



Between Friends

A publication for the Friends of the Society of

the Little Flower, Darien, Illinois, and Canada

www.littleflower.org
Summer 2015

Little Flower
Family



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

Little Flower family

from the director

Beloved Friends of St. Thérèse,


We are all part of God's family. Family are the people God chose for us. Friends are people we choose. A family is the container of love and security where God planted us here on earth. Family is simple. Family is complex! Family is the environment where we grow up to learn our true identity as beloved daughters and sons. Family is the relationship of giving and receiving that mirrors the Blessed Trinity — the Divine image and likeness we are all created in.

Our Church is placing a special emphasis on family as God's gift. The nature of family seems to be changing, but its essential role of love and security is eternal. We are looking forward to the October

canonization of Zélie Guérin and Louis Martin, the parents of our beloved St. Thérèse. They created a family where holiness was an essential part of the life-process and relationships. They imaged God's love and presence and

instilled in their family a deep sense of the Divine Presence.

So please enjoy this edition of *Between Friends*. We are more than friends — we are actually family as the Society of the Little Flower, the Friends of St. Thérèse.

The Carmelites are blessed as we are parts of each other's lives and ministries. You are family to us. We remember you each day in prayer and in our hearts, with gratitude. 

Father Bob Colaresi, O. Carm.
Director

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A growing family

>> Mary Therese Lambert, Editor of *Between Friends*



from the **editor**

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When the storms of life gather around, there is no better safe haven than your family. The storms will eventually give way to brighter days, and the memories that endure will be of the people who supported you in those moments of trial.

In the end, love endures.

I came from a big Italian family, comprised of a large and diverse group of family members (might I say characters?). Although we each had our own distinct personalities, we shared many things, including the values that were taught to us at an early age. These were the values that were meant to get us through life. At the top of the list were loyalty and respect.

Although no family agrees with each other all the time, with maturity one comes to realize family ties do bind. Armed with that security, one can reach out beyond the safe and

comforting circle of one's natural family to discover, as writer Jane Howard stated, "a family of choice."

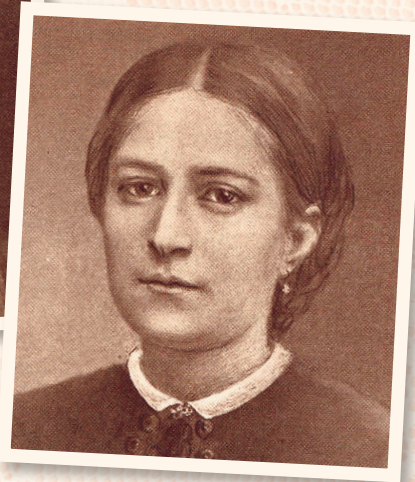
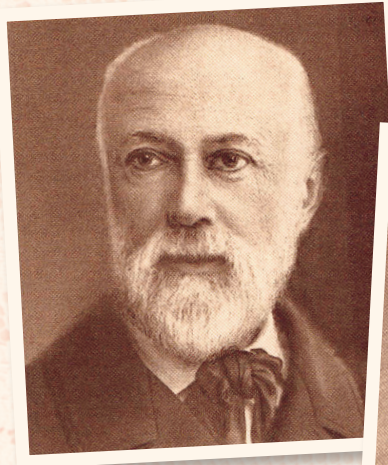
One suspects St. Thérèse may have felt the same when she entered the Carmel in Lisieux. In spite of her mother's death at an early age, her family was incredibly close, guided by the sure and steady hand of her father, Louis Martin. Nonetheless, Thérèse felt a calling to move beyond the security of her home, Les Buissonnets, to join a new home and a new family at the Carmelite monastery. This would be her "family of choice."

As part of the Society of the

Little Flower, you are more than friends of St. Thérèse; you are part of something much bigger. You are family. This is a family that helps and guides one another through prayer and sacrifice, joined around our beloved patron saint.

In this issue, you will learn about how we intend to expand our family even further — reaching out to generations both young and old — through our work in the renovation of the National Shrine of St. Thérèse. You will also read heart-tugging stories about faith and family. They are stories that share a common thread, as they speak to the powerful intercession of the Little Flower. Indeed, her love endures to this very day.

