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# GENTLE BREEZES — OF CARMEL —

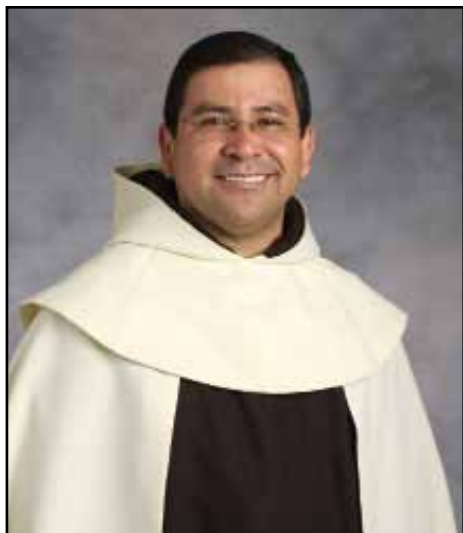


*He is  
Risen!*



ST. THÉRÈSE PROVINCE OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS  
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# Give Thanks for the Easter Season!



**“You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here;”**

*(Mark 16, 6)*

Alleluia! Happy Easter! It is good to praise the Lord at all times, but during the Easter season, there is a special desire that comes from deep within us to give thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ for giving us the

glory of his resurrection. There are many different graces that we receive as a Church, as in our own personal lives, with the Easter celebrations. However, I believe that



in order to appreciate and to live these graces that come from the solemn feast of Easter, it is good to remember what the Lord went through in order to give us freedom from our sins.

St Teresa of Avila says in her autobiography: *“For in thinking about and carefully examining what the Lord suffered for us, we are moved to compassion; and this sorrow and the resulting tears bring delight. In thinking about the glory we hope for, the love the Lord bore us, and His resurrection, we are moved to joy which is virtuous and the sorrow very meritorious”*(V12, 1). Therefore, the joy of Easter and the compassion of his passion and death must lead us to love our Lord more and more.

Lent, Holy Week and Easter are special times in our liturgical calendar. They are not just times of celebration, but they are also opportunities to learn more about our faith. Likewise, the different seasons in our liturgical calendars are opportunities to develop a deeper relationship with our Lord Jesus and through him with the entire Godhead, the Trinity.

Then let us enjoy and rejoice in the blessed season of Easter, and let us always remember that we are in the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us love Him more

*Let us love Him more and more with a love that is rooted, not in superficial things or sentiments, but with love rooted in faith, charity, and hope...*

and more with a love that is rooted, not in superficial things or sentiments, but with love rooted in faith, charity, and hope: A love that can be experienced in our relationship with our brothers and sisters and in the way we love and follow the teachings of our Catholic Church.

Subsequently, my brothers and sisters, Easter is the perfect time to continue walking in the path of conversion that we began during Lent. May our risen Lord help us to grow closer to Him and bless us in our efforts to live as faithful and loving Christians.

My prayer for this Holy Season is for your loved ones and your needs.

In Christ who has risen from the tomb,

Fr. Luis Joaquín Castañeda, O.C.D.  
Provincial



GENTLE BREEZES OF CARMEL IS PUBLISHED BY  
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FOR OUR FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS.

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# Living with the Risen Christ

By Fr. Gregory Ross

In her spiritual autobiography, St. Teresa of Jesus describes the special grace she received of having Jesus Christ appear to her as the Risen One. She declares that words could never succeed in describing the beauty of the Risen Christ. At one point in her life, she experienced the habitual presence of the Risen Jesus, whom she described as granting her a special awareness that he was always with her, at her right side.

What St. Teresa experienced in an extraordinary way reminds us of the truth of our faith that Jesus, the Risen One, is with us always, even until the end of time (*cf.* Matt 28,20). The forty days of the Easter season invite us to recall and to deepen our appreciation of the presence of

be walking with us as we are caught up in our own worries, sorrows, confusion, etc. Jesus is there listening to us, patiently accompanying us, trying to help us to see the events of our lives in the light of God's word, just as he did with these two disciples of his.

Jesus allowed these two disciples to recognize his risen presence "in the breaking of the bread." Just so, the Eucharist is the primary means through which the Risen Christ makes himself present to us in our daily lives. In this sacrament, he is truly present to us as the one who has triumphed over sin and death. As the Carmelite Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity once wrote: "We possess the vision in substance beneath the humble Host. Yes, it is indeed the Same whom the

blessed contemplate in glory and whom we adore in faith" (Letter 165). So strong and clear was Bl. Elizabeth's faith in the presence of the Risen Christ in the Eucharist that the reception of Holy Communion was for her like an anticipated heaven: "It seems to me that nothing speaks more of the love that is in the Heart of God than the Eucharist: it is union, consummation; it's He in

us, us in Him, and isn't this Heaven on earth? It is Heaven in faith while waiting the face-to-face vision so much desired" (*ibid.*). In this matter, Bl. Elizabeth echoes the Catechism of the Catholic Church,



which calls the Eucharist "an anticipation of the heavenly glory" (CCC 1402).

