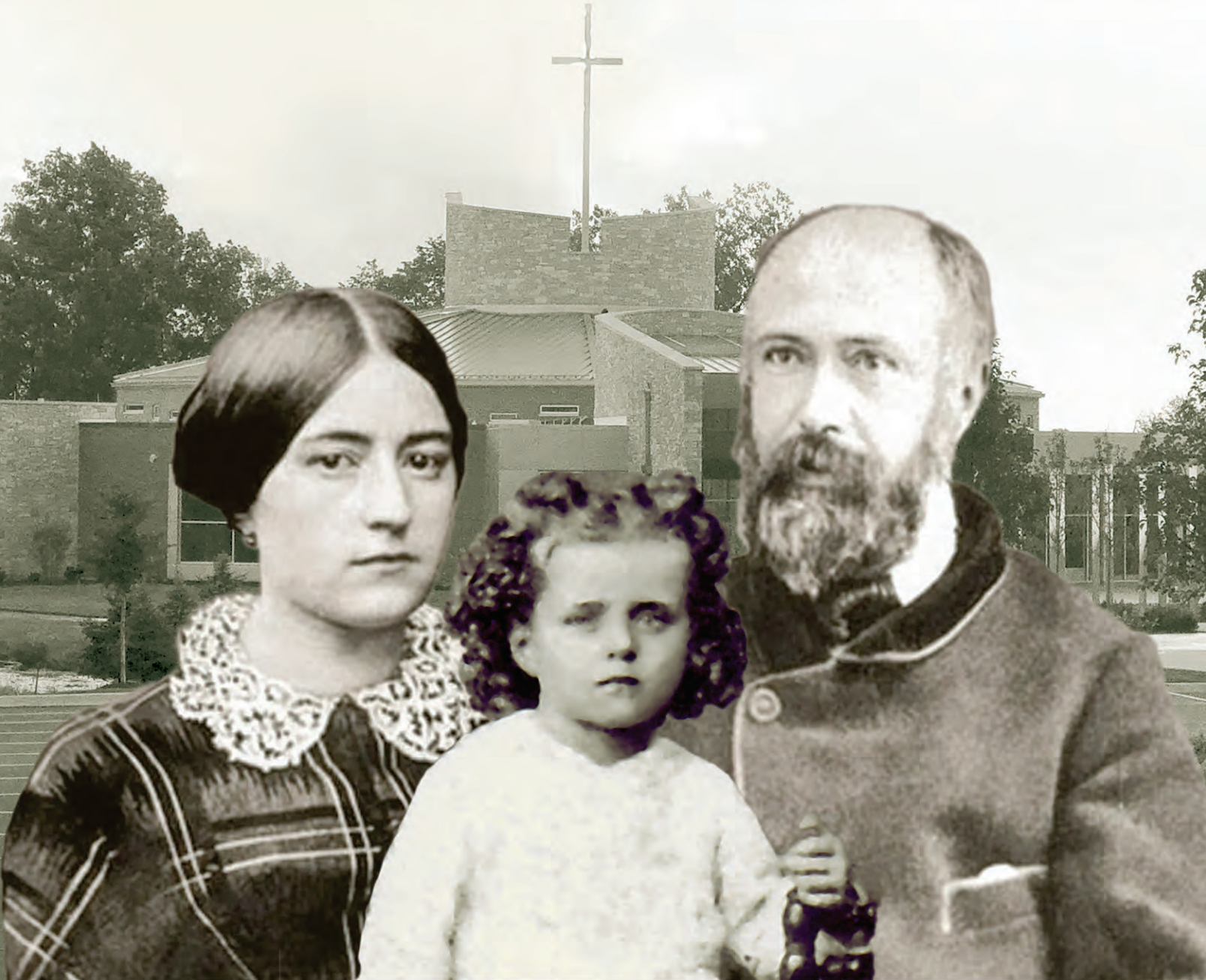


Between Friends

A publication for the Friends of the Society of

the Little Flower, Darien, Illinois, and Canada



St. Thérèse
FAMILY HOMECOMING

Reconnecting

HAVE RECENTLY HAD the opportunity to reconnect with my family and friends. It was a time to rejoice and relax and really enjoy being with those people that bring so much contentment and happiness to my life. I hope that all of you have the opportunity from time to time for these little occasions as well. I am often struck with gratitude for the blessing that our readers and donors, like you, are for the mission of the Society of the Little Flower. Your steadfast generosity of our mission reminds me of the support, care, and attention that can be shared in families and among friends. You make the Society of the Little Flower a community of good, a family of faith, and I am so blessed that I can be a part of it.

St. Thérèse often reminds us of the need for strong, loving relationships. Her parents, Sts. Louis and Zélie, had a dedicated and wonderful married life with passionate devotion to the raising of their five daughters. We can truly learn a lesson or two from them.

Please, know that you are remembered in my prayers of gratitude each day. May you and your family be blessed by the Lord in abundance. 🌹

Rev. Thomas Schrader, O. Carm.
Director



ST. LOUIS AND ZÉLIE IS MARKED WITH COM 0



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 2023

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Family AND OUR Chosen Family

FAMILY IS THE BLESSING that each and every one of us is given, whether that family is our assigned family or our chosen family. Some people like to say, "Family is just the friends that God assigns to us." I like to add, "Friends, especially the best of them, are the family members that we get to choose."

As I sit here reminiscing through so many memories, I am in awe of the love that so many family members share and more importantly our chosen family. It is clear to me that not all assigned family members are there in ways we need them to be; to support and lift us up. It really is up to us to find those who are truly there for us through the highs and lows.

