



Between Friends

A publication for the Friends of the Society of

the Little Flower, Darien, Illinois, and Canada

SHARING THE

light of hope

Light of hope

With spring around the corner, we are reminded that the challenges of life never last. Winter can be a cold and dark time. The chill of winter in the north gives way to the soft rains of spring. The dark days of late December gained more light as the New Year arrived. I take heart in the hope of the slow and certain work of God present in the changing of the seasons.

Like God's work, our task is often more one of slow and steady progress. Day by day and bit by bit, with love, all of our little acts of goodness blend together to make God's reign here on earth possible. I am reminded of Blessed Baptist Spangoli, a Carmelite priest, educator, and reformer who lived during the plague. He was a light of hope to all Christians. His leadership with the Carmelites was optimistic and truthful, as were his

many poems and other writings. In troubled times, he offered a vision of a better world to those around him. Over many years, he wrote and taught in universities and served as a leader to his Carmelite

brothers. At his passing, the world and Carmel still showed signs of many of the troubles he worked to erase. Yet, the world is a better place because of who he was and what he did.

Friends like us make the world a better place for one another. Your love for and devotion to St. Thérèse are proof of that. I believe that like the Little Flower and Blessed Baptist Spangoli, you and I, too, will leave the world a better place because of our commitments to good will and holy living. I hope that this issue of *Between Friends* will help you transform cold to warmth, darkness to light, and sorrows into joys. God bless you! 🌹

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



Rev. Thomas Schrader, O. Carm.
Director

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HOLD ONTO THE *light of hope*

YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD THIS WISDOM: “GOD WRITES STRAIGHT WITH CROOKED LINES.” Looking around, I can see this is true. Even more, I can see that He writes slowly and methodically. The more I ponder recent events, I am beginning to understand that God writes in calligraphy with the care of an artisan.

Around the offices and halls of the Society of the Little Flower, I am hearing a lot of laughter. Around Christmas, I saw many displays of Christian charity—gifts exchanges, delicious foods left in the common space of the cafeteria for all to enjoy, and everybody doing what they can to help those of us going through hard times. The air has the smells of pine, chocolates, and cakes. All these are smooth and attentive strokes of God’s pen in the story of our lives. While many of us have struggled through the losses, I am grateful that most of us are still able to enjoy things as they are.

When I walk around the campus here in Darien, I can see neighbors going for walks. The waters of the pond flow one day and are

iced over the next. Some days, there is snow. On others, there is browning grass which will turn green again. I can envision the new life in store for us. The migrating birds are no longer here, but there are now clear skies. I can imagine the clear skies ahead for our times. Once closed doors at the National Shrine and Museum of St. Thérèse are now being filled with visitors again. The story goes on and on.

While our hearts may be growing weary, I know that we can hold onto the light of hope. The lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the light of Christ will take whatever sorrows, despair, or grief we have and transform them into a new and full life! 🌹

“

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Mary Thérèse Lambert
Editor of *Between Friends*

WE LIVE IN FAITH AND HOPE, *even in the darkness*



**Friar
Ryan-Joseph
Resurreccion,
O. Carm.**

A **MONG THE YOUNG CARMELITES IN OUR PROVINCE,**
RYAN IS A SHINING LIGHT. A native of Los Angeles,

California, he is the youngest of two boys in an observant

Catholic family. His mother had a great devotion to St.

Thérèse. After college seminary, he became a Catholic school teacher, because of the good education he had received.

During those early years, he read St. Thérèse's *Story of a Soul* and he fell in love with her.

Ryan's first spiritual director was an OCD Carmelite and he took the name of John of the Cross as his Confirmation name. The Little Flower seemed to be always in the background of his life. Teaching for 10 years in Catholic schools, he, like so many teachers, was disappointed at students always whining about what they did not like. And for some reasons he started to listen to Thérèse whining like young students. Ryan admits this cooled his love affair with her, as many of us have experienced when we read her life.

But God and Thérèse have their ways. Father Paul Henson, a Carmelite Vocation Director, came into his life and planted the seed to become a Carmelite. In the novitiate, Ryan learned more about her and the deeper aspects of her powerful spirituality. This is happening as his mother was dying; maybe she was handing on the devotion she had to St. Thérèse.

It was a re-awakening as St. Thérèse was reclaiming her role in his spiritual journey. Ryan explains: "She became a beacon

of hope for me—a model to appreciate the small things in a fast-paced world. She helped me appreciate the value of the little things of life, like a smile."

During his recent internship in a Carmelite community and ministry, Ryan commented: "Like recently, St. Thérèse helped me navigate the waters and struggles within COVID while teaching high school boys at Mount Carmel High School in Chicago. She taught me the 'ministry of presence'—often all I could do was just listen to their fears and encourage their hopes."

Both Sts. Thérèse and John of the Cross teach us to deal with the dark nights of life and allow God to transform them through presence, faith, and hope. He is aware that the large stained-glass windows at the National Shrine of St. Thérèse in Darien, Illinois, depict John of the Cross and his Ascent of Mount Carmel, as her life and spirituality more closely parallel his teaching, rather than her namesake, Teresa of Avila.