Brothers and sisters, welcome to this issue of *Between Friends*!



The Martin family — our new saints

This October, Pope Francis will canonize Marie Zelie Guérin and Louis Martin, the parents of St. Thérèse, in conjunction with the Extraordinary Synod on the Family. It is a special moment in the history of our Church. Very rarely have married couples been canonized, especially parents who had children. This is especially significant because since Vatican II we have come to a deeper awareness of the primary role of the laity as the People of God. Despite understanding the heroic role of parenting, somehow our hierarchical Church focused more on virginity and the clerical state as more important. We are waking up.

Zelie and Louis Martin are good examples of true holiness. Both were most open to God's will. Louis Martin tried to become a monk, but was rejected because he did not know Latin. Zelie Guérin came from a very strict, Jansenistic background, tried to become a Sister of Charity, but was rejected for health reasons. Both had deep faith. A blind date had them meeting at St. Leonard's Bridge in Alençon. This meeting changed their lives. Three months later they were married.

Given Zelie's strict upbringing, the couple committed themselves to chastity, thinking they would live out the religious vows they originally intended to make. It was their local priest who encouraged them to consummate the marriage and have children. Eventually, they gave birth to nine children, only five of whom lived into adulthood: Marie, Pauline, Leonie, Celine and Thérèse. Despite the pain of the infant deaths of two daughters and two sons, they did not lose their faith in God's providence.

Despite being successful entrepreneurs, they doted on their children. Louis was a successful jeweler and watchmaker. Zelie was an excellent lace-maker and organized a cottage industry making the famous Alençon lace. In fact, she was so successful that Louis retired to help her with her lace business.

As their youngest child Thérèse wrote, "The good God gave me a father and mother more worthy of heaven than of earth." They taught their daughters prayers and the piety of their day. As a family, they went to Mass daily and received the sacraments. But they also taught them a deeper lesson – the lesson of love. They provided an environment where the diversity of their personalities was respected. The girls were challenged to use their gifts well and for others. They were taught their responsibility to the poor. They did not let their privileged status blind their daughters to the plight of others, nor their responsibility to them. Zelie and Louis gave the girls an inner experience of being loved and respected, as well as the challenge of being responsible to live the Gospel.

I think the best example was their attention to young Thérèse, who was hyper-sensitive. She needed to be

noticed. Each morning and evening as she descended or ascended the stairs from her bedroom, Thérèse would stop at each stair and say: "Mama, Mama." Her mother would always respond, "Yes, Thérèse." Thérèse did this on every step. She would not take another until she received a response. This took great patience, but both her mom and dad knew

she needed to develop the confidence in being loved and noticed. It was this attentive presence that developed their more contemplative approach to listening to God's presence deep within them. No wonder four of the five Martin women became Carmelites!

All the Martin girls were taught to trust God – in good times and troubling times, amid joy and sorrow. Both Zelie and Louis taught them to learn of God's providence, both in fulfillment and disappointment. They taught their children, strong-willed as some of them were, to surrender to the sovereignty of God's goodness. No wonder Thérèse ultimately taught "go to Him with confidence and trust – with a childlike simplicity." Eventually, at her darkest moment, she said, "Everything is grace!" The Martin women learned from their parents' faith that God is everywhere.

So despite the popular piety of an angry and judgmental God that had to be appeased, and the joyless piety of many people, it is not surprising that Thérèse and her sisters came to experience the unconditional mercy of God. There was great joy, warmth and a sense of play in the Martin household. Laughter was common. Parents do help form our image of who God is – and Zelie and Louis did that very well.

In some ways, it is strange that all five adult Martin women became nuns. Each felt the call to be brides of Christ and give their lives totally to Jesus and to His Church. They certainly learned this deep covenant love from the sacramental love their parents showed to each other: deep respect, profound presence, and self-giving love.

Zelie died of cancer in 1877, at the young age of 46. She never complained. She told her daughters that God wanted her in heaven. Louis lived much longer, until he was 70, dying in 1894, after a stroke and an emotional breakdown. He sacrificed his life, having given all his daughters away to the Eternal Father.

