

Apostolate of the
Little Flower



HOPE

Anticipating the Nativity of the Lord

Preparing Our Hearts in Hope

A virtue essential in our Christian journey

Celebrating the Liturgy During a Pandemic

Moving forward in hope, flourishing in ways we had not considered

A Gift to the Christ Child

An invitation to offer our love, cares and sufferings

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Your legacy will live on in our ministries for generations.



"I will spend my Heaven doing good upon earth."
- St. Thérèse of Lisieux

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Celebrating 100 Years of Sharing the Spirituality of St. Thérèse

Established as part of our first apostolate in 1920, *The Little Flower Magazine*, reached over 100,000 subscribers by 1923. Recognizing the great devotion of subscribers from all over the country, the friars realized that our little delegation in the U.S. now had a mission: to spread devotion to Thérèse, to prepare for her canonization in 1925, and to build a national shrine in her honor.

Today, the *Apostolate of the Little Flower* magazine carries on the mission by serving as the official publication of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas. This magazine is wholly dependent on you, the readers and devotees of St. Thérèse.

"After My Death, I Will Let Fall



A Shower of Roses"

Dear friends,



During this time of hope and anticipation of the Nativity of the Lord, I am glad to greet you for the first time. 2020 has been a year of great change! It is, perhaps, interesting to note, that just as we celebrate 100 years of the Apostolate of the Little Flower, it is also just over 100 years since the last pandemic swept the world. Then, as now, people had need for hope.

With faith, life continues, regardless of outside forces. This summer the Province of St. Thérèse held our Provincial Chapter at which new assignments are determined for our friars. Little Flower Basilica, where I have been assigned as Superior, welcomed an entirely new community. Despite the challenge of these responsibilities under these times, I take joy in serving here at the Basilica.

As we approach the end of the year, I am reminded of the rocky ground in the parable of the sower. Should our soil prove rocky, we may at our first encounter with God, experience great satisfaction in prayer, attending Mass, reading the Bible, etc. But as time goes by, that gratification diminishes more and more and with it also does our perseverance, until we finally give up. 2020 has been a year which demonstrates the need for us to allow his Word to grow deep roots in us.

As the consolation we may usually gain from our religious practices has been withdrawn from us, our goal must be to move from the realm of sense to the realm of spirit. When living our spiritual life in the realm of sense we act on the basis of gratification, doing what feels good and avoiding what doesn't. Now, an important opportunity has emerged: to grow up and begin living the spiritual life of an adult, of a true disciple not bound to feelings.

As Advent comes to a close and we approach the Christmas season, I invite you to begin to follow Christ, not on the basis of gratification, but in faith, hope, and love. These three virtues have this year had the opportunity to become strong. This is the road from slavery to our appetites to freedom and true union with God. Therefore, this year has been a great grace and opportunity to pursue the Giver and not the gift.

In this issue we explore the theme of hope in various ways, from the growth of our ministry into new media, to the personal growth that theological hope offers us. In order for us to become fertile ground in which God's Word bears abundant fruit it is crucial that we persevere. Only then will God's Word grow deep roots in our hearts and we can experience the freedom that he grants to those who are determined to be true servants of love as his Son was.

May the joy of the birth of Jesus continue to keep you firm in faith, persistent in charity, and strengthened in hope.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jorge Cabrera". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial "J" and "C".

