

THE LITTLE FLOWER PRAYER BOOK

Discover the beauty of St. Therese's journey through faith, where her unwavering trust led her to God's comforting embrace, guiding souls through their darkest hours.

BROTHER PATRICK

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THE LITTLE ST. THERESE OF THE CHILD JESUS AND THE HOLY FACE PRAYER BOOK

Imagine a holy Saint specifically for ordinary individuals—those who yearn for a deeper connection with Jesus and those who grapple with the challenges of living a holy life. This Saint endured profound torments, both of the body and the soul, faced uncertainty regarding her vocation, and exhibited remarkable strength during her early conversion. Her story is remarkable, resonating deeply with the struggles and aspirations of everyday people seeking holiness.

HERE IS AN EXCERPT FROM HER STORY . . .

In the early summer of 1887, a criminal, Henri Pranzini, was convicted of the murder of two women and a child. He was sentenced to the guillotine. The convicted man, according to police reports, showed no inclination to repent. Therese immediately stormed Heaven for Pranzini's conversion. She prayed for weeks and had Mass offered for him. There was still no change in the attitude of the condemned man.

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HER PARENTS – THE MARTINS

Louis Martin and Zelie Guerin first crossed paths in Alencon, and on July 13, 1858, they embarked on their extraordinary journey together by marrying. At the time of their union, Louis was 34 years old, while Zelie was 26. Over the next fifteen years, Zelie would give birth to nine children, comprising seven girls and two boys. Reflecting on their life, Zelie expressed, "We lived only for them; they were all our happiness," capturing the essence of their parental devotion.

However, the Martins' joy would soon turn to grief as tragedy struck their family relentlessly. Within a mere three years, they lost two infant sons, a five-year-old daughter, and a six-and-a-half-week-old baby girl. These losses brought overwhelming shock and sorrow to the family, leaving them to grapple with their profound grief.

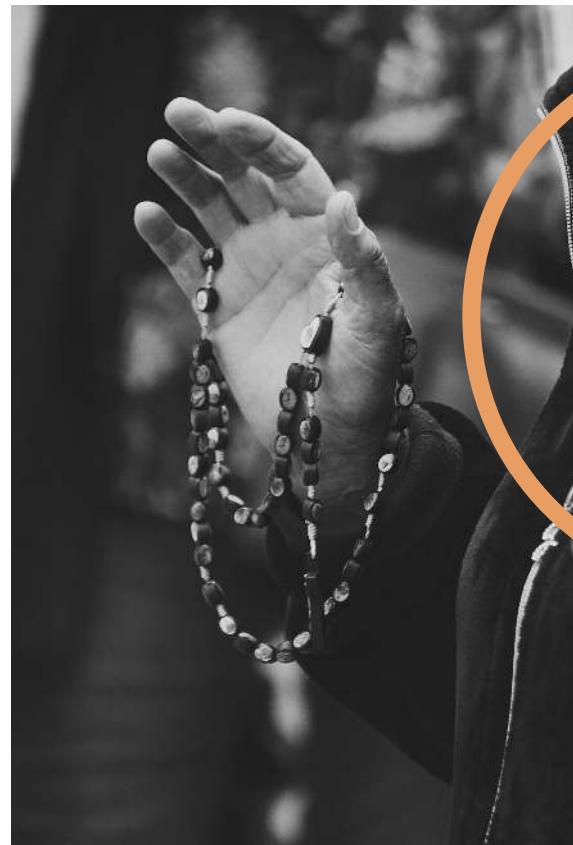
Zelie was engulfed in a numbing sadness, lamenting, "I haven't a penny's worth of courage." Yet, despite the weight of her sorrow, her unwavering faith became a source of strength, helping her endure these harrowing experiences. Through her trials, she found solace that transcended her pain.

In a poignant letter addressed to her sister-in-law, who had also suffered the loss of a child, Zelie shared her heartache: "When I closed the eyes of my dear little children and buried them, I felt sorrow through and through...People said to me, 'It would have been better never to have had them.' I couldn't stand such language. My children were not lost forever; life is short and full of miseries, and we shall find our little ones again up above." This letter underscores the depth of her faith and hope amid unbearable loss.

The Martins welcomed their last child on January 2, 1873. Born weak and frail, doctors feared for the infant's survival, and the family braced themselves for yet another heart-wrenching blow. Zelie recorded the struggle of her three-month-old daughter, stating, "I have no hope of saving her. The poor little thing suffers horribly....It breaks your heart to see her."