We celebrate that Sts. Louis Martin and Zelie Guérin Martin are a model of family life most of us can emulate. They lived their faith in a very real way, and shared it with their children – and with us! 🌹



Teresa di Lisieux, 1876.

"Each felt the call to be brides of Christ and give their lives totally to Jesus and to His Church. They certainly learned this deep covenant love from the sacramental love their parents showed to each other: deep respect, profound presence, and self-giving love."



To request a free copy of our booklet, *Family Focused Estate Planning*, please call Dan or Janice in our Office of Planned and Major Giving at 1.888.996.1212.

Make your estate plan a family affair

As much as parents try, it's usually impossible to divide an estate into precisely equal shares – and sometimes that's not a parent's goal. There are ways for parents to minimize friction, however.

- Talk with your children about your intentions, particularly if you're favoring one child over the others. "Favoritism" may be due to health problems, financial setbacks or to "even out" assistance given to others during your lifetime. Whatever the reasons, discuss the plans with your children. Don't surprise them when the will is probated and leave them with the nagging question, "Why?"
- A letter of instruction may prevent disputes over who should receive certain assets of sentimental value. Unlike a will or living trust, a letter of instruction is not a legal document, but it will express your wishes regarding items of personal property and can be updated without the formal requirements of a will. If it's important for one child to have a particular item, consider giving it to him or her now.
- If one child wishes to buy the family home, consider leaving it to him or her in your estate and dividing the rest of the estate among the other children. If the home represents a major portion of the estate, allow the child to purchase the other siblings' shares or place the home in a trust for the benefit of all the children. The child living in the home will pay rent that is then distributed to the others; he or she can also buy the home from the trust.
- When designating assets for the children, consider tax and valuation issues. Naming one

child as the beneficiary of an IRA and naming another as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy may seem "fair," but the child receiving the IRA will owe income tax on the funds as they are withdrawn. The life insurance policy passes tax-free.

- We encourage you to consider the Society of the Little Flower as a member of your family when drafting your estate plan, so you can continue the support you have given during your lifetime. Share the fact that you are leaving a legacy to the Society of the Little Flower as part of your estate plan. It's a message to your children on the importance of furthering the work of the Carmelites and the impact the Little Flower had on your life.

Be sure to let your children know where your will and/or living trust are kept, along with the location of any other documents, such as a living will or health care power of attorney. 🌹

Charitable gift annuities: A wealth of options

A charitable gift annuity with the Society of the Little Flower is an extraordinary way to make a gift, increase your income and reduce your tax bill — all in one transaction. Our gift annuity program is a response to our many friends who have expressed a desire to make a gift of significance, while still retaining income from the gift property during their lives.


A charitable gift annuity is a contract in which you exchange a gift of cash or securities for a fixed income each year for the rest of your life (or for the lives of two people). A gift annuity offers many options:

- **One or two lives** – Your gift annuity can be for one life or, if you wish, it can be paid for the lives of two individuals. Annuity rates are slightly lower for two-life annuities.
- **Payment frequency** – Depending on the size of your gift, annuity payments can be monthly, quarterly, semiannually, or annually.
- **Cash or securities** – Gift annuities may be funded with cash or appreciated securities that you have owned for more than one year. When you contribute stocks, bonds, or mutual fund shares, you'll

minimize the capital gains you would owe if you sold the shares. The remaining capital gains can be spread over your life expectancy, offering favorably taxed income. If you fund your gift annuity with cash, a large portion of the annuity payment will be tax-free for your life expectancy.

- **Immediate or deferred** – You can have payments start in the year of the gift, or you can choose to defer the start of payments until a later date, possibly retirement. Deferred gift annuities offer higher payout rates and larger charitable deductions.

