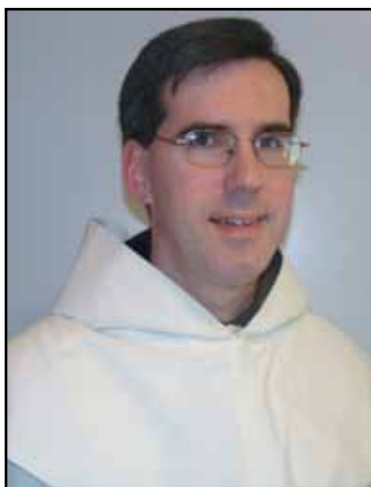


# GENTLE BREEZES — OF CARMEL —



## FROM THE PROVINCIAL · FATHER GREGORY ROSS, OCD



October is a month filled with beautiful feast days in the Liturgy of the Church: The feast of the Holy Guardian Angels (Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>), the feast of St. Francis of Assisi (4<sup>th</sup>) and the feast of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary (7<sup>th</sup>), to name just a few. In conjunction with this feast of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, October is one of the months during which the Church fosters devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the prayer of the Rosary.

For the Discalced Carmelite Friars, October is also the month in which we celebrate the feasts of two of our greatest saints: St. Teresa of Jesus, our foundress (October 15<sup>th</sup>), and St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, the Little Flower (October 1<sup>st</sup>).

These two saints were themselves very devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Teresa of Jesus, in her autobiography, shares with us how her mother took great care to teach her to how to pray the Rosary. She also tells us of how, after her own mother died, she turned to Mary to be her mother, and declares that Mary heard her prayer and drew her to herself.

St. Thérèse, one of St. Teresa's greatest spiritual daughters, once said of the Blessed Virgin: *Mary is more Mother than Queen*. One might ask, "What did St. Thérèse mean by this?" I believe we can find the answer in some of the other things that our little saint has to say about Mary.

St. Thérèse once lamented the fact that many of the sermons that she had heard about the Blessed Mother had

made her seem "unapproachable." These sermons had focused on the privileges of Mary, her many exalted perfections, and the exceeding glory that she enjoys in heaven. The Little Flower felt that sometimes sermons like that put Mary on such a high pedestal that simple souls would not be able to relate to her or dare to draw near to her with confidence in her compassion. She explained to one of her sisters: *It is good to speak of her prerogatives, but above all it is necessary to be able to imitate her. She prefers imitation to admiration, and her life was so simple!*

Indeed, Mary's life was simplicity itself, and it is this simplicity that makes her so imitable. St. Thérèse directed her attention to Mary's life as it is presented to us in the Gospels, and she longed for preachers to do the same: *For a sermon on the Blessed Virgin to please me and do me any good, I must see her real life, not her imagined life. And I am sure that her real life must have been very simple. They show her as inaccessible; they should show her as imitable, bring out her virtues, say that she lived by faith as we do, giving proofs from the Gospel, where we read, "They did not understand what he said to them" (Lk 2,50).*

St. Thérèse shows us what type of homily she might have preached on the Blessed Virgin Mary in her poem entitled, "Why I love you, O Mary". In this poem, the Little Flower begins: *Oh! I would like to sing, Mary, of why I love you, of why your name so sweet rejoices my heart, and of why the thought of your supreme grandeur could never inspire fear in my soul.....For a child to cherish his mother, she must cry with him, share his sorrows. O, my dear Mother, on this foreign shore, in order to draw me to yourself, how many tears you shed!... In meditating upon your life in the holy Gospel, I dare to look at you and draw near to you. It is not difficult*



This original oil painting of St. Thérèse was done by her biological sister, Sr. Celine. It is located in the Basilica of the Little Flower in San Antonio.