St. Thérèse has been one of my chosen family members for so many of my highs and, as some of you may know, my very lows. Many of you have written to me and echoed that same message.

This issue's "St. Thérèse Family Homecoming" is focused on the many faces family takes on.

Also, the Society of the Little Flower is thrilled to announce that we will be hosting the primary reliquaries of three saints from one family for two whole weeks: St. Thérèse and her parents, Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin! I hope that the pages of this issue will inspire you to plan your visit, your pilgrimage, to the National Shrine and Museum of St. Thérèse in Darien, Illinois, when she and her parents are here Sept. 17-Oct. 1, 2023.

I thank God for the constant and loving generosity so many readers like you show in supporting our mission and ministries. Thank you. I hope that God continues to hold and keep you and all your loved ones safe and healthy! 🌸

I love to hear from you! Please send any suggestions or comments to Mary T. Lambert, Society of the Little Flower, 1313 N. Frontage Rd., Darien, IL 60561-5340



Mary Thérèse Lambert
Editor of *Between Friends*

“

I thank God for the constant and loving generosity so many readers like you show in supporting our mission and ministries. Thank you. I hope that God continues to hold and keep you and all your loved ones!”

Carmelites you should know

Father Bernhard Bauerle, O. Carm.

BORN HANS JURGEN BAUERLE IN ACHERN, Germany, in 1936, he was the first of three children, the oldest boy with two sisters. Growing up in Germany during Nazi times and World War II and its tragic aftermath, he learned to cope with darkness. His dad was captured by the Russians, and his family did not know if he was alive or dead for many years.

Having been helped by relatives in the USA with care packages amid the extreme poverty of the postwar era, the family decided that one of them should come to America to help them with their bakery business in Wilmington, Illinois. Thus began a life where Father Bernie would be asked to go where was needed, because he was, and is, so responsible.

So at age 14, in 1949, he was sent to the USA with few English skills to help his aunt and uncle in their bakery. He attended nearby Joliet Catholic High School where he met the Carmelites. He explains that he was drawn to the Carmelites by their lifestyle, their caring, their family spirit, and how they reached out to him. Graduating in 1955, he spent an extra year helping his aunt and uncle who were disappointed that he did not take over the bakery. Despite some political differences with his relatives, the Carmelites pursued him. In 1956, Hans Bauerle joined the Carmelite formation program, making religious vows in 1958 and solemn vows in 1962. He took the religious name Bernhard, which he still uses today. Ordained to priesthood in 1964, his first assignment was a pastoral year at DeSales High School in Louisville.

His first permanent assignment was to Carmel Catholic High School in Mundelein, Illinois, for seven years, teaching religion and doing counseling. He then was asked to return to Louisville DeSales from 1973-1976, when he was asked to return to his alma mater, Joliet Catholic High School, where he taught religion and did counseling until his organizing skills led him to become Assistant Principal in 1985, and eventually Principal in 1987. People were always impressed by how well Father Bernie listened and followed through.

The boys school merged with St. Francis Academy in 1990, and Father Bernie became the Principal of the new school, Joliet Catholic Academy, using his skills to help calm the troubles mergers usually experience. His steadfast, responsible presence helped JCA, as it established its new identity, until 1998.

He returned to Carmel Catholic High School in Mundelein from 1998 until 2002 as a teacher and counselor, also serving as weekend priest at St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Gurnee, Illinois, where he was loved for his profound homilies and counseling and confessional skills. His pastoral side began to shine even brighter.

In 1999, he was elected as Midwest Regional Provincial and served until 2005. He also served as the Provincial Treasurer from 2002 until 2011. This was a challenging time as part of his responsibility was to deal with the emerging sexual abuse crisis in the Church. Despite his revulsion at what was being done, Father Bernie was deeply involved with investigating the victims and abusers, and he helped the province develop policies and strategies to help victims and prevent such activities from happening again. His pastoral style, listening, and responsive counseling presence helped very much in those days. His sense of responsibility served him and the province well on the Board of Directors of the Society of the Little Flower.

In 2008, he was asked to become Director of the National Shrine of St. Thérèse in Darien, Illinois, where he continues to serve today. He mentions that he did not take St. Thérèse too seriously until he became the Shrine Director. She taught him, “God loves me just the way I am and I try to help people experience that loving acceptance by God.”

During this time, the new National Shrine was built and dedicated in 2018, and Father Bernie has been taking care of this sacred place that attracts many to Thérèse daily.

Reflecting on his life, Father Bauerle humbly mentions how he was put into situations and responsibilities he never sought and wasn't sure was in his skill set, but that he trusted God and the Carmelites, and how people helped him serve and brought out his pastoral approach. “I try to help people understand how to respond to God and St. Thérèse as they are coming into their lives.”

This Carmelite is a man who works behind the scenes, doesn't like public hoopla, but who responsibly and faithfully serves people and allows God's love and wisdom to flow freely through him. Father Bernhard Bauerle is one of the giants in the Carmelite Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary that you should know.

As the Risen Lord appeared to Peter, asking him, “Do you love me” – and then said “when you were young, you went where you wanted, but when you grow old, someone will... lead you where you did not want to go!” (John 21: 17-18) Father Bernie proves his love of Jesus and God by going where he did not intend and giving his wholehearted best to make a difference in people's lives. St. Thérèse smiles on her German brother who takes care of her National Shrine.



Father Joseph Atcher, O. Carm.

BORN IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY the fifth of eight children, Father Joseph Atcher has three sisters and four brothers. Both his parents worked and made sure that their children attended Catholic parochial schools and high school. He went to DeSales High School, where he met the Carmelites who taught and staffed the school. It was there he was drawn to them because of the idea of living in community with others working to improve the lives of others. He wanted to be a teacher. After completing eight years of Carmelite formation and academic education, during which Father Joe made his first religious vows in 1969 and solemn vows in 1974, he was ordained to priesthood in 1976.