FIVE GREAT IDEAS FOR SOCIETY OF THE LITTLE FLOWER GIFT ANNUITIES

1. The gift annuity can be a most satisfying way to provide financial support for a parent or other family member. For example, Beth, who is age 65, wants to assist her mother, who is age 87. She could contribute \$10,000 for a gift annuity and we would agree to send her mother quarterly checks for life, with lifetime payments continuing to Beth after her mother dies. Their payout rate? Six percent! Part of the payments will be tax-free and Beth will also receive a charitable deduction for a portion of her gift. She is able to assist her mother and provide a thoughtful legacy for the Society of the Little Flower.
2. Walter is like many a baby boomer who is looking to augment his retirement nest egg. The deferred payment gift annuity is an ideal tool by which to support the work of the Little Flower, save taxes now, and establish a solid income for retirement. Deferred annuities provide both attractive payout rates and significant charitable deductions. Let's say Walter, age 55, transfers \$25,000 in appreciated securities for a gift annuity that will begin payments when he reaches age 65. At that time, the Society of the Little Flower will begin paying Walter \$2,125 annually for life. Walter can arrange additional deferred gift annuities in future years and receive larger deductions and higher payout rates as he continues to grow older.
3. In Maureen's will, she is leaving \$100,000 to Little Flower to establish a gift annuity for her sister, Colleen. The gift annuity will provide lifetime payments to Colleen. "I treasure the idea that my sister will have a quarterly reminder of my love and concern for her, and that there will be a continuing bond with St. Thérèse," Maureen said.
4. Linda has served as a care-giver for George and Paula's handicapped daughter for more than 18 years. Now that Linda is preparing to retire, George and Paula want to reward her for her years of service and also provide her with added security in retirement. Arranging a gift annuity is an excellent option, providing lifetime payments to Linda, tax savings for George and Paula, and support for the Society.
5. Steve owns U.S. savings bonds that have stopped earning interest. He could convert the savings bonds into a charitable gift annuity by cashing the bonds and contributing the proceeds to the Society of the Little Flower. He has to report and pay tax on the interest built up on the bonds, but his gift annuity will create a charitable deduction that may reduce or even eliminate the taxes owed. Furthermore, he will receive lifetime payments at an attractive payout rate, part of which will be tax-free during his life expectancy. 

To request a free gift annuity illustration, tailored to your personal situation, call Dan or Janice in our Office of Planned and Major Giving at 1.888.996.1212.



THE LITTLE WAY *to the* LITTLE FLOWER:

A family's path to St. Thérèse of Lisieux

STORY BY JASON T.

I was recently asked how my family came to know St. Thérèse of Lisieux. For my wife, who was raised in a mixed Baptist and Methodist family and did not become a Catholic until later in life, the answer is easy: She learned about St. Thérèse when I suggested that we name our first daughter after her. For me, however, the answer is not as easy. As a cradle Catholic, I've learned about many saints, and have a very special appreciation of St. Thomas Aquinas, after whom I took my confirmation name. I had a basic knowledge of St. Thérèse, but never really devoted time to learn about her or study her writings. I've always been drawn to the towering intellectuals of the Church, and it is a great hope and prayer of mine that the Church will fully return to inculcating in our youth the timeless wisdom of the Angelic Doctor, as urged by Pope Leo XIII well over a century ago.



In case you are wondering, my brief *excusus* regarding St. Thomas actually does tie into my journey toward St. Thérèse. I spent well over a decade as a vigorous apologist for the faith, and in particular the classical, realist philosophical tradition that serves as the foundation for the Church's moral teachings. In all of these intellectual endeavors, however, I was overlooking – and was, in fact, not living up to – the most basic of all moral principles that this vast and great intellectual tradition was developed to defend and nourish: love. For it is written, that of all the virtues, “the greatest of these is love.” (1 Cor. 13:13) Taken a step further, the greatest of all loves is to sacrifice or to endure suffering in loving another, for perfect love makes sacrifice a joy, as proclaimed by Jesus Himself: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.” (Jn 15:13) Thanks to the intercession of St. Thérèse, we discovered the greatest of all loves in our life in the most unexpected way.

Everything in our lives changed when we first learned the tragic news that our first daughter, not yet born, had an untreatable condition. We were told that the condition was not only completely untreatable, but also always fatal. Even if a child is able to survive in the womb long enough to be born, the lack of amniotic fluid in the womb precludes the lungs from developing, which means the child will be unable to breathe in enough oxygen to sustain itself. The child will slowly fade into a deep sleep and pass away.

