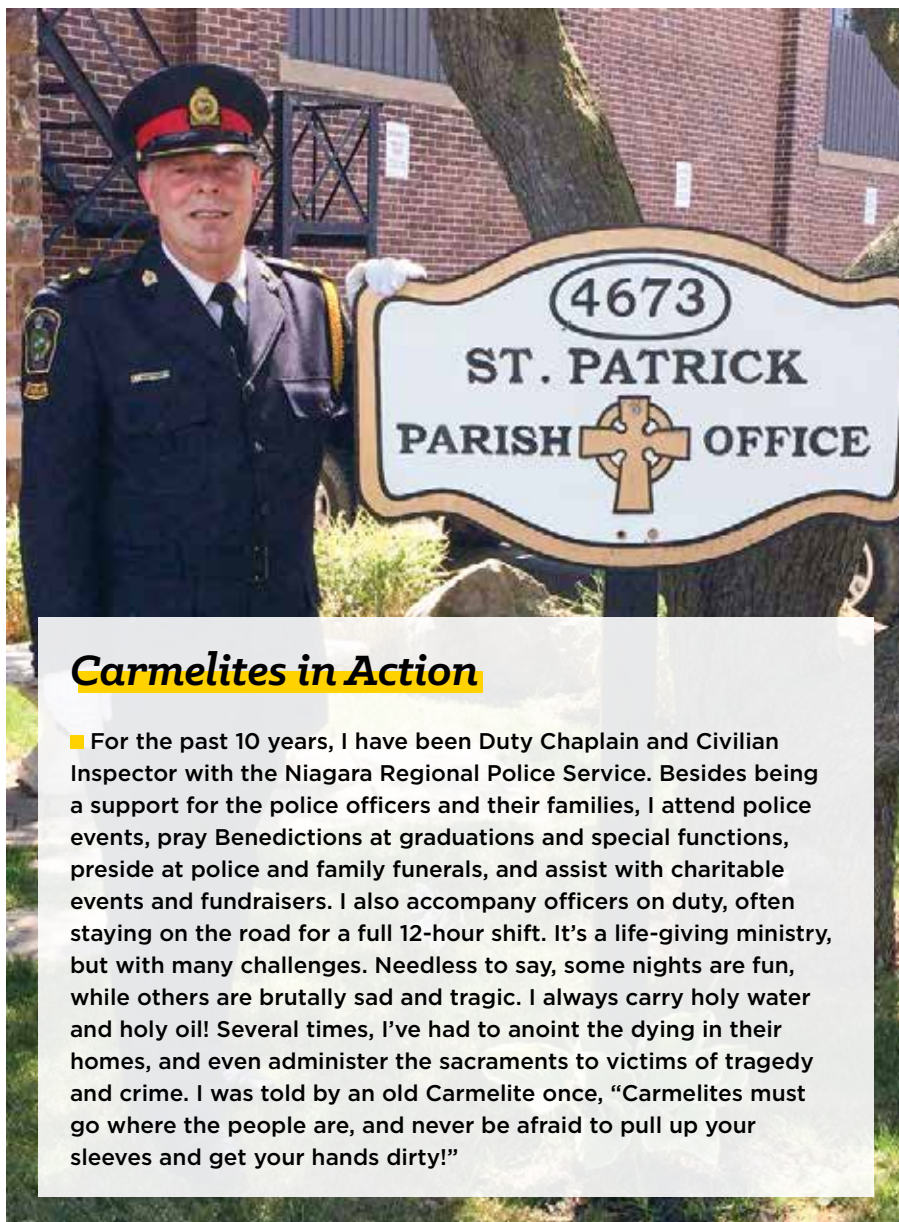
People in Carmelite ministries are challenged to reach out and help others – our wonderful words must become enfolded in concrete actions to help and ennoble others. We know the biblical mandate that we are our brothers'/sisters' keepers! We make a visible and significant difference!

Our Mission Continues because Carmelites stress human relationships. In many of our ministries, we stress *human contact*. We just don't contribute money or food – we encourage face-to-face meetings so that human contact can help us experience the face of Christ in people we would not usually meet. We see that they are as human as we are, with the same hopes, dreams, and hurts. They are not objectified categories we can judge, but real people – God's people! Like us!

You make it all possible. *You continue the Gospel mission*. We are grateful to God and St. Thérèse for you!