Father Joe shares that his journey with St. Thérèse began as a young Carmelite reading her books and preparing for the novitiate. In many ways, he explains, “She became my guide. In my early assignments, I felt sure that she may have said, along with Our Lady of Mount Carmel, ‘You again?’ as I sought her intercession on how to navigate things and make decisions over and over again. She was always there to help and on more than one occasion I realized afterward how significant her help had been in given situations.

“From my earliest days as a Carmelite, I have been ever grateful to St. Thérèse and the members of the Society of the Little Flower,” Father Joe explained. “I realized how significant their gifts were to us. They provided an education second to none. They afforded us the opportunity to live comfortably and not extravagantly. They put food on our table during our formative years — and they continue to accomplish many wonderful things for the Church and our Carmelite communities.

“One of my greatest experiences of the generosity of the supporters of the Society of the Little Flower was the building of the new National Shrine in Darien. Being part of that and watching it come to fruition was a great day for the community and for the members of the Society of the Little Flower.”

Father Joe Atcher spent most of his ministerial life in secondary education, as a teacher, Dean of Students, Campus Minister, Assistant Principal, Principal, and President at several of our Carmelite high schools. He served in Carmelite parishes as Pastor and Director of the Cemetery in Tenafly, New Jersey. The Archdiocese of Louisville hired Father Joe as the Executive Director of the Office of Lifelong Formation and Education, recognizing his organizational skills. He used his position to

try to create a better future for Catholic education in schools and parishes, with an emphasis on addressing learning disabilities for students with mild to moderate learning disabilities. He knows that the Bible tells us that God is partial to the poor and forlorn.

The Carmelites have honored his gifts in provincial administration as Regional Provincial, Assistant Provincial, and Treasurer of the Province.

Father Atcher has the gift of organization. He knows how to build teams of people to work together and a willingness to try new things in adverse conditions. He has the ability to listen to others and work with them toward a common goal. Carmelites who live and work with Joe would say he has an inquisitive mind and a willingness to think things through before embarking on something with lasting consequences.

We know he has a prayerful heart, a welcoming manner, and a willingness to carry things through to completion.

He lives St. Thérèse’s “Little Way” of doing the little things and details with great love, energy, and attention.

Father Joe reflects on how working with committed and dedicated people who gave him courage to address challenging situations. The Carmelites have placed him in difficult assignments which needed some renewal and active transformation. Father Joe is a “go-to guy who gets things done!” is a mantra in our Province.

In the last years of ministry, Joe feels called to continue to help the Church and minister to his fellow Carmelites. He helps our seniors and keeps in touch with their needs. “This time is important to me because I am able to give back to some of the men who have given so much for me and the Province,” he explained.

“As our Province expands in developing countries, following the example of St. Thérèse who wanted to be a missionary,” Father Joe stated: “I’ve been impressed to witness the generosity of the Little Flower members as we expand in Mexico and El Salvador, where so many vocations are coming, and their contributions to the formation programs in those areas.

Father Joseph is a very responsible Carmelite who shares his gifts, wisdom, and energy with the Province and the Church, inspired by St. Thérèse and grateful for your support. 🌸



By Father Bob Colaresi, O. Carm.

Pilgrimages to Darien, Illinois - *A Good Day at the Shrine and Museum*



I want to invite you on a short adventure through a good day at the National Shrine and Museum of St. Thérèse. This story is a combination of some of the many little joys, healings, and moments of awe that can be found here. They are just brief moments of memories from guiding many groups. There are many moments I would love to include but cannot, either because of the limitations of space or because they are so sacred that they are meant to be kept personal. While every moment here is graced by God, sometimes we get a special glimpse into the reality of being totally loved. The most frequent special moments I see are when families come to visit.

One day, the County Catholic Women's Group and the St. Thomas Parish Youth Group had tours here. The women's group would be coming for a regular tour: morning tour, Mass, hot lunch, and afternoon tour. The St. Thomas group had a late afternoon/after-school trip for a one-hour tour. Sometimes, a busy day is just that — busy — and other times it is totally blessed!

Some of the people on tour were siblings or cousins, while others were longtime friends. This "family" of women came to the National Shrine and Museum of St. Thérèse full of blessings for each other and for those of us who get to be here each day. The "family" of faith from St.

Thomas came filled with grace; they were ready to have a truly unique experience.