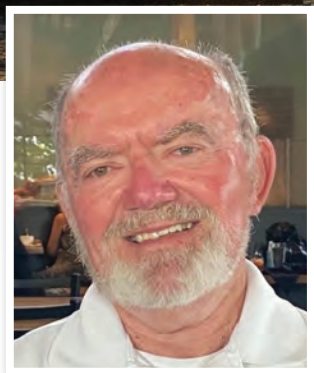
Ryan knows that the Carmelites were founded in the darkness of the Crusades, and that we seek light. At 36 years old, he is dedicating his life as a Carmelite to be the best Carmelite he can be for the students, even in challenging times. He wants to be present to their struggles, and offer them hope and encouragement. "Like Paul did to the Corinthian communities in their struggles, I want to be present to the students in their academic journey, even if it just means being present at their freshman games."

As a tribute to his mother, Ryan's dad has been a regular member of and donor to the Society of the Little Flower. "I'm grateful to the friends of St. Thérèse and members of the Society of the Little Flower because they make our lives and ministries possible, even during formation. We pray for them every day in gratitude for their faith, devotion, and generosity.

"We live in faith and hope, even in the darkness, where God protects us, and never leaves us! I want to share that light and hope with others." 🌹



**By Father Bob
Colaresi, O. Carm.**



**Father Peter
McGarry, O. Carm.**

**A MONG THE SENIOR CARMELITES IN OUR PROVINCE OF
THE MOST PURE HEART OF MARY, PETER MCGARRY IS**

A DELIGHTFUL LIGHT. A son of Irish and English immigrants, he is a native of Chicago, Illinois. He's the youngest of four children who were latchkey kids because both their parents worked nights. They learned quickly to be responsible and take care of themselves and each other.

Peter was a shy young man who had a minor speech impediment. At school, other students made fun of him and his speech. Even when he started at the Carmelite high school seminary in Mount Carmel College, Niagara Falls, the abuse and jokes continued, and migraine headaches plagued him for the next 20 years. The Carmelite priests there told him that he would never make it, but Peter seemed to have some inner spark. Despite being hurt and humiliated by the verbal abuse, he found inner strength to prove himself. He just worked and tried harder. Peter was a fighter!

Peter was held back academically twice and had to repeat two years of schooling. A less courageous man might have given up. Because he was older by seniority, Peter became the senior of the college and had responsibilities. Peers and faculty began to see that there was more to him than was obvious. He credits Father Malachy Smith, the Student Master, with protecting him when other faculty wanted him dismissed. Eventually, the Carmelites encouraged him to get therapy, where he had

to improve his speech problems and his battered self-image: though handicapped verbally, he was not dumb. He had a keen and perceptive mind.

After ordination to the priesthood in 1969, he was sent to Crespi Carmelite High School in Encino, California. While teaching Spanish and history, he earned master's degrees in history and educational administration. During his 14 years there, he served as a teacher, a coach, as Moderator of the Student Council, and as Vice Principal and Principal. He started the Alumni Association and a Development Office. His joyful energy and hope were contagious.

Through it all, people learned that first impressions of Peter McGarry were always wrong. He was intuitive, smart, and perceptive—his heart was always in the right place, even if the words did not flow easily. He became the Carmelite Vocation Director for eight years, and for three years he served as Pastor of the inner-city Parish of St. Gelasius in Chicago. He went to another parish and worked with youth, but the lack of supportive Carmelite prayer life led him to leave and return to Mount Carmel High School in Chicago, prompted by seeing a medal of St. Thérèse that had fallen. He saw it as a sign of her telling him to get a transfer.

The Little Flower was always watching out for her little Carmelite brother, Peter McGarry.

The light and hope which Peter shared with so many came from his courage, energy, and faith. His speech "handicap" became a blessing. Students, faculty members, parents, and parishioners saw his courage to not let the naysayers shrink and define him. He had a "can-do" attitude, which his parents instilled in him. He developed a sense of compassionate understanding of others who struggled and became an instrument of grace for them to deflect naysayers and believe what God believed about them: that they are beloved of God and valuable. Peter knew how to ignite that divine spark in others that has energized his whole life.

As one of his former students and a good friend testified: "Father Peter and the English language might not have always been on the same page, but his heart was focused on us and empowered us to work through struggles and handicaps with courage, hope, and faith." There were always smiles, laughter, and joy when Peter was involved. What a testimony of Gospel living!

Peter always knew that St. Thérèse was about "little things." He lived her "little way of confidence and trust." He knew he was special and accepted that he was small in stature and blessed with a speech handicap, but his large heart made miracles happen and ignited hope and courage in many people's lives. That is what Carmelite beloved sons of God do! And Peter gave his all wrapped in hope and courage.