And the mission continues as God never gives up on us. twenty years after my Amy experience of the "green dress," I was dismissing the young children at Mass for their Liturgy of the Word lessons and one young boy pulled at my vestment as I was explaining the Gospel and asked: "Why do you wear this green dress?" The community roared. It was reminder of who and what we are about! 🌹

We all continue that mission using the gifts, talents, treasure, hungers, and hopes of our hearts and lives. But first of all we have to experience it ourselves: that God first loves us!



Carmelites in Action

■ For the past 10 years, I have been Duty Chaplain and Civilian Inspector with the Niagara Regional Police Service. Besides being a support for the police officers and their families, I attend police events, pray Benedictions at graduations and special functions, preside at police and family funerals, and assist with charitable events and fundraisers. I also accompany officers on duty, often staying on the road for a full 12-hour shift. It's a life-giving ministry, but with many challenges. Needless to say, some nights are fun, while others are brutally sad and tragic. I always carry holy water and holy oil! Several times, I've had to anoint the dying in their homes, and even administer the sacraments to victims of tragedy and crime. I was told by an old Carmelite once, "Carmelites must go where the people are, and never be afraid to pull up your sleeves and get your hands dirty!"

United in Prayer

■ If you visit any Carmelite Community and have the pleasure of celebrating Eucharist with us, or joining in our Morning and Evening Prayer in one of our chapels, one of the first things you will notice is that there is always an Intercessory Prayer of Thanksgiving for the donors and members of the Society of the Little Flower, and all our benefactors. Or you may hear, "For the intentions of the friends of the Little Flower Society." You are never forgotten, and you are deeply appreciated. St. Therese spoke of prayer as a burst from the heart. Our Carmelite prayers are bursts from our heart to God for you! Even as the snow flurries blow across our chapel windows in Canada, or the canna lilies dance gently in the breeze, or the leaves fall and dance about, we Carmelites raise you and your intentions, your needs, up to God. You have blessed us in so many ways, and for that we are eternally grateful. It is simply profound when we are all joined in prayer, no matter the season. And we must always remember that no prayer goes unheard.

St. Patrick's Feeds and Clothes the Children

■ Another hands-on ministry at St. Patrick's is our Breakfast Program. Throughout the school year, we provide breakfast every morning for our local children. No one can learn on an empty stomach. With donations from our parishioners and local businesses, grants from our Carmelite Province, and with the assistance of many volunteers from our pews, this is such a joy-filled ministry. Besides providing the children with food, we also make available many clothing items, including school uniforms. Every Advent, we have a parishioner who volunteers to make Christmas Gifts available for the children to give to their parents. The children come into the Parish Hall, choose the gifts they like, and walk away with the gifts wrapped for their parents and ready to place under their tree. If we can bring joy to the hearts of children, there's hope for the future.





St. Patrick Response to the Refugee Crisis

■ Three years ago, even before Pope Francis called for every parish in the world to sponsor a refugee family from Syria, our Parish of St. Patrick in Niagara Falls (which has been served by the Carmelites since 1875) had already begun to rouse the people in doing something. Before long, we raised enough funds to sponsor two families. And so the process began. Eventually, we received a family of three, and then a family of four from Damascus, via a Lebanese camp. It was an overwhelming joy for our parishioners, and a life-changing experience for the families. "Lord, when did we see you a stranger and

welcome you?"

To see so many parishioners actively involved in helping these families become settled was simply Faith in Action! We gathered enough furniture for several houses, every household item conceivable, linens, and much clothing and food. Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre also helped with many donations! After the needs of the refugees were attended to, we were able to furnish several apartments for local needy families in Niagara Falls. Word is on the street that if you need something, go to St. Pat's because they will help you.

Both families have done extremely

well. Our parishioners found jobs for the parents; three years later, they are becoming Canadian citizens. One mother has been working at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre! One family has saved enough money to purchase their own house. It's such a joy to see these Syrian families at Mass every weekend, and to see the children doing so well in our Catholic schools. It goes without saying, "You can't tell a Carmelite, or a Newfoundlander, that something can't be done!" You just put your hands to the plow and invite everyone around you to put their hands to the plow. Before long, we have a field ready for new life! Praise God! That's the spirit of the Carmelites in action, to be with the people, tending to the needs of everyone.

