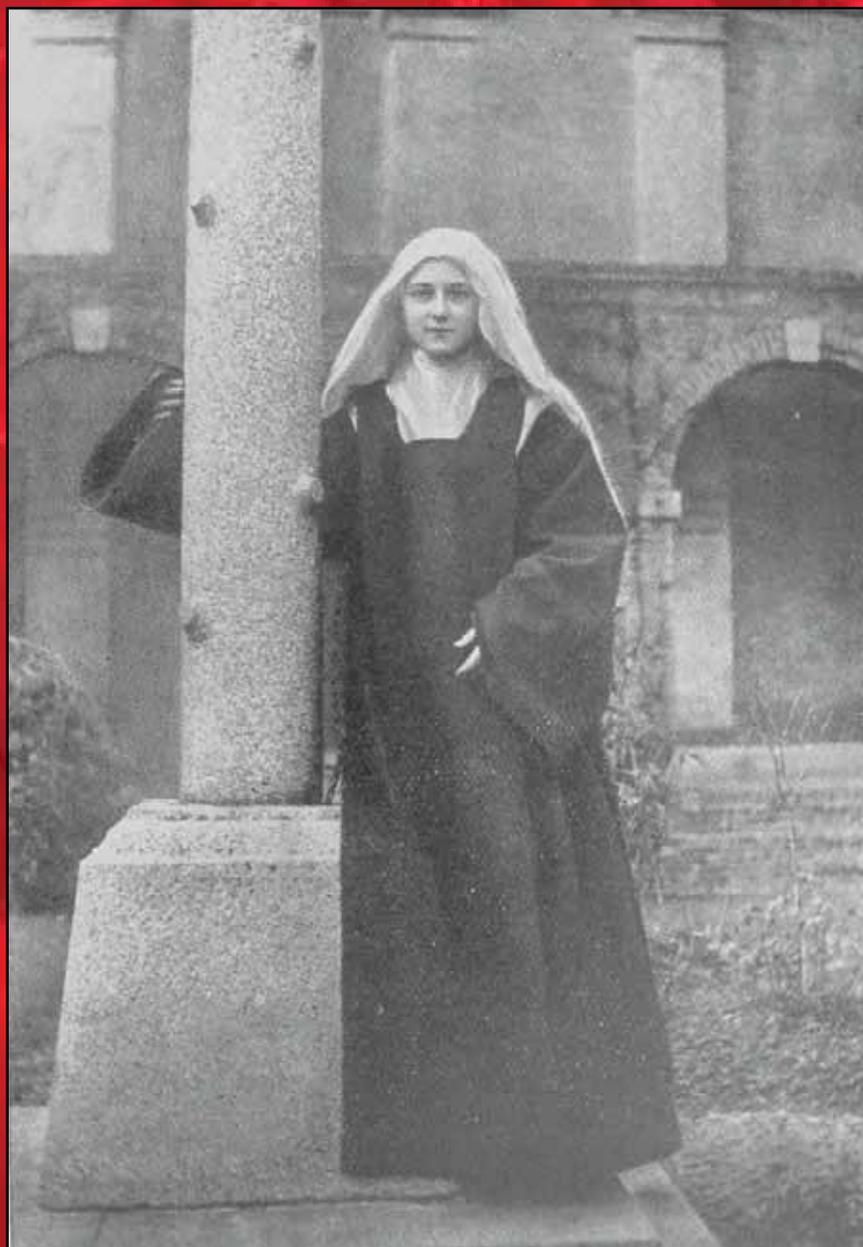


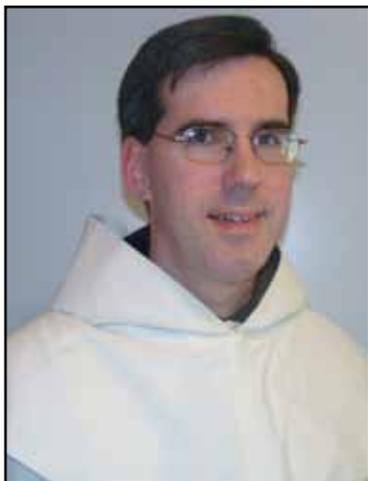
GENTLE BREEZES — OF CARMEL —

*When Charity
is deeply
rooted in the
soul it shows
itself
exteriorly...*

– Story of a Soul, Chapter IX



FROM THE PROVINCIAL • FATHER GREGORY ROSS, OCD



“My God! I love you!” These were the last words St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus uttered before she entered into eternal life on the evening of September 30, 1897. These last words, so simple and brief, sum up the whole life of St. Thérèse. In her spiritual autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, the saint declares that from the time she was three years old, she had never denied anything to Jesus! She also writes how as a child, she had the desire to love Jesus more than he had ever been loved. After several years in the monastery of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Lisieux, France, she wrote her famous declaration: *My vocation is Love!.....In the heart of the Church, my mother, I shall be love.*