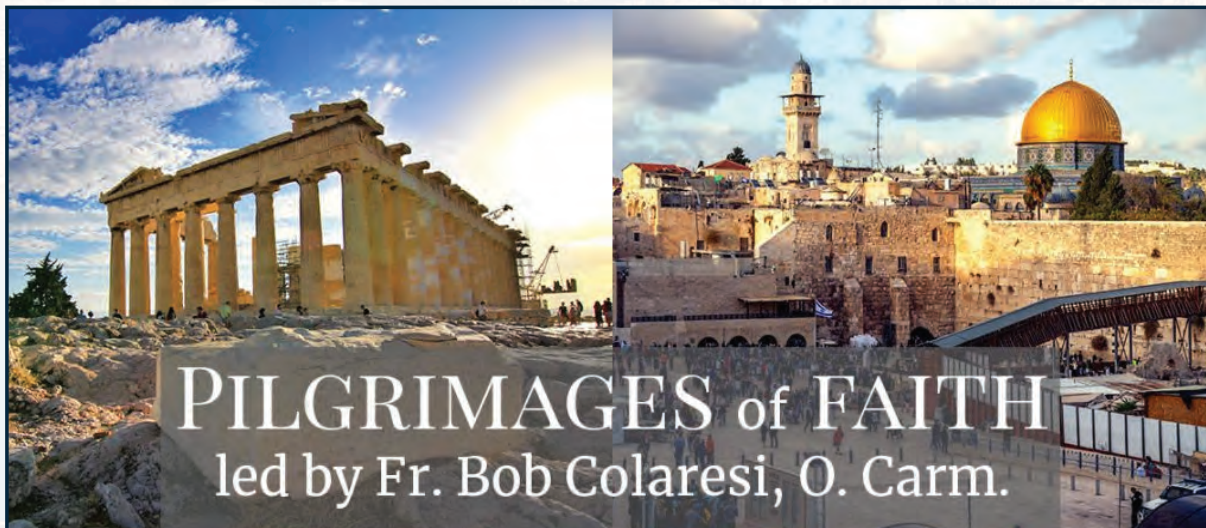
Arriving car by car, about 30 women showed up in the parking lot on a cool fall day. We greeted each other with a smile and morning chit chat as we walked into the museum and past the gift shop. As we entered, the women turned in awe to the massive, wood relief carving of St. Thérèse's life. "Oh my." "Ah! Wow." "Just amazing!" Then the questions rolled in: How did they make it? What is it made out of? How long did it take? We laughed throughout the morning, told stories at lunch, and encountered little graces at the end of the day.

In the late afternoon, the school group

got a firsthand experience of the artifacts, relics, stories, and heart of St. Thérèse and her "Little Way" of spirituality — as much as you can in one hour anyway. Both groups found something they needed; moreover, they left better, holier, and happier than when they came. Surely, they were a bit tired and weary from a long day when they came here. After some time to sit and hear about their connection to St. Thérèse and the communion of saints through their little pilgrimage to our campus, the young people's eyes begin to light up. Then they had a few minutes to look around the museum. Instructed to find something they are interested in and to be prepared to say what it is they like and why they like it, we moved into a discussion on how holiness is made around ordinary everyday things and people. By the end of their tour, you could practically see the halos growing or at least the desire for one coming alive.

This is just a peek into a small selection of the graces encountered here. We hope that you will make a pilgrimage here soon and bring others with you. Groups of all types are welcome here. So, come join us and be blessed! 🌹





Carmelite and Colonial Spain

April 16-29, 2023

Father Bob Colaresi will lead us 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 the 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. It hosted the golden age of enlightenment, when Christianity, Judaism, and Islam co-existed with a great sense of peace, wisdom, and mutual respect. Parallel schools of mysticism and spirituality mutually enriched each other. Reactionary Catholicism, manifested in the Inquisition, eventually destroyed this time of enlightened peace when the Jews and Muslims were expelled from Catholic Spain in 1492.

If you wish to receive a cost and information brochure of any of these pilgrimages, please contact: Carmelite Spiritual Center, 8419 Bailey Road, Darien, IL, 60561, 630.969.4141, or CarmeliteSpiritualCenter.org.

Holy Land

October 8-18, 2023

Father Bob leads his 35th pilgrimage to the Holy Land as we return to our spiritual home and reflect on the Scriptures. Starting in Jerusalem, we visit the Mt. of Olives, Bethlehem, Ein Karem, Way of the Cross, Western Wall, Masada, Judean Wilderness, Ein Gedi, and Emmaus. Then, it is off to Galilee, visiting Mt. Carmel, Jaffa, Nazareth, Cana, Caesaria, Sea of Galilee, Capharnaum, Mt. of Beatitudes, Caesaria Philippi, and Mt. Tabor. What a powerful experience into the heart of Christianity, the life of Jesus, and our Jewish heritage!

Pilgrimage through France

October 27 - November 6, 2023

Following the life and spirituality of St. Thérèse, Father Bob Colaresi will lead us first to 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. We also visit the Normandy beaches of "Omaha" and "Utah" and the powerful U.S. cemetery. Next, it's Alençon, where St. Thérèse was born and her parents met and lived, until the death of her mom, before going to Paris, where we will experience this magical city with all its historic and beautiful sites, including Versailles.

St. Thérèse

FAMILY HOMECOMING

BY FATHER BOB COLARESI, O. CARM.



“She felt so close.” – Sheila L.

“Her presence was awesome, almost magnetic.”

– Lisa K.

“She taught me that an ordinary person like me could be holy” – Philip

“The wait was worth it. She was mesmerizing!” – Cora M.

“Her presence and the shower of grace moved me beyond words” – Jose G.

“The devotion was contagious!” – Donald H.

“I was overwhelmed by the huge crowds she attracted.”

– Mary T.

“We felt like family because she was like family to us.” – Jim C.



These were among the thousands of comments from people visiting St. Thérèse relics at the National Shrine of St. Thérèse in Darien, Illinois, in October 1999.

The response of people who came to visit her relics in Darien, as well as the 120 other sites throughout the United States, was overwhelming. Many felt that she was visiting them. The way people bonded with her and one another had a power and energy that had the media trying to capture what was happening. St. Thérèse was touching hearts at a deep level and that connected the thousands of pilgrims as a cohesive family of holiness and love. There were tears of joy and smiles of love!

I stayed in the Shrine for many hours just watching how they were attracted to her. It was a contagious explosion of holiness. With large groups, there can be pushing and impatience, but not here. These friends of St. Thérèse were so respectful of each other. There was a shared reverence and sharing stories of what she had done in their lives and how she made holiness accessible. It was a magical, mystical experience of communion and love. It was a family of

friends bound together by our Carmelite Sister, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus!