Our Mission Continues

■ The greatest joy of being a Carmelite in a parish in Niagara Falls, is the opportunity to put flesh on the Gospel of Jesus Christ in concrete ways. We also allow ourselves to be inspired by the Carmelite saints, to move beyond ourselves. Inspired by the Blessed Virgin

Mary, our Sister, and by our spiritual father, the prophet Elijah, we are called to keep our eyes open, our hearts open, our ears open, our hands open, and our feet ready. This message gets imbedded into the hearts of our parishioners, and, as a result, good things happen. We see where there's a need. We hear the cries of the poor. We feel the sufferings of others, and we take our hands and feet to them. 🌹

■ **Father Gerard Power, O.Carm.** is the new Director in Canada of the Society of the Little Flower. Father Gerard was born in St. John's, Newfoundland, and raised in St. Mary's Bay. He joined the Carmelites in Washington, D.C., in 1993, professing his simple vows in Middletown, New York, in June 1995. He professed his Solemn Vows at Mount Carmel Monastery Chapel in Niagara Falls in 1998 and was also ordained to the priesthood at the Monastery Chapel in 1999. He was the last Carmelite ordained in the last millennium. Father Gerard currently serves as Pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Niagara Falls. He also serves on several boards and commissions within the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary. He has been a Civilian Inspector and Auxiliary Chaplain with the Niagara Regional Police Services since 2009.



Father Gerard Power, O.Carm.

Ways to Support St. Thérèse's Mission

■ **THERE ARE AS MANY WAYS** to advance St. Thérèse's Little Way as there are friends who are devoted to her. One of those ways is by supporting the Society of the Little Flower to ensure that St. Thérèse's mission continues through her National Shrine and spiritual campus, Carmelite ministries, and the education of seminarians.

Our role in the Office of Special Gifts is to help donors achieve their goals for support in ways that best fit their circumstances. Gifts of every size given in any form provide essential funds to the Society of the Little Flower. Thank you for all you do!

Most donors choose to donate by check or credit card. Below are additional ways to give that can provide extra benefits to donors and vital support for St. Thérèse's mission:

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES

- Little Flower gift annuities provide donors with a fixed stream of income (much of it tax-free) for themselves or loved ones for life. The gift remainder supports St. Thérèse's mission through the St. Thérèse Endowment Fund.

BEQUESTS

- Including a gift for the Society of the Little Flower in one's will or living trust is a simple and powerful way to provide a legacy for St. Thérèse that will help to ensure a strong future for her Carmelites and their ministries.

GIFTS FROM IRA ACCOUNTS

- Individuals who are 70 ½ or older can donate directly from their IRA. The distribution to charity is not taxed as income (as a normal distribution is) and can be counted toward one's required minimum distribution for those 72 or older. Your IRA administrator can share how this type of gift would fit your situation.
- In addition, donors of any age can name one or more charities as a beneficiary of their IRA. Since individual (vs. charitable) IRA beneficiaries have to pay income tax on withdrawals from an inherited IRA, this can be a better asset to leave to charities you wish to provide for through a future gift.

GIFTS OF APPRECIATED SECURITIES

- Donating stock or mutual fund shares that have increased in value (when owned for more than one year) allows donors to make an impactful gift to the Society of the Little Flower that does not incur capital gains tax.

To learn more about the variety of ways you can donate to the Society of the Little Flower, please call the Office of Special Gifts at 1.888.996.1212. We will be so pleased to talk with you about your goals for supporting St. Thérèse's mission and provide information about different gift types. Thank you for all you do to honor and thank St. Thérèse. God bless you! 🌹



Spreading Devotion to St. Thérèse

Mary Ann grew up in a Catholic family with priests and nuns as relatives, and attended Catholic school. She felt very special as a triplet, and then as a twin when her identical sister died.

She first learned about Thérèse when her family was given a series of books on the saints. "The minute I read about St. Thérèse, I felt a special, close bond with her," Mary Ann shares. "They still publish those books. Two of the people I gave the book to have asked me to be their Confirmation sponsor and they picked Thérèse for their name!"

As a child, her missal was filled with Thérèse holy cards. She was always in front of the Little Flower's statue in her church. The same statue is in the cathedral in Charleston, South Carolina. She has 130 books on Thérèse, including the two she had as a child. "It has taken me many years to get to know Thérèse and to understand what Jesus is saying to me through her. I have had a few Christmas conversion moments. She has always been with me."