To everyone's surprise, the baby girl displayed an unexpected tenacity. She not only survived but thrived, growing into a vibrant "big baby, browned by the sun" within a year. Zelie joyfully noted, "The baby is full of life, giggles a lot, and is sheer joy to everyone," marking a turning point for the family.

The specter of death had seemingly receded from the Martin household. Although the shadows of suffering lingered in the hearts of Louis and Zelie, they chose not to let bitterness take root. Their faith provided them with comfort and support during the most tumultuous times, allowing them to embrace life anew.



The series of tragedies they faced only deepened the love Louis and Zelie Martin had for one another. They poured their affection into their five surviving daughters: Marie, 12; Pauline, 11; Leonie, 9; Celine, 3; and their newborn. They named their new daughter Marie-Francoise-Therese Martin, a name that would become synonymous with holiness.

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A century later, the world would come to know her as Saint Therese, affectionately referred to as the "Little Flower," a testament to her gentle spirit and profound impact.



Marie-Francoise-Therese Martin entered the world on January 2, 1873, and was baptized just two days later on January 4th. Reflecting on her early years, she later remarked, "All my life, God surrounded me with love. My first memories are imprinted with the most tender smiles and caresses...Those were the sunny years of my childhood." This vivid recollection highlights the warmth and nurturing environment she experienced in her home in Alencon, France. Therese's joyful disposition contributed significantly to her overall happiness during these formative years.

THE BABY OF THE FAMILY

The Martin household was a lively and affectionate place, filled with the sounds of laughter and love. Louis Martin affectionately assigned nicknames to each of his daughters, cultivating a sense of individuality and bond among them. Zelie, in her letters, frequently communicated to her relatives about the joys and unique personalities of each child. Therese, being the youngest, quickly became the favorite of everyone, especially her mother.



Little Therese, with her blond hair and blue eyes, was a bundle of affection, stubbornness, and remarkable precocity. She had a tendency to throw dramatic tantrums, yet her laughter had the power to brighten even the darkest corners of the room. Zelie noted in a letter to her daughter Pauline, "She (Therese) flies into frightful tantrums; when things don't go just right and according to her way of thinking, she rolls on the floor in desperation like one without any hope."

Throughout all of her antics, Therese thrived on the abundant love that surrounded her in her Christian home. It was within these walls, where prayer, liturgy, and acts of kindness formed the foundation of her ardent love for Jesus, that her desire to please Him and the Virgin Mary took root, shaping her spiritual journey.

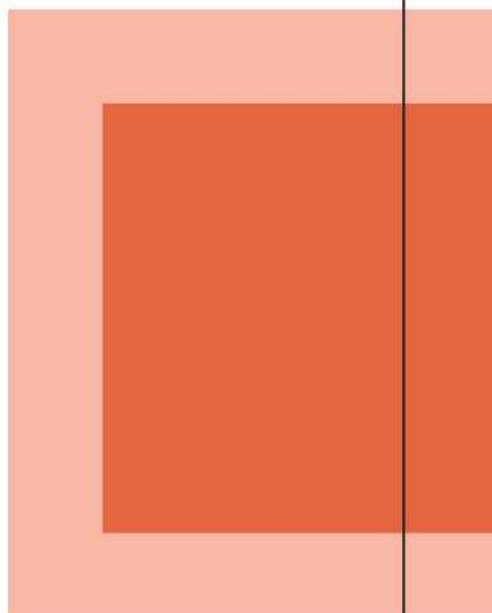
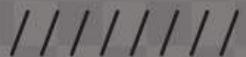


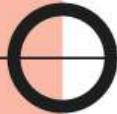
"I CHOOSE ALL"

At the tender age of twelve, Therese's sister Leonie decided she no longer needed her doll dressmaking kit. She stuffed a basket full of materials intended for creating new dresses and offered it to her younger sisters, Celine and Therese. "Choose what you wish, little sisters," Leonie invited. Celine eagerly picked a small ball of wool that delighted her, while Therese, without hesitation, declared, "I choose all." This moment beautifully encapsulated Therese's approach to life—she was not one for half-measures; for her, it was always all or nothing.

On Sundays, Louis and Zelie Martin would take their daughters for walks, exploring the breathtaking countryside surrounding Alencon. Therese relished these outings, finding joy in the wide open spaces and the beauty of nature. Often, however, these walks would tire her out, necessitating her father to carry her home in his arms, a testament to their close bond.