He expresses profound gratitude for the support of the Society of the Little Flower. "My parents would not have been able to support my education. I am most grateful that you made my life and ministry as a Carmelite priest possible."

Peter turned darkness into light because he allowed his handicap not to shrink him, but to strengthen and transform him so that he could understand others with their problems and struggles. "God gave me a tender heart!" And the light and hope shine on! 🌹

Keeping the lights on

DAYLIGHT BEGAN TO FADE to darkness as I drove from the offices of the Society of the Little Flower to close the National Shrine and Museum of St. Thérèse for the day. Mid-autumn evenings in Darien are peaceful and quieting. With a calm in my heart, I prayed how I would close for the day.

GETTY IMAGES/CHAINARONG PRASERTTHAI

“Lord, should I do my usual routine? Would it be best to close the chapel first tonight? What if there are people who need to pray!” God seemed to respond, “What if there are people who need the museum open longer?”

“OK, I’ll close the museum last.” I looked at the clock; I was already closing late. It seemed that this would be a normal closing. Lights off. Lock doors. Go home.

Parking in front of the shrine, I turned off the chapel lights and secured the doors behind me. Walking to the museum, it felt like a normal day. Lights off. Lock the doors. Go home.

Approaching the main floor of the museum through a dimly lit hallway featuring dozens of statues of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, I saw a rather tall man inspecting the replica of St. Thérèse’s cell. Shoulders drooping, I felt sad to have to tell this visitor that we were past closing. I could hear Thérèse telling me, “Be gentle and kind.”

Calling out softly, “Sir, the museum is closing,” Mary was there. She seemed to say, “You might need to leave the lights on a bit here.” Coming through the doorway at the end of the hall, there were at least three other visitors.

The gentleman approached said, “We won’t be long. Sorry to trouble you.” I responded, “You can stay until the lights are off, it will be about five minutes.” I paused, “Are you all here together?” He responded, “Yes, we are. We just flew in to Chicago and came here right from the airport. You see, it was very important that we came here.”

He then told me how the family of five, one son and two daughters, was only in Chicago a few days. This was their only opportunity to visit. The family and I chatted a bit. It turned out, one of the daughters shares two names with our friend, the Little Flower. She is also a devotee to St. Thérèse. Another daughter wants to be a Carmelite nun and is discerning.

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Inspired, I invited the discerning daughter to pray on the original stones from the hallway outside St. Thérèse’s cell from Lisieux, Carmel. “Thérèse is a powerful saint. Be careful what you ask, she can and will make it happen. Make sure you really want it.” On the stones, she knelt and prayed for a few minutes.

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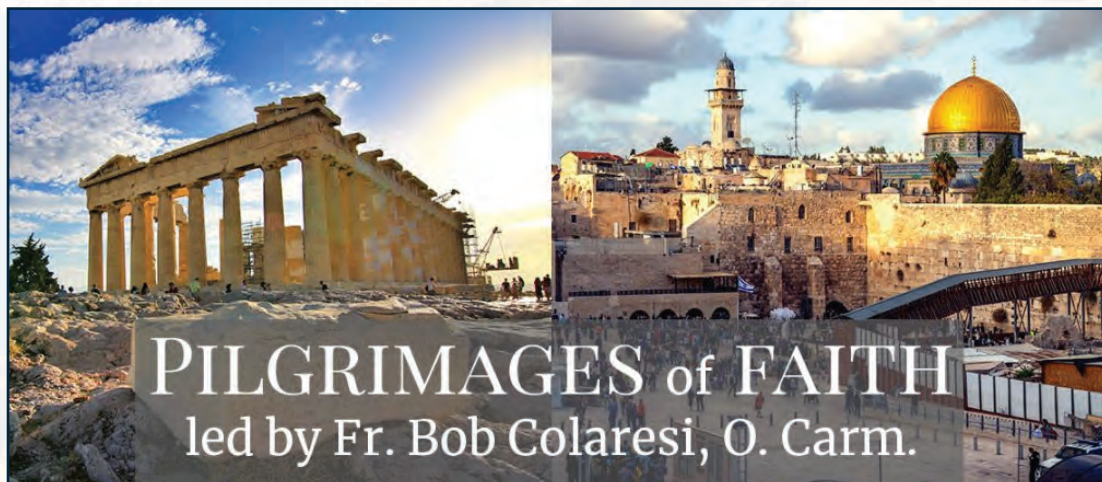
SAINT THERÈSE OF LISIEUX, CARMELITE CONVENT

Inspired, I invited the discerning daughter to pray on the original stones from the hallway outside Saint Thérèse’s cell from Lisieux, Carmel. “Thérèse is a powerful saint. Be careful what you ask, she can and will make it happen. Make sure you really want it.” On the stones, she knelt and prayed for a few minutes.

We left the museum. Lights off. Doors locked. The mother asked for a quick visit to the shrine; I couldn’t say no. Back to the shrine.

Shrine doors opened. Lights on. The family processed into the chapel. The mother said, “This is a holy place.” The whole family knelt and, on their knees, moved closer to the altar in prayer.