The Carmelites and the Society of the Little Flower have the privilege again of hosting her traveling relics, and those of her sainted parents Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin, Sept. 17-Oct. 1, 2023. We are organizing a much longer time for people to spend quality and heartfelt time with her. This family of the friends of St. Thérèse is gathering for a special time of grace, intimacy, and wonder. It will celebrate her 150th birthday, and the 100th anniversary of her being declared Blessed by the Church!

Having been overwhelmed by that incredible experience 24 years ago, I've been reflecting on what we learned from pilgrim friends and on what

that experience meant. The sense of presence, hearts, and family stand out. How strangers can bond around a common love!

I had always been suspicious of “body parts spirituality.” I wasn’t sure what it meant. But experiencing the faith, love, and presence made me listen to our God calling us together as a family — and special saints, our special friends, enhance that experience. Certainly the Little Flower, St. Thérèse, is among the most powerful. She has taught me so much about trusting God and the Divine Presence in our lives, as she has done with so many of you. She brings an inner peace and unity that is awesome. She teaches us that “everything is grace” and these moments of her presence are sacramental moments of God’s presence in and through her. Fr. Tom Schrader, our Society of the Little Flower Director, asked me to consider organizing a return visit. At first, I was reticent because I remember how much work and worry there was when we brought her over for 121 Carmelite sites. So I agreed if we could just have her here at her National Shrine located in Darien Illinois.

That and many experiences taught us that God is a family!

We don’t often think this way. We deeply believe there is one God! But the biblical revelation of our Catholic tradition is that God is a Trinity of

Persons — Individuals divinely interconnected and mutually indwelling as One!

Human words and images can never capture the reality of Who God is. The Divine is beyond human understanding. Yet our hearts and souls can experience God and the Divine Presence, because God has created us “in the divine image and likeness!” There is an aspect of the Divine within us. God is

at the heart of who we are: the Divine Dwelling Place. We usually call it “grace,” and grace is really the Divine Presence.

St. Thérèse’s greatest teaching, experienced at the darkest moment of



her life, is: “Everything is Grace.” God is at the heart of everything, especially dwelling in our deepest center.

Carmelite St. Teresa of Avila, Doctor of the Church, whom St. Thérèse was named after, teaches us in her *Interior Castle* that “our soul is a like a castle made entirely of a single diamond, in which there are many rooms...the soul is nothing but a paradise where the Lord finds His delight ... in the center and middle is the main dwelling place where the very secret exchanges between God and the soul takes place.”

So within us is the dwelling place of the Triune God! Prayer is centering ourselves within the Indwelling Presence that defines us and communing with the God Who is Love! St. Thérèse wrestled with this Divine Presence, especially in dark times, like we all do, even as she taught us to be comfortable with the God of Love and Mercy, Who delights in us and always sustains us.

Our Catholic, Christian faith believes that God is for us, the One Whom we refer to as Father. He guarantees that reality is benign and good, always on

our side and for us. Too many people are fearful of an angry, judgmental God and a world coming apart. Like a good Father, God is for us and protective of us.

Jesus, the human manifestation of the Son of God is God alongside of us. In the Incarnation, we celebrate that He became enfleshed as a human being to show us how to truly live as beloved daughters and sons of God. God’s mercy was enhanced as Jesus experienced all the ups and downs of our human journey, including misunderstanding, pain, and cruel death. Because Jesus is God alongside of us, we can trust the human pattern of loss and renewal,

death, and resurrection. We can trust that as we prayerfully center ourselves, God is present and revealing. There is always hope!

The Holy Spirit is God within us. The Divine Spirit is that inner aliveness which heals us and awakens us to our wounds and glory. This God within us is our conscience, the interior homing device, our deepest intuition that God is with us, that we are connected with the whole universe, and “all will be well,” because God dwells within us. God is closer to us than our breath.

So this “Family God” is the heart of who we are. This Triune Family of

ST. THÉRÈSE RELIC PRAYER:

*St. Thérèse, help me to sincerely believe, as you did,
in God’s unconditional love for me and everyone.*

Continue to be my sister and friend.

*I want to follow your “Little Way” of doing ordinary
things with extraordinary love.*

Intercede for me and our world.

Amen.

God is always present to each other, respecting and not overwhelming — a flow of life-giving presence giving and receiving, a mutual indwelling. The call of faith is to trust the Divine Presence within us and permeating everything.

Gratitude wells up within us when we experience and appreciate this Divine self-giving that is always and already present. This Divine intimacy is the restless longing we all experience. We don't earn it or deserve it. This indwelling presence is freely given because God is so good!

Engaging with this Family Triune, God leads us into a passionate love affair with God that overflows in the way we love one another. All we need to do is become aware of and honor the presence. Listen to the "silent whisper" that Elijah, the spiritual founder of the Carmelites, had to quiet down, center, and listen to, despite his fears and insecurities.

Even as organized religion seems to stress the Divine and Real Presence outside us, Carmelite spirituality focuses on the inner Presence — that mystical experience of God Who is the Divine Spark that is our soul! All experiences of God's Presence in nature, Sacraments, people, etc., ultimately only make sense as they ignite that intimate spark already within us. We don't make it happen. God does all the work. We simply awaken to the reality of what God is doing.

As we go through life, we all choose friends who enliven the human journey for us. In some way, they are sacraments of God's presence with us — we are not alone!

Family are the people God chose for us! Family is a wonderful and complex part of our lives. Our Mom and Dad, our sisters and brothers, and the whole rest of the extended family, aunts, uncles, cousins, and even children, are the people who form us, challenge us, and help us develop our self-confidence, experiences of being loved, and our firm

identity to maneuver the human journey. We live in an incarnational world; we need "God with skin on," as the little girl said when she wanted a hug.