Rev. Jorge Cabrera, OCD
Superior

ON THE COVER

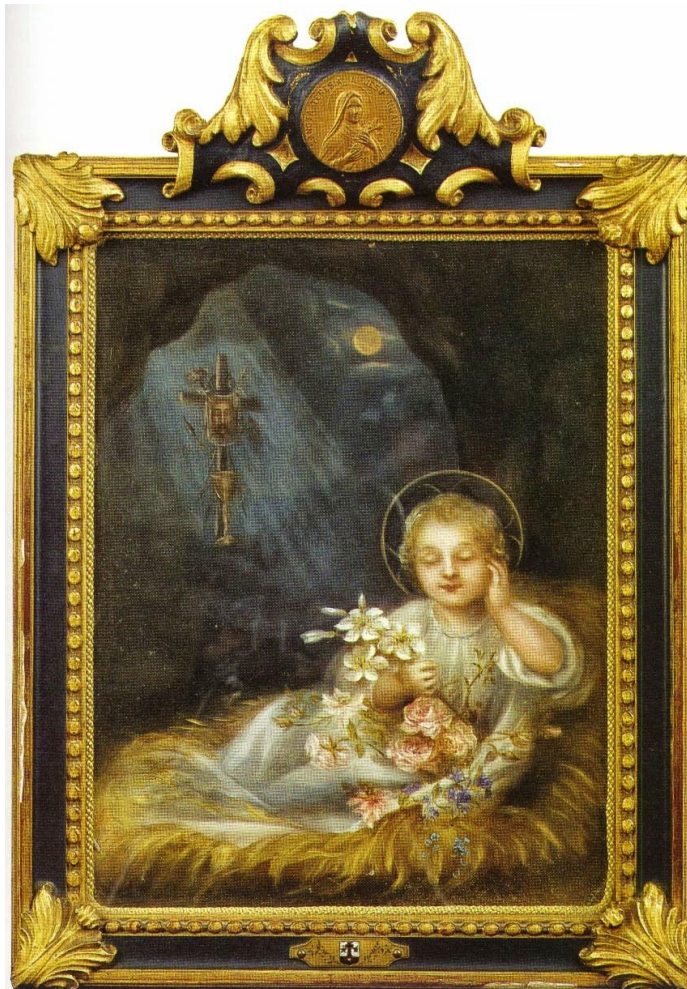
The Dream of the Child Jesus

This beautiful stained glass window of the Child Jesus cannot be found by the average visitor to the Basilica today. This is a relic of our past which currently resides in storage. The style of this window strongly resonates with the oldest windows in the Basilica. The windows in the tomb chapel, choir loft, and the original baptistery all share the same decadent shades of blue and a style distinct from that of the Life of St. Teresa or Life of St. John windows.

In the 1950s, when Fr. Pascal Pierini, OCD was Subprior of San Antonio, he commissioned Rodney Winfield of the Emil Frei firm of St. Louis to design the main windows on either side of the pews. After completing this project, Emil Frei offered the shrine a gift to Thérèse, free of charge: the rose window depicting St. Elijah. Unfortunately, the installation of this gift in the friar's balcony over the north entrance would displace this charming face of the Child Jesus.



Stained Glass Collection: The Dream of the Child Jesus Window



"The Dream of the Child Jesus" painting by St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, 1894.

In 1894 Thérèse completed an oil painting she called "The Dream of the Child Jesus," which was then gifted to Mother Agnes of Jesus. Thérèse describes her painting as one in which the Child Jesus dreams of "A cross!... a lance!, a crown of thorns! And yet the divine Child does not tremble..."¹ It is easy to see where the unknown artist gained inspiration for his window. As elsewhere in the Basilica, the motif of roses is present, echoing the original painting, but here spilling in profusion from the Child's lap.

For now this window remains in storage, lovingly kept in a free standing frame, visible only to a rare few. It is with great hope that we anticipate the completion of the Masterplan which will give this beautiful window a new home where it can be admired by all. We share it now with you this Christmas season as a glimpse of the hidden wonders the Basilica holds.

As the Child dreams of his future and the salvation it will bring, so we at the Basilica dream of our future restoration and how we might share His message of love, made possible by the support of those like you.

1. LT 156 From Thérèse to Mother Agnes of Jesus. January 21, 1894

Offer the gift of Little Flower to a loved one this holiday season!

Patrons of St. Thérèse

For your donation of \$50, you will receive an enrollment in the Little Flower Mass Association for your intention along with a series of 5 Basilica archival prints.

Friends of St. Thérèse

For your donation of \$75, you will receive an enrollment in the Little Flower Mass Association for your intention, 5 Basilica archival prints, and a print of The Child Thérèse by Robert Garza, a San Antonio artist who evocatively combines the classic and the contemporary.

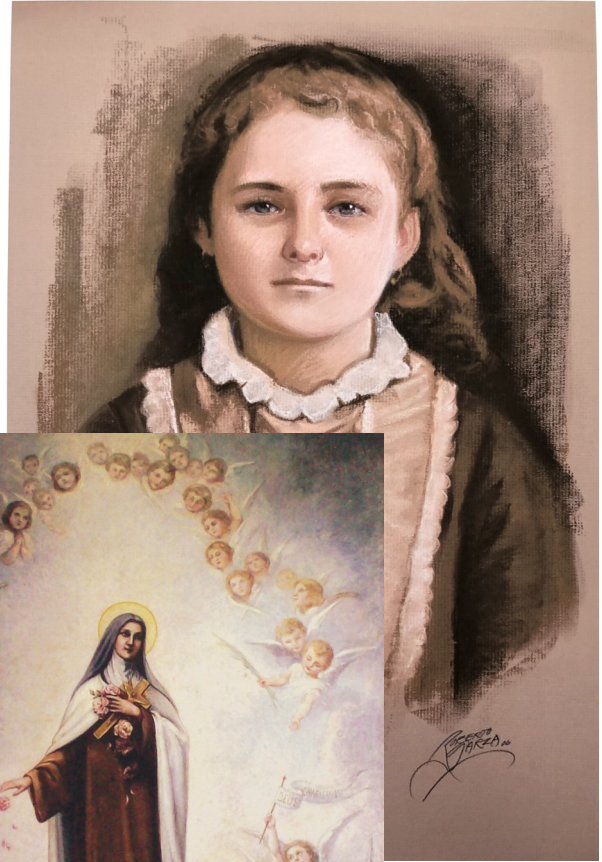
Devotees of St. Thérèse

For your donation of \$100, you will receive an enrollment in the Little Flower Mass Association for your intention, 5 Basilica archival prints, The Child Thérèse print, plus a numbered limited edition print of the painting of St. Thérèse on display in the Basilica undercroft.

Please use the “My check payable” section of your return envelope to write in your donation amount or visit our website: littleflowerbasilica.org/restoration

Items will be mailed to you once you have confirmed the intention for your Mass Association Enrollment.