I’m glad I kept the lights on, and hope we can continue to do so for those who may need them. What a great honor to share this spiritual home! 🌹



Carmelite & Colonial Spain

THIS TRIP HAS BEEN CANCELLED

Following in the footsteps and spirituality of Sts. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, the great Carmelite Doctors of mysticism and spirituality, we will visit Avila, Alba de Tormes, Salamanca, Fontiveros, and Segovia. We also include history and heritage of Spain, including the Islamic and colonial elements. Thus, we visit Granada, Cordoba, and Seville, along with Madrid and Toledo. Spain is a wonderful country, rich in history and heritage.

The Holy Land

October 30 – November 10, 2022

Father Bob is leading his 34th biblical pilgrimage to the Holy Land, returning to our spiritual home to reflect on the Scripture of our salvation. Starting in Jerusalem, we visit the Mount of Olives, Gethsemani, Bethlehem, Ein Karem, Way of the Cross, Western Wall, Massada, Judean Wilderness, Emmaus, and the Dead Sea. Then to Galilee and on to Mt. Carmel, Jaffa, Nazareth, Cana, 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.

**For full details, brochure and registration form, please contact Carmelite Spiritual Center:
630.969.4141 or retreats@carmelitespiritualcenter.org**

SHARING THE *light of hope*

"Let us be made golden by the sunshine of His Love."

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

EVERY MORNING WHEN THE LIGHT OF THE SUN RISES ABOVE THE HORIZON, we experience the promise and hope of a new day of life. Because of this hopeful fact each day, many religions, including our own, often had our churches facing east to embrace the new life offered by God.

It is significant that we begin each year celebrating St. Thérèse's birthday on January 2. This past January 2 was her 149th birthday. The Little Flower is a bright new light in a Church trapped within darkness. She knew early on that just as the sun may seem hidden on cloudy days or nights, the sun was present — symbolizing the presence of God everywhere.

Like many of us, St. Thérèse experienced times of darkness. Losing three mothers, tuberculosis, hypersensitivity, scrupulosity, being misunderstood as too innocent and childlike, and thought of as heretical and way too simple, she did not believe the negative Jansenism which dominated Catholic spirituality in those days.

Jansenism was a heretical theological movement within Catholicism, primarily active in France, that emphasized original sin, human depravity, and fear of a judgmental God. It was sort of Puritanism, a severe understanding of God's grace, life, and human free will. Its theological issues are complex, but its practical effect on popular spirituality was a sense of an angry and wrathful God, very easy to displease and with a challenging need to be kept happy. God's mercy was overwhelmed by righteous judgement.

In Jansenistic eyes, which the Little Flower was immersed in by her family and clergy, human nature was seen as depraved, concupiscence was rampant, and rigorist views on moral issues and the Sacraments of Penance and Communion made religion a tightrope to walk. Jansenism stressed a morbid preoccupation with hell, sexual purity, moral rigor, and clerical authority. It was truly a time of darkness for the "Good News" that is the Gospel faith of our Church.

Among Thérèse's significant prophetic breakthroughs and gifts to the Church was her emphasis on God's unconditional mercy. This is a significant awakening to "the sunshine of His Love" that is always dawning and present.

As headstrong and determined as she was, young Thérèse experienced so many obstacles when she felt a vocational call to become a Carmelite cloistered nun at an early age. The Mother Superior, the Carmelite Priest Chaplain, the local Bishop, and even the Pope put her off with pious words: "If God wills, when you get older!"

As hurt as she was by these clouds of obstacles, she believed the sun would break through. The light of faith is beyond the rational and is experienced. The

Little Flower knew it was God shining the light of mercy and hope.

The Scriptures proclaim the story of God's love affair with us; God chooses Abraham, his family and people to be "a light to nations"—to proclaim the light of truth about Who God is and what God expects of us.

This divine relationship gets confused and compromised by human motives of darkness and self-centeredness, the prophets confront the darkness and call us to light. Isaiah proclaims: "A people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.... a Child is born to us." A Child of Light announced by a guiding Star.

This "Child" is the light of the world, revealing who we are as beloved daughters and sons of the Loving God, and therefore our responsibility to live in such a way that the light of justice and peace will not separate, divide, demean, diminish, or destroy any of our sisters and brothers in the human family.

Jesus challenges us to be light: "You are the light of the world ..." He mandated at the end of His beatitudes, the heart of the Gospel. A light not to be hidden or dimmed, but to shine forth brightly: "A light to everyone in the house. Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Mt 5:14-16)

Yes, Jesus was and is the Light of the World, and by His abiding presence within us empowers us to live in the sunshine that is God and reflect that sunshine in a world of shadows. Light often causes shadows, which means some people are overshadowed and get lost or forgotten in the darkness, though.