Family is critical to our human lives, even if it is complex. Sometimes, family is that awesome safe place where we feel loved, respected, and connected. We are enmeshed in each other's lives, with respect. Family are the people we share a common heritage, history, DNA, blood connection, traditions, culture and values.

However, sometimes our family is too enmeshed, boundaries are violated, and mutual respect and love are undermined

by power, privilege, prestige, and comparisons. Boundaries are shattered and we don't feel safe. The intensity of our connection can sometimes magnify disagreements and hurts, and this sometimes leads to separation in hopes of finding a safe space again.

There is also the greater family God has placed us within: the body of Christ and the communion of saints. As God's beloved daughters and sons, we belong to the human family as sisters and brothers. We are Christ's body here on earth. We also have so many people who have gone before us and, now sanctified, continue to inspire us.

“
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For so many of us, St. Thérèse leads us to intimacy with God. This sacred visit of her relics and those of her mom and dad, Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin, is a centering moment where we experience that presence which unites us as family and friends.

There will be Eucharist every day, as well as talks, healing services, and other activities, but primarily there will be time to be with her and let her excite our hearts and reignite why we love her! It will be a family experience of the heart!

Sept. 17-Oct. 1, 2023, at the National Shrine of St. Thérèse in Darien, Illinois will be a powerful family reunion of people whose hearts and souls have been touched by the powerful message and "Little Way" of our sister in faith, St. Thérèse, and her parents, Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin. They will be visiting us with grace, a shower of roses, and personal presence.

This sacramental relic presence of three special family saints, Sts. Thérèse and Louis and Zélie Martin, who show us how family reflects our Family God, will intensify our prayerful connection with the God Who is for us, alongside us, and within us. It will be a mystical experience her friends will love.

Please look at the schedule and plan to participate as much as you are able. 🌹

Don't miss out on celebrating this wonderful event! Sign up for email updates about this blessed event at www.littleflower.org/relicsvisit.

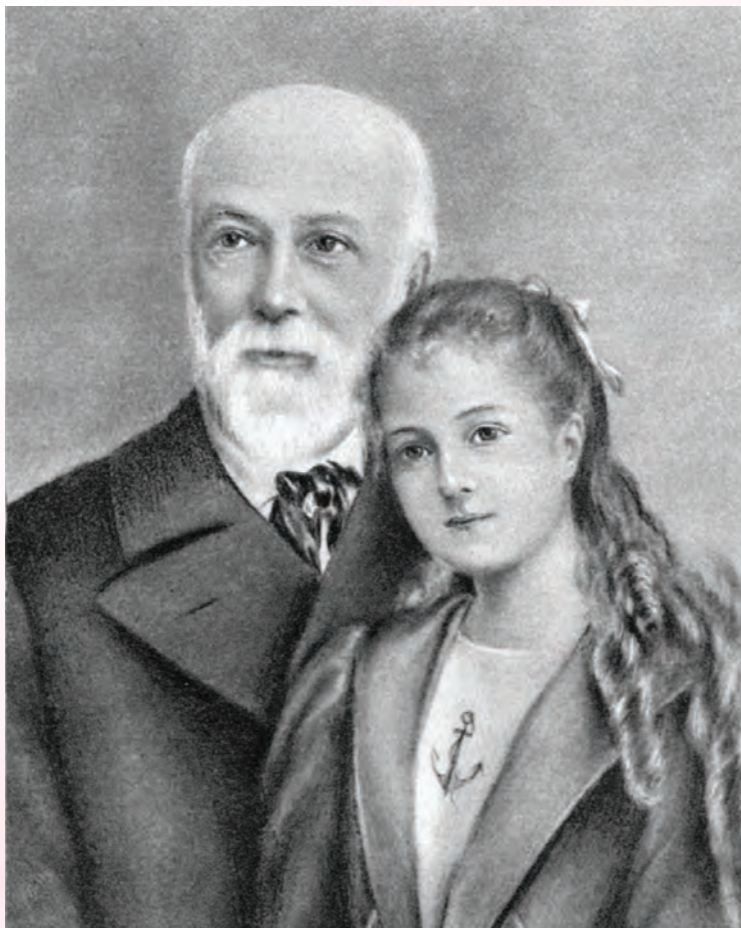


Full Trust in God

Is there such a thing as a perfect family? What lies at the heart of a family that makes it strong and healthy? I don't think we'll ever find the perfect family. With that said, we do have the example of the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Mary was called by God to be the mother of our Savior. And she trusted God totally, when she proclaimed her fiat. Then lived her fiat. Joseph was chosen to be Jesus' foster father. And being an honorable and dignified man, he took on that ministry so well. What made them a perfect model was their full trust in God and their complete surrender to God's will.

Family and faith were so important to them. And they stuck together through thick and thin! The Holy Family knew a lot of sorrow, trouble, and pain. Look at the circumstances of Jesus' birth. Then they had to become refugees by fleeing to Egypt to protect their child's life. There were so many ups and down throughout their life. This should encourage us in these troubling times. Mary and Joseph didn't live a sheltered and trouble-free life. Absolutely not. But they are the Holy Family. They had faith, had full trust in God, and were very obedient to God's will. That was at the heart of their family.

Skip ahead 1,873 years and we encounter St. Thérèse's family, the Martins. What was at the heart of their family: Louie and Zélie Martin and their five girls? Before Thérèse was born, her mom and dad lost four young children to death. Two boys and two girls. When Thérèse was 4 ½ years old, her mom died from cancer. Then her older sister Pauline took over and became a mother figure for her. They were inseparable. Then, in a few years, Pauline joined the convent, and that had a grave effect on little Thérèse!