*You know that our Lord does not look
at the greatness or difficulty of our action,
but at the love with which you do it.
What, then, have you to fear?
- St. Thérèse of Lisieux*



We are excited to announce the Grand Opening of Little Flower Catholic Store!

Rebranded from the Little Flower Gift Shop, the Catholic Store now offers an array of items focusing on Carmelite Spirituality, Little Flower Basilica, and Catholic essentials. In August of this year we reopened our doors under our new manager Norma Aguilar, a member of the Secular Order community in San Antonio.

The store is open for shopping or phone orders:
Friday-Sunday, 9am – 3pm

(210) 736-3889
920 Kentucky Ave.
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CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY

Preparing Our Hearts in Hope

By Fr. Jorge Cabrera, OCD

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! See, I am coming to dwell among you, says the Lord. Many nations shall join themselves to the Lord on that day, and they shall be His people, and he will dwell among you, and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you” (Zec 2: 14-15).

With these and similar words in different parts of the Old Testament our Lord God promises His people a Messiah who will bring them liberation, redemption, and peace. In the liturgical season of Advent, the Church invites us to listen to these promises realizing they are truly meant for us now as well. She encourages us to allow our hearts to swell with hope and desire for God’s gift of His Son to us, as Israel did so long ago. Thus, Advent is all about hope, a virtue that is essential in our Christian journey. For this reason, guided by the wisdom of Sacred Scripture and St. John of the Cross, I would like to share with you some reflections on the role hope plays in our lives and the importance it has in our journey as children of God.

The theological virtue of hope is both a gift from God and a response on our part to His promises. The beautiful biblical passage from Zechariah quoted above shows how, through His promises, God seeks to provoke hope in the hearts of His people. This is a manifestation how His Word is truly “living and effective” (Heb 4: 12). In this way God intends to prepare and stretch our hearts making them receptive to welcome the promised gift of His Son. Through the hope that God ignites in our hearts He makes us capable of receiving His gift.

Through the season of Advent we make ours that time of Israel’s waiting

St. John of the Cross expresses this in one of his Romances. The Mystical Doctor uses poetry to show how God stirs hope in His people about the coming of the Messiah by telling them “...that one day / He would exalt them, / and that He would lift them / up from their lowness... / for He would make Himself / wholly like them, / and He would come to them / and dwell with them; / and God would be man / and man would be God...”¹

In this sense we can say that hope is an agent that brings about that which we await, that is, the fulfillment of God’s promises in us because it makes us capable of receiving them.

Another beautiful and mysterious quality of the virtue of

hope is its capacity to somehow bring the future into the present. We have all experienced this, even at the temporal level. If we won a trip to the destination of our dreams for next month we would definitely rejoice in anticipation even though we are not taking the trip yet. In the same way hope allows us to have a foretaste of what we are hoping for and rejoice in it. In this sense, it brings to the present that which is still in the future. This is a most valuable characteristic because it helps us to persevere in the midst of trials by allowing us to set our eyes on the light at the end of the tunnel. The Mystical Doctor expresses it in the same poem describing how God’s promise of a Messiah made their trials lighter: “By this bright hope / which came to them from above, / their wearying labors were lightened...”² In this sense we can say that hope is both promise and gift, allowing us a foretaste of the joy that we await, in this case the Messiah of God.

Hope, a virtue...essential in our Christian journey.



Through the season of Advent we make ours that time of Israel’s waiting and allow it to inform our hope in the manifestation of Christ’s salvation in our present circumstances and its eventual full revelation in eternity. Hope, thus, allows us to rejoice in advance and see our present struggles in the light of a future of redemption.

This doesn’t mean, however, that our waiting time is empty or dormant, as if God was only waiting for us at the end of the road. As we explained before, through hope God walks with us and prepares us now. Thus, through this theological virtue, the waiting time is not empty or dull, but transformative in itself. We can truly say, then, that because of our hope, the redemption we

await is happening now, even though only partially. In light of this we can say with St. Paul:

“Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (1 Cor 6: 2).

St. John of the Cross goes as far as to say that we will receive from God as much as we hope. This virtue, he says, gives us wings that make us capable of attaining that which we all seek (whether we know it or not), transforming union with God, which St. John poetically compares to prey: “In a wonderful way / my one flight surpassed a / thousand, / for the hope of heaven / attains as much as it hopes for; / this seeking is my only hope, / and in hoping, I made no mistake, / because I flew so high, so high, / that I took the prey.”³ We can thus say that hope is the container in which we will receive the water of God’s gift. The bigger the container the more we will receive.

According to St. John of the Cross, the virtue of hope also has potential to assist in the healing of our memories. As fallen human beings we have a tendency to sometimes dwell too much in the past. Both pleasant and unpleasant memories can be a hindrance for us to move on in our following of Christ. By inordinately holding on to good memories, we can remain in a permanent state of lamentation for the loss of the “good old days” and stay stuck in a “paradise lost” mode, losing sight of God’s presence and action in our lives here and now. Bad memories can make us repeatedly relive the past, haunting our present and crippling our future. Both kinds of memories can, therefore, become anchors that prevent our boat from sailing along. St. John states that in these cases, hope can help us to undo the ropes that keep us bound to the past. By enabling us to put our focus on God’s promises and open our arms to receive them, hope can serve as the sails that, filled by the wind of the Spirit, allow us to move along to where God wants to lead us. The attachment to memories pulls us back, but hope pushes us forward.