St. Thérèse’s bold desire to love Jesus so much was firmly rooted in her faith in his infinitely merciful love for her. She grasped the meaning of the passage from the First Letter of St. John: *In this is love: not that we have loved God, but*

St. Thérèse realized that God’s love for us is not dependent upon any greatness or virtue on our part. Rather, God loves us because he is great and infinitely merciful. He is Love.

that he has loved us and sent his Son as expiation of our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another (1Jn 4,10-11). She could say along with

St. John: *We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us (1Jn 4,16).*

St. Thérèse realized that God’s love for us is not dependent upon any greatness or virtue on our part. Rather, God loves us because *he* is great and infinitely merciful. He *is* Love. The title that St. Thérèse herself gave to her spiritual autobiography is *The Springtime Story of a Little White Flower, as Told by Herself*. The saint saw herself as a little flower to whom God had stooped down in his great mercy in order to shower her with his graces. She realized that God delights not just in the great saints, but also in the many simple, “little” souls that he has created and who are open to his grace and who look to him with trust and love. She writes: *Just as the sun shines upon both the cedar and the little flower, in the same way the Divine Star illuminates each soul in particular, great or small, as though it were alone on earth. He makes all things work to each soul’s good, just as in nature the seasons are arranged in such a way as to bring into bloom, on the designated day, the humblest daisy.* It was this great faith in God’s merciful love for her that moved St. Thérèse’s young heart to love God so ardently in return.

This faith in God’s love comprises one facet of what St. Thérèse called her “Little Way.” On the one hand, this Little Way is the way of confidence – the confidence of a little child in the love her good Heavenly Father bears her. To follow the Little Way means to place all our trust in God’s goodness, and not to rely on our good deeds or other actions to “earn” his love and grace. It means to remain humble and “little” in the presence of his merciful love. It means to

maintain our confidence in God’s love for us even when we are experiencing darkness or suffering, just as St. Thérèse often did.

On the other hand, St. Thérèse’s Little Way is a way that is *very* active! The saint of Lisieux never missed an opportunity to perform some act of kindness, to offer up some suffering, or to make some sacrifice, offering all of these things to Jesus – not to “earn” his love or to “earn” merit for herself, but simply to please him. As she writes in one of her poems: *My only joy on this earth is to be able to please you. And also, Jesus, my joy, it’s to love you!*

But St. Thérèse realized that her actions, her acts of kindness and sacrifices, did not have to be “great” or “heroic” in order to please God. What was important was to do these little things out of great love for God. The saint herself described her deeds as “poor little actions and desires.” She sees herself not as a great eagle, but as a weak little bird. She sees herself, simply, as a child!

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The Discalced Carmelite Province of St Thérèse

By Fr. John Michael Payne, O.C.D.

Our province of Discalced Carmelite friars began as a delegation from the Province of Valencia in Spain. Three friars from that Spanish province were thrown out of Mexico in 1914 by Pancho Villa, the revolutionary. Their names were Frs. Luis Benages, Bernard Brotons, and Cyril Corbato. Frs. Luis and Bernard had been classmates. Fr. Cyril was four years older than Luis. He took charge of the two younger priests for he had more pastoral experience than they.

Bernard, however, soon wrote to their Father Provincial in Valencia: please send us a superior, someone more versed in the missionary spirit, like Father Edward. Fr. Edward Soler, who had been pastor in Aguascalientes, Mexico, but had fled the religious persecution of Pancho Villa, was then in Havana, Cuba.

Father Edward sailed to New Orleans, where he stayed in our nun's guest house, learning English well enough to tackle a train trip to Southeastern Oklahoma, where Bernard and Luis were ministering to the Mexicans working the coal mines there. Edward decided, since they had been accepted into the diocese of Oklahoma, they might as well lobby the bishop for a place in the capitol of Oklahoma City. But he had also received an invitation for the Carmelites to teach in a seminary in Little Rock, Arkansas.