Thérèse's family was clearly a close-knit one, with strong family bonds. From studying *The Story of a Soul*, we see that they were a family of prayer and deep faith. The Church was paramount in their lives. Louie and Zélie Marin attended daily Mass, even having their own family pew at St. Pierre Church. [I had the joy of sitting in their pew.] The sacraments were important to them.

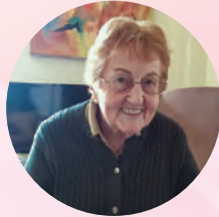
In an article a few years ago, our beloved Father John Russell, O.Carm., who was a scholar on St. Thérèse, wrote that the primary focus of the Martin Family "was raising their children in ways that showed respect for God and a love for each other. Zélie taught her five daughters how to love God through prayer, self-discipline, and a generous love. The daughters learned about life especially by observing their parents' love for each other and their commitment to family life." They saw God in all aspects of life, and were always open and warm in their love for one another. Love was at the heart of their family.

The family did many things together: walks to the beaches, walks to different

churches, nature walks. There's something to be said about the "Family that Prays together stays together!" And the family that plays together, and enjoys discovering together, seeking God together in his created beauty, also stays together. Their family faith and their bonds of love were able to carry them through many tragic losses and transitions.

Zélie and Louis Martin manifested a faith commitment that was solid and real. This enabled St. Thérèse, although she had her deep struggles, to grow up knowing that her life was a gift from God, and she wanted to live it fully for Jesus. From the time of her mother's death, Thérèse received strong support from her father. His love and understanding gave her the confidence she needed and the ability she needed to take risks and to make decisions.

Father John Russell added, "Family life needs to have a concrete way of expressing faith in Jesus Christ; the example of parents needs to be consistent and authentic; the family relationships born of love require affirmation, challenge, correction, and a generous spirit." So it is easy to see what



was at the heart of the Martin family: God, faith, love, respect.

In honour of the Martin Family, and in honour of St. Thérèse, maybe we can each examine our own family life. Are we doing enough activities together? Are we praying together! Do we worship together in our family church? Are we even eating together? Is Christ the head of my household? Do we do enough fun things together? Are we balancing work and family life? These are a few things that, I suggest, should be at the heart of a family. And if these are at the heart of a family, and if the family is the basic unit of society, then we can only have a healthier, more loving, more caring society. 🌹

THE MANY FACES OF ST. THÉRÈSE

AS YOU LOOK AT THESE PICTURES that surround St. Thérèse — people who are part of the family that lives close to her heart — you can be assured that you also have a place with her. As part of her extended family, know with full confidence that she never forgets her own.

Truly, you are her own.

Just as you rely on her for favors large and small, she also relies on you. It is through you that her message of trust in the One who walks at every person's side, through thick and thin, is heard.

St. Thérèse forever points the way to Jesus. She wants you to trust as she did, encouraging you to look to Him with the confidence of a child. Sometimes, such faith can feel like an enormous risk, yet it is anything but that. It is the way that leads to true peace, and ultimately to eternal life.

Our world needs to hear that! As part of St. Thérèse's family, you can be that messenger. With her around your shoulder, she knows that she can count on you.

We will be forever grateful for the life and love you share so generously with St. Thérèse and her Society of the Little Flower. 🌹



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



▲ Natasha's grandmother, Esperanza



▲ Natasha's father, Alfred Cardenas, in Vietnam



▲ Natasha's youngest son in the Middle East



▲ Natasha's oldest son in France

Generations of Faith

St. Thérèse came into my life when I was 43 years old. It all started on a Saturday morning while having a cup of coffee with my father. I had been through a rough patch and was living with him at the time, along with my two sons, ages 9 and 14.

Out of the blue, my father looked up from reading his newspaper and asked me if I had ever heard of St. Thérèse of the Little Flower. I answered no. He then put his paper down and proceeded to tell me about his experience with her.

My father was born in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, and immigrated with his mother to San Francisco when he was a boy. His father stayed behind in Mexico. In the mid-1960s, my father joined the Marine Corps and was sent to Vietnam. When his father, who was still in Mexico, heard his son was on his way to Vietnam, he was concerned that his son was going off to war. My grandfather wrote to my father before he shipped off and enclosed a prayer card and relic of St. Thérèse. My father shared that he carried the card with him throughout his tour in Vietnam, and he truly believed she protected him in some very dangerous situations.

He then told me that St. Thérèse longed to become a missionary to Vietnam. However, her health declined and she never realized that dream. I asked him if he still had the prayer card and relic. Unfortunately, he did not

know where they were. He suggested I go online and “Google” St. Thérèse and maybe it will provide me with some comfort.

After the conversation with my dad, I decided to go visit my grandmother; she will be turning 102 in June of 2023. As I was chatting with her, I was admiring her nightstand. On it a small statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe stood next to another statue of *El Santo Niño de Atocha* (Holy Infant of Atocha), along with photos of loved ones who had passed. As I looked closer at the nightstand, I noticed a faded prayer card propped up against a lamp. I asked my grandmother which saint was on the card and where she got it. She proceeded to share that before she met and married my grandfather, in Mexico, he was sent to a seminary by his parents with hopes of him becoming a priest.

Obviously, that did not happen. When they were married, he would often take out the prayer card and share the story of how he acquired it. He told my grandmother that a group of Carmelite nuns were in Mexico and that one of them was St. Thérèse's sister and that she had given him the card. My grandmother then mentioned that my grandfather mailed it to my father when he was headed to Vietnam. She ended up with it because she took it from my dad's room upon his return from Vietnam to keep it safe. She then handed me the prayer card/relic and said, “Take it, but keep it safe.”