*for me to believe that I am your child, for I see you as human, and suffering like me.... You make me feel that it is not impossible to follow in your footsteps, O Queen of the elect. You have made visible the narrow road to heaven.*

*Continued on page 3*

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## St. Thérèse Urges Trust, Not Fear of Purgatory

During the month of November, remembrance of the souls in Purgatory is a strong tradition among Catholics. St. Thérèse, too, prayed for the souls in Purgatory. However, the future Doctor of the Church had a bold approach to the subject of Purgatory. Her teaching on the subject is summarized in an essay by Father Hubert van Dijk, ORC. This article has been translated from German into English and placed on line at [www.franciscan-sfo.org/ap/litfwrpu.htm](http://www.franciscan-sfo.org/ap/litfwrpu.htm).

*We share with you here some of the highlights of this essay.*

The common teaching within the Church is that Purgatory can hardly be avoided. While still only a novice, St. Thérèse commented about this with one of the sisters, Sr. Maria Philomena, who

believed in the near impossibility of going to heaven without passing through purgatory:

*You do not have enough trust. You have too much fear before the good God. I can assure you that He is grieved over this. You should not fear Purgatory because of the suffering there, but should instead ask that you not deserve to go there in order to please God, Who so reluctantly imposes this punishment. As soon as you try to please Him in everything and have an unshakable trust He purifies you every moment in His love and He lets no sin remain. And then you can be sure that you will not have to go to Purgatory.*

She even said that we would offend God if we didn't trust enough that we would get to heaven right after dying.

When she found out that her novices talked occasionally that they would probably have to expect to be in Purgatory, she corrected them saying: *"Oh! How you grieve me! You do a great injury to God in believing you're going to Purgatory. When we love, we can't go there."*<sup>1</sup>

Now, this is a new doctrine, but only for those who don't know God, who are not childlike, who don't trust. It is so correct to see things this way. It is true that God will judge us at one point, but He is always and first our Father Who... suffers when He has to punish His child and sees his or her suffering. The child should do His will just out of love, and not to avoid punishment. And this really means that God does not want Purgatory! He allows that His children suffer, but only *as if He had to look away*.

If St. Thérèse is correct that one does not need to be in Purgatory because God Himself does not want this and would love to help us, the thought that Purgatory can be avoided is suddenly not so far-fetched anymore

### God is Father rather than Judge

Once St. Thérèse had a confrontation regarding this topic with Sr. Marie Febronia, who not only was sixty-seven years old but also was sub-prioress. She had heard that St. Thérèse encouraged the novices to believe that they could go straight to heaven. She did not like this as she considered this kind of confidence presumptuous, and thus she reproached St. Thérèse. St. Thérèse tried lovingly and calmly to explain to Sr. Febronia her point of view but with no success as Sr. Febronia clung to her belief. For St. Thérèse God was more Father than Judge, and she took the liberty of finally responding, "My sister, if you look for the justice of God you will get it. The soul will receive from God exactly what she hopes for."

The year had not passed when, in January 1892, Sr. M. Febronia together with other sisters fell prey to the flu and died.

### FROM THE PROVINCIAL *Continued from page 2*

St. Thérèse then goes on to reflect upon the life of Mary as it is presented in the Gospels. She does indeed point out the virtues of the Blessed Mother that all Christians can imitate: her humility, her obedience, her joyfulness in poverty, her faith, her simplicity, her love..... The Little Flower declares: *The number of little ones upon the earth is truly great. They can raise their eyes to you without trembling. It is upon the ordinary path, incomparable Mother, that you are pleased to walk in order to guide them to Heaven.*

Finally, the little saint sings to Mary: *You love us, Mary, as Jesus loves us....To love is to give everything and to give oneself.* St. Thérèse recognizes in Mary the perfect realization of the Christian vocation – to love as Jesus loves. She is the pre-eminent disciple of her Son, imitating him in his self-giving love. She is a mother who is "all for" her children, just as Jesus is "all for" his Father and "all for" humanity. By imitating Mary, one is in fact imitating Jesus, implies Thérèse.