Shadows can be personal or corporate. We live in or project shadows when we are afraid of God, indifferent to people suffering in poverty, violence, or hunger. When we believe we are worthless, unimportant, shamed, sinful, guilty or a mistake. When we focus on the wounds, disappointments, betrayals, grievances, blame, shame, and self-centeredness (it's all about me). As the lens we look at reality through, we are choosing darkness. We warp reality and truth, denying the very reality where God is present to us. Did not Jesus strongly condemn abusing and misleading the innocent with a millstone around their necks and being thrown into the sea? (Mt 18:6)

Shadows are destructive when we image God as angry, wrathful, punitive, and exclusive, and when we reduce religion into devotional piety rather than transforming our world into the paradise of harmony



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and justice which is God's kingdom.

The shadow of denial is intense when we plead ignorance about why we don't attend to the thirsty, hungry, poor, naked, imprisoned, sick, and stranger. We reply, "Oh, if we only knew it was you!" The Light shouts: "I told you it was me!" We separate Christ from His Body—the human family of God!

Sin is always about separating what God put together—it is the dark shadow of disconnection which shatters the "Shalom" Jesus breathed on us in His resurrection, when He reunited heaven and earth. "Shalom" means "wholeness, connection, unity, communion"—it is the light of oneness, belonging, and responsibility. Sin is darkness!

Prayer is critical to seeing and being enlightened. More contemplative or listening prayer helps us listen to God's whispers and see people and situations the way God sees them. Our Gospel and Carmelite spirituality are rooted in the Divine Indwelling, always and already present—the light that permeates our core and helps us to see what God sees and "know as we are known." (1 Cor 13:12) Many of us find it easier to talk God to death about what we need and want and how to be God, instead of listening in silence which unveils the truth and presence. Light becomes more apparent when we listen twice as much as we speak in prayer. Isn't God telling us something by giving us only one mouth but two ears?!

God wants us to be the light of the world and children of light and hope!

The latest magisterial teaching of our Church is the Vatican II Council which defined the Church in its document *Lumen Gentium* (*The Light of the World*.) We were reclaiming our biblical divine mandate, after centuries of playing defensive games of power, righteousness, privilege, and self-referential narcissism which focused more on protecting the institutional power structure than the dignity of all God's children. Our Church came to finally believe that all baptized people have the responsibility to shed the light of God's presence and grace and

“

'Shalom' Jesus breathed on us in His resurrection, when He reunited heaven and earth. 'Shalom' means 'wholeness, connection, unity, communion' — it is the light of oneness, belonging, and responsibility. Sin is darkness!'”

transform the world—the whole world!

As followers of Jesus, this light causes us to challenge the shadows and darkness that limit, shrink, and destroy the lives of so much of humanity. At Baptism, we were anointed as priest, prophet, and king (queen)—this is our prophetic identity to speak the truth and not hide or pretend it doesn't exist—and to work for ways to unveil and transform these shadows and darkness so that the Divine Indwelling may be revealed. At Baptism, we place before the infant a candle lit from the paschal Easter candle, signifying light that will never be extinguished.

One of the aspects of seeing the light is that our identity, world, and responsibility in it are bigger than we imagined. Isn't this why we sometimes find it easier to limit our focus and wear dark sunglasses in the darkness? Let's just go to Church and fulfill Church obligations, and let God handle everything else, washing our hands of any responsibility. Darkness shrinks and freezes us.

Among the significant ways of being light is St. Thérèse's "Little Way" of confidence and trust. She teaches that the littlest thing done in love can ripple though creation and transform it. She understood the holiness of the holy land of our life experience, permeated and enlightened by God. Ordinary things done with extraordinary love are what transforms the world and works miracles.

We are all aware that at the darkest moment of her life, when Communion was refused her because she vomited, at a time when she experienced the absence of the consolation of God's presence for a year and a half, she finally realized and explained; **"Everything is Grace!"** The very darkness became light because God is always present, permeating, enlightening, and enchanting the universe with hope and presence.

One powerful way the Carmelites and so many experience light is through the prayers and generosity of the members of the Society of the Little Flower. You give hope to so many people around the world. Your continued generosity and the light of your outreach continue to uplift people in poor and

undeveloped areas. How many people and families had something to eat this past year, experienced education, learned skills to become self-sufficient, received some necessary health care, or experienced the light of God's care for them through your care for them? This is taking the mandate of Jesus to be the light seriously. And you are a bright light who dispels many shadows and burdens. St. Thérèse brightens the heavens with her smile that you are continuing her mission "to make God known and loved to the ends of the earth!"

