

SPRING 2016
VOL. 9 NO. 1

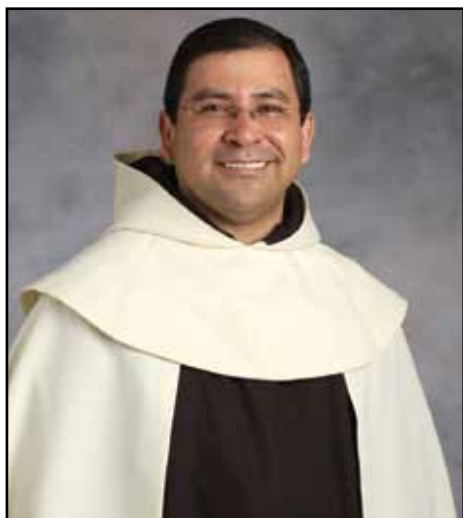
GENTLE BREEZES — OF CARMEL —



Visit us; You are Welcome!

The Discalced Carmelite friars' Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas, has been named a pilgrimage church for the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

ST. THÉRÈSE PROVINCE OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS
824 KENTUCKY AVENUE, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78201 • 210.735.9126 • WWW.CARMELITEFRIARSOCD.COM



Live the mercies of God with the joy of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! It seems that more and more the seasons of the year are passing faster and faster. Here we are celebrating the beautiful spring season along with the great Feast of Easter, which this year is marked by the very special touch of the celebration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. For this reason, in this newsletter, I invite you, our readers, to live the Mercies of God with the joy that the Glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ brings to our life.

I am sure that since last year you have heard, read, researched and talked about the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Moreover; I am sure that you are following the invitation of our Holy Father Pope Francis to live and celebrate this Holy Year. Perhaps you began doing so by participating in the opening of a Holy Door in your diocese or any other events organized by your parish.



“To live in the presence of God is to live in His Mercy, and to experience His Mercy is to experience His forgiveness”

Likewise, you are practicing the corporal works of Mercy and the spiritual works of Mercy. I think we are very blessed, not only for this Jubilee Year, but also for all the ways in which we can experience this Year of Mercy.

Whatever you are currently doing or preparing yourself to do in order to live this time of grace, I remind you that Easter is not only an important liturgical celebration; but it is also a celebration of the mercies of God. Hence, my intention in writing this letter is not to give you one more article about the Mercy of God, because you can read better written articles from other sources. My aim is to pray with you and to call to your attention with simple words what a blessing it is to live in its fullness this Jubilee Year of Mercy.

To live in the presence of God is to live in His Mercy, and to experience His Mercy is to experience His forgiveness which many times is beyond our human grasp. The love of God helps us to see our life in the light of our Lord’s resurrection. In other words, with the light of our Lord’s resurrection our life becomes filled with love, compassion, peace, truth and thankfulness.

We are filled with a Love from God, given to us His children, a love that we must show to all our brothers and sisters.

We are filled with Compassion that we receive from God by forgiving our sins, a compassion we can share with others.

We are filled with a Peace that comes after we let go of all our failures and mistakes from our past.

We are filled with a Truth of knowing that we are always in the care of a loving Father; and

We are filled with thankfulness to God for all the mercies that He has for each one of us.

The Mercy of God is always present in our life and it is manifested in good actions. Moreover, the Mercy of God is in the wisdom that comes from Him, because as we read in the Letter of St. James (3:17) “But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits”. So, the good fruits of Mercy are what our Holy Father invites us to experience in every daily activity. Ask for God’s wisdom during this Easter season so that we may recognize that we are sinners, but extremely loved sinners; to trust that Jesus loves us endlessly, despite our unworthiness, and to believe that Jesus thought we were worthy enough that He would die and rise from death for us. From His love for us comes God’s mercy for you and I, and we live this love when we try to do good and to forgive, as He forgives us. During this Easter season let us live in the presence of our Lord, singing his mercies and giving glory to Him who is all Merciful! Happy Easter!