This does not, however, mean that hope erases our memories; the problem is not remembering, but doing it in a way that affects us negatively. Instead hope helps us to come to terms with our memories by seeing them in the light of that ultimate hope we await, where all questions will be answered, all desires satisfied, and we will see all past circumstances of our life through God’s eyes.

It is important at this point to make an important distinction between theological hope and what St. John of the Cross calls vain hope. The first one aspires to the ulti-

mate gift of God Himself that begins in this life and will be fully given in the next. The second gets stuck in other things that, even if they are good in themselves, are not God. This hope is vain because it makes us desire things that we may or may not receive. And even if we do receive them, they will not fully satisfy us as only God himself can. This means that by vain hope, sooner or later, we set ourselves up for disappointment.

Theological hope, rather, goes hand in hand with a humble and serene recognition of one’s poverty, that is, the awareness that regardless of how much goods of this world we have or don’t have (either material or spiritual), we will only find the full satisfaction of our longings in God’s eternal embrace. This is why theological hope reminds us that in this world “we have no lasting city, but we seek the one that is to come” (Heb 13: 14). In words of St. John: “...what need is there in order to be right other than to... live only in dark and true faith and certain hope and complete charity, expecting all our blessings in heaven, living here below like pilgrims...?”⁴ It is therefore important that we allow the lesser hopes of this life to be informed and illuminated by theological hope so we don’t lose sight of the big picture.

As we immerse ourselves in the holy season of Advent let us embrace God’s invitation to make room for Him in our hearts by theological hope. Through it He incites us in joyful anticipation, lightens our trials, makes us capable of Him, and frees us from the tyranny of our memories. We will then exclaim with St. John of the Cross:

“You will not take from me, my God, what you once gave me in your only Son, Jesus Christ, in whom you gave me all I desire. Hence I rejoice that if I wait for you, you will not delay.”⁵

Fr. Jorge Cabrera of Mary Immaculate, OCD was born and raised in Puerto Rico. He entered the Discalced Carmelites in 2001 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2009. Fr. Jorge has a Master’s Degree in Divinity from Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, Louisiana, and a Licentiate in Spiritual Theology with concentration on Carmelite Spirituality, from CITEs (International Center for Teresian and Sanjuanist Studies) in Avila in conjunction with Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid, Spain. He is currently serving as superior and parochial vicar at Little Flower Basilica in San Antonio, Texas.



1. St. John of the Cross, *Collected Works*. ICS Washington DC, 1991, p. 63-64.
2. St. John of the Cross, *Collected Works*, p. 64.
3. St. John of the Cross, *Collected Works*, p. 57.
4. St. John of the Cross, *Collected Works*, p. 754-755.
5. St. John of the Cross, *Collected Works*, p. 87.

ILLUMINATING THE BASILICA

Celebrating the Liturgy During a Time of Pandemic: A Retrospective

On September 27, 1931 the Shrine of the Little Flower opened its doors despite the struggles of the Great Depression which burdened people across the country and the world. Now, COVID-19 has led Little Flower Basilica, like many churches throughout the U.S., to close its doors for much of 2020. The struggle to maintain the Basilica's presence in the life and community of the faithful Catholics who rely on her has forced us to develop in new and extraordinary ways. As we move forward in hope for the coming year, we look back on 2020 and how our liturgical celebrations have adapted and flourished, even within new restrictions.

*...New possibilities for how the devotees...
could express their faith...*

March - Lent

Nearly halfway through our Lenten fast the Archdiocese of San Antonio decreed that for our health and safety we had also to abstain from our Sunday Mass and Communion. The Basilica community reeled but complied and continued the Lenten journey, though seemingly more distant from our Lord and their brothers and sisters at the Basilica.



Little Flower volunteers form a COVID Safety Team to prepare for the Basilica reopening.

April - Easter

While still in the grip of the first panic and the seeming impossibility of acquiring the supplies needed to keep our congregation safe, Little Flower's first tentative steps towards livestreaming and expanding our online presence were forced into a run with the demands of the Easter Triduum.

July - Our Lady of Mount Carmel

For the first time since the declaration of Pandemic swept the nation, Little Flower Basilica opened its doors to Mass attendees for a major celebration. By this point the

daily live-stream of the liturgy was well established and parishioners had grown used to the stringent measures put in place for their safety. For the recently established COVID Safety Team, this would be the first test of organizing for a Carmelite Feast. Weekly Mass attendance was growing, but slowly. Would the Little Flower Family's love for Our Lady override any lingering fear?

As hoped, July 16 brought with it a larger number than had yet attended any celebration, a total of 126 people. The real surprise, however, was in the online reach of the celebrations. Little Flower had already been present online through various social media prior to 2020, featuring items on Facebook, Instagram, and others. We hadn't previously, however, made any attempt to stream services or had any idea of what the potential reach could be. Seeing that the celebrations for Our Lady of Mount Carmel garnered 2,132 views was staggering.