The Catechism also reminds us that the Eucharist "unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints" (CCC 1419). This truth can provide great consolation to those who have lost loved ones to the mystery of death. In drawing near to the Risen Christ in the Eucharist, we are also drawing near to our loved ones who have passed from this life to the next. We remember them at the sacrifice of the Mass, praying that they may enjoy the fullness of risen life with Christ in heaven. And the Risen Lord invites us to seek our departed loved ones at his side, for his own resurrection is the source of eternal life for those made partners in his Paschal Mystery through Baptism and through the other mysterious workings of God's grace. *He is the head of the body, the church. He*

*Continued*



the Risen Christ in our daily lives.

More often than not, this presence of Christ in our lives goes unrecognized. Like the experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the Risen One can

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

— ST. THÉRÈSE

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## Living with the Risen Christ

is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead (Col 1,18), and In Christ shall all be brought to life (1Cor 15,22). Living with the Risen Christ means living in the faith that our departed loved ones live in him and are united to us in him.

The Risen Lord is also present to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We read in the Gospel of John that on the evening of the day of the Resurrection, Jesus appears to his Apostles and says: *‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained’* (John 20,21-23). It is the Risen Christ who gives his Church the authority to forgive sins in his name through the power of the Holy Spirit, his gift. John the Evangelist, in showing Jesus bestowing this gift on the very day of his Resurrection, seems to be showing Jesus’ eagerness to bestow the healing power of his mercy to humanity through the ministry of his Church.

This forgiveness of sins through the ministry of his Church is another way in which we can draw near to the Risen Christ. It thus seems fitting that the Church exhorts her members to go to the Sacrament of Confession and receive Communion at least once a year precisely during the Easter season. This is the traditional “Easter duty” of Catholics. Likewise, Pope John Paul II officially introduced the title “Mercy Sunday” for the Sunday after Easter. Every year during the Mass of Mercy Sunday, the above passage from the Gospel of John is

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proclaimed as part of the liturgy, highlighting the connection between the resurrection of Jesus and the forgiveness of sins.

In addition to the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance (as well as the other sacraments), our everyday prayer also presumes the resurrection of Christ. We can pray to Jesus, and he hears us, precisely because he is the Risen One who lives to intercede for us. Through his Paschal Mystery, his suffering, death and resurrection, Jesus has been constituted the eternal High Priest for our sake. *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So*

*let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help (Heb 4,14-16).*

Our prayer to the Risen Christ can also take the form of quite simply remaining in his presence, simply dwelling in faith before the One who lives forever at the right hand of the Father. Through the grace of baptism, he dwells in our hearts. This mystery of Christ’s dwelling by grace in the soul of the Christian was lived profoundly by Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity. She found in this grace a sign of Jesus’ faithful love. She shares her enthusiastic faith in this mystery with her mother, encouraging her to turn always to the Risen One as well: “Oh, may the Master reveal to you his divine presence, it is so suave and sweet, it gives so much strength to the soul; to believe that God loves us to the point of dwelling in us, to make Himself the Companion of our exile, the Confidant, the Friend of every moment...” (Letter 305).

The Risen Jesus declares: *Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age (Matt 28,20).* May the Lord of Life, the Risen One, reveal to you also his living presence this Easter Season and give you the grace to live always in his presence. May his peace and mercy be with you and all your loved ones.

### 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.*



# Rest in Peace Joseph Neilson

*Joseph of St. Thérèse*

(1932 – 2012)



Joseph A. Neilson was born on December 28, 1932 in Manhattan, New York City to Frederick Neilson & Josephine Clancy. His father died when Joseph was young, and his mother supported her two sons by

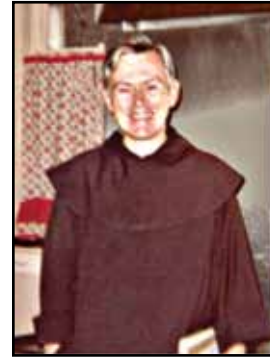
working as a cook for a wealthy family in Manhattan. After being taught by the Christian Brothers in primary school, he graduated from Fordham. “My brother George was away in WW II, and while I was at home alone and sick, I picked up Therese’s *Story of a Soul*. That was my discovery of the Carmelite life.”

He was received into the Carmelite order by Novice Master Fr. Patrick Ahern in San Antonio in September of 1951. Early in the morning of May 15<sup>th</sup>, Brother Joseph and his fellow novices closed down our novitiate in San Antonio and headed north to Little Rock. They arrived at Marylake, the site of our province’s new novitiate, around sunset. Fr. Felix greeted him at the back porch, took him into the chapel and invited the novices to view the rest of the monastery while Brother Victor Kopycinski prepared supper. Joseph was lucky to get a separate cell; because when the new group of postulants arrived from Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas on June 16<sup>th</sup>, the new boys spent their first evening at Marylake arranging a large room downstairs into a dormitory.

