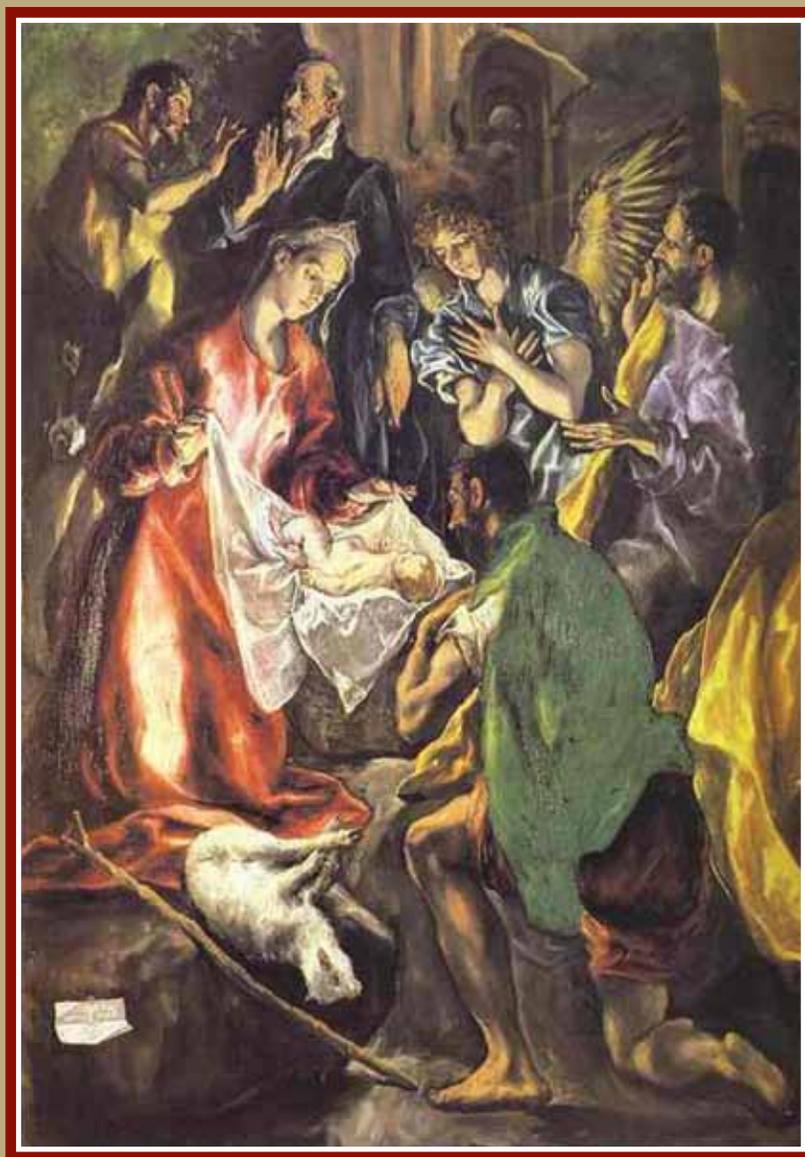
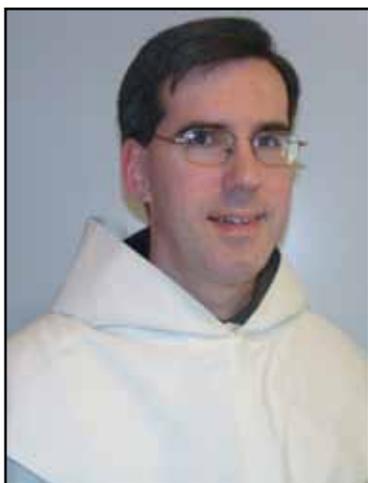


# GENTLE BREEZES —OF CARMEL—



*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.  
- John 1, 5*

## FROM THE PROVINCIAL · FATHER GREGORY ROSS, OCD



*In the evening [of life],  
you will be examined in love.  
Therefore, learn to love God  
as he desires to be loved,  
and leave your own way of doing things.*

These words were written by St. John of the Cross, the first Discalced Carmelite Friar. They are among the best known of his counsels. St. John's feast day is celebrated each year on December 14<sup>th</sup>. His teaching offers us sage advice as we draw near to the "evening" of this year of 2010. We can see in his counsel an invitation to examine how we have spent the year that is now concluding. How have we used this time that the Lord has given us? How have we responded to the graces he has granted us and the challenges that he has placed before us? Have we loved God "as he desires to be loved?"

