

“Under the Mantle of Mary”



A Spiritual and Pastoral Guide to Living Marian Discipleship in the Life and Mission of St. Thérèse of Carmel Catholic Church.

Expressing the theological, spiritual, and pastoral unity of our community through Mary's patronage in the spirit of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother and Model of the Church, and to St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, our Patroness and Guide in the *Little Way*.



ST. THÉRÈSE
OF CARMEL

Preface

Under the Mantle of Mary is offered as a spiritual guide for the life and mission of St. Thérèse of Carmel Parish. It seeks to unite every ministry, outreach, and act of service under the loving intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and in simple fidelity to St. Thérèse's *Little Way*.

Our parish is called to be a living reflection of Mary's faith and Thérèse's trust, a community that prays with simplicity, serves with joy, and loves with perseverance. This guide provides spiritual patrons for each dimension of parish life, inviting every member to discover the Marian heart of their vocation.

This guide finds its roots in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which proclaims that ***"the Blessed Virgin is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and of the Redeemer... she is also clearly the mother of the members of Christ... having cooperated by charity that the faithful might be born in the Church"*** (cf. *Second Vatican Council, Lumen Gentium*, §§ 63-65). In her, the Church contemplates its own mystery and vocation: to bear Christ into the world through faith, charity, and obedience.

It is in this light that our parish seeks to live *Under the Mantle of Mary*, uniting contemplation and mission after her example and that of St. Thérèse.

I sincerely hope this guide will inspire us to deepen our love for the Eucharist, to live our discipleship more intentionally, and to find in Mary and Thérèse two luminous examples of how to say "yes" to God each day.

Fr. Chris Tozzi, Pastor
St. Thérèse of Carmel Catholic Church

Introduction

At the heart of every parish is the living mystery of Christ, the Word made flesh, and at His side, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. She is the model disciple, the pattern of the Church, and the mother who guides her children along every path of faith, service, and mission.

In her many titles, the Church recognizes the diverse ways that the one Mother of God manifests the love of Christ: as teacher, intercessor, servant, comforter, and queen. Each title expresses a grace that corresponds to a living dimension of parish life.

At St. Thérèse of Carmel, we entrust every ministry, apostolate, and pastoral initiative to Mary's care, guided by St. Thérèse's *Little Way*, confident that through her intercession all our work may be directed toward the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Our Patroness - St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Theological and Spiritual Rationale

St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, known throughout the world as *the Little Flower*, is the radiant patroness of our parish. Her spirituality, grounded in simplicity, trust, and love, reveals the Marian heart of discipleship. Thérèse saw in the Blessed Virgin not a distant queen but a tender mother, accessible to all her children.

“She is more mother than queen,” Thérèse wrote, ***“because she walks with us in our littleness.”***

Her *Little Way* teaches that holiness is found not in extraordinary works, but in doing ordinary things with extraordinary love. This is the essence of Mary’s own life, the hidden fidelity of Nazareth, the courage of Calvary, and the silent joy of Pentecost. Mary, for Thérèse, was the first and perfect disciple who loved without measure and trusted without fear. To walk the *Little Way* is to imitate Mary’s simplicity, her confidence in God’s mercy, and her total surrender to His will, as St. Thérèse did.

Thus, the parish of St. Thérèse of Carmel is called to embody this same spirit:

- **To pray** like Mary — with quiet constancy and trust.
- **To serve** like Mary — humbly and joyfully in hidden ways.
- **To love** like Mary — generously, with compassion for the poor, the lonely, and the forgotten.
- **To hope** like Mary — steadfast in faith even in times of trial.

In this way, St. Thérèse’s *Little Way* and Mary’s maternal intercession converge. Both lead us to Christ through small acts of love, transforming the life of the parish into a living reflection of the Gospel.

Prayer of Parish Patronage

*St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face,
teach us your Little Way of confidence and love.
Help us to see every act of service, prayer, and sacrifice
as a flower offered to God for the salvation of souls.
With you and the Blessed Virgin Mary, may we live in simplicity, humility, and joy,
so that our parish may become a garden of God’s grace. Amen.*

Consecration of Parish Life - St. Thérèse of Carmel Catholic Church

In the spirit of St. Thérèse’s *Little Way*, our parish entrusts each dimension of its life to the maternal care of Mary. In her many titles, we discover how God’s grace touches every vocation, ministry, and heart.