October - The Feast of St. Thérèse

The feast of our patroness has always been the grandest celebration of the year at Little Flower Basilica. The restrictions placed on celebrations provided new





St. Thérèse Devotees receiving roses from the Carmelite friars at the Mass of Roses.

possibilities for how the devotees of the saint could express their faith. The Novena of the Little Flower this year gave our new pastor a chance to communicate with the faithful on a personal level and share a more in-depth look into St. Thérèse’s Little Way. 2,255 views on the short videos released each day of the novena gave a wider audience the chance to pray with us and submit their intentions.

By this point, though the group of volunteers serving on the COVID team had organized weddings, funerals, and other special services, in addition to Sunday Masses, the Feast of St. Thérèse was still a major undertaking. The wider impact of the pandemic was evident in how colleges started the fall semester. Fortunately, two students from the University of the Incarnate Word were willing to take on the roles of Sr. Agnes and St. Thérèse for the *Transitus*, the annual reenactment of the saint’s last conversations. Together, the Basilica hosted 263 and reached nearly 4,500 people online on September 30 and October 1.

Looking forward to Christmas

Christmas celebrations are nearly upon us and the new liturgical year has started with a strong feeling of hope that this time of crisis has not dampened. Mass attendance has continued to rise and with online engagement we look forward to sharing the Christmas season with a community that has grown even beyond the United States. At heart is still St. Thérèse’s message that little things done with extraordinary love can have a great impact.

What began as a complete moratorium on public liturgy has allowed us to explore and flourish in ways we had not considered. Just as the original conception of The Apostolate of the Little Flower allowed the Discalced Carmelites to reach and educate a nation, in the next hundred years we look forward to sharing the liturgy and the Carmelite charism with the world.

Follow us on our socials to hear the latest news!



LA GRAN POSADA

December 16:
Special YouTube Premier



La Gran Posada is a traditional Mexican Christmas celebration, annually presented by the Hispanic Heritage Society of San Antonio. It includes a medley of Hispanic carols, or *villancicos*, with Invocations to the Virgin Mary, the Litany, and *Cantos de las Posadas*, along with traditional Christmas songs from around the world.

La Gran Posada features Voces de San Antonio. Cristina Ortega, the artistic director of the program, began the tradition over 21 years ago at Little Flower Basilica.

Featuring Cristina Ortega

Cristina Ortega is an internationally known singer with a career of 55 years. She was designated as "The Soprano of Mexico" by the National Institute of Fine Arts in Mexico City.



Grow Your Faith!

Friars and OCDS Share the Carmelite Faith Online

Haven't had a chance to attend a "Get to Know Your Basilica" tour?

Fr. Gregory Ross, pastor of the Basilica, teamed up with Today's Catholic to produce a virtual tour of the Basilica, sharing details about our history and unique features. Find the video at littleflowerbasilica.org/about

Explore the Carmelite Charism

Fr. Gregory Ross, Fr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, and Fr. Luis Belmonte-Luna have each released a series of talks on St. Teresa of Jesus covering her life, prayer, and more. Available in English and Spanish.

Learn more about St. Thérèse's Little Way in a special nine-part series of short videos originally shared for her feast.

Find these at youtube.com/littleflowerbasilica

Prayer and Reflection

Fr. Jorge Cabrera and Fr. Bonaventure Sauer meditate on the Life of Our Lady, common Catholic prayers, and more in short videos exclusive to youtube.com/littleflowerbasilica.



Advent Retreat

Available on YouTube:
youtube.com/littleflowerbasilica

Reflexión con Fr. Jorge Cabrera, OCD

Reflection with Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD

Coming Soon

The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites plan to release the schedule of Carmelite Spirituality Talks for 2021. Check out littleflowerbasilica.org for the latest updates on public and virtual events.

Cornerstone for the Future: Restoration of the Little Flower Basilica

Chanting the Flos Carmeli, the Discalced Carmelite Fathers of the Province of St. Thérèse closed their XXXI Provincial Chapter meeting encouraged by the newly-elected Provincial, Fr. Luis Castañeda, OCD, "to take the best from the past and to build and live our present and future with creativity."

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the friars began their new assignments and Little Flower Basilica welcomed a new pastor and rector, Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD (see New Assignments, p.12). As the friars settled

into their new communities and roles, the first priority was to provide a safe environment for worship and bringing liturgy and spirituality programs to the faithful in the Basilica and at home. Sharing the Spirituality of Carmel is foundational to the ultimate restoration and preservation of the historic Basilica shrine.

After completing several major repairs and renovations to the Basilica, including the 2000 exterior rehabilitation and roof replacement and the 2006 Basilica Undercroft and St. Elias Chapel renovation project, the Carmelite Fathers entered a mission-driven reorganization in response to the needs of our times and the declining numbers of religious vocations. To assist the Province in carrying out its mission, the friars established a central administration office led by Executive Director, Susana Cantu. The new collaborative effort between the friars, the administrative team, the Secular Order Discalced Carmelites, and Little Flower Parishioners enhanced the functioning of the shrine and its purpose as a robust center of the Carmelite charism for the Archdiocese of San Antonio and the greater region with the initiation of the Basilica's Carmelite Spirituality and Evangelism Programs.