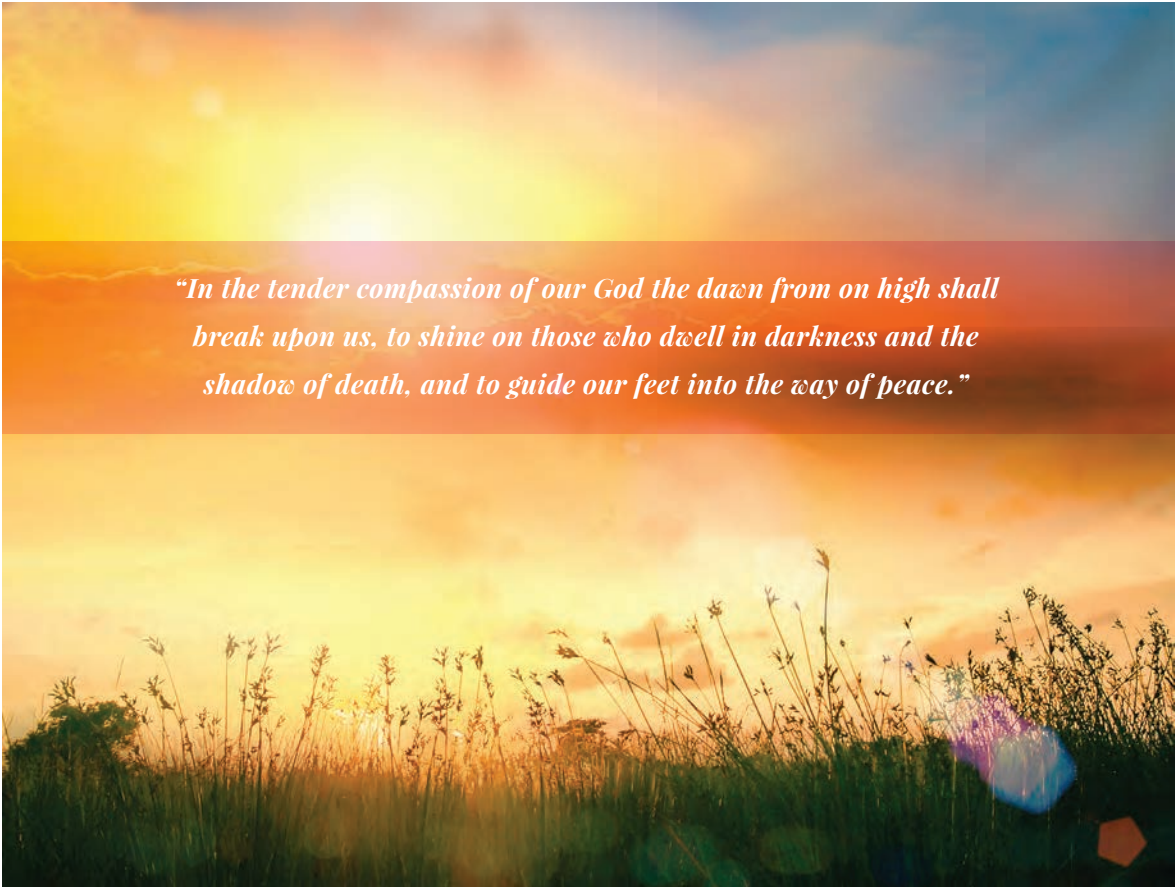
We live in the light of hope because we believe in God's possibilities, not just our human limitations. God always and already present is the Light we live from and the sight we need. We need to stop wearing dark sunglasses in the darkness. In faith, we trust and listen to the Presence. In hope, we believe the absence is illusory. We trust the truth of our faith and hope, because it is God—eternal, loving, seducing, and embracing us and our world with an intimacy that is so bright it almost blinds us.

Thomas Merton is one of the great mystics of our time. In March 1958, in a shopping center of downtown Louisville, Kentucky, he had an awakening that redefined his life from an enclosed Trappist monk to a greater involvement in social justice issues. He was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization

that he loved all these ordinary people and strangers. He saw them "walking around shining like the sun." *"It was like 'they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness ... This sense of liberation from an illusory difference was such a relief and joy to me that I almost laughed out loud ... I have the immense joy of being man, a member of a race in which God Himself became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this!'"* (Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander)

Each day, the Morning Prayer of our Church closes with Canticle of Zechariah: *"In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace."* We are called to live and share the light of hope. God never, never abandons us!

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. (Jn 1:5) Let us be the light Jesus and St. Thérèse challenge and enlighten us to be. Let us see the glory of God in everyone and everything—let us see all people "walking around shining like the sun!" Yes, "Let us be made golden by the sunshine of His Love." "Everything is grace!" 🌹



"In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace."


LEFT: MARGARET MANNING
RIGHT: ALBERT ROBERTSON

In 1962, Sister Agnes de Lourdes told me that I was a hopeless case. But the smile on her face made me think otherwise.

That year, I began fifth grade at a Catholic grammar school on the southwest side of Chicago.

Early on, Sister Agnes mentioned to me that my handwriting was awful—and she was going to do something about it. She wasn't kidding.

One day, Sister gave me a task: write a paragraph that was legible and would meet with her approval. I lost track of the number of times I marched back and forth to her desk. Each time, my finished product was met with a shake of the head. At the end of that very long day, she looked me square in the eye and proclaimed, “Danny, you are hopeless!” That smile I referred to above assured me that I really wasn't a hopeless case.