Being raised by a Catholic grandmother with a strong devotion to our Blessed Mother, and having witnessed her intercession numerous times when darkness came over our family, I showered our Blessed Mother with prayers – more than I have ever prayed in my life – until my heart was black and blue. We did not give up hope, but after each medical test and a definitive MRI confirmed what we feared, it slowly became apparent that our miracle – or at least what we envisioned it to be – was slipping beyond our grasp. After the tests were completed and the medical diagnosis was confirmed, my wife Angela and I were crushed and spiritually destitute.

Nevertheless, we decided to try to be strong for our child and make the most of our situation by setting some very simple goals for our family:

1. To give our child a name;
2. To do everything we could to enable her to be born alive and be baptized; and
3. To allow her to meet her family.

When we set out to achieve the first goal on our list, that is when St. Thérèse elbowed her way into our lives. I knew that I wanted to name our daughter after a saint, but I don't know to this day what made me think of St. Thérèse. While meditating on this one day, I thought of the image of a flower, and the wonderful metaphor that the flower represented within the context of our circumstances. I thought about the image, the similarities between the flower and our daughter; both are small, delicate, sweet, gentle, beautiful, and have little time on this earth in comparison to the length of an average human life. I then remembered that St. Thérèse was also known as “The Little Flower,” and decided to read a bit more about her on the Internet. It didn't take long for me to realize that I had found our saint, the saint after whom I wanted to name our daughter. I emailed an article about St. Thérèse to Angela, and after she read it, she agreed that Therese was the perfect name for our daughter. Her name was more than just a formality: it was a mission statement, a battle cry, and each time we said her name it was as though a trumpet was calling us to battle.

As we embarked on our journey with our Therese, we read more and more about St. Thérèse, and prayed for her intercession along our journey. We still held out hope for a miracle, but it became more and more apparent God's will was not the same as our will. Though I grew up in a family with deep roots in the faith, and with several family members who became priests and nuns, I was never a great Catholic, or even that good of a Catholic, for that matter. Angela and I went to Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days, and I had always fully believed in and defended the Church and its teachings, but we were not – and for that matter, are still not – spiritual athletes by any stretch of the imagination. We are relatively normal people and are thus normal sinners like any other average person. We wondered whether we could make it through our darkest hour, and were not sure if our battered souls were capable of weathering such a tumultuous spiritual storm. Fortunately, for us and for Therese, God has the ability and the tendency to give extraordinary strength to ordinary people whenever they most need it. In our case, knowing that we are not spiritual athletes, he sent the perfect saint for us: St. Thérèse.

Through her intercession and her “Little Way,” we continued our journey, one step at a time. We set the small, little goals for ourselves that I mentioned above, and did little things that were within our abilities, like making a pilgrimage to Lourdes and bathing in its waters, taking Therese to the Co-Cathedral to hear the organ music (she seemed to become quite animated whenever the pipe organ would play), and praying the rosary before bedtime with her. We had never really noticed or paid much attention to the statue on the wall directly to our left

on the row in which we typically sat in the Co-Cathedral, but one day during Mass I did a double-take after noticing it was none other than St. Thérèse! It was difficult for us to look at her without weeping or tearing up, but we knew she was praying for us and for little Therese. Though I was in a very dark place spiritually at the time, and felt as though my prayers to the Blessed Mother were left unanswered, I now believe that it was through her intercession that St. Thérèse found her way into our lives.

As the days turned into weeks, and the weeks turned into months, the day of Therese's birth drew near. We had made all of the necessary arrangements: Our family would all be at the hospital to meet her shortly after she was born (we did not know how much time she would have), and I had a container of holy water from the Co-Cathedral's baptismal font with which to baptize her once she was born. For the hour and a half or so of her short, sweet time with us after she was born, our family and friends who were with us that day fawned over her, showering her with love. We did not get the miracle we were asking for, but through St. Thérèse's intercession we experienced firsthand and learned the wisdom of her "Little Way" – that is, the way of love and sacrifice. In an ironic twist of fate, our wounded hearts were strengthened in love through our suffering alongside Therese. As we helped our daughter Therese to carry her cross, we got a glimpse of the gravity of sin and the massive weight of the cross that Christ carried for all of us. Though I was once entirely preoccupied with intellectual and doctrinal matters, and thus how to think and reason like a Christian, I came to learn and appreciate, through St. Thérèse's "Little Way," the path of charity and love, and thus how to actually live and act like a Christian.