Operating under this collaborative management model, the Carmelite Fathers were better equipped to advance their mission and continue their restoration efforts despite the small number of friars and limited resources. Being awarded various grants¹ for planning and with the growing support of Basilica donors, the friars have accomplished the following:

Conducted a Property Condition Assessment: Focused on site, structural, building envelope, and geotechnical aspects regarding the three primary campus buildings (the Basilica, the Monastery, and the College) and the surrounding site boundary, the assessment was completed by Raba Kistner, Inc.

Repaired and Renovated Little Flower Convent: In anticipation of being displaced during the renovation and restoration period of the monastery, major improvements were made to the Little Flower Convent next to the school including: full roof replacement, kitchen renovation, chapel repairs, and hvac replacement.

Completed Assessment Review: The Little Flower Building Committee, a volunteer committee of engineers, architects and general contractors, studied and reviewed the assessment and made the following observations and recommendations:

Defined Preliminary Project Phases:

- Phase I: Water Intrusion Mitigation
- Phase II: Structural Repairs
- Phase III: Restoration and Historical Preservation

Defined Pre-design Activities:

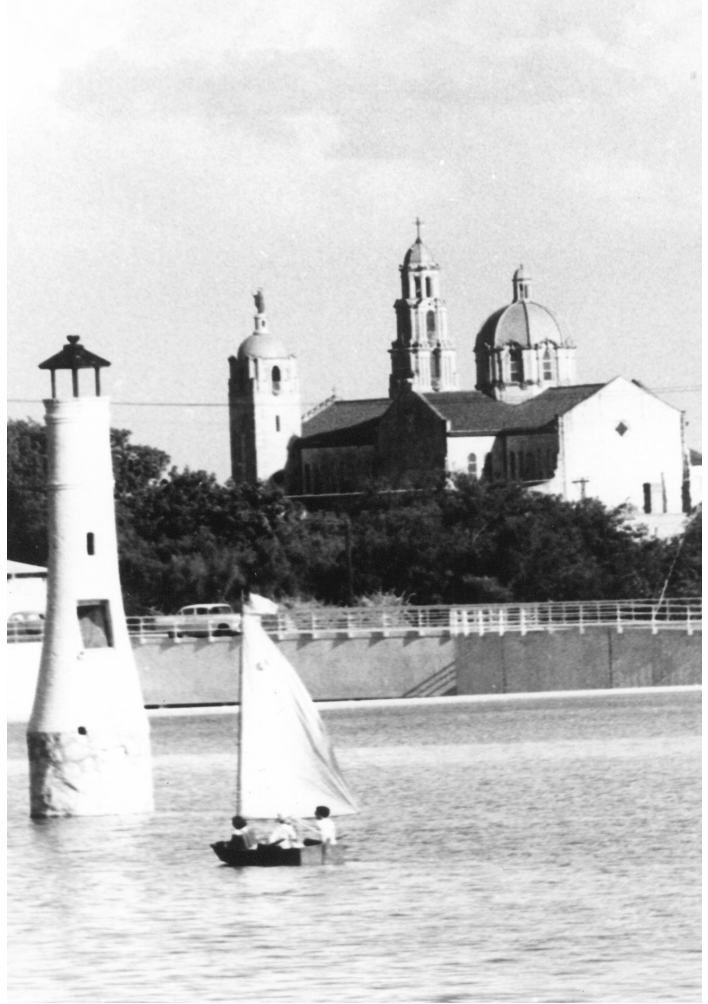
- Activity 1: Complete engineering design for Phase I
- Activity 2: Concurrently, develop Masterplan for Phase II and III

Engaged Project Management Consultant: This year, considering the magnitude of the project, the various professionals that we will need to work with to complete the project and the need to provide continuity in project management and oversight, the friars engaged the services of Project Control of Texas, Inc., a project management consultant.

Selected Architecture Firm: Most recently, the Carmelite Fathers selected Douglas Architects to complete the engineering design of Phase I and to develop a Historical Preservation Masterplan which addresses known water intrusion issues, structural repairs and historical restoration and preservation of the Basilica. Douglas Architects has assembled a team of architects, engineers, historical preservation experts, and fundraising professionals to take the next steps for restoring and persevering the Basilica of the Little Flower.

A little over a year ago, we celebrated the 90th anniversary of the blessing of the cornerstone for this most sacred place. The Cornerstone for the Future celebration gave us a moment to reflect and consider our own

commitment to preserving the legacy of faith built by the generations before us. These next steps may prove more difficult in these uncertain times. However, just as countless devotees of St. Thérèse laid the cornerstone for her shrine in the midst of the Great Depression, we hope in the Lord that devotees today will be the cornerstone for the future.



Donate Today

The Basilica was built with contributions of many devotees to "The Little Flower" across the country. You can contribute to our preservation in the same way. Consider being part of the next generation of supporters of Little Flower Basilica. A donation to the Basilica Restoration Project will help continue the process of designing and planning for our community to serve you for another 100 years. For more information or to contribute to Basilica Restoration, visit littleflowerbasilica.org/restoration or make checks payable to "Little Flower Basilica" and use your return envelope.