Unfortunately, these cherished family moments would soon be overshadowed by sorrow. The shadow of death, which had previously cast its pall over the Martin household, returned with a vengeance when Therese's mother, Zelie, succumbed to breast cancer after enduring twelve years of illness in August 1877. At that time, Therese was only four years old, and the loss would profoundly impact her formative years.

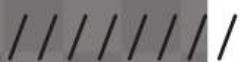




THE WINTER OF GREAT TRIAL

Following his wife's passing, Louis Martin relocated his family of five daughters, aged four to seventeen, to Lisieux. He rented a home and named it "Les Buissonnets," meaning "The Hedges." This marked the beginning of what Therese described as "the second" and "most painful" period of her life. The shock of her mother's death had a profound effect on her demeanor; "my happy disposition completely changed," she recalled. "I became timid and retiring, sensitive to an excessive degree...."

In this challenging time, Louis and his daughters did everything they could to support Therese, who was deeply mourning her mother. They showered her with affection and attention, striving to comfort her in her grief. At Les Buissonnets, under the guidance of her sisters Marie and Pauline, Therese began her early education, finding solace in their care.



After classes each day, Therese would join her father in his study, where Louis affectionately referred to her as his "little queen." Their bond grew stronger through shared moments, which often included daily walks to different churches where they would pray before the Blessed Sacrament. Therese later expressed her gratitude for the tenderness her father showered upon her, marveling at the depth of their connection.

Therese's reflections on her life revealed a recurring theme of exile, which would dominate her existence. She recalled that the first word she learned to read was "heaven," illustrating her early awareness of a greater reality beyond this life. From childhood, she regarded her world as merely an introduction to a more glorious future yet to come.

Sundays held a special significance for Therese, marking days of rest that were often tinged with melancholy due to their inevitable conclusion. It was during one of these Sunday evenings that she felt the intense longing for the eternal rest of heaven, describing it as "that never-ending Sunday of the fatherland..." Her reflections on such days reveal the depth of her spiritual yearning.

Despite the comfort surrounding her, Therese still experienced intense emotional outbursts. She recounted one of her more notorious tantrums involving her nurse, Victoire: "I wanted an inkstand which was on the shelf of the fireplace in the kitchen; being too little to take it down, I very nicely asked Victoire to give it to me. But she refused, telling me to get up on a chair." This incident highlighted her spirited nature and her propensity for dramatic expressions of frustration.

Therese's dignity shone through even in her childhood rebellions. Before jumping off the chair, she turned to Victoire and declared, "Victoire, you are a brat!" before making her escape, leaving Victoire to ponder the weight of her words. This humorous episode serves as a glimpse into Therese's innocent yet fierce personality.

HER SCHOOL YEARS

In October 1881, Louis enrolled Therese as a day boarder at the Benedictine Abbey school of Notre-Dame du Pre in Lisieux. Unfortunately, she despised the place and later recounted that "the five years (1881 – 1886) I spent there were the saddest of my life." The rigid structure of the school and the lack of engaging instruction contributed to her unhappiness.

Classes often bored her, despite the effort she put into her studies. Although she found joy in catechism, history, and science, she struggled with spelling and mathematics. Recognizing her overall intelligence, the nuns advanced her from classes for eight-year-olds to those for fourteen-year-olds; however, this only increased her feelings of boredom. Her keen intellect, while a blessing, also sparked envy among her peers, leading to challenges in her social interactions.

The burden of genius often comes with a price, and young Therese was no exception. She found herself distanced from the ordinary games and dances enjoyed by her peers, feeling uncomfortable around most children. Her greatest comfort lay in her relationships with her sisters, particularly Pauline, who was her closest companion.

LOSS OF A SECOND MOTHER

Therese viewed Pauline as her second mother and cherished their bond. However, one day, Pauline delivered the heartbreak news that she would be entering the convent at the Carmelite Monastery in Lisieux. Therese, at just nine years old, was stunned by the revelation.

