

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item F-7**  
**September 25, 2025**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Vince Lago**

**Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson**

**Commissioner Melissa Castro**

**Commissioner Ariel Fernandez**

**Commissioner Richard D. Lara**

**City Staff**

**City Attorney, Cristina Suárez**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**

**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Public Speaker(s)**

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Agenda Item F-7 [Start: 11:40 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission co-designating Indian Mound Trail as “St. Theresa’s Little Way” in honor of the Centennial Celebration of the Church of the Little Flower and St. Theresa Catholic School. (Sponsored by Commissioner Fernandez)

Mayor Lago: F-7.

Commissioner Fernandez: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Mr. Clerk, if you could play that introductory video that I sent you, please.

City Clerk Urquia: If cable TV could put the YouTube video to the Commission.

Commissioner Fernandez: With audio, please.

[Video Presentation]

She grew up in a Catholic family. Her four sisters would all enter religious life, and her parents would become the only married couple declared saints of the Catholic Church.

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Her four other siblings would die young, as did her mother, who died when Therese was only four. At the age of 14, she decided to request admission to the Carmel of Lisieux, a Carmelite monastery. Therese enlisted the help of her father, who called her his *petite fleur*, or little flower. The two met with the Father Superior, who would not allow her to enter on account of her age. Therese did not give up. She and Louis set off on a pilgrimage to Rome, where on November 20, 1887, she knelt before Pope Leo XIII and asked him to allow her to enter Carmel. His holiness replied, “Well, my child, do what the superiors decide. Therese insisted, and he replied, you will enter if it is God's will. By April 9, 1888, Therese had received the blessing of the Bishop and was admitted to Carmel as a postulant at the Carmel of Lisieux. Her life in the convent was hidden and simple, marked by love. Therese developed what she called her little way, a spirituality centered on doing small, everyday actions with great love and trust in God, rather than seeking grand deeds. She believed holiness was accessible to everyone through humility, simplicity, and childlike confidence in God's mercy. Therese endured great physical and spiritual trials during her short life, especially during her final battle with tuberculosis. Despite her suffering, she radiated joy and faith, famously writing, *my vocation is love*. Her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, written at the request of her superiors, has become a spiritual classic, inspiring countless people with its message of trust and love. Therese died September 30, 1897, and was canonized by Pope Pius XI on May 17, 1925. In 1997, Pope St. John Paul II declared her the fourth woman doctor of the Church, recognizing the depth of her teaching, despite her young age of 24. Today, she is one of the most beloved saints in the world, with more than 1,700 churches, chapels, cathedrals, and basilicas consecrated to her around the world. Therese reminds us that even the smallest act, when done with love, can transform hearts and build the kingdom of God. Right here in Coral Gables, in the spring of 1926, just a few months after Therese's canonization, the Church of the Little Flower was established by Bishop Patrick Berry of the Diocese of St. Augustine. The church was to be built adjacent to the newly opened school, St. Joseph's Academy, today known as St. Teresa Catholic School. The church, currently undergoing renovations, was completed in 1952, and is the religious home to over 3,000 families in our community. The school, operated by the Carmelite Sisters, has graduated thousands of students who have become active members of our community, including members of our city staff. Today, with the Commission's support, we will honor the legacy of St. Therese of Lisieux and the work of the parish and school in her name, by designating Indian Mound Trail between Palermo and Valencia as St. Teresa's Little Way. In time for the school's anniversary celebration in November, and the presence of the relics of St. Therese at the parish in December of this year.

[End Video Presentation]

Mayor Lago: Commissioner?

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Commissioner Fernandez: Thank you very much. So, I had a resident approach me, Jorge Santillanes, about the possibility of naming Indian Mound Trail in front of the school and the church as St. Therese's Little Way. So, I spoke with staff, and co-designation is the best way to do it. Really, the only tenants of that block are the church, and there's one resident at the end of the block who are parishioners at the church as well. And I think this is a way to honor the legacy that the Carmelite Sisters, St. Teresa, the Church of the Little Flower, have had in our community here in Coral Gables. I think George Merrick had a great vision for our city. Part of that vision includes bringing in different faiths and denominations into this city and ensuring that residents had access to their religion and their faith in the City of Coral Gables. And this was the first Catholic parish in the City of Coral Gables. I was talking earlier about David Lawrence and bringing it back to reading. One of the books that I read this summer was the autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux. And if you have not had the opportunity to read it, regardless of your faith, you should pick this book up. It is an incredible read. She was 23 and 24 years old when she was writing this book. And the Catholic Church in nearly 2,000 years has only had 38 doctors of the church declared. St. Therese was one of them. This 24-year-old became one of the doctors of the Catholic Church because of what she wrote for this book. And she never expected this to be published. In fact, she always said, if it is published, make sure it's after my lifetime. Because she did not want the recognition. One of the sisters who was in the Carmel with her often said, such a religious person, and nobody will ever know anything about her because she lived in a monastery. How things have a way of working themselves out. And today, over 1,700, I tried to figure out which order Coral Gables Church of the Little Flower was, since it was dedicated so shortly after St. Therese's canonization. We were way down the list. There were a lot of people who really had a connection just a short 37, 38 years after her passing, that many churches were dedicated in her honor. And we've seen, just recently, the canonization of Carlo Acutis, a 15-year-old in the Catholic Church, very similar to the faith of St. Therese. St. Therese has touched the lives, hopefully of the 14th, has mentioned St. Therese. Fulton Sheen wrote a book about St. Therese. It's incredible what this one little nun, who had a very strong faith in God, was able to do for the faith of so many people around the world, and she still does so today. She said that she would spend her days in heaven working for the souls on earth. And it's an incredible life. I wanted to put this on here. I would like for us to move forward on this. I think it's an opportunity that we have to honor St. Therese and, again, like I said, an incredible parish, which has a large number of our residents being a part of the parish, and many more who have been a part of the school. Imelys is here from the Clerk's office. She is one of the alums of St. Theresa, and I'm open for discussion from the rest of my colleagues.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Mr. Clerk, do you have any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: No, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: I will close the public comment. Anyone on the Commission would like to add anything?

Commissioner Castro: If you move it, I'll second.

Mayor Lago: Anything else from the Commission?

Commissioner Lara: I think that was great, Commissioner Fernandez. I think we all have a deep connection one way or another, some deeper than others, to the church, St. Theresa and Little Flower. And it is a jewel of the city. It's a part of the city's history. And on a personal note, I was married to the church of Little Flower. And I think a lot of people can recount the benefits and the blessings that fall upon us all for having that in the city. And I think that your resolution seems quite appropriate to me. And I think that the residents will be very, very happy as well with this recognition.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Just a brief comment that I think this is a wonderful way to not only recognize the person she was, but also what she stood for. And it's a good, appropriate day to do that. And dedicating that section will help remind people and look up what the story was. And hopefully they'll pick up the book and they'll learn a lot more and try to emulate that behavior. So, thank you.

Mayor Lago: I'm 100 percent behind it.

Commissioner Fernandez: And today's actually the feast day of her parents, Saints Zelig and Louie. So, with that, I'll make a motion.

Commissioner Castro: And I moved it.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, do you have a motion and a second?

Commissioner Lara: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

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(Vote: 5-0)