1. Little Flower Basilica is thankful to the support of the many individual donors and the following grantors and sponsors of our Basilica programs and restoration efforts: Bexar County General Fund, Cato & Cato, HEB, Kenedy Foundation, Koch Foundation, Martinez-Rodriguez Law Firm, P-21 Foundation, Scanlon Foundation, Strake Foundation, Stuart-Griffin-Perlitz Foundation, Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation and Westerman Foundation.

PROVINCE OF ST. THÉRÈSE

The Office of the Provincial announces new assignments for the 2020-2023 triennium.



This year the Province of St. Thérèse of the Discalced Carmelite Friars celebrated the XXXI provincial chapter in the city of Dallas, Texas from May 25 to June 5. As every three years, the friars evaluated all the aspects of their vocation as Discalced Carmelites.

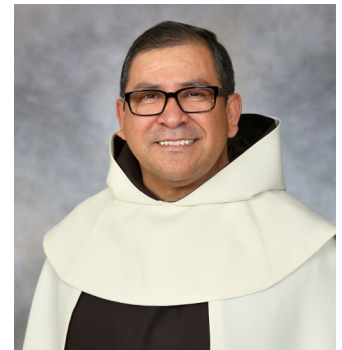
As mendicant friars they are supposed to move from community to community every three years. It is true that here in our Semi-Province they have not been able to do so every triennium because of their small numbers. However, summer for us here in the Semi-Province has been a time of major transition. Many changes have come in the lives of our communities and parishes. Please keep all the friars in your prayers as they begin their new assignments.

The provincial, Fr. Luis Castaneda, OCD, has assigned the following to the Basilica of the Little Flower in San Antonio, TX:

Provincial, Fr. Luis Castaneda, OCD

Fr. Luis Joaquin Castañeda, OCD, is a native of Mexico. He began his religious formation in the Discalced Carmelite Order in the US after meeting the Discalced Carmelite Nuns in New Caney, Texas. Fr. Luis completed his postulancy and novitiate in the Marylake formation house in Arkansas. After making his first Vows, he began his theology studies in New Orleans and finished

them in San Antonio, where he also completed his formation for the priesthood. Ordained in 2003, Fr. Luis continued his studies in religious formation. Fr. Luis has also served as vicar for the Carmelite Nuns of the Province and as Provincial from 2011-2017.



Superior, Fr. Jorge Cabrera, OCD

Fr. Jorge Cabrera of Mary Immaculate, OCD, was born and raised in Puerto Rico. He entered the Discalced Carmelites in 2001 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2009.

Fr. Jorge has a Master's Degree in Divinity from Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, Louisiana, and a Licentiate in Spiritual Theology with concentration on Carmelite Spirituality, from CITEs (International Center for Teresian and Sanjuanist Studies) in Avila in conjunction with Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid, Spain. He is currently serving as superior and parochial vicar at Little Flower Basilica in San Antonio, Texas.

Pastor and Rector, Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD

Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD, made his first profession as a Discalced Carmelite Friar in 1990 and was ordained a priest in 1995. During his years with the Province of St. Thérèse, he has served as student director, associate professor of dogmatic theology at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, and provincial superior. Since 2011, he has served as vocations director. He is currently serving as pastor and rector at the Basilica of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas.



Fr. Sam Morello, OCD

Fr. Sam Anthony Morello, OCD, entered the novitiate at Marylake Monastery in Little Rock, AR two weeks after graduating from high school. Ordained in 1962 at the Teresianum in Rome, he has taught theology at various universities and was instrumental in opening Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas in 1974 as an informal ecumenical center of Catholic spirituality. Now semi-retired, Fr. Sam resides in community at the Basilica of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas.



Fr. Raul Reyes, OCD

Fr. Raul Reyes, OCD, now in the 51st year of his priesthood, always wanted to be a priest. The Teresian sisters who taught elementary school provided him with his introduction to St. Teresa. After finding his calling with the Discalced Carmelites, he entered seminary in 1961. Fr. Raul went on to complete studies in San Antonio, TX, Washington, DC, Pittsburg, PA, and in Rome. Fr.



Raul has served in many roles throughout the Province: pastor at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel & St. Thérèse Parish in Oklahoma City, pastor of the Basilica in San Antonio 1975-81, Superior of the Novitiate at Marylake in Little Rock, two terms as Provincial Superior, and more. Currently, he is in community at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower.

Fr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, OCD



Fr. Emmanuel J. Nnadozie, OCD, is a Nigerian Carmelite of the Anglo-Irish Province of the Discalced Carmelite Friars. Ordained in 1981, he has worked in different capacities in his home Vicariate of Nigeria. Most of his priestly engagement has been in seminary formation, retreat work, counseling, and pastoral ministry. After training as a

pastoral counselor at Loyola College in Maryland (2002 - 2005), he is presently completing a doctoral program in counselor education and supervision at St. Mary's University, San Antonio.



What Gift Will You Give to the Christ Child?