As the 1920s began, Fr. Edward was faced with many decisions as to what direction to take in establishing a new province of Discalced Carmelite friars in the United States. Fr. Cyril had built a monastery in McGehee, Arkansas, which was an awkward 130 miles from the teaching assignment Edward had accepted in Little Rock. Edward's health was not good at the time. He had sent a letter of resignation to the Provincial in November of 1918, which was politely ignored. The last thing he needed to focus on at this time was a hare-brained idea that Fr. Bernard had proposed – the idea of starting an English magazine. Bernard was denied backing for his magazine project from the friars. Nevertheless, the Little Flower

Magazine began with a printing of 5,000 in April of 1920, with a group of Carmelite Tertiary Sisters (today known as the Carmelite Sisters of St. Thérèse, or the “Villa Theresa Sisters”) listed as publishers.

The growth of our province seemed to coincide with the growth of devotion to the Little Flower in the United States. The success of the friars' promotion of St. Thérèse lay in its timing. Pope Benedict XV declared Thérèse “Venerable” in August 1921, approving her heroic virtues. In April of 1923, she was beatified: “raised to the altars” as they say when a Venerable servant of God is assigned specific liturgical prayers

and a date on the church calendar when a Mass may be celebrated in their honor. Then, in May of 1925, Pope Pius XI canonized her.

The many events leading up to this great honor given our little Discalced Carmelite sister were all chronicled and anticipated in the friars' Little Flower Magazine. Photographs were printed of these events, such as the ceremonies surrounding the exhumation of her grave, and procession of her body through the streets of Lisieux, as well as the illumination of St Peter's in Rome for her canonization. Eventually Fr. Edward came to recognize Fr. Bernard's vision. When subscriptions reached 100,000 a month in 1923, Edward built the “Little Flower Home” beside his monastery in Oklahoma City to house the printing presses.



Friars with the monumental painting of St. Therese given them by Therese's sister, Mother Agnes of the Lisieux Carmel, on April 18, 1927.

Valencia's delegation of Discalced Carmelite friars in the United States continued to grow and achieved the status of a “semi-province” on January 1, 1936. The semi-province became a “province,” placed under the patronage of St. Thérèse, in May of 1947, with Fr. Edward Soler as our first Provincial.

The choice of St. Thérèse as our provincial patron can be traced back to the events of her beatification in 1923. Fr. Bernard was still printing the Little Flower Magazine through the Carmelite Tertiary Sisters in Hartshorne, Oklahoma, at that time, while Fr. Edward was busy establishing our new foundation in Oklahoma City.

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The Ordination of Fr. Juan Evangelista Cabrera, O.C.D.

June 12, 2009 • Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas

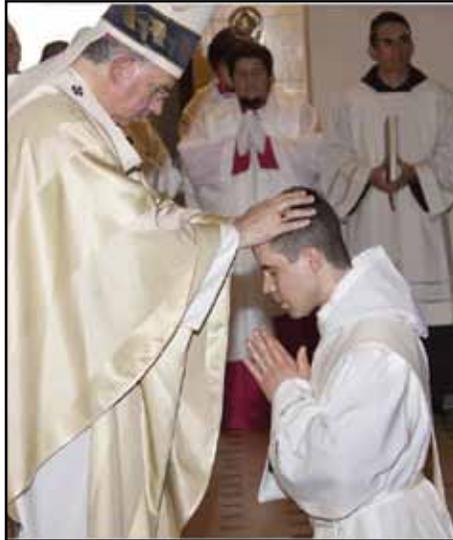
By Fr. Juan Evangelista Cabrera, O.C.D.

“Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal patiently with the ignorant and erring, for he himself is beset by weakness and so, for this reason, must make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people. No one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God...” (Heb 5:1-4).

This was one of the biblical passages I came across when I was trying to choose the readings for my ordination to the priesthood. As soon as I read it I had to search no more. This passage resonated with my vocational experience with such clarity that it left no room for hesitation.

Even though every part of the ordination liturgy was filled with significance, during it there were several moments that stood out for me in a special way. The first one was when my Provincial and my superior changed my deacon's stole and invested me with the priestly stole and chasuble. It marked for me a significant moment of transition, I was being truly clothed with Christ the priest. It was a visual manifestation of the biblical phrase I chose for my ordination, “You in me... and I in you” (Jn 17:21).