I. Formation and Discipleship

Patroness: *Mary, Seat of Wisdom*

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word.” (Lk 1:38)



Theological Rationale

Mary’s docility to the Word makes her the model of every disciple. In her, the Eternal Word found a dwelling place; through her faith, the wisdom of God took flesh. Under her title as *Seat of Wisdom*, she forms the minds and hearts of believers in the truth of the Gospel. She teaches us to listen, to ponder, and to let Christ be formed within us. Through her maternal guidance, she leads the faithful more deeply into God’s truth and love, shaping a life of discipleship that unites contemplation with action, humility with faith, and learning with love. In every age, she continues to guide the Church in catechesis, education, and lifelong formation, drawing her children into a deeper knowledge of Christ, the fullness of wisdom made flesh.

St. Thérèse sought wisdom not through study but through loving surrender. In *Story of a Soul*, she wrote that Jesus taught her *“the science of love,”* which surpasses all knowledge. Like Mary who pondered the Word in her heart, Thérèse discovered that true formation comes through prayerful attentiveness and trust. Her *“Little Way”* teaches that holiness is learned not in classrooms but in the humble school of daily fidelity to God’s will.

Spiritual Emphasis

Formation is not mere instruction, it is the shaping of disciples who think, love, and act with Christ.

Associated Parish Ministries

- **Notre Dame Academy:** Catholic education for children, preschool–8th grade.
- **Faith Formation for Children and Teens:** sacramental preparation for Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation.
- **Adult Faith Formation:** Bible studies, small-group sharing, and retreats.
- **OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults):** a journey of conversion and entry into full communion with the Church.

Prayer of Invocation

*Mary, Seat of Wisdom, form us in faith, hope, and charity.
Enlighten our minds and inflame our hearts,
guide our teachers, catechists, and seekers of truth,
that we may become true disciples and teachers of your Son. Amen.*

II. Devotional Life

Patroness: *Our Lady of Fátima*

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” (Lk 1:46 - 47)



Theological Rationale

At Fátima, Mary called the world to prayer, penance, and conversion. Her message reminds us that devotion is not mere sentimentality but participation in God’s saving plan. *Our Lady of Fátima* invites the faithful to embrace conversion, prayer, and reparation, the heart of all true Christian devotion. Through the Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration, and daily prayer, she leads us to encounter her Son and to live in joyful communion with Him. Her maternal call to consecrate our lives to Christ renews the soul of the parish, forming a community rooted in faith, hope, and love, and awakening in every heart a deeper longing for holiness.

Thérèse’s whole life was a living Rosary, each act of love a bead offered to Jesus through Mary. She practiced penance not through great austerities but by offering small sacrifices with joy. Her devotion to Mary was tender and interior: she called her **“more mother than queen.”** Like *Our Lady of Fátima*, Thérèse reminds the faithful that prayer and reparation transform the world one act of love at a time.

Spiritual Emphasis

Mary leads us to interior renewal through habitual prayer and penance. She forms hearts that listen, trust, and respond in love.

Associated Parish Ministries

- **Eucharistic Adoration:** resting in Jesus’ true presence and love.
- **Liturgy of the Hours:** sanctifying the day with psalms and Scripture.
- **Marian Devotions:** Rosary, First Saturdays, and Fatima devotions that draw us closer to Christ through His Mother.
- **Healing Prayer Ministry:** experiencing Christ’s mercy and peace.

Prayer of Invocation

*Our Lady of Fátima, teach us to pray with faith and perseverance.
Strengthen our faith, draw us closer to your Immaculate Heart,
and turn our hearts to the Sacred Heart of Jesus,
that our parish may live each day in peace, penance, and devotion to your Son. Amen.*

III. Family Life, Marriage, and Home Ministry

Patroness: *Mary, Mother of the Holy Family*

“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good.”
(Rom 12:9)



Theological Rationale

In the home of Nazareth, Mary nurtured love, faith, and work, forming with Joseph the household where Jesus grew in wisdom, age, and grace. As *Mother of the Holy Family*, she blesses and protects every home that seeks to live in the light of the Gospel. Within the rhythm of ordinary life, she teaches parents, children, and spouses to reflect the harmony of the Holy Family, uniting prayer and labor, peace and charity. Under her maternal care, the domestic Church becomes the foundation of all parish and ecclesial life, where faith is lived, love is learned, and holiness quietly takes root.