AWAKENING TO REALITY

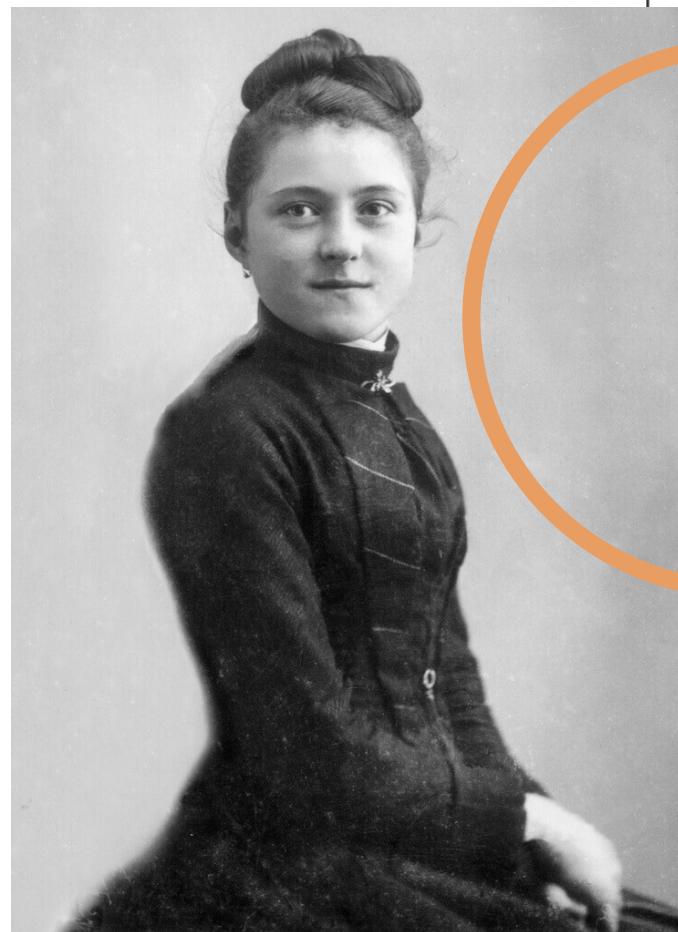


OFF TO SCHOOL

This departure plunged Therese into a profound sorrow as she realized she was about to lose her second mother. In her anguish, she reflected, "...I was about to lose my second mother. Ah, how can I express the anguish of my heart! In one instant I understood what life was; until then I had never seen it so sad, but it appeared to me in all its reality and I saw it was nothing but a continual suffering and separation. I shed bitter tears..."

ILLNESS AND STRUGGLE

In the winter following Pauline's entrance into the Carmelite monastery, Therese fell gravely ill. Medical experts struggled to diagnose her condition, labeling it everything from a nervous breakdown to a kidney infection. During this period, Therese attributed her suffering to demonic influence, a belief that reflects her intense spiritual outlook. The medical practitioners of her time were unable to provide effective treatment for her malady.



PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL PAIN

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Her suffering was compounded by constant headaches and insomnia, which wreaked havoc on her young body. As her illness progressed, Therese endured severe episodes of fever, trembling, and even cruel hallucinations. In one harrowing account of her delirium, she described being "absolutely terrified by everything," feeling as though her bed was surrounded by terrifying precipices.



Despite numerous treatments, nothing seemed to alleviate her suffering. Then, on May 13, 1883, in a moment of desperation, Therese turned her gaze toward a statue of the Virgin Mary positioned near her bed and prayed for a cure. In that instant, she experienced a profound sense of peace and love emanating from Mary, which she later characterized as "radiating kindness and love." Remarkably, Therese was healed, and this statue would come to be known as "Our Lady of the Smile."

Shortly after Pauline's departure, Therese resolved to join her at the Carmelite Convent in Lisieux. She approached the prioress with her request, articulating her desire to enter not for Pauline's sake but for Jesus' sake. However, the prioress advised her to return when she was older, as Therese was only nine at the time.



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DIVINE INTERVENTION

Through her prolonged illness, her resolve to join the Carmelites only intensified. "I am convinced that the thought of one day becoming a Carmelite made me live," she later reflected. Following her recovery, Therese became even more determined to make a significant impact for God and others. She envisioned herself as a new Joan of Arc, intent on rescuing not only France but the entire world.

With remarkable boldness, the ten-year-old declared, "I was born for glory." This statement encapsulated another vital theme of Therese's life: she perceived her mission as one of salvation for all people. She believed she could achieve this by becoming a saint, understanding that her glory would remain hidden until God chose to reveal it.



At the age of ten, Therese reaffirmed and clarified her life's ambitions. She possessed the wisdom to recognize that she could not fulfill them without enduring suffering. What she did not fully grasp at that young age was the extent of trials she would have to face to attain the glory she sought.