So, in these words of St. Thérèse one can gain some understanding of

what she meant when she declared that Mary is more Mother than Queen. Mary is a mother who is close to each one of her children. She can relate to us and have compassion on us in the difficulties we experience in life and in the trials we encounter as we try to follow Jesus in faith, because she herself walked this path of faith and experienced the types of ups and downs that we all encounter. Mary's greatness does not remove her from the realm of our experience, making her unapproachable, but rather brings her closer to us. She loves us as Jesus loves us, and is dedicated to all those entrusted to her by her Son, who tells us, "Behold, your mother" (Jn 19,27).

During this month of October, may you, too, come to a greater realization of Mary's motherly presence in your life, just as St. Teresa of Jesus and St. Thérèse did. May St. Thérèse encourage you to a greater trust in our Blessed Mother and to realize that all of us can imitate Mary, as we strive each day to follow Jesus in faith just as she did.

*Fr. Gregory Ross, O.C.D.*

*Continued on page 6*

## Definitor Fr. Grennan Visits Province, Attends North American Region Meeting



Fr. John Grennan, O.C.D.

In April, we enjoyed a visit from Fr. John Grennan, O.C.D. Fr. John is one of the nine “Definitors” of our Order of Discalced Carmelites. The Definitors serve as councilors to the General of the Order, Fr. Saverio Cannistrà of Italy. Fr. John spent two weeks visiting the monasteries of our Province, meeting all of the friars and nuns along the way. He ended his visit

in Oklahoma City, where we had a three-day meeting of representatives from the Discalced Carmelite Friars and Nuns from all over the United States, Canada, and Guam. This meeting is held once every three years in order to promote unity and collaboration among the Discalced Carmelites in our region of the world. This year, we began

planning for the celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of St. Teresa of Jesus, which will occur in 2015. We also began planning for a visit from Fr. Saverio, our General, to the USA in March of 2011.



From June 7-11, the friars held their annual assembly in San Antonio, Texas. This assembly is a time of fellowship, planning, and ongoing formation for the friars. On the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup>, the friars celebrated a solemn Mass in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower to conclude the Year of the

Priest, which was observed in the Church from June of 2009 through June of this year. At this Mass, Fr. John Michael Payne, O.C.D., (far left in photograph) superior of our community in Little Rock, Arkansas (Marylake Monastery) presided. Fr. John Michael celebrates his 40<sup>th</sup> year of priesthood this year.

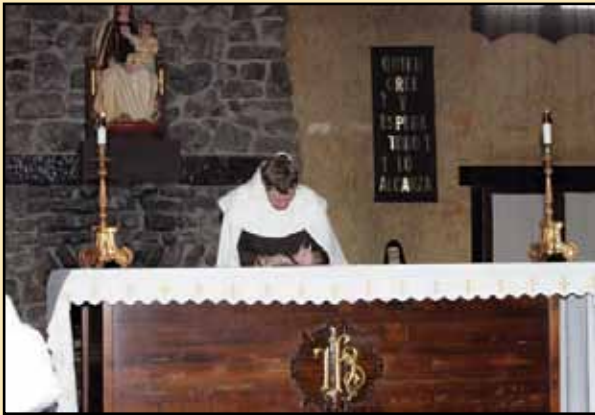
## *Br. Daniel Makes First Profession of Vows; Brs. Jorge and Alberto Enter Novitiate*



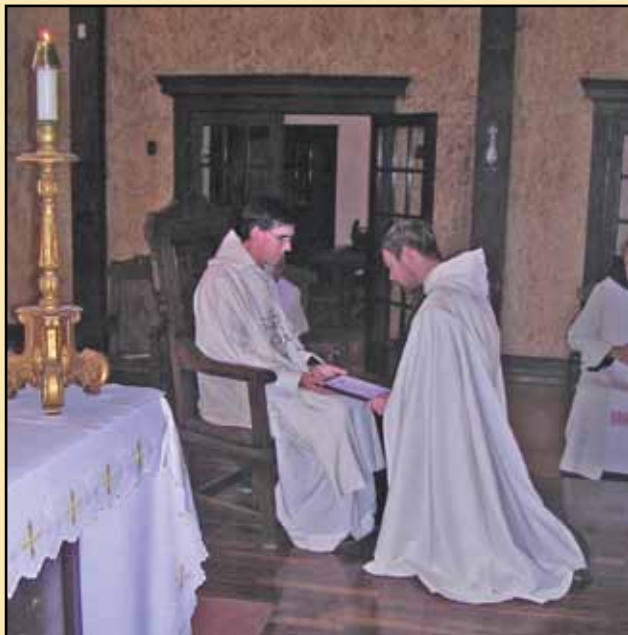
Fr. Gregory Ross, Br. Jorge Maria, Br. Daniel Marie, Br. Alberto, Fr. Raphael, Fr. John Michael, and Br. Juan Guillermo.