The Martin home in Lisieux was a domestic Nazareth, marked by prayer, work, and love. Thérèse learned sanctity from her parents' faithfulness and simplicity, seeing in them the reflection of Mary and Joseph. Her *Little Way* teaches that family holiness grows in small gestures of patience, forgiveness, and service, where every hidden act becomes an offering to God.

Spiritual Emphasis

The family is the first school of faith, prayer, and love. Mary sanctifies ordinary family life and keeps Christ at its center.

Associated Parish Ministries

- **Mom's Ministry:** faith, friendship, and support for mothers at every stage.
- **Marriage Preparation and Family Enrichment.**
- **Baptismal Preparation and Home Blessing Ministries.**

Prayer of Invocation

*Mary, Mother of the Holy Family, bless our homes with unity and grace.
Help us to love one another and teach us patience, forgiveness, and joy,
that Christ may dwell at the center of every family. Amen.*

IV. Social Outreach & Service

Patroness: *Mary, Our Mother of Mercy*

“Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” (Lk 6:36)



Theological Rationale

Mary’s compassion at Cana and at the Cross reveals her as the living image of divine mercy. As *Our Mother of Mercy*, she manifests the compassionate face of God and intercedes for all who suffer in body or spirit. From the foot of the Cross, she became mother to every soul in need, and through her intercession the Church learns to serve with tenderness and love. The one who hastened to help Elizabeth and who pleaded for mercy at Cana teaches us that true compassion acts, it moves outward to heal, to feed, and to restore. Under her patronage, the ministries of outreach, justice, and charity become expressions of the Church’s maternal heart, extending the mercy of God to the poor, the vulnerable, and the forgotten.

Though enclosed in Carmel, Thérèse’s heart embraced the world. Her “missionary soul” reached out through prayer and sacrifice to sinners, priests, and the suffering. Like Mary at Cana, she noticed spiritual need and interceded with quiet confidence. Her compassion mirrors Mary’s: mercy expressed through prayer, empathy, and self-offering for those most in need of grace.

Spiritual Emphasis

Mercy is love in motion. Under Mary’s patronage, our parish becomes a field hospital of compassion, a place where the poor are fed, the lonely are visited, and the forgotten are remembered.

Associated Parish Ministries

- **Community Outreach** (food, clothing, and care kits)
- **Pro-Life Ministry**
- **Service Projects and Parish-wide Acts of Mercy**

Prayer of Invocation

Mary, Our Mother of Mercy, open our eyes to see Christ in the poor and suffering. Strengthen our hands and open our hearts to serve with tenderness and courage, that your Son’s mercy may be made visible in our parish and our world. Amen.

V. Evangelization & Community Life

Patroness: *Mary, Mother of the Church*

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” (Mt 28:19)



Theological Rationale

At Pentecost, gathered with the apostles in prayer, Mary became the living heart of the newborn Church. As *Mother of the Church*, she continues to inspire every work of evangelization, outreach, and community building. Through her maternal intercession, the faithful are formed in unity, charity, and missionary zeal. Her motherhood embraces both the communion of believers and the outreach that flows from it, reminding us that true mission is born from prayer and sustained by love. Under her mantle, the Church learns to welcome others into faith, to strengthen the bonds of communion among all peoples, and to bear joyful witness to the Gospel in every generation.

Thérèse saw evangelization not as preaching or promotion, but as love. “In the heart of the Church, my Mother,” she wrote, “I will be love.” Her hidden vocation radiated outward, showing that every act of charity builds up the Body of Christ. Like Mary at Pentecost, Thérèse gathered souls through prayer and gentle witness, revealing that mission begins in communion and blossoms into joy.

Spiritual Emphasis

Evangelization begins with belonging. Under Mary’s maternal care, the parish becomes a home of faith and friendship, where community life deepens discipleship and discipleship leads to joyful mission.