I wish I would have had a camera to capture the look on my father's face when I arrived back at his home that afternoon, the same day we had been talking about sweet St. Thérèse. Since that day, she has remained in my life.

Two weeks after the incident with the



▲ Prayer card with relic



prayer card, my father found a statue of St. Thérèse in an antique shop. He purchased it and gifted it to me. It still sits on my dresser in my bedroom. Soon, I started writing letters to her, sealing them in envelopes and placing them under the statue. My letters to her are personal, oftentimes including petitions. And my petitions have been answered, not always in the way or time I thought they would, but rather how God and St. Thérèse thought best. They are gifts and miracles from her. I envision her tugging on the robe of Jesus' like a child and saying, “Hey, my sister Natasha has a request.”

Throughout this journey, my young sons, who are now young men, witnessed me praying the rosary, and my annual novena leading up to the Feast of St. Thérèse. My eldest son, while studying abroad, surprised me and took a little pilgrimage to the birthplace and home of St. Thérèse and shared the experience. My youngest, who is now serving in the U.S. Army and deployed in the Middle East, carries a rosary I ordered from the Society of the Little Flower. We have kept up our belief and faith in the Little Flower through the generations. 🌹



GETTY IMAGES/SHAPTECHARGE

The Other Side of Estate Planning

THE FIRST TIME I SAW ART, he was shuffling down the sidewalk, carrying a well-worn shopping bag, which I later learned served as his “lunch bucket.”

Art had called earlier that week and asked that we get together, saying that he wanted to discuss some ideas with me. I was somewhat taken aback because we had never met, but I agreed. There was something about the sincerity in his voice.

I arrived early for our 10 a.m. appointment and sat in my car in front of a nondescript office building. At the appointed time, I went up to the second floor, where Art greeted me warmly. As our conversation unfolded, I soon learned that Art was the owner and CEO of a very successful manufacturing company.

Based on first impressions, I never would have guessed. He told me that he liked to keep his office away from the day-to-day hubbub of running the company, entrusting those details to his daughter. As the saying goes, never judge a book by its cover.

After discussing the ideas Art wanted to share with me, I asked him to what he attributed his success. Without blinking an eye, he smiled, paused for just a moment and then pointed toward the heavens. More than 10 years have gone by since that first meeting, and most everything I remember about Art was captured in that one gesture.

We often make assumptions about people simply based on how they look, what they wear or the degree of material success they have achieved. Art told me he didn't want to be remembered

for what he did or for the things he accumulated. He simply wanted to be remembered as someone who stood for what was right and was a man who knew he owed everything to a loving and merciful God. He wanted that to be his legacy.

There is much talk about estate planning these days, with the thought that one's legacy is formed by that plan. Indeed, such can be the case, but only if the conversation moves from passing on assets to passing on values.

How do you think people will remember you in the future? Most likely your answer will be similar to what Art shared with me. And the good news is you have time to shape the memories people will have of you.

HERE'S A PLACE TO START:

■ Write a letter to those whom you love and include that letter with your estate plan. Let the letter offer a glimpse into the values that matter most to you. Tell stories about the people and events that helped make you the person you are today. If you need some ideas to help guide your letter, try some of these:

- Your mother and father's greatest influence on you;
- The things you liked to do as a child;
- The greatest joy and the greatest disappointment (or regret) of your life;
- The values that were most important to you;
- What you believe to be the secret to a happy life; and
- The words of your favorite prayer, song or saying.

We need to start thinking about estate planning in a more complete way. When you realize that inherited money is typically spent within 18 months, you can begin to understand that shaping one's legacy is about so much more than money. It's the “other side” of one's estate plan that matters most.

Whether you already have your estate plan in place, or have yet to begin creating one, I encourage you to contact our Special Gifts Office at 888.996.1212 to request a free copy of our planning guide, “Effective Estate Planning: What You Need to Know.” You will find several helpful tips and pointers inside.

Finally, I encourage you to include in your “last testament” a word or two about why our patron, St. Thérèse, means so much to you. As you are certainly aware, our world so desperately needs to know the real secret to success in life, which serves as the basis of Thérèse's spirituality: the importance of childlike faith and trust in God. That will be the greatest gift of all to those you love. 🌹

BY DAN PRITCHARD

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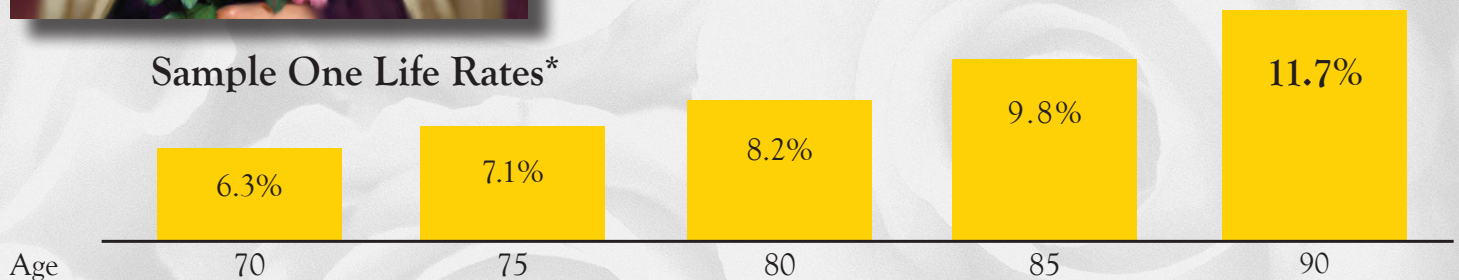


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