The interesting thing is that, even after our daughter's death – and in fact, especially after her death – her life continues to touch peoples' hearts. Numerous family members, friends, and people we don't even know have contacted us to remark upon Therese's story, and have informed us that the remembrance that I wrote for Therese has been read in numerous churches, most of which are not even Catholic churches. At Therese's funeral Mass, we had pictures of her on a stand near the altar and at the feet of the statue of St. Thérèse, along with the following quote that we had placed in a pink picture frame: "Enjoy in peace the joy God

is giving you, without worry about the future. He is reserving for you, I am sure, new graces and many consolations. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the Little Flower."

A good friend of my mother's surprised us a little over a year ago with a life-size statue of St. Thérèse that he found in an antique shop. Her statue stands in our foyer, and though it is in need of repair, it stands as an everyday reminder of the state of disrepair in which all of our souls exist and, more importantly, the lasting impact that our daughter, Therese, had on not just our lives, but the lives of many others.

Finding solace in the words of St. John Paul II, "Be not afraid," we decided to once again charge into the fray. We were determined to not allow our own fear to conquer us and prevent us from having what we wanted most: a family.

In retrospect, and in going through the exercise of collecting these thoughts and reflecting on our experience, I have come to appreciate even more the extent to

which St. Thérèse has showered, and continues to shower, our family with roses. Our daughter, Elizabeth, just turned 3, and we will soon celebrate the first birthday of our son, Mance, who looks remarkably like his oldest sister.

Father Robert Barron, a Roman Catholic priest, author, scholar, and Catholic evangelist, makes an insightful observation when he imagines St. Thérèse explaining, likely with a wry smile, that she too is no spiritual athlete like some of her Carmelite predecessors such as St. John of the Cross or St. Teresa of Avila, who are capable of scaling the highest of all spiritual mountains as they ascend upward into the heavens. Father Barron follows up that observation by noting that, as St. Thérèse watches from the base of the mountain while those great spiritual athletes go about their business of climbing it, she merely stretches out her arms upward to her Father in heaven, who then lifts her higher than all the others. For we mere mortals, that is a very encouraging and hopeful proposition, that through St. Thérèse's "Little Way," we all have the ability to be saints. That is why, with all due respect for my namesake and my hero of all heroes, St. Thomas Aquinas, for our family, St. Thérèse and our very own little saint, Therese, are our patron saints. We pray that others will come to know St. Thérèse and find their own Little Way, and experience the shower of roses and love that follows.

"We did not get the miracle we were asking for, but through St. Thérèse's intercession we experienced firsthand and learned the wisdom of her "Little Way" – that is, the way of love and sacrifice. In an ironic twist of fate, our wounded hearts were strengthened in love through our suffering alongside Therese."



2015 PILGRIMAGES

Led by Fr. Bob Colaresi, O. Carm.

FRANCE

JULY 12-21, 2015

A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH FRANCE, FOLLOWING
THE LIFE & SPIRITUALITY OF ST. THÉRÈSE

Cost: \$3,900, double occupancy.



We begin at Lourdes, the most powerful of Marian Shrines, with the issue of healing, living water and hope. Then we fly north to Normandy, the homeland of St. Thérèse, visiting Lisieux, her Carmelite convent, her childhood home, Les Buissonnets, the Basilica and the Cathedral. Then to the Normandy Beaches of Omaha and Utah, and the powerful American Cemetery - to Alençon, where St. Thérèse was born and her parents met and lived, until the death of her Mom - and finally to Paris, where we will experience this magical city with all its historical and beautiful sites, including Versailles.

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

NOV 1-12, 2015

THE FAITH EXPERIENCE OF A LIFE-TIME -
A JOURNEY OF THE HEART AND SPIRIT.

Cost: \$4,275, double occupancy

A biblical journey to where God's revelation happened. Start in Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, Way of the Cross, Western Wall, to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, Ein Karem, place of the birth of John the Baptist and the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth; Zion Hill where the Last Supper, Pentecost and the imprisonment of Jesus took place, to the Judean Desert, the Dead Sea, Massada, and Qumran. Then driving north we visit Emmaus, Jaffa, Caesaria, Mount Carmel, the Galilee, Nazareth, Cana, Capernaum, Mt. of Beatitudes, Sea of Galilee, Tabgha, River Jordan, Mt. Tabor, Beit Shean, and so much more. Highlights include boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, St. Peter's Fish Lunch, Baptismal renewal in the River Jordan, Biblical Passover meal, an Israeli/Jewish Biblical guide and teacher, and Biblical reflections and Mass daily at holy sites.