Immediately following I knelt before the archbishop and he anointed my hands saying, “The Father anointed our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. May Jesus preserve you to sanctify the Christian people and to offer sacrifice.” This was the second highlight of the liturgy for me. At that moment my hands ceased to be my own. Now they were Christ's. Through them he would touch, heal, forgive, and comfort. Also, through these hands our Lord was to bring about the greatest of miracles, the redemptive Mystery of God's love made present in the sacrifice of Christ at the altar. “You in me... and I in you” again resonated within me. I, an ordinary sinner, was now another Christ. God's love goes beyond all comprehension.



In that instant the words that were proclaimed in the first reading became a reality in me, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication by our God, to comfort all who mourn” (Is 61:1-2).

For the presentation of the gifts my parents brought forward the chalice and the paten, prepared with wine and the host. The archbishop received them handed them over to me saying: “Accept from the people of God the gifts to be offered to him.

Know what you are doing, and imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord's cross.” As a priest of Jesus Christ and in union with him I am called to make a sacrificial gift of self pleasing to God for love of him and his people. The Eucharist is to shape and transform my whole existence into itself. When celebrating the Holy Sacrifice I am to offer myself together with Christ. “You in me... and I in you” (Jn 17:21).

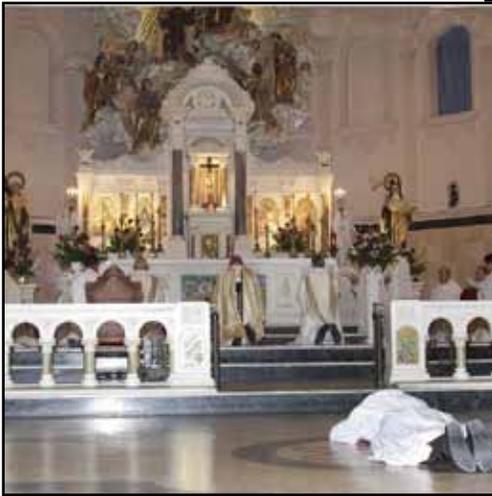
At the sign of peace the archbishop embraced me and then all my Carmelite brother priests. When my Provincial did so he said to me, “Congratulations, Father Juan!” Those words had a profound effect on me, they were an epiphany. Suddenly I realized that I was a priest of Jesus Christ. All those years of preparation, discernment, prayer, studies, ups and downs had flowed into that moment. It was finally there, a present reality. God had been faithful to his promises. My heart echoed the Psalmist's words, “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then we thought we were dreaming. Our mouths were filled with laughter; our tongues sang for joy” (Ps 126:1-2a).

Little more than two months have passed since my ordination. I am still bewildered by the mystery of God's call. I pray I remain bewildered. I pray I never get used to it. The day I do not

experience this humbling confusion, the day I think I have grasped and comprehended it will be the sign that I got it all wrong, that I need to refocus. The moment I believe that I had something to do with this unmerited gift that has been entrusted to me I will need to go back to that Friday evening on June 12, 2009 and remember that “no one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God.” I pray I remain faithful to this unmerited call and grow ever closer to the Heart of Christ until one day I come into his unmediated presence and forever abide I in him and he in me.



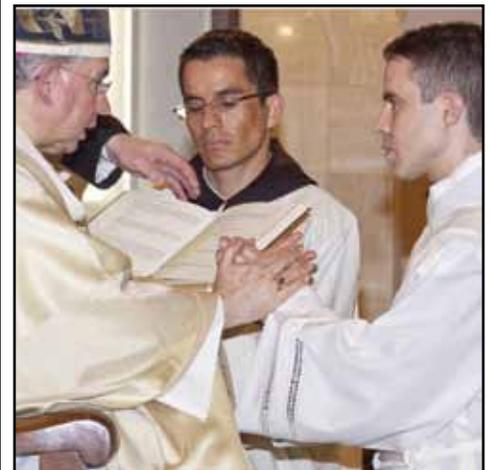
*Photographs by
Linda Drum*



*Know what you are doing,
and imitate the mystery
you celebrate:
model your life on the mystery
of the Lord's Cross.
–Rite of Ordination*



Above: After having ordained Fr. Juan Evangelista to the priesthood, Archbishop José Gomez receives his first priestly blessing.