THE PRICE

The years ahead would be marked by "spiritual torment," a struggle that would ease only when she began preparing for her long-anticipated First Communion. On May 8, 1884, at the age of eleven, Therese received her first "kiss of love," a profound sense of connection with Jesus, feeling His presence as He gave Himself to her in return.

Her deep longing for daily communion led to an intense desire for spiritual nourishment. The sacrament of Confirmation, which she received on June 14, 1884, filled Therese with ecstasy, as it was known as "the sacrament of Love." However, shortly thereafter, the young Martin girl experienced a particularly harsh bout of scruples that persisted for seventeen months, leaving her in a constant state of fear regarding sin and plagued by disturbing thoughts that disrupted her peace.

The emotional turmoil she faced resulted in frequent tears and headaches. In response to her struggles, her father decided to withdraw her from the Abbey school and arranged for private tutoring. During this time, her sister Marie became a vital support, helping Therese to navigate her fears. Yet, Marie, too, would eventually enter the Lisieux Carmel on October 15, 1886, marking a significant loss for Therese, who now felt she had lost her "third" mother.

On Christmas night in 1886, following Midnight Mass, a profound shift occurred when the shadow of self-doubt, depression, and uncertainty lifted from Therese. In that moment, she experienced a newfound calmness and inner conviction that transformed her life. As she ascended the stairs at home, something her father said sparked this change, and she felt the Holy Child's strength replace her weakness. After ten long years of struggle, her tears ceased, and she entered what she would call the "most beautiful" period of her life.

Freed from her previous struggles, Therese embarked on her "Giant's Race," consumed by a thirst for souls akin to that of Jesus. She expressed, "My heart was filled with charity. I forgot myself to please others and, in doing so, became happy myself." This period marked a significant transformation in her character and her approach to life, as she dedicated herself to serving others and nurturing her spiritual growth.

At last, Therese Martin could pursue her heartfelt aspiration of entering the Carmelite order as soon as possible, seeking to devote her life to loving Jesus and interceding for sinners. During Mass in the summer of 1887, she experienced a profound moment of grace, which left her with a powerful vision. In this vision, she saw herself standing at the foot of the Cross, collecting the precious blood of Jesus to share with souls in need. Deeply convinced that her fervent prayers and personal sacrifices could lead others to Christ, she boldly approached Jesus, asking for a sign to confirm her path. To her delight and amazement, He responded affirmatively.

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HER LIFE AT LISIEUX CARMEL

Marie Martin, the eldest daughter of the Martin family, took a significant step by joining her sister Pauline at the Lisieux Carmel in 1886. Following Marie's lead, Leonie Martin entered the Visitation Convent at Caen the very next year. Inspired by her sisters' choices, Therese sought her father's permission to join them at the Lisieux Convent. Although Louis Martin likely anticipated this request, it still brought him a sense of sadness, knowing that three of his daughters were choosing the path of religious life. Nevertheless, true to his generous nature, he not only granted Therese permission but also dedicated himself to assisting her in realizing this cherished dream.

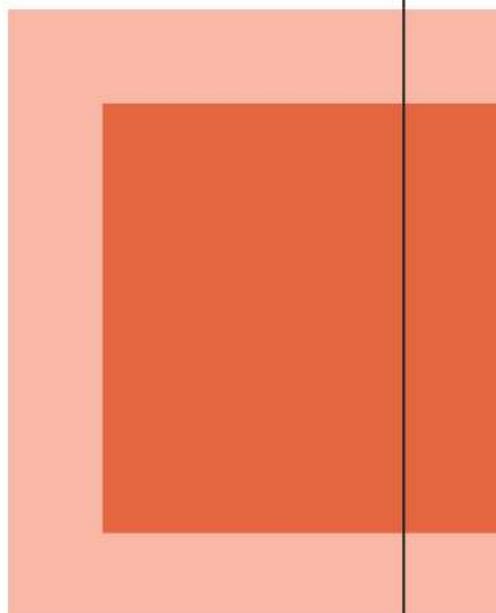
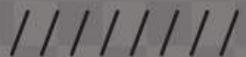


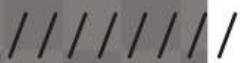
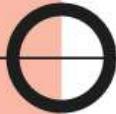
THERESE'S DETERMINATION

At the tender age of fourteen, Therese made another attempt to gain permission to enter the Carmelite order. Unfortunately, her request was met with refusal once again. The priest-director suggested that she return when she turned twenty-one. He added, almost dismissively, that she could always appeal to the bishop, as he was merely acting as his delegate at that moment. What this priest did not grasp was the level of determination and resolve that characterized Therese.