May the Resurrection of our Lord bless you and your homes with love, hope and faith! Furthermore, may you experience God’s Mercies during this jubilee year in the daily events of your life! Let us pray with our Holy Father Pope Francis for the renewal of each one of us and of the Church.

You and your family are in our prayers, and I will pray for your intentions during this Easter season, as well as the entire jubilee Year of Mercy.

In Christ and Carmel,

Fr. Luis Castañeda, O.C.D.
Provincial

Follow us on twitter

@carmelitesok

Opening of the Jubilee Year of Mercy at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower



Fr. Luis Belmonte, OCD, Pastor (pictured at right) addresses the faithful gathered for the opening of the Holy Door.

His Holiness Pope Francis has declared a Jubilee Year of Mercy for the entire Church from December 8, 2015 – November 20, 2016. The Discalced Carmelite friars' Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas, has been named a pilgrimage church for the Jubilee Year by Archbishop Gustavo Sillar. The Basilica's main entrance is designated as a "Holy Door" for pilgrims. The friars celebrated the formal opening of the Holy Door on December 13, 2015. Here are some photos of the event for you to enjoy.



Right: The Holy Door for the Jubilee Year of Mercy at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas.



Fr. Luis leads the faithful through the Holy Door, bearing the book of the Gospels.

Cover:
The Basilica is filled during the Opening Mass.



Fr. Luis Prepares to open the Holy Door.



The faithful gather outside the Basilica.

Pope Francis, St. Thérèse, and the Year of Mercy

Fr. Gregory Ross, O.C.D.

Never forget this: The Lord never gets tired of forgiving us. It is we who get tired of asking for forgiveness.

These words were spoken by Pope Francis during his first Sunday Angelus address in March of 2013. This same theme of forgiveness is currently being highlighted by the pope during the Jubilee Year of Mercy in which we now find ourselves. In his formal declaration of the Jubilee year, entitled *The Face of Mercy*, Pope Francis states: *In the parables devoted to mercy, Jesus reveals the nature of God as that of a Father who never gives up until he has forgiven the wrong and overcome rejection with compassion and mercy (n. 9).*

His Holiness' statement about forgiveness also seems to reflect the influence of St. Thérèse of Lisieux in his spirituality. Pope Francis has a well-known devotion to the Little Flower. He once told a journalist: *Whenever I have a problem, I ask her not to solve it, but to take it into her hands and to help me accept it, and I almost always receive a white rose as a sign.* As we shall see, his emphasis on God's tireless mercy echoes the spirit of the patroness of our Province, who herself came to discover and to proclaim the infinite mercy of our heavenly Father.

Her confidence in God's merciful love led St. Thérèse to be able to accept her own faults and imperfections, what she called her own littleness. She refused to become discouraged by them, placing all her hope in God's mercy, not in her own merits.

St. Thérèse first of all came to understand that it was the mercy of God that had protected her from grave sin. A priest once declared to her after having heard her general confession that she had never committed a mortal sin. Whereas one tends to think of mercy in terms of forgiveness of sins committed, St. Thérèse came to understand that it was an even greater work of God's mercy to preserve a person from sinning in the first place. She illustrates this point through a parable



Pope Francis shows a large medallion of St. Thérèse that he has just received as a gift.

of a doctor who has a young child. If the doctor's child stumbles upon a rock and injures herself, the doctor shows his love by putting his skills to work in healing his daughter. But, says St. Thérèse, it would be a work of even greater love for the father to run ahead of his child to remove the stone from her path so that she doesn't stumble upon it at all. This is how she understood what a great mercy God showed her in keeping her free from grave sin.