Following Thérèse and the Carmelites, Mary Ann became a Third Order Carmelite 16 years ago. In 2013, she visited the National Shrine of St. Thérèse here in Darien, Illinois. "I was so blessed to visit your Shrine. What a dream come true! To touch Thérèse's actual door and floor tiles from her room in the Carmel of Lisieux was amazing!"

During her visit, Mary Ann shared with Father Bob Colaresi that she has made the Society of the Little Flower a beneficiary of her will. "I strongly believe that spreading St. Thérèse's message is very important. I want everyone to know and love her and to love Jesus and Mary as she did." She also supports St. Thérèse's mission through the Society of the Little Flower as a monthly Circle of Roses donor.

Mary Ann is committed to sharing Thérèse with others to help them on their spiritual journey. The children in the after-school program in the Catholic school where she worked knew she loved Thérèse. "St. Thérèse was our patron and I was always talking about her or giving the children holy cards." One day, Mary Ann hopes to bring her daughter and granddaughter, who will inherit her books on Thérèse, to visit the new National Shrine of St. Thérèse here in Darien – to share this powerful experience together. 🌹



Elizabeth Wesel
Director of Special Gifts

TURN TO ST. THÉRÈSE

Many can testify that St. Thérèse has been their co-pilot during some of life's most difficult moments. For one World War II vet, St. Thérèse literally did serve that role; he recently shared his inspirational story with Dave Hrbacek of the *Catholic Spirit* in the Archdiocese of Minneapolis-St. Paul, and is reprinted here.

A 19-year-old Don Stoullil enlisted in the Army National Guard in 1940 with the hope of becoming a pilot. To his disappointment, after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Don was placed in the regular Army and was transferred to Camp Haan in California.

As it turned out, Camp Haan happened to be located near the aviation training facility, March Field. Don stated, "I used to watch those B-17s take off over at March Field. My body was in Camp Haan, but my heart was over at March Field. I wanted to get in the Air Corps."

With the U.S. anticipating a Japanese attack, Don was eventually moved to Alaska to operate anti-aircraft artillery. But his heart was still in the air, and, with the help of a commanding officer, Don was able to go to Anchorage and applied for aviation cadet training.

In 1942, he was accepted into flight school. He chose to be a bomber pilot and in 1943 was assigned to the 303rd Bomb Group in Molesworth, England. It was there that he met Chaplain Father Edmund Skoner.

Soon thereafter, Father Skoner presented young Don with something that would serve as bullet-proof protection throughout his 31 missions: a first-class relic of St. Thérèse. To quote Don: "St. Thérèse, oh, she took care of us – absolutely. She means just about everything because I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for St. Thérèse."

Our beloved saint got Don and his 10-man crew through some mighty



close calls. He recalled one incident in particular, that of a German Messerschmitt fighter plane that was bearing down on him. He was looking out the windshield of his cockpit and saw the enemy plan zooming straight at him with machine guns blazing.

"This is it," he thought, as he braced for the barrage of bullets that he expected to blast through the glass and tear his body. But it didn't happen. Not one piece of lead penetrated the cockpit. The reason? For Don, it was clear: the relic of St. Thérèse protected him and his crew.

Today, Don, who is closing in on 100 years old, lives in a care facility that bears St. Thérèse's name. He also frequents a small prayer space in the facility called the Little Flower Chapel. There, he will often say, "Thank you, Thérèse, for 31." As so many of us do, he knows he owes his life to our patron saint.

Over the past 100+ years, many who have served in the military – throughout the world – can attribute their safety to their devotion to St. Thérèse. She is not only the patron saint of the military, but

also of missionaries, florists, and the sick.

Many of us know her as the patron saint of anyone who feels lost and hopeless. We count on her promise that after her death she will let fall a shower of roses.

Never fail to turn to this young nun who was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope St. John Paul II. At that time, the Pope stated, "Among the Doctors of the Church, Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face is the youngest, but her spiritual path is so mature and ardent, the intuitions of faith present in her writings are so vast and profound, as to have earned her a place among the great masters of the spirit."

When you feel you have nowhere to turn, even in life's most dire of circumstances, turn to St. Thérèse and pray for a rose. You just might get one. 🌹

– Don Stoullil's story was originally written by Catholic News Service's Dave Hrbacek. We are deeply grateful to him for allowing us to use much of his text as we retell this story in *Between Friends*.

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