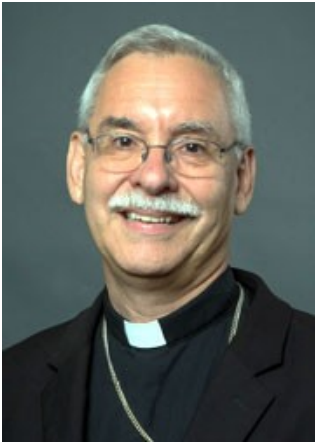


Mass before relics of St. Therese of Lisieux

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Bishop Anthony B. Taylor preached the following homily Nov. 8, 2025 at Christ the King Church in Little Rock.



Bishop Taylor

In our Mass today, we are privileged to have a first-class relic of St. Thérèse, one of the most dearly loved saints of recent centuries.

But why are we doing this? Why do we venerate the relics of the saints, be it a first-class relic — a part of the saint's body, which is what we have here, or a second-class relic of clothing that the saint had worn, or something that the saint had used while in this life, for instance her rosary, or a third-class relic of something that had come in contact with a first or second class relic.

But still, why do we venerate relics? We honor them because we honor that saint's fidelity to Christ and his or her imitation of Jesus' perfect sacrifice on the cross. Relics are placed under our altars because their sacrifice was only made possible through the grace they received in the Eucharist. Even so, the Church is clear that we honor and venerate the saints — and their relics — but we do not worship them. To the contrary, the saints lead us to fuller worship of God in spirit and truth. By telling their story and by honoring their bodies and their belongings, we give thanks to God for the holy witness of the saints.

The witness of St. Thérèse is so simple and powerful that she has been declared a Doctor of the Church. Marie-Françoise Thérèse Martin entered the Carmelites at age 15 — pretty young, but becoming a Carmelite is a sure path to holiness. When she became ill with tuberculosis at age 23, her activities became limited by the disease and so her prioress — who was also her blood sister Pauline — directed her to write about her childhood and about her life in the convent.

St. Thérèse sought holiness through her “little way” of fidelity to God in the small things of everyday life.

These writings became her autobiography, "The Story of a Soul." St. Thérèse sought holiness through her "little way" of fidelity to God in the small things of everyday life. She used to say that "Love is repaid by love alone." As such, she has become an inspiration for all of us.

Mother Teresa took St. Thérèse as her patron saint, and to this day our Missionaries of Charity find inspiration in her for their own "little way." Inspired by St. Thérèse, Mother Teresa would say that we might not be able to do great things, but we can do small things with great love.