Your Continued Support Is Vital To Help Build the Kingdom of God

By Robert J. Allen

“Charity is a quality of the soul rather than a good deed” according to Bishop Fulton Sheen. As we look at the giving patterns of people in the United States, we are humbled by their charity.

We are told that eight out of ten Americans donated money or volunteered time to a charity in the past year. (Gallop Poll). Add to that fact that charitable giving accounts for two percent of the U.S. gross domestic product and no other country in the world comes close to that.

We also learn that almost 80 percent of all donations come from people who attend church on a weekly basis. This adds to our understanding that stewardship is not a term but how people choose to live their lives. When evaluating the present economic climate, I am very encouraged that 72 percent of the people said they would give the same level of income to charity next year.

The question is not, “Why give?” Rather ask yourself “To whom and how much will you give” in order to better serve your favorite charity. People give because they are asked, but they need a reason to give and must feel the charity is worthy, in their judgment, to receive this gift. Most gifts benefit someone other than the charity. This is one of the reasons Capital Campaigns are so successful. People realize that their gift will go on giving or providing to charities for decades. The work or the service offered has a value beyond bricks and mortar.

If you are reading this article, you are more than likely a friend and/or benefactor of the Discalced Carmelite Friars. Charity toward others is the keystone of their life, helping others. Your friendship and financial support are what allows these men to carry the gospel to others in word, deed and action. Your continued support is vital in helping to build the Kingdom of God. Thank you!

FROM THE PROVINCIAL

Continued from page 2

She wished to perform her little acts of love as a way of strewing flowers before the throne of God, as a child might do before the throne of a king.

St. Thérèse understood that actions as simple as smiling at a sister who was having a rough day, or helping an elderly sister to the dining room, or helping to do the community laundry were ways of showing her love for God, since these were the actions that his divine will had arranged for her to do. No extraordinary deeds for the little saint – only ordinary deeds done with great love.

This “ordinariness” of the Little Way is what makes it so imitable for each one of us. We are each called to have a great faith and confidence in God’s merciful love for us, no matter what,

But St. Thérèse realized that her actions, her acts of kindness and sacrifices, did not have to be “great” or “heroic” in order to please God.

for God is love. St. Thérèse urges us never to let our confidence in God be discouraged by our weaknesses or

by our faults. We are all children of our Heavenly Father, who loves us not because we are good, but because he himself is good! And we can all respond to his love by offering him the little sacrifices we encounter each day, and by performing the little acts of kindness that each day, each human encounter, offer to us. The saint of Lisieux also assures us that it is pleasing to God when we turn to him with repentance and humble confidence in his forgiveness after we fall, trusting that his merciful love will raise us up.

I believe it is because she was – and is! – so in touch with God’s love, that St. Thérèse continues to radiate this love of God to so many people on earth even to our day. Truly her vocation continues to be love! The goodness and love we experience from her teachings, her intercession and her “shower of roses” are an echo of the infinite goodness of our great God – the God who is Love.

Fr. Gregory Ross, O.C.D.

Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD
Provincial

GOOD NEWS! IRA ROLLOVER PASSES FOR 2008/2009!

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The Discalced Carmelite Province of St Thérèse

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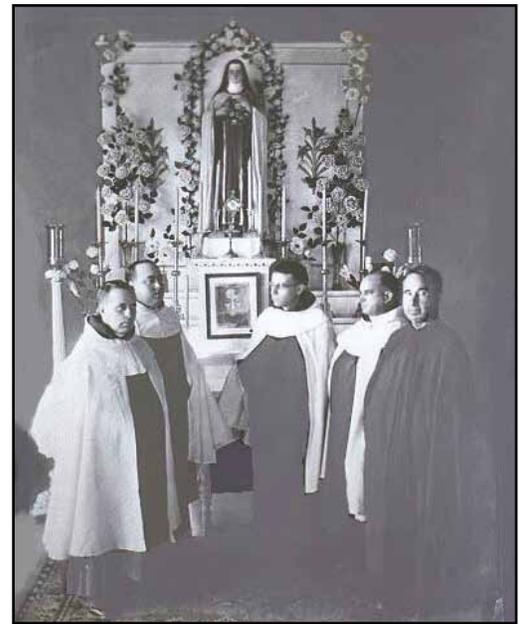
In February of 1923, the final act of the Apostolic Process of Therese’s cause for beatification and canonization was completed, as the decree approving her miracles was read in the Consistorial Hall of the Vatican. Pope Pius XI then gave a speech in which he gave tribute to the Little Flower. “With all our heart we congratulate the religious family of Carmel on the new flower which the charity of the Divine Heart has caused to spring up in their garden...”