On July 16<sup>th</sup>, also at Marylake Monastery, Br. Daniel Marie of the Cross made his first profession of vows as a Discalced Carmelite friar. Br. Daniel completed his year of novitiate training in preparation for this religious profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. He is now a new member of our community in New Orleans, the St. John of the Cross House of Studies, where he is beginning his seminary training for the priesthood.

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, at Marylake Monastery in Little Rock, Arkansas, our two new novices received the habit of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and began their novitiate – a year of intense formation in our Carmelite charism and way of life. Our two new brothers are now known as Br. Jorge Maria of the Lamb of God and Br. Alberto of the Sorrowful Mother. Please keep them in your prayers as they begin this new stage of their vocational journey.



Br. Daniel Marie signs his vows on the altar.



Br. Daniel Marie professes his vows.



Top: Brs. Jorge and Alberto petition to receive the habit and be trained in the Carmelite way of life.

Above: Brs. Alberto and Jorge are clothed in the habit of Carmel by Fr. Gregory.

Right: Br. Alberto receives his white mantle from Fr. Gregory.



## St. Thérèse Urges Trust, Not Fear of Purgatory

*Continued from page 3*

Three months later St. Thérèse had a dream which she related to her Mother Prioress and which was then documented:

*“O my Mother, my Sr. M Febronia came to me last night and asked that we should pray for her: She is in Purgatory, surely because she had trusted too little in the mercy of the good Lord. Through her imploring behavior and her profound looks, it seemed she wanted to say, You were right. I am now delivered up to the full justice of God but it is my fault. If I had listened to you I would not be here now.”*

### Love banishes fear

The question of whether Heaven will follow right after death is a question of trust. *God does not need our merits* in order to take us straight to Him *but He needs all of our trust*. Or the other way around--it is *not our sins* that can prevent God from giving us this grace *but rather our lack of trust*. Therefore, we must draw the conclusion that *everything depends solely on trust*. There is no trust without perfect love. And vice versa, there is no *love* without trust.

And this is exactly what the Apostle John writes in his first letter, *“In this is love perfected within us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as He is so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love”* (1 Jn. 4:17-18).

When our great hour comes, as St. Thérèse writes to Abbé Roulland, missionary in China, if only we trust, the Blessed Virgin will obtain *“the grace of making an act of perfect love”* should we have *“some trace of human weakness”* and so will we reach heaven immediately after death.

### St. Thérèse’s teaching, a great message for third millennium

One can rightfully say that Thérèse is turning all common opinions on Purgatory upside down. She wants to appear before God empty-handed and explains why it can be easier for sinners who have nothing to rely upon, to reach Heaven than the great saints with all their merits.. She emphasizes that trust alone is enough, that merits are no guarantee but often an obstacle for the straight way to Heaven, and that sins do not need to be an obstacle. After a ‘messed-up’ life, God can still take one straight to Heaven if the dying person only has trust. And how easy it can be to trust if there are no merits but only one’s misery! Through trust she shows the shorter way to Heaven to the small and humble. And so many can and will go that way. She writes about this to her sister Marie: *“... what pleases Him (God) is that He sees me loving my littleness and my poverty, the blind hope that I have in His mercy... That is my only treasure, dear Godmother, why should this treasure not be yours?...”*

(Endnotes)

1 *Last Conversations*, ICS. Washington DC. 1971, pg 273.

