

Relic will be displayed at special service to honour The Little Flower - Friday, 18 September 2009



The shrine to St Therese of Liseux has always held a special place in the hearts of parishioners of St Patrick's, Dumbarton.

For more than a century since the church first opened candles have burned constantly beside her statue for the intentions of parishioners who have prayed there.

Now a relic of the saint will be brought to the church for a special Mass there on Thursday 1st October at 7pm to celebrate the memory of St Therese, who is also known as The Little Flower.

St Patrick's parish priest, Canon Gerry Conroy, said: "We would like people from throughout the West of Scotland who have a special devotion to St Therese to join us on this occasion."

He said St Patrick's had obtained the relic through connections with the Carmelite order of nuns who have had a monastery at Garmoyle in Helenslea Road, Kirktonhill, Dumbarton, for the past 75 years. St Therese is the patron of the Carmelites.

Canon Conroy said the relic – a piece of the saint's bone – had been given to the convent by a Carmelite priest.

He added: "It is one of only two such relics in Scotland. The other is at Carfin in Lanarkshire.

"We have been given a long-term loan of it and it will be placed on display in the church for veneration at this special Mass."

Canon Conroy said that also in St Patrick's on Thursday October 1, which is the feast day of St Therese, there will be a blessing of roses before the main altar at the 10am Mass.

He added: "St Therese became known as The Little Flower because she loved nature, and often used the imagery of nature to explain how God is everywhere and how everything is connected in him.

"We have chosen her feast day to launch a new initiative in the parish in honour of St Therese.

"Households will be offered an opportunity to host a statue of St Therese together with the relic for a week and they will be asked to pray for vocations to Carmel as well as to the priesthood and religious life.

"In return the Carmelite nuns here in Dumbarton have undertaken to pray for the intentions of that household for the week.

"Various other items – books, DVDs and CDs about the saint's life - will also be included in the pack the household will receive to help them in their journey of faith."

Meanwhile, other relics of St Therese are currently being taken on a tour of churches in England and Wales. This tour is ongoing and will end on October 16.

To date the relics have visited nearly 40 countries around the world, including Brazil, Russia, Kazakhstan, the United States, Ireland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Lebanon and Iraq.

Wherever they have gone, many people have experienced conversion, healing, a renewed sense of vocation, and answers to their prayers, according to sources in the Catholic Church.