Bishop Hugonin of Bayeux would always remember the day she arrived at his office with her father on a rainy afternoon to present her surprising request. "You are not yet fifteen, and you wish this?" the bishop asked incredulously. With unwavering confidence, young Therese replied, "I have wished for this since the dawn of reason."

The bishop was taken aback by the level of support Therese received from her father. He had never witnessed such eagerness from a parent to surrender their child to God's service. "A father as eager to give his child to God," he noted, "as this child is eager to offer herself to him."





In a clever attempt to appear older, Therese had neatly arranged her hair before the meeting, an action that amused the bishop. Even in later years, he recounted this charming detail whenever he spoke of her, highlighting her youthful ingenuity.

Despite his fondness for Therese, Bishop Hugonin did not grant her request on the spot. He expressed a desire to consider the matter further and promised to communicate his decision in due time to Therese and her father.

Therese had a contingency plan in case her meeting with the bishop did not yield the desired outcome; she intended to take her plea directly to the Pope. Thus, in November 1887, Louis took his daughters, Therese and Celine, on a pilgrimage to Italy, joining a group of French Catholics traveling to the Eternal City to celebrate Pope Leo XIII's Golden Jubilee.

In her autobiography, Therese vividly described her enchanting journey through Southern Europe. Upon reaching Rome, she found herself captivated by the grandeur of the Coliseum, where the rich history of Christian martyrdom resonated deeply within her spirit.

While inside the Coliseum, Therese and her sister audaciously disregarded the rules prohibiting visitors from descending to the arena floor. They stealthily slipped away from their tour group, climbed over barriers, and knelt to pray on the historic ground. In a moment of reverence, they collected a few stones as relics before rejoining the group, unnoticed by all except their father.

The long-awaited audience with Pope Leo XIII arrived at the end of their week in Rome. On Sunday, November 20, 1887, they were informed that speaking during the audience was not permitted, as it would prolong the event unnecessarily. Seeking guidance, Therese turned to her beloved sister Celine, who encouraged her to speak up. Moments later, Therese found herself at the feet of the Holy Father, her eyes brimming with tears as she exclaimed, "Most Holy Father, I have a great favor to ask you!...Holy Father, in honor of your jubilee, permit me to enter Carmel at the age of fifteen."

Father Reverony, the pilgrimage leader, was taken aback by Therese's boldness, responding with a cold demeanor, "Most Holy Father, this is a child who wishes to enter Carmel at the age of fifteen. The superiors are currently deliberating the matter."

"Well, my child," the Holy Father replied kindly, "do what the superiors tell you." Undeterred, Therese rested her hands on his knees and made one final plea: "Oh, Holy Father, if you say yes, everybody will agree!" The Pope looked intently into her eyes and responded emphatically, "Go – go – you will enter if God wills it."

Reluctant to leave the presence of the Holy Father, the papal guards had to gently lift Therese and escort the tearful young girl to the door. As a parting gift, they presented her with a medal of Leo XIII. Her old nurse, Victoire, could have attested to the Pope's surprise, having witnessed Therese's tenacity on several occasions.



On New Year's Day, 1888, the prioress of the Lisieux Carmel informed Therese that she would soon be welcomed into the monastery, but asked her to exercise a bit more patience. On April 9, 1888, an emotional and tearful Therese Martin bid farewell to her family and home. She was determined to live "forever and ever" in the spiritual desert with Jesus and her fellow enclosed companions, having just turned fifteen years and three months old.

Yet, a shadow loomed over her joyous entry into Carmel—the deteriorating health of her father, Louis, who had developed cerebral arteriosclerosis. Celine chose to remain at home to care for their father during his prolonged and difficult illness, as his condition was becoming increasingly severe.

Once, in June of 1888, Louis ventured out from their home in Lisieux and became lost for three long days, eventually reappearing in Le Havre. Tragically, in August, after suffering a series of strokes, he became paralyzed.

Years earlier, when Therese was just a child, she often gazed out from an attic window, reveling in the beauty of the day. On one particular day, while her father was away on business in Alencon, she caught sight of a frail, stooped figure in the garden below.

Panic-stricken, she cried out, "Papa, Papa!" Marie, her sister, quickly heard the unmistakable alarm in Therese's voice and rushed to her side, but the mysterious figure had vanished. Marie reassured her that it was nothing to worry about and urged her to forget the incident.