## “Our Little Way”

*“Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least people of mine, you did for me.” – Matthew 25: 40*

**By Michael Montoya, Development Director**

We have all heard this verse from Matthew’s gospel countless times throughout our lives, and also perhaps many times have been inspired to serve and aid those of our brothers and sisters who have at one point or another needed and asked for our help. Understandably what is most commonly focused

*It is in our choice to take action that a deed great or small is accomplished.*

upon in this gospel message is often only the subject of our support, and that by helping the neediest person we are more able to greatly serve.

However it is interesting to me that what is often overlooked in this very popular message is the very manner in which we serve. For it is in “whatever” we do that we are serving. It is in our choice to take action that a deed great or small is accomplished. What this teaching implies and graces us with is that simple humble power that we all have to effect change in our lives and in the lives of others in “what ever” we do: our own “Little Way.”

I have never understood this more than when I first learned of and read the teachings of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and I have never witnessed this more than through my interaction with Discalced Carmelite Friars of the Southern Province. Through work and service in the Development for the Discalced Carmelites I am able to see first hand the propagation of their mission and charism in every little thing that they do and how in every response that we get from you their care and concern is evident.

There are things in our life that we often do not notice until they are gone, the small things, the details, the small graces, the small prayers answered, the small prayers said by our friends for us, without us ever knowing. Thus is the life of the Friars daily and for all the world. They are here to help you, but need your help to continue. I ask you to help in whatever way you can. As St. Thérèse once said *“ You know well enough that Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even their difficulty, but at the love with which we do them.”*

**For inquiries into a vocation  
to the Discalced Carmelite Friars,  
please contact our Vocations Director  
at [carmelitesok@yahoo.com](mailto:carmelitesok@yahoo.com).**

# God's Generosity Allows You to do the Same

By Robert J. Allen

*"Give and the gift will be given to you." Luke 6:36*

Charity begins with God's gifts to each person and can never be measured; however God requires each of us to share His gifts with others. He doesn't tell us how much, when, where or even how. Unlike the IRS that orders us to pay taxes, the percentage and the date to the US Treasury, and in cash. We follow this law because of the consequences or penalties.

God's plan is to give each person a free will. It is our choice. He also gives us total love and unending mercy.

When we are served by Carmelite Friars or uplifted by their daily prayers, sacrifices or unlimited intercession for our needs, we too often take their gifts to us and the people of the world for granted. The truth is God gave each of these men a vocation. He called and they listened.

Have you ever wondered how they can do all they do and not have employment that pays a salary. How can they

exist and where does the money come from? The Carmelite Order lives out of their trust in God and that He will provide.

Here is where God and the tax laws meet. Instead of giving money to the government, even the government says – why not give money to a charity and we will reduce the taxes you pay. We understand that the Carmelites can make a dollar go further than any bureaucrat.

If you look at the tax laws, several gifts not only give you the tax deduction (to the limit the law provides), it can give you income back on your gift. Some of these are: Charitable Gift Annuity, Charitable Remainder Trust, Charitable Uni-Trust, or Lead Trust. No, you don't need to be wealthy to utilize these Planned Gifts, but they may be a way to help the Carmelites and help yourself and your estate.

Without obligation, call the Carmelite Development Office for a confidential and no obligation explanation of these government-approved Planned Gifts. Call (210) 734-4002 for more information.

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## Mission Statement

*The Discalced Carmelite Friars are a community of priests and religious brothers serving the Church through a life of contemplative prayer. In our apostolic work, we also strive to foster growth in the spiritual life, helping men and women to grow in friendship with God and with neighbor.*

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

– ST. THÉRÈSE



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**On the cover:** the scene of St. Thérèse in heavenly glory as depicted at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas. St. Thérèse receives roses from the Child Jesus to let fall to earth. These roses are symbols of the favors and graces that the Lord is pleased to freely



grant people through the intercessory prayer of St. Thérèse. The Child Jesus is portrayed as being seated on the lap of his mother Mary, who is portrayed under her title of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, clothed in the Brown Scapular and white mantle of the Carmelites.