By Patricia Enk, OCDS

Few people know that St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face wrote plays for "pious recreation" in the Carmel of Lisieux. During Christmas of 1896, a little less than a year before St. Thérèse died, she wrote a charming little play in the form of verse for her sisters in Carmel entitled "The Little Divine Beggar of Christmas." In the play an angel comes bearing the little Christ Child in swaddling clothes, and pleading for the Incarnate Word who cannot yet speak. The holy angel invites the sisters to offer little Jesus not only their love, but also their "cares and sufferings," which the angels, being pure spirits, cannot give Him. After placing the Infant Jesus in the crib, the angel offers to the Mother Prioress, and then to all the Carmelites, a basket of little notes. "Each takes one, haphazard, and without opening it gives it to the angel, who then sings the petition therein contained, — the gift which the Divine Child asks from each in turn."

Each simple gift with spiritual significance is offered to the Christ Child to show their love: A gold throne...of your pure hearts' holy fires, A star...the love and light of virtues -- shedding welcoming radiance near and far, or Roses of penitence... tears for sinners, and so on. The particular gift for the Child Jesus that St. Thérèse took for herself was "The Reapers... to gather the harvest [of souls]... with fires of unquenchable love, and glad to suffer or to die for Him Who reigns above."

There are twenty-six gifts in all, but my own favorite is the gift that encapsulates the two greatest devotions of St. Thérèse: the Child Jesus and the Holy Face.

The Little Divine Beggar of Christmas Part II - 6, A Mirror

*Children like to have you place them,
near a mirror clear and fair;
Then they greet with childish rapture
The bright face that they see there.*

*Come, then, to the favored stable,
Let your soul like crystal glow.
Let the Word, become an Infant,
In your heart His likeness know!*

*Sister, be the living image,
of your Spouse, -- His mirror clear;
All the beauty of your Jesus
He would Love in you appear.
(Translation by S.L. Emory)*

St. Thérèse' sister Celine (Sr. Genevieve of the Holy Face), also wrote about the "mirror" that is the Face of Christ: "Devotion to the Holy Face was, for Thérèse, the crown and complement of her love for the Sacred



Painting of St. Thérèse with child Jesus and Holy Face
by Patricia Enk, OCDS

Humanity of Our Lord. The Blessed Face was the mirror wherein she beheld the Heart and Soul of her Well-Beloved. Just as the picture of a loved one serves to bring the whole person before us, so in the Holy Face of Christ Thérèse beheld the entire Humanity of Jesus. We can say unequivocally that this devotion was the burning inspiration of the Saint's life... Her devotion to the Holy Face transcended, or more accurately, embraced, all the other attractions of her spiritual life."

St. John of the Cross writes that the soul "can only be satisfied with God's Face." So gaze on the Face of the Child Jesus this Advent, contemplate Him as a poor little beggar of your love, and allow Him to gaze on you, with all your imperfections. Because, as St. John of the Cross says, "When God looks He grants favors... virtues, perfections, and other spiritual riches." Jesus said, "Let the little children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Luke 18:16). When a soul comes to Jesus in child-like confidence and trust in His mercy -- by contemplating "the Word, become an Infant" -- His image will be reflected in our souls "as in a mirror," and we may become His "living image." What a delightful gift to give Him this Christmas!



Patricia Enk, OCDS is a wife, mother of six, grandmother of sixteen and counting, artist, and Secular Discalced Carmelite of Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit Chapter in Covington, Louisiana. Patricia also has a blog dedicated to devotion to the Face of Christ: IlluminaDomine.com

First Words

*Small, soft clouds drift
from the newborn's lips,*

*mingling with vapor
from the mouths*

*of mother and father,
donkeys and cows,*

*as well as steam
from dung piles.*

*Small, soft clouds
longed-for by priests*

*and publicans,
wise men and widows,*

*saints and sinners.
What would this newborn*

*say if he could talk?
He would say,*

*"Today you will be
with me in paradise."*



Tim Bete, OCDS, has two collections of poetry, *The Raw Stillness of Heaven* and *Wanderings of an Ordinary Pilgrim*, both of which are available on Amazon. You can read more about him at GrayRising.com.



Vigil Candles

Have a vigil candle lit for your intentions at the Tomb Chapel of St. Thérèse in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower. Please use the form on your return envelope or visit our website at: littleflowerbasilica.org/fundraiser/vigil-candle/

Our chapel is a replica of St. Thérèse's tomb in Lisieux, France. The iron grill work is composed of hundreds of roses. The statue of the Little Flower is life-sized and hand carved. The Tomb Chapel serves as a reliquary holding a ring with fragments of the saint's bones, a carved cross containing a piece of the saint's bone and cloth from her Carmelite habit.

Candles are lit in front of the tomb chapel for prayer intentions. To "light a candle for someone" indicates one's intention to say a prayer for another person, and the candle symbolizes that prayer.





**BASILICA OF THE
NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE
LITTLE FLOWER**

**APOSTOLATE OF THE LITTLE FLOWER
824 Kentucky Ave.
San Antonio, Texas 78201**

**PERIODICALS
POSTAGE PAID
SAN ANTONIO
TEXAS**



Christmas at Little Flower

December 24
5:30 pm Vigil Mass
9 pm Christmas Eve Mass

December 25
10 am Christmas Day Mass

Open to the Public and Livestreamed.



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