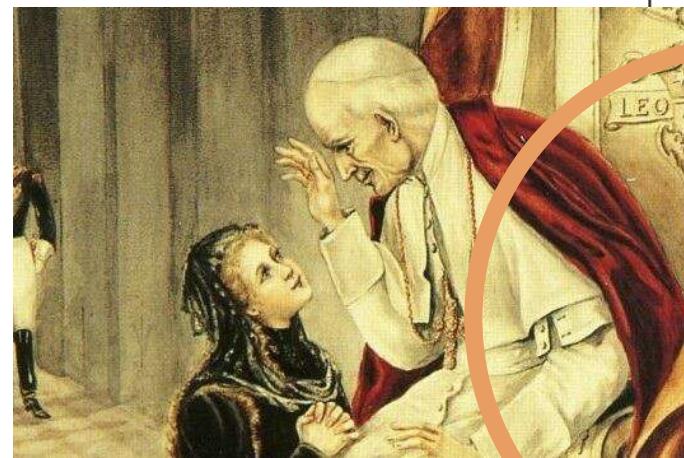
This haunting vision lingered in Therese's mind for the next fourteen years, and with her father now paralyzed, its meaning became clear at last.

Despite his declining health, Louis mustered enough strength to attend the ceremony of Therese's clothing in the Carmelite habit on January 10, 1889. However, shortly thereafter, on February 12, he was admitted to the hospital due to an episode of dementia.

Witnessing her father's humiliation caused Therese immense pain. "Oh, I do not think I could have suffered more than I did on that day!" she lamented. This experience deepened her understanding of the sufferings endured by Christ, the prophesied Suffering Servant.

Louis made one last visit to the Carmel in May 1892, before passing away peacefully two years later in 1894, with Celine by his side. Following his death, Celine joined her three sisters at the Carmel in September 1894.

Therese spent the last nine years of her life within the walls of the Lisieux Carmel. Though her fellow Sisters recognized her as a diligent nun, she was regarded as nothing more than that. She diligently attended to her responsibilities in the sacristy, kept the dining room clean, painted pictures, composed short plays for the community, and engaged fully in the rich communal prayer life of the cloister. Her superiors entrusted her with the task of instructing the novices, yet externally, there was nothing particularly remarkable about this Carmelite nun.



Therese was profoundly influenced by the spiritual atmosphere of the community, which still bore the marks of Jansenism and the prevailing fear of an avenging God. Many of the sisters struggled with scruples and an overwhelming fear of divine justice. Even after confessing her sins to Father Pichon, her Jesuit spiritual director, in May 1888, Therese continued to grapple with feelings of unease.

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However, a sense of peace washed over her when she made her profession on September 8, 1890. It was during the reading of St. John of the Cross—an unconventional choice for the time—that she found relief. Through the "Spiritual Canticle" and the "Living Flame of Love," she discovered "the true Saint of Love," which she felt was the path she was meant to follow.



During a community retreat in October 1891, a Franciscan priest, Father Alexis Prou, inspired her to embrace the "waves of confidence and love," a journey she had previously hesitated to undertake.

The harsh winter of 1890-1891 brought with it a severe influenza epidemic that claimed the lives of three sisters, including Mother Genevieve, the founding mother of the Lisieux Carmel and a revered figure in the community. Remarkably, Therese was spared, and during this time, her true energy and strength began to reveal themselves. Her joy was palpable when her sister, Agnes of Jesus (Pauline), was elected prioress in February 1893, succeeding Mother Marie de Gonzague.



Pauline encouraged Therese to compose verses and create theatrical performances for liturgical and community events. Among her works were two plays about Saint Joan of Arc, whom she held dear, which she performed with great enthusiasm and conviction. The arrival of Celine at Lisieux Carmel in September 1894, equipped with her camera, added to their joy by allowing them to document their recreation periods and preserve Therese's image for posterity.



THERESE DEVELOPS HER “LITTLE WAY”

Therese was acutely aware of her own littleness and limitations. “It is impossible for me to grow up, so I must accept myself as I am, with all my imperfections,” she reflected. Yet, she yearned to discover a path to heaven that was simple, direct, and entirely new. She envisioned an elevator in the home of a wealthy individual, representing a means to reach her ultimate goal.

She articulated her desire to find an “elevator” that would elevate her to Jesus, as she felt too small to ascend the arduous stairway to perfection. In her quest, she turned to the Scriptures, seeking a sign of this “elevator” she longed for. There, she discovered the words of Eternal Wisdom: “Whoever is a little one, let him come to me.” She realized that the elevator to heaven was the loving arms of Jesus, and she understood that she did not need to grow up; instead, she needed to remain little and strive to become even smaller.