But, likewise, she realized the truth of what that same priest had told her: *Thank God for what He has done for you; had He abandoned you, instead of being a little angel, you would have become a little demon.*

Nevertheless, St. Thérèse also certainly understood God's mercy as a tender forgiveness for her venial sins, faults and weaknesses. In trying to communicate her understanding of God's merciful love to others, she uses the following image: *Look at a little child who has annoyed his mother by flying into a temper or by disobeying her. If he hides away in a corner in a sulky mood and if he cries in fear of*

being punished, his mamma will not pardon him, certainly, not his fault. But if he comes to her, holding out his little arms, smiling, and saying, "Kiss me, I will not do it again," will his mother be able not to press him to her heart tenderly and forget his childish mischief? (Letter 191)

The Little Flower came to realize that God's merciful love purified her of

her faults and failings. In 1895, just two years before her death, she was inspired to make an offering of herself to this merciful love of God. In her spiritual autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, she shares her joy at having done so: *Ah! Since the happy day, it seems to me that Love penetrates and surrounds me, that at each moment this Merciful Love renews me, purifying my soul and leaving no trace of sin within it, and I need have no fear of purgatory. I know that of myself I would not merit even to enter that place of expiation since only holy souls can have entrance there, but I also know that the Fire of Love is more sanctifying than is the fire of purgatory.*

Her confidence in God's merciful love led St. Thérèse to be able to accept her own faults and imperfections, what she called her own littleness. She refused to become discouraged by them, placing all her hope in God's mercy, not in her own merits. On one occasion as she lay ill in the infirmary, the young saint realized she had acted selfishly towards a sister. She repented immediately and asked for pardon. Later, she declared, *Oh, how happy I am to see myself imperfect and to have such need of God's mercy at the moment of my death!*

Continued on page 6

Pope Francis, St. Thérèse, and the Year of Mercy

Continued from page 5

Finally, St. Thérèse shares with us that her confidence in God's mercy does not spring from her awareness of never having committed a grave sin. Rather, it springs from her faith in God's own goodness. She concludes her *Story of a Soul* exuberantly proclaiming: *Yes, I feel it; even though I had on my conscience all the sins that can be committed, I would go, my heart broken with sorrow, and throw myself into Jesus' arms, for I know how much He loves the prodigal child who returns to Him. It is not because God, in His anticipating Mercy, has preserved my soul from mortal sin that I go to Him with confidence and love.... No, there is no one who could frighten me, for I know too well what to believe concerning His Mercy and His Love. I know that this whole multitude of sins would be lost in the twinkling of an eye like a drop of water cast into a burning furnace.*

The Lord never tires of forgiving us. Encouraged by St. Thérèse and by Pope Francis during this Year of Mercy, let us never get tired of asking for forgiveness, for *His mercy endures forever! (Ps 136)*



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

PLEASE CONSIDER THE DISCALCED
CARMELITE FRIARS OF OKLAHOMA
WHEN MAKING OUT YOUR WILL

OUR TAX ID # IS: 73-0580271

**YOUR LEGACY WILL LIVE ON
IN OUR MINISTRIES FOR GENERATIONS.**

GENTLE BREEZES OF CARMEL IS PUBLISHED
BY ST. THÉRÈSE PROVINCE
OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS
FOR OUR FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS.

PUBLISHER
FR. LUIS JOAQUIN CASTANEDA, OCD

EDITOR
FR. GREGORY ROSS, OCD

GRAPHIC DESIGN
SUSAN GARRISON

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION, PLEASE
ADDRESS THEM TO:

ST. THÉRÈSE PROVINCE OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS
824 KENTUCKY AVENUE * SAN ANTONIO * TEXAS * 78201

Prayer of Pope Francis for the Jubilee

*Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful
like the heavenly Father, and have told us
that whoever sees you sees Him.*

Show us your face and we will be saved.

*Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew
from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and
Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;
made Peter weep after his betrayal,
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.*

*Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us,
the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:*

"If you knew the gift of God!"

*You are the visible face of the invisible Father,
of the God who manifests his power
above all by forgiveness and mercy:*

*let the Church be your visible face in the world,
its Lord risen and glorified.*

*You willed that your ministers would also be clothed
in weakness in order that they may feel compassion
for those in ignorance and error:*

*let everyone who approaches them feel sought after,
loved, and forgiven by God.*

*Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us
with its anointing,*

*so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace
from the Lord,*

and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm,

*may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty
to captives and the oppressed,
and restore sight to the blind.*

*We ask this of you, Lord Jesus,
through the intercession of Mary,*

*Mother of Mercy; you who live and reign
with the Father and*

the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

Amen.