Brother Joseph was the first novice to make his profession at Marylake on the Feast of St. Thérèse in 1952. He had taken the religious name Joseph of St. Thérèse. Br. Joseph and Br. Sam Anthony Morello were sent to Rome to study theology and were ordained there on April 29, 1962. His first assignment was at Marylake, and in 1966 he was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Provincial Councilor and Novice Master. In 1969 he was sent to be the new superior of our Houston community. When Houston was closed, he was sent back to Marylake. He spent 1975 as a hermit in Placid’s hermitage on the back of Marylake’s property. In 1978, Fr. Joseph was again appointed Novice Master and prepared Br. John Magdalene for profession.

Fr. Joseph loved to run. After running for a year from Marylake to our Nuns in Little Rock (13 miles each way), he ran the Boston Marathon. He was always sought by our nuns throughout the province and beyond for conferences on Carmelite history and spirituality. His spiritual conferences would often last all morning or afternoon. Our nuns soon learned to attend in relays. A few would slip out while Fr. Joseph was looking up something in a book then slip back in after completing their chores while the next group slipped out.

In the late ‘70s, Fr. Joseph took on the cause of protesting abortion. He became the spiritual advisor of groups picketing abortion centers in Little Rock, then in Oklahoma. The Pearson Foundation, concerned with pregnancy counseling, named him their national Chaplain in St. Louis in 1984. He set up White Rose Counseling Centers in Texas and Arkansas. Being born on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, he felt called to this apostolate.



Fr. Joseph’s I.Q. was genius level. I never realized how encyclopedic his knowledge was until I examined the library of which he was in charge at Marylake. One would suspect a few areas of expertise would excel in the books he gathered for theology, history, scripture or spirituality. But poetry, art, music, and even the novels he collected for those sections of the

library were superb. You could ask Fr. Joseph a question about anything from Elvis to Stephen Hawking, and though he might not have an immediate answer, he knew exactly where it could be found – not by a goggle search. Fr. Joseph never took to the computer, but he knew where the answer was in a library book.

The old stereotype of the absent minded professor comes to mind when you notice how a brilliant mind like Fr. Joseph’s was quite incompetent when it came to practical matters. Growing up in Manhattan, Fr. Joseph never saw



the need to learn how to drive. But the day finally came at Marylake when he asked one of the brothers to teach him. Noticing how one of the most difficult things to master was backing up, Father Joseph would drive the car around the large oval drive at Marylake –backwards. He reasoned that if he hit anything, it would not be anything serious, only a chicken house or milk barn. But he was a terrible driver. One of his

great feats was ending up perched on top of a three-foot tall concrete barrier in the middle of a Houston freeway, facing backwards. None could imagine how in the world he ended up there, but he did.

On November 29, 1986, when Father was stationed at Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas, he was in a terrible automobile accident that damaged his brain stem. This severely affected his movement and his speech. From November to August he was in a Dallas Rehab Institute, and then sent to Tangram in San Marcos where he remained until he was able to move back to Mt. Carmel Center.

In 2002 he was sent from Dallas back to Marylake where he carried on a prodigious career in spiritual direction.

*Continued on page 6*

# Father Ralph Reyes Celebrates His 50th Profession Jubilee



*You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last... John 15:16*



## Joseph of St. Thérèse

*Continued from page 5*

Speaking of moves, we Carmelite friars are always being moved around from one house of the province to another. Fr. Joseph was sent to be superior in Oklahoma City by Fr. Raymond Donoho in 1981. Fr. Joseph was so devoted to the vow of poverty, that he was able to make all his moves carrying everything he possessed in two suitcases and one handbag. I know of no Carmelite in modern times able to accomplish such a feat.

After a number of falls at Marylake, he needed to be moved to a nursing home in San Antonio in February of 2009. He accepted this unpleasant "assignment" with great resignation. In 2012 he was moved to Morningside Manor on Babcock Rd where he died at 4:30 am on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Leave it to the Irish to die on St. Patrick's Day. Mass of Christian Burial was held on Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at Marylake Monastery. May his soul, so beloved by so many, now rest in peace.

--Fr. John Michael, O.C.D.

**Discalced Carmelite Friars**  
Province of St. Thérèse  
House of the Builders of the National Shrine of the Little Flower

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**Welcome:**  
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Fr. Gregory Ross, O.C.D., Provincial Superior

**Carmelite Thought for the Day**  
October 21, 2010  
"Just as the sun shines simultaneously on the tall cedars and on each little flower as though it were alone on the earth, so our Lord is occupied with each soul as though there were no others like it!"  
-St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face

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*Have a Blessed Easter Season!*