Associated Parish Ministries

- **Welcome Committee** – inviting and connecting new members
- **Young Adults Ministry (18–39)** – building faith and fellowship
- **Parish Guild** – service, prayer, and community engagement
- **Knights of Columbus** – men united in charity and fraternity
- **Community Life Events** – gatherings that strengthen bonds of faith and joy

Prayer of Invocation

Mary, Mother of the Church, gather us as one family in faith and love.

Inspire our community to welcome the stranger,

encourage the seeker, and proclaim the Gospel with joy.

May your maternal care make our parish a living image of the Church you nurture.

Amen.

VI. Liturgical and Music Ministry

Patroness: *Mary, Mystical Rose*

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” (Col 3:16)



Theological Rationale

Mary’s life was a continual offering of praise, a hymn of love that magnified the Lord in all things. Under her title as *Mystical Rose*, she reflects the beauty of grace and the harmony of worship. Adorned with every virtue, she leads the Church in her perfect praise of God and draws all ministers of the altar and of music into deeper union with the sacrifice of her Son. In her, the liturgy becomes radiant and fruitful, beauty is joined to reverence, and praise becomes participation in the divine life. Through her example, the Church learns to worship with purity of heart, gratitude of spirit, and joy that blossoms into holiness.

Thérèse loved the beauty of the liturgy and offered her voice in choir as a prayer of praise. Her reverence for the Eucharist was marked by simplicity and awe. She saw in every Mass a renewal of Calvary and desired her life to be ***“one continual act of love.”*** Like Mary, the *Mystical Rose*, Thérèse teaches that worship becomes radiant when offered with purity of heart and joy.

Spiritual Emphasis

The liturgy is heaven’s song sung on earth. Through Mary’s intercession, the parish’s worship becomes beautiful, ordered, and deeply prayerful.

Associated Parish Ministries

- **Called to Serve:** Sacristans, Altar Servers, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Hospitality Ministers.
- **Liturgical Music Ministry:** Choirs, Cantors, and Instrumentalists offering varied musical styles to enrich worship.

Prayer of Invocation

*Mary, Mystical Rose, adorn our worship with the beauty of holiness.
Teach us to sing your Magnificat with our lives,
that our voices and hearts may proclaim the glory of God in perfect harmony.
Let our praise rise as a sweet fragrance before the throne of the Most High,
a song of love joined to the sacrifice of your Son. Amen.*

VII. Pastoral Care and Consolation

Patroness: *Our Mother of Perpetual Help*

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Mt 11:28)



Theological Rationale

Mary stands with all who suffer, offering the consolation of her maternal love. Under her title as *Our Mother of Perpetual Help*, she never ceases to bring comfort to those in distress. In the ancient Byzantine icon, she holds her Son close yet turns her gaze toward us, the afflicted, the anxious, and the sorrowful. She accompanies all who bear grief, illness, or loss, bringing peace and hope to the afflicted. Through her steadfast intercession, the wounded find strength in Christ’s mercy and healing in His wounds. In her presence, the Church learns to accompany others with compassion and to make visible the tenderness of God’s love for every broken heart.

Suffering was Thérèse’s hidden apostolate. During her final illness, she offered her pain for others, saying, ***“I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth.”*** Her serenity in weakness mirrored Mary at the foot of the Cross, present, compassionate, and steadfast. She reveals that consolation flows not from removing suffering but from transforming it through love united with Christ’s wounds.

Spiritual Emphasis

Mary consoles by her presence. Through her intercession, the parish becomes a refuge of mercy and healing.

Associated Parish Ministries

- **Ministries to the Sick and Bereaved:** bringing Christ’s comfort, companionship, and sacramental grace to the suffering and grieving.

Prayer of Invocation

*Mother of Perpetual Help, comfort the afflicted and strengthen the weary.
Intercede for all who carry heavy burdens,
and guide all who seek healing of body and soul,
that they may find refuge in the love of Christ your Son. Amen.*

VIII. Administration and Governance

Patroness: *Our Lady of Good Counsel*

“Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will set over his household?” (Lk 12:42)



Theological Rationale

Mary’s prudence and discernment make her the model of wise governance. Under her venerable title, she has long been invoked by popes and pastors seeking divine guidance in the care of souls and the stewardship of the Church’s mission. She embodies prudence, foresight, and trust in the Holy Spirit, virtues essential to those entrusted with leadership and responsibility. Through her counsel, leaders learn to guide with integrity and to serve with humility, always attentive to the will of God. Under her maternal protection, the parish grows in unity, charity, and fidelity, reflecting in its governance the wisdom and peace of her Son.