Looking back on that experience, I realize now that Sister Agnes de Lourdes taught me a very important lesson—one that didn't have that much to do with penmanship: Although you might not always succeed, keep trying, do your best, and give the rest to God.

In my role as a Special Gifts Officer, I am privileged to speak with a number of our donors. My fifth-grade experience recently came back to me as I was reflecting on one of my phone calls. In that call, our donor confessed, “St. Thérèse has always been there for me. Why has she forgotten me now? I'm trying so hard to be good. I need a miracle.”

I mentioned to her that sometimes “trying hard” isn't necessarily the best way to get an answer to prayer. Some things just aren't meant to be. But don't give up on miracles, either. Effective prayer employs both persistence and trust.

It doesn't do us much good to arm-wrestle with God. In fact, the answer to our prayers is most often found in an act of surrender. For many of us, this act can be the most difficult part of prayer. St. Thérèse had to learn that lesson as well.

Although she didn't meet the age requirement, Thérèse was bound and determined to enter the Carmel in Lisieux. By hook or by crook she tried,

was given special permission to enter the Carmel at age 15. In her surrender, she was blessed with a miracle. Such a lesson is one for all of us to learn. Truly, God never lets us down.

Right now, you may be struggling and seeking an answer to prayer. You may have your rosary beads and the novena prayer card to St. Thérèse on the table next to your bed. You may be frustrated, fearful, and perhaps feeling hopeless. I urge you to call our prayer line (800.621.2806) and ask us to join you in prayer. This is one of the most important things we can do for the friends of St. Thérèse, and it is our privilege to do so. 🌹

Postscript: Many years after my grammar school writing experiment, I decided to look up Sister Agnes de Lourdes. I wanted to thank her for the life lessons she taught me. She was well on in years by then, and when I came for my visit, she had to be helped into the visiting room. But she hadn't lost that smile I saw so many years ago, and was grateful that I shared that memory.

As I left the room, I glanced back, knowing this would be the last time I would see Sister Agnes. It's been almost 50 years since that meeting, but in my heart, I still carry this good woman and the lessons she taught me. Personal persistence and faith in the goodness of the Lord can resolve any situation (except, perhaps, when a pen is placed in a certain person's hand).

She kept her relationship with Christ ***alive and strong***

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS SAYS, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." (Heb 10, 23) How often we hear the expression, "Don't ever lose hope, or, If you lose hope, you lose everything." This is so true. All our hope is in the Lord. We see that when we look at the many crises and struggles in the life of St. Thérèse. God knows she's had her share. Yet, no matter what she faced or endured, from her early childhood right through to her death, the foundation of her life was the unchanging love of Christ. That's where she got her *light*, her *hope*, and her *strength*.



She kept her relationship with Christ alive and strong. It was a simple relationship, a childlike relationship, a trusting relationship. Thérèse wrote to her sister Celine, "The good God does not need years to accomplish His work of love in a soul; one ray from His Heart can, in an instant, make His flower bloom for eternity." She knew that with God, all things were possible. She never lost hope for her future, even for her Heaven, from where she still ministers to millions of souls.

Millions are drawn to St. Thérèse. She can understand the everyday person. And everyone can relate to her. Her experiences can shed much light on our problems. Turn to Christ, throw our struggles upon Him, and trust Him, Thérèse would say. Christ will shine His light in places where we think it's impossible. Even in darkness and pain, and feelings of aloneness, Thérèse still continued to hope and pray.

These past two years with the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an overwhelming increase in people turning to St. Thérèse for help and guidance. She gave many people hope. Her spirituality shed light for those who were struggling for answers, struggling to survive, struggling to keep one foot in front of the other. The most popular saint of our times is so approachable ... and accessible to everyone.

People from all walks of life needed to draw from her well of strength. And what is her well of strength? A life of being

in love with Christ. That's what calmed her every storm, even the storm of her death. That's what gave her hope. Her strength lay in prayer and sacrifice. May Christ our light, fill our lives with hope. And may Thérèse continue to shower down roses of light and hope as we look forward to better days ahead. 🌹

Prayer to St. Thérèse

O Little Flower, St. Thérèse,
you promised to let fall from heaven
a shower of roses.

You promised to spend your heaven
in doing good upon the earth.

In this time of turmoil,
mingle with your Roses,
rays of light and hope,
to help us move forward
in calm and peace.

Strengthen our faith
and deepen our trust
in the Light of all Lights,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Little Flower Canada

As Director in Canada of the Society of the Little Flower, I visit the offices every now and then. We have not been open to the general public during the pandemic. I'm always amazed at the hustle and bustle of activity in our offices. The phones are busy, the mail room is busy. Prayer requests and Mass requests come in by the thousands. Not only do you support our seminarians, and prepare young men for the priesthood, but your generosity has been able to do many repairs and constructions around the Monastery of Mount Camel, which holds the National Shrine of St. Thérèse. Every day, I thank God for the generosity of our donors. Your footprints of love and charity are visible throughout the entire property, and visible throughout the entire Carmelite Formation Program. And for that we are grateful. That is shedding God's light on St. Thérèse's mission and ministry. This is what gives us hope for our Carmelite future.