The rituals leading up to Thérèse’s beatification began in the spring of 1923, when her body was unearthed from the cemetery of Lisieux, and with great pomp and circumstance paraded through the streets of that city to her Carmelite monastery, where a new tomb had been prepared for her. Fr. Bernard published in the friars’ magazine a photograph of the new tomb prepared for Thérèse. We would later build a replica of that tomb for our national shrine to her in San Antonio, Texas.

Shortly after the saint’s body had been moved, the beatification ceremony took place in Rome on April 29, 1923. The occasion was chronicled in greatest detail. 60,000 gathered at St. Peter’s under “crimson damask hangings, scintillating with light from thousands of chandeliers” to hear the bishop of Bayeux read the decree of beatification and see Pope Pius XI and “the

entire sacred college in their scarlet robes” venerate the newly beatified.

A less impressive ceremony was held in Oklahoma City on that same day. Our Carmelite Fathers had prepared a special devotional altar for their new chapel in that city. They calculated the hour at which our Venerable sister had been beatified in Rome, and as soon as



Friars in front of the altar on which was offered the first Mass in honor of Therese of Lisieux in the US

Thérèse had been raised to the altar in Rome, one of our Fathers offered a Mass to her on our own altar, thereby consecrating that altar to the newly Beatified. It was the first Mass in the United

States said in thanksgiving for the beatification of our sister by a Discalced Carmelite priest. The readers of the Little Flower magazine were urged to send in their requests and light a votive candle in front of this altar.

Seeing the ground swell of devotion from subscribers all over the country, Fr. Edward realized that Bernard was onto something larger than either priest had imagined. He hastened to build the “Little Flower Home” for Bernard’s presses. More importantly, Edward realized then that our little delegation to the United States had now a mission. That mission was to spread devotion to Thérèse, to prepare for her canonization in 1925, and to build a national shrine to her. The shrine was originally planned for Oklahoma City. We did indeed build Little Flower church there in 1928, but the grand national shrine was erected in San Antonio in 1931. Today it is known as the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower, and you are all invited to visit!

PLEASE HELP... *Gentle Breezes of Carmel* is being sent to you as our way of saying THANK YOU for your support of the Discalced Carmelite Friars. We want you to be better informed of our ministries and work throughout the Southern part of the United States. You are invited to send us your comments and prayer request and we assure you of our daily prayers.

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+ Let Us Remember: All Souls Day, Nov. 2 +

During the month of November, Catholics traditionally remember their beloved departed. In many places, November 1st, All Saints Day, is a day to visit the graves or tombs of our loved ones – to clean, to leave flowers, to remember and to pray. On November 2, All Souls Day, we remember those who have departed from this life, yet wait to enter the fullness of heavenly glory. As members of the Church, the mystical Body of Christ, we are united in Christ to both the saints in Heaven and the souls who are being purified in Purgatory



As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come. (St. Gregory the Great)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (nn. 1030-1032) has the following to say about Purgatory: All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:

This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin." (2Macc 12,46). From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them. (St. John Chrysostom)

St. Thérèse of Lisieux was very conscious of this practice of interceding for souls being purified on their way to heaven. She prayed for them with her typical boldness and confidence in the goodness and mercy of God. In her *Story of a Soul*, the saint described the favors she asked of Jesus on the day that she made her profession of vows as a Discalced Carmelite nun:

Many were the graces I asked. I felt myself truly a queen and took advantage of my title to obtain every favor from the King for His ungrateful subjects. No one was forgotten. I wished that every sinner on earth might be converted; that on that day Purgatory should set its captives free.

The Discalced Carmelite Friars of the Southern Province join you in remembering your beloved departed. May Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Thérèse intercede for them, as well. With you, we commend your loved ones to the infinite love and mercy of our Heavenly Father.

"I will spend my Heaven doing good upon earth."

– ST. THERÈSE

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