For further more information, full brochure or registration form, please contact:

Darlene Jindra • Carmelite Spiritual Center • 8419 Bailey Road, Darien, IL 60561

630-969-4141 • retreats@carmelitespiritualcenter.org



I trust in you St. Thérèse

- BY JOE VOSS -

The early evenings were a magical time when the sun would begin to set, the stars would begin to glimmer and gain their shine, the breeze would begin to cool and refresh, and I would walk with my maternal grandfather while we talked in complete peace.

One evening, he pointed to the sky to the constellation of Orion and he told me, "Look, those stars form the letter T and St. Thérèse used to say that God loved her so much that he put that reminder for her in the night sky!" Simply amazed, I asked, "Grandfather, can you tell me more about her?"

I already knew my mother's name was Rosalva Thérèse and my sister's name was Thérèse, but I didn't exactly know all the reasons. My grandfather smiled and answered, "St. Thérèse is a saint of our times and since she was born, she offered her life to God, our Father."

He told me her whole story and how she entered the Carmelite order at 15 and then revealed how, in their gratitude for her incredible miraculous powers, they had decided to name my mother Rosalva Thérèse. He told me, "When your mom was 10 months old, she became gravely ill with meningitis. The doctor was always at her side, until one day, in complete agony and with a sense of loss, he told me there was nothing more that he could do for the baby girl. She could barely breathe and her veins couldn't withstand the needles anymore. The medicines weren't working

and she was unconscious and the doctor just said he would leave and bring the priest for the baby."

My grandfather continued, "I decided to pray to St. Thérèse with my whole heart, all of my devotion, and I said, 'She is my only little girl, I trust in you St. Thérèse, I have so much faith in you, please grant me that this child live.'" His eyes were tightly shut while he prayed and prayed, oblivious to everything but the wish in his heart and his love for the little baby and his trust and faith in St. Thérèse.

His attention finally returned to the child when he

heard little sounds in the crib and he saw the baby moving her little mouth. He gave her water with a little dropper and he was amazed that she was alive and that she took in the water. He ran to the doctor and told him and the doctor responded, "That is impossible. I am really sorry for your pain and your loss, but that just isn't possible."

He implored the doctor to return and said to him, "St. Thérèse has granted us a great favor, please come and see her." The doctor returned and saw the child drinking the little drops from the dropper and exclaimed, "That is truly a miracle."

The miracle is in everything and part of everything now: My mother turned 85 this past April. My parents had 11 children, 35 grandchildren, and 22 great-grandchildren, including my five children.

It's also worth noting that my daughter was also a miracle; she was born after nine years of trying! I also named her Rosalva Thérèse after the sweet saint that did that incredible favor and gave us my mom. Through her, 68 souls continue to honor St. Thérèse of Lisieux. She continues sending her abundant shower of roses! 



Before joining the Society of the Little Flower in 2013, Joe

Voss served the Church in various capacities. In the coming years, he is determined to meet as many friends of St. Thérèse as he can, learning of their spiritual journeys and sharing stories of the impact of their support. Joe can be reached at **888.996.1212**.

Where have they gone?

>> **Daniel Pritchard** is the Director of Planned and Major Gifts for the Society of the Little Flower



Without a doubt, the no. 1 worry that we hear from the friends of St. Thérèse is that their children and grandchildren are no longer going to church. Typically, that worry is immediately followed with a question: “Where did I go wrong?”

Here’s the short answer to that question: “You didn’t.” Allow me to share some startling information with you.

The National Study of Youth and Religion is a research project led by Dr. Christian Smith, a professor from the University of Notre Dame. His team’s research discovered that approximately 70 percent of baptized Catholics leave the Church by the time they are adults. And of that group, 80 percent of them leave by the time they are 23.