Father Gerard Power, O.Carm.
Director in Canada of the
Society of the Little Flower.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT *special gifts?*



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PERHAPS YOU HAVE NOTICED that the Society of the Little Flower has a department that handles “special” gifts. You may wonder what makes a gift special.

Actually, every gift is special to us in the sense that it is treasured and appreciated as a sacrifice from your heart. We realize you receive multiple charitable solicitations, often daily, and when you choose us as a beneficiary of your generosity, that is special in our eyes.

The Special Gifts Department at the Society of the Little Flower helps people get creative in their approach to giving, often to their personal benefit as well. It's true, with many special gifts, both the Society and the donor can benefit.

Perhaps the most common special gift we receive is a charitable gift annuity. A gift annuity allows one or two individuals to make a gift to us and in return receive a lifetime income

at a very attractive payout rate. The Society's rates rank as some of the best in the country. A gift annuity can be quite appealing to those who want to supplement their retirement income and also help the Carmelites.

An additional type of special gift is called a bequest, in which someone remembers the Society of the Little Flower in their will or trust. Another way to accomplish a gift of this sort is to make us the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or IRA. This allows people to maintain control of their assets until God calls them home. We consider these gifts special because they include us as a “member of the family.”

Some of our friends like to take particular advantage of tax laws in their

giving. Gifts of stock are just one example of that. When someone makes an outright gift of stock through a transfer into our brokerage account, not only do they avoid tax on the capital gain, they also receive a deduction for the stock's full value at the time of the gift. For example, someone may choose to donate 10 shares of XYZ stock for which they originally paid \$25 a share. The stock is now valued at \$100 a share. That gift allows a person to avoid all the tax on the \$750 of capital gain and make a gift of \$1,000 for an out-of-pocket cost of \$250. The only caveat is that the stock must be held for longer than a year.

These are just a few examples of special gifts. Our office would be happy to speak with you about the many opportunities special gifts present. There is no obligation just to ask a question or run an idea by us. Just call us, toll-free, at 888.996.1212. We are here to help! 🌹

BY DAN PRITCHARD

Lives in the light of God



Recently, Father Tom Schrader and I had the privilege to visit with some friends of St. Thérèse, and hopefully shared light and hope along the way.

The photo you see here was taken when Father Tom and I visited with St. Thérèse's good friends Fe, Ron, and their family. As we listened to their journeys, Father Tom asked if they would like to receive a blessing. It turned out that blessing was quite timely.

A month after our visit, Ron was called home to God. Fe told us that Father Tom's blessing gave such comfort to them, both at that time and even now. I firmly believe that our visit with Fe, Ron, Fiona, and Chris was not accidental. I am certain that God uses the places and situations we are in so that we can be His hands and heart here on earth, ministering to those in need.

Fe has since shared with us the hope our visit gave to her family, and strengthened her faith that Ron now lives in the light of God. None of

us knows what the future may hold and when we might be called upon to be instruments of God's peace. It is our unconditional, loving response to those situations that can change someone's life.

We share the light of hope with others when we pray for them, support them, help them, and are kind to them—especially to those who make it difficult for us to do so. Isn't that what God wants—for us to share His light of hope? It is that hope that can carry us through the dark times of our lives.

Through hope, fear fades away, our path is strengthened, and our faith is deepened. May the coming months give each of us the courage to seek out opportunities to light a candle for those who desperately need the strength that our light will bring. 🌹

BY MARY ZACHARIAS

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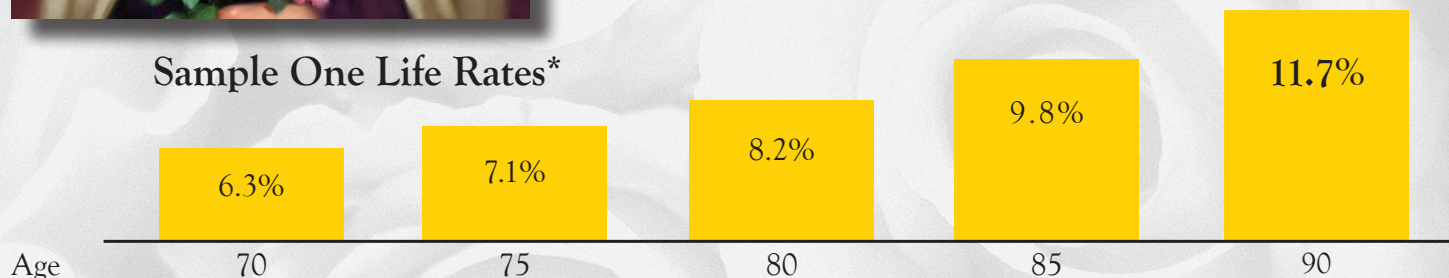


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