Within the convent, Thérèse served as novice mistress in spirit long before she was formally appointed. Her leadership was marked by gentleness, prudence, and fidelity to conscience. She counseled others to ***“bear with one another’s faults”*** and to trust in divine wisdom rather than personal control. Like Mary, she governed hearts through humility and discernment rooted in prayer.

Spiritual Emphasis

Parish administration, properly understood, is a ministry of discernment, ensuring that all decisions reflect the wisdom and order of God.

Associated Parish Ministries

- **Pastoral Council and Finance Council**
- **Parish Administration and Staff Leadership**
- **Stewardship and Planning Committees**

Prayer of Invocation

*Our Lady of Good Counsel, guide our decisions with prudence and peace.
Help us to seek God’s will in all things,
that every plan may build up the Body of Christ. Amen.*

Section IX. Ecumenical, Multicultural, Intergenerational / Peace & Unity Ministry

Patroness: Mary, Queen of Peace - “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Mt 5:9)



Theological Rationale

Mary gathers her children from every nation and tongue. As *Queen of Peace*, she is the heart of reconciliation and unity, the Mother who bore the Prince of Peace and continues to draw all peoples into one family in Christ. Her peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the living presence of God’s justice and mercy. Her maternal love transcends divisions of culture and language, inspiring the Church to build bridges of charity, forgiveness, and hope. In her, the Church learns to be a bridge-builder, healer, and reconciler, an instrument of communion that reflects the peace of her Son to a world in need of grace.

Thérèse’s peace came from total trust in God’s mercy. She forgave easily and prayed for those who caused her pain, writing that she desired “*to love Jesus for those who do not love Him.*” Her spirit of reconciliation flowed from her belief that every soul is loved infinitely. Like Mary, the *Queen of Peace*, she gathers hearts through forgiveness, turning wounds into occasions of grace.

Spiritual Emphasis

The parish, under Mary’s mantle, becomes a home of belonging for all, where diversity is celebrated as a reflection of God’s creative love, and peace is pursued as the fruit of mutual respect and understanding.

Associated Parish Ministries

- **Filipino and Chinese Catholic Communities** – celebrating faith through culture and tradition.
- **Super Seniors (50+)** – fostering friendship and intergenerational unity.
- **Ecumenical and Interfaith Dialogue** – nurturing understanding among Christians and people of goodwill.
- **Community and Cultural Events** – parish picnics, festivals, and gatherings that build harmony in diversity.

Prayer of Invocation

Mary, Queen of Peace, unite our hearts in love and understanding.

Bless our parish with harmony among cultures and generations.

Teach us to be peacemakers, bridge-builders, and bearers of your Son’s mercy, so that Christ’s peace may reign in our Church, our city, and our world. Amen.

Conclusion: Living the Marian Way of Parish Life

The Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Thérèse of Lisieux guide us in transforming every act of service into a prayer of love. The Marian dimensions of parish life are not separate paths but petals of one flower, each distinct, yet rooted in the same stem of grace. United through the Eucharist, our parish becomes a living reflection of Mary's *fiat* and Thérèse's trust, proclaiming that holiness begins in the ordinary and blossoms through love.

Each ministry of St. Thérèse of Carmel shares in the life of the Church through one of Mary's graces: **prayer, service, consolation, formation, stewardship, family, mission, beauty, and peace.**

May our Blessed Mother, under all her titles, lead us always to her Son, Jesus Christ, who is the source and summit of every good work.

“Through Mary, we return to Christ.” — St. Louis de Montfort

Prayer of Invocation



*Holy Mary, Mother of God, and St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus,
teach us to love as you loved, to serve as you served,
and to trust as you trusted.*

*May our parish be a light of faith, hope, and charity,
so that all who enter may encounter the Heart of Christ.*

Amen.