To quote the study: “Adolescents seem to be shifting away from conventional religious beliefs. Over the three-year period [of the study], more adolescents reported they were unsure about their belief in God, fewer reported belief in a personal, involved God, fewer reported belief in a judgment day, and fewer reported belief in angels or some form of afterlife.”

So, if you feel that you “went wrong” somewhere along the way, you have plenty of company. The more likely reason for our “fallen away” youth is that there is a societal shift afoot, one that will take great effort and a lot of prayer to counteract.

At the Society of the Little Flower, we have embarked on a very ambitious renovation and expansion program, one that will update and modernize our entire Carmelite campus. It’s an expensive proposition. The reason the Carmelites are investing in this project is simple: We need to reach out to our youth in ways that will appeal to them and show them

a different way to live. We need to find a way to bring them back to God and to the Church. And we firmly believe that a very powerful way to do that is helping them to understand “The Little Way” of St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Pope Pius X called Thérèse the “greatest saint of modern times.” Pope Pius XII called her “the greatest healer of modern times.” St. John Paul the Great, our dear late Holy Father, named her a Doctor of the Church. And our present Pope Francis considers Thérèse his “go-to” saint.

Could all these brilliant spiritual leaders be wrong? Could you and I, as a devoted friends of Thérèse, also be wrong? I think not. The love for her that is expressed from every corner of the globe comes from enthusiastic hearts.

But in addition to our shared enthusiasm, we must act. Here at the Society we believe that we have an obligation to guide our young people along a new path and to challenge them to embark on a different journey than the one that is being promoted by the distracting messages of various media.

How do we intend to accomplish such lofty goals? First of all, with great hope. The Holy Spirit is ever alive, guiding, suggesting, and cajoling each and every person, young and old alike, to reach out to God with confidence. Ours is a God of mercy, who never gives up on anyone. He sees our hearts as no one can. He can see through our bravado, our pretenses, and our fears; He sees each of us as His

beloved child.

We can take comfort in knowing that when we do God’s work – as we are setting out to do here at the National Shrine of St. Thérèse – we simply cannot fail. And the “hound of heaven,” as described by poet Francis Thompson, is our partner in this pursuit of souls.

Please read on to learn the details of how we are going to try to achieve our goal.

First of all, the renovation of the Shrine Museum will soon be complete. This museum is not meant for “display purposes only.” It has been renovated and reconfigured to be a place of education and spiritual renewal. Rather than merely inviting visitors to view what is on display, they will now be able to learn about the life and spirituality of St. Thérèse both visually and through interactive, self-guided tours. Visitors will learn what people and which events shaped the person who told us that “everything works out for the good of each soul.”

We also recently completed a major expansion of our Spiritual Center. This center is located next to the outdoor Carmelite Meditation Garden, within which are the visually stunning Stations of the Cross, a reflection pond, and several places for people to meditate. Due





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to expanding interest in our retreats and days of recollection, our Spiritual Center has tripled its capacity to host various types of retreatants, from individuals to

groups of teens to religious communities. Noted speakers from across the country guide those who come to the center to find a place of peace and solitude.

We also need to expand our capacity to host increasing numbers of people who come to the Shrine to attend daily Mass or celebrate various events in the life of our patron saint. We will be building a new Shrine Chapel to accomplish this goal; the project will be the most ambitious in our history. When completed, the chapel will double our present capacity and will include a special area devoted to the Little Infant Jesus. After all, Thérèse's formal religious name was Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face!

As you might imagine, we will need the help of many to achieve what we have set out to do. But the goal is worth the effort. We must create new and innovative approaches to speak to those who are spiritually lost – whether they

are young or old. This is what we have set out to accomplish, and with God's help and yours, we are sure to succeed.

The encouraging words of the recently deceased Auxiliary Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, Guy Gaucher, give us hope: "There are many signs that a demoralized society is turning again to the Gospels, and that faith, hope, and love are being renewed among the directionless young — signs which show that the life and message of a young girl who 'died for love' of God and humanity will always bear fruit. For she has promised to work for us here on earth, 'to the end of time.' This is plain enough. God always finishes what He begins."

To learn more about our expansion and renovation efforts, including how you can personally help, I can be reached at 1.630.719.2242 or dan.pritchard@littleflower.org. 🌹

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