Therese wholeheartedly surrendered her life to Jesus, believing that He did not require grand gestures from her. Despite her feelings of inadequacy when it came to even the smallest acts of charity, she placed her trust in Christ, hoping He would work through her. In this way, she echoed the words of St. Paul: “I can do all things in him who strengthens me.” For Therese, “all things” encompassed the daily challenges and tasks that came her way.

Life in the Carmel was not without its challenges, including the inevitable conflicts that arose in communal living, the cold environment, the adjustment to a new diet, and the difficulties associated with prayer—two hours dedicated to personal prayer and four and a half hours of communal liturgy. One day, while washing handkerchiefs alongside a group of Sisters, Therese found herself splashed repeatedly with hot, dirty water by one of the Sisters, a situation that tested her patience.

Remembering her notorious temper, Therese felt the urge to react strongly, but she chose to say nothing. Instead, she turned to Christ for strength, accepting this lack of consideration from her fellow Sister, and ultimately discovered a sense of peace amidst the annoyance.

In the routine of convent life, Therese felt compelled to assist Sister St. Pierre, an elderly nun who was determined not to let her age hinder her involvement in convent activities. Therese offered her help as they walked down the corridors together.

"You move too fast," Sister St. Pierre complained, prompting Therese to slow down. "Well, come on," Sister urged, "I don't feel your hand. You've let go of me, and I'm going to fall." In a final judgment, Sister St. Pierre declared, "I was right when I said you were too young to help me." Therese accepted this criticism with grace and managed to smile, embodying her "little way."

Another source of irritation arose from a nun's peculiar clacking noises during chapel. While Therese refrained from voicing her thoughts, she suspected that the noise was caused either by the nun toying with her rosary or perhaps by ill-fitting dentures.

The incessant clacking grated on Therese's nerves, causing her frustration to boil over. Despite her attempts to block out the sound, she was unsuccessful. In a moment of creative inspiration, she decided to transform this annoyance into a prayer, offering the clacking as a form of worship to Jesus. "I assure you," she dryly noted, "that was no prayer of Quiet."

Therese, known as a great mystic, often found herself falling asleep during prayer, which embarrassed her. She felt guilty for not staying awake during her hours of prayer with the religious community. Ultimately, she made a charming observation regarding her "little way," noting that just as parents love their children whether they are awake or asleep, so too did God love her, even when she dozed off during prayer.

3

HER ILLNESS, DEATH, AND SAINTHOOD

IN THE INFIRMARY

In April 1896, St. Therese began to show the first signs of tuberculosis, the illness that would eventually claim her life. By the following April, her condition had deteriorated significantly, leading to her confinement in the infirmary at the Carmel. At the request of her Prioress, Mother Marie de Gonzague, Therese devoted her time to writing her life story, a manuscript that would later become part of her celebrated work, "Story of a Soul."

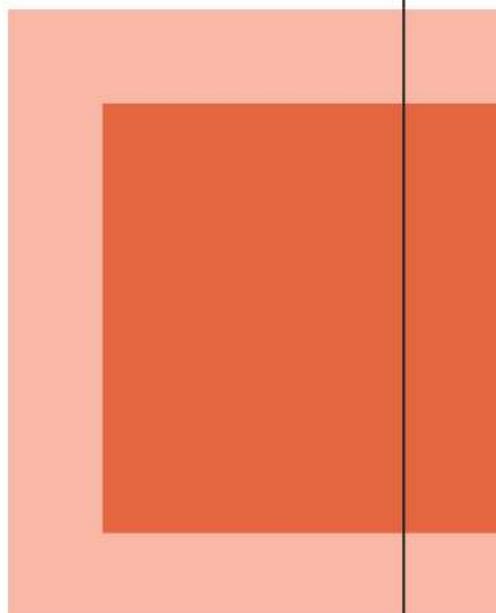
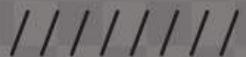


DEATH AND SAINTHOOD

As the summer of 1897 progressed, it became increasingly clear that Therese would not recover from her illness. In July, she received the sacrament of Extreme Unction, acknowledging the gravity of her condition. Therese passed away peacefully at 7:20 PM on September 30, 1897, at the young age of 24. She departed this world with the firm belief that her true life was just beginning