*In our weakness and  
ignorance, we often stumble  
in responding to God's graces  
and in our efforts to live his  
Gospel teaching, however  
sincere our desires and efforts  
may be.*

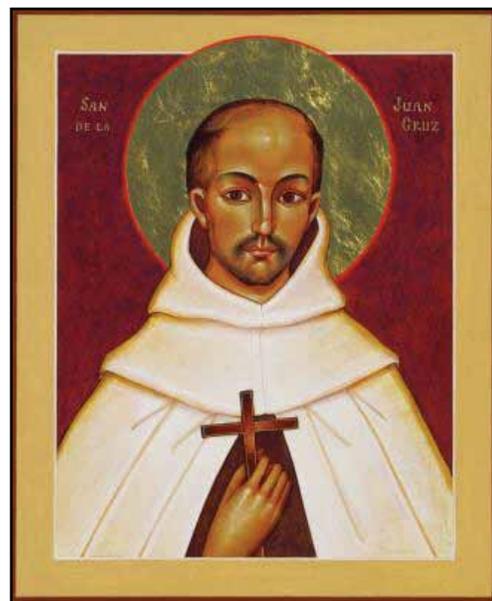
St. John of the Cross' words reflect the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel: *I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. (Jn 13,34-35)*

*You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments. (Mt 22, 37-40)* One thinks also of the parable of the separation of the sheep from the goats in the Gospel of Matthew. The criteria of judgment is nothing other than charity: *Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.* In the evening, we will be examined in love...

Many meanings are given to the word "love." As part of our "examination", we might ask ourselves what our understanding of love is. What does it mean to truly love? As we seek to love God and neighbor, how do we let ourselves be guided? By our feelings? By our society's notion of what love is? Or do we turn to Jesus as our guide to let him form us in charity?

In the Gospels, Jesus teaches us both by word and example how God desires to be loved: with all our heart, soul and mind. He desires us to love him above all things. He desires us to show our love for him by loving one another, by loving the "least brothers" of his. *Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets" (Mt 7, 12)* The Gospels and all of the Scriptures present us with the means to be formed in charity, to be educated in love that is faithful and true.

If we reflect with honesty and humility over how we have responded to God's grace and to his teachings during the past year, we will realize that we have fallen far short of fulfilling his great commandment. Our fallen human nature, still bearing the effects of original sin, tends easily towards selfishness rather than towards generosity. In our weakness and ignorance, we often stum-



ble in responding to God's graces and in our efforts to live his Gospel teaching, however sincere our desires and efforts may be. We may find this "evening" pervaded with the darkness of our failings.

Yet, at the same time as we are invited to enter into this "examination in love" at the evening of the year, the Church places before the eyes of our heart a light of great hope: the celebration of the birth of the Son of God, "Love's pure light." Into the darkness of winter, of the evening of the year, comes the light of the world, the light that *shines in the darkness* and which *the darkness has not overcome.* (Jn 1,5)

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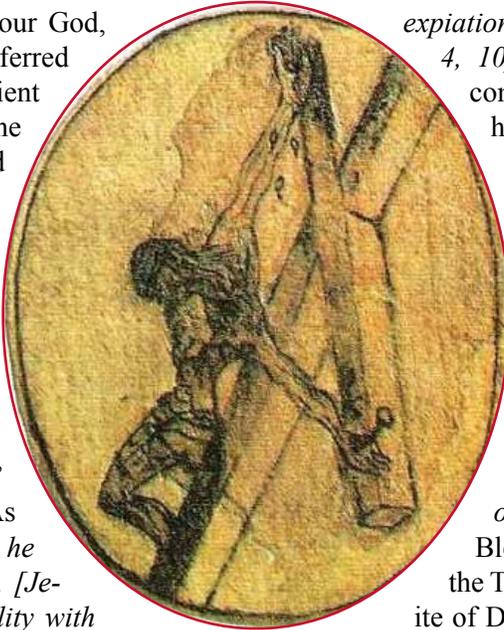
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Yes, the birth of Jesus Christ, the mystery of Christmas, offers the human heart new hope as each calendar year concludes. Emmanuel, *God with us*, comes to renew us and to refresh our spirits. The sight of the infant Jesus reminds us of the redeeming heart of our God, whom St. Augustine referred to as "Beauty ever ancient and ever new." He is the child who is to be named *Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. (Mt 1, 21)*

In his Incarnation as man, one might say that in a certain sense God the Son Himself "left his own way of doing things" out of love for us. As St. Paul writes: *Though he was in the form of God, [Jesus] did not deem equality with God something to be grasped. Rather he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. (Phil 2, 6-8)* St. Paul urges Christians to have this same attitude as Christ.



The child Jesus comes to educate us in love. Primarily to manifest to us what love truly is, namely, God's love for us. As the Scriptures proclaim: *In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. (1Jn 4, 10)* But also, Jesus comes to show us how to love as he does, with a divine love – in humility, truth and fidelity, to the point of laying down one's life out of love. *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. (1Jn 4, 11)*

Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, the Carmelite of Dijon, France, once reflected on the mystery of the Word made flesh who dwelt among us. (cf. Jn 1,14) She writes: *"God has said: Be holy, for I am holy. (Lv 11,44.45)* But He remained hidden in His inaccessible [light] and the creature needed to have Him descend to it, to live its life, so that following in His footsteps, it can thus as-

*The child Jesus comes to educate us in love.*

send to Him and become holy with His holiness." Jesus, the Word made flesh, shows us how to love God as he desires to be loved. He enables the human person to become holy with the holiness of God, to love with the love of God himself.

So, as we draw near to year's end, may the Lord of Love be with all of you, our friends. May he shine his light of mercy into your hearts and show you his providence in your lives. May he give you confidence and trust in his divine goodness, the goodness that radiates from the face of his Only Begotten Son. Please accept the thanks of all of your Discalced Carmelite brothers for your support during this past year. Be assured of our prayers for you and all your loved ones as we conclude 2010 and begin a new year in the light of Jesus Christ, the Word who was made flesh and comes to dwell among us.

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

Fr. Gregory Ross, OCD  
Provincial

## Introducing the Little Flower Mass Association

*The Discalced Carmelite Friars are pleased to introduce to our friends the Little Flower Mass Association.*

*Offer to your friends and loved ones the spiritual gift of an enrollment in the prayers of the Discalced Carmelite Friars and in Masses offered at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas.*

*Please contact us at 210-734-4002 for more information.*



Basilica of the  
National Shrine  
of the  
Little  
Flower



Enrollment  
in the  
Little Flower  
Mass  
Association

# St. Joseph, a Righteous Man and More: A Christmas Reflection

By Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD

*Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Jesus, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”*

*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:*

*“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. [Mt 1:16-24]*

We learned the Christmas story as children. We’ve heard it told and retold countless times, in countless ways. It has, of course, the inevitability of a story which we know by heart. Each character has his or her part. There’s Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, the shepherds, the angels, even the ox and the ass, and the star in the night sky. And they all play their parts perfectly. The story unfolds just as it should, with no surprises. The angels don’t decide not to sing. The shepherds don’t decide it’s too cold to bother with any of this searching for a baby in a manger somewhere in a stable in Bethlehem. Joseph doesn’t decide from the very beginning not to trust this silly dream he’s had but to go ahead and divorce Mary anyway. You know, it would be interesting to retell the Christmas story by inserting some such unexpected development along the way and then letting the imagination play with the possible consequences for a while. I suspect it’s been done before.

In real life, people act not as characters in a story, but as free persons. Events unfold not according to a preordained script, but unpredictably, with a measure of uncertainty. Thus, in this Gospel story when Joseph decides to obey his inspired dream and take Mary his wife into his home, we naturally say, “Ah, yes, of course.” But what we probably should say, if we were being



*But by believing what God spoke to him in a dream, and by opening his life to the sudden intervention of the Holy Spirit, Joseph allowed himself to be drawn into the Christmas story---the story of the birth of him in whom God and man are mysteriously made one.*

honest with ourselves, or what we certainly would say, if we were hearing the story for the first time, is---how very strange.

Joseph is a righteous man. He keeps the law. Yet he does so with mercy. Mary has wronged him, it seems, by becoming pregnant with a child not his own. Therefore, he decides to divorce her. Yet he doesn’t want to expose her to shame, taking his revenge on one who has caused him some shame. He decides to divorce her quietly. All of this is noble, righteous, kind, caring, compassionate. Who could fault Joseph in any way? Yet Joseph decides to go a step further, in faith, in obedience. He decides to trust and follow a dream which, he believes, God has sent him. The child which Mary his betrothed carries in her womb has been conceived miraculously, wondrously, in a manner hardly believable. The child has been conceived through the Holy Spirit.

Thus, Joseph was righteous not just because he possessed a good, kind, merciful, and obedient heart. He was righteous because he possessed a listening heart as well, a heart open to the unexpected and uncertain. He had a place in his vision of God for the Holy Spirit, and for the power of God to break into our lives and our world and rewrite the story we’ve been telling ourselves about ourselves, about who we are and how things work in this world, about what’s then possible for us or for others. By being a righteous and compassionate man Joseph was already part of the great story of the people of Israel. But by believing what God spoke to him in a dream, and by opening his life to the sudden intervention of the Holy Spirit, Joseph allowed himself to be drawn into the Christmas story---the story of the birth of him in whom God and man are mysteriously made one.

If, like Joseph, we can point to one moment somewhere in our life where the Holy Spirit intervened, and we followed, then at least for that one moment our life and God’s grace were completely in sync. And when you think about it, that’s an incredible thing, to have such a moment in one’s life. Maybe we can think of it as our own *personal Christmas story*---a moment of grace in which God and man are in sync, at one, at peace, and yet the story is ours. It is *my* Christmas story. No matter how out of sync with God we may feel at most times, to remember such a moment in a spirit of wonder and gratitude is not a bad way to keep Christmas.



A shower of roses descends upon the sanctuary of the Basilica.

October 1<sup>st</sup>, the feast of St. Thérèse was celebrated with great solemnity at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas. On September 30, the vigil of the feast, Fr. Luis Gerardo Belmonte, O.C.D., Rector of the Basilica, led the faithful in a commemoration of St. Thérèse's *Transitus*, her passing into eternal life. Our saint was honored in her Shrine Chapel, passages from her final writings and conversations were read, and a procession with her image made its way through the Basilica. The Little Flower herself declared to her sisters: "I am not dying. I am entering into life!"

On the evening of October 1, Bishop Oscar Cantu of San Antonio presided at the "Mass of the Roses." At this celebration of the Eucharist on St. Thérèse's feast day, roses are blessed and distributed to the faithful as a reminder of the Little Flower's promise to let fall a "shower of roses" from heaven, symbols of the graces that God grants to the faithful in response to her loving intercession on their behalf.

More photos of the celebration are on page 7.



Basilica Rector Fr. Luis Gerardo Belmonte, O.C.D., addresses the congregation.



Bishop Oscar Cantu blesses roses for distribution to the faithful.

# Opening the Doors of New Hope

*“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you;  
Seek and you will find;  
Knock and the door will be opened to you*

As we again enter into the season of Advent, a season brimming with hope, and as our calendar year comes to a close, our minds inherently begin a review of our past year, its many blessings and also perhaps its difficulties. This very common cyclical process allows us to put into perspective our lives, our duties, our commitments and levels of it to ourselves, our Church and our brothers and sisters so that we may truly feel the fullness of hope and set greater goals for ourselves in our years to come.

Over the past year in the Southern Province Development Office we have done this and as our year comes to a close our review begins and we must now take note of what we accomplished and what we hope for in the 2011 year. We have been blessed to know of your friendship throughout 2010 and it was through interactions with you that we come to know the

movement of the Holy Spirit and the Mercy of God our Father. Our comfort in times of need has also been the passage above from the Gospel of Luke. It is through these words of Christ, that we see our mission validated. Sometimes it is difficult to ask for help. We all seek to preserve our strength and at times we hold on so tightly to our trust that we do not ask. However, what we all slowly come to understand through the virtue of wisdom is that God is our strength and his mercy is the unrelenting response to our moments of trusting in him.

*We have been blessed to be able to continue to serve and spread the charism of our Discalced Carmelites through your generosity.*

As I said we have been blessed during this year. We have assembled an Advisory Council through the charity of the members that have agreed to serve, in congruence with our Provincial Development headquarters in San Antonio. We will be launching a new website on December 14 (Feast of St. John of the Cross), with the service and commitment of our Partner Church and Main, Inc., and through a generous sponsor. We will finally be able to offer Perpetual Mass cards through other generous sponsors. We have been blessed to be able to continue to serve and spread the charism of our Discalced Carmelites through your generosity.

All these graces are the groundwork laid and our hope for a wonderful 2011. It is no accident that all these graces have occurred in time for our anniversary celebration of our Province, and our 80 year anniversary of our National Shrine of the Little Flower (St. Thérèse). We want our celebrations to be your celebrations, our graces to be your graces, our service to be your happiness and comfort, and our continuation of our Teresian charism to be never-ending.

I ask you humbly one last time for the 2010 year, to help our Friars continue their mission of community, contemplative prayer, and apostolate of spirituality. We are eternally grateful for your support and renew our pledge and promise to you to serve. Thank you!

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*“I will spend my Heaven doing good upon earth.”*

– ST. THÉRÈSE



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Procession at the conclusion of Mass of the Roses.



Bishop Oscar Cantu presides at the Mass of the Roses.



Fr. Luis Gerardo Belmonto, O.C.D., incenses the Shrine chapel.



Procession from the Shrine Chapel during the celebration of the Transitus.



*After my death  
I will let fall a  
shower of roses.  
- St. Thérèse*

### **Mission Statement**

**T**he 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.

Would you like to receive a copy of *Gentle Breezes of Carmel*? If so, just fill out the following form, and we will add you to our newsletter list. There is no charge.

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City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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# A New Look for Our Website

By Elizabeth Brown (owner of Church & Main, Inc. a marketing communications company)

In our increasingly complex lives, many spiritual pilgrims are searching for resources to help guide their personal journeys of faith. More and more of these pilgrims are turning to the online community because it is available on the private timeline of the seeker, offering a level of depth and richness that can quietly nourish.

Under the prayerful guidance of Father Gregory Ross and representatives of our community, we are pleased to launch the new website for the Province, [www.carmelitefriarsocd.com](http://www.carmelitefriarsocd.com), a site that we hope will provide spiritual treasure to our community of faith.

The first thing visitors to the site will notice is that we have a new name for our Province. We are now officially known as the *Saint Therese Province of the Discalced Carmelite Friars*. This new name reflects the devotion we have to the patroness of our Province, Saint Therese of Lisieux, as demonstrated by the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little

Flower. A link from the new site will go to a new page featuring the Basilica.

The second thing visitors will notice are the images of some of our Carmelite saints. From the first woman Doctor of the Church, Saint Teresa of Jesus; to the newest Doctor of the Church, Saint Therese of Lisieux; to the beloved Saint John of the Cross, images of these saints can serve to inspire each of us on our private faith journeys. The writings and the prayers of the Carmelite saints will be the source of the daily "Carmelite Thought for the Day". The intention of this changing daily prayer is that visitors will bookmark the page and return regularly for inspiration and will link all who visit the site in a virtual community of prayer around the country and around the world.

The new site also extends an invitation to those exploring a Carmelite vocation with an overview of the elements of our vocation, admissions information, and a look into the Day in the Life of the friars and the communities within our Province. Visitors will also find a brief overview of the Carmelite approach to spirituality and links to other sites relating to our Carmelite

charism. The Secular Carmelites will find special links and resources that support their service to our communities as well.

The new site includes two new features. The first is the capability to email a Prayer Request directly from the website, a feature which facilitates communications between our Carmelite community and our friars. The second is the capability to make donations online securely and easily from the comfort and privacy of home, making it easier than ever to respond to the requests for support that fuel the work of our Province.

Please visit our new site at [www.carmelitefriars.ocd](http://www.carmelitefriars.ocd) and then bookmark the page to make your return visits that much easier. Your comments on the site are most welcomed by writing to [XXXXXX](mailto:XXXXXX)

The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo and title "Discalced Carmelite Friars Province of St. Thérèse Home of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower". Below the header is a row of 12 small portraits of saints. A navigation bar contains links: Home + Spirituality + Our Saints + Vocations + Contribute + About the Carmelites + Contact Us. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column, titled "LINKS:", lists: Worldwide Homepage of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, California Province, Washington Province, The Vatican, and a highlighted box for Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower. The middle column features a "Welcome" message from Fr. Gregory Ross, O.C.D., Provincial Superior, and a "Carmelite Thought for the Day" for October 21, 2010, with a quote from St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face. The right column contains links for "Gentle Breezes" (newsletter sign-up and archived issues) and "Secular Carmelites". At the bottom are two buttons: "MAKE A DONATION" and "MAKE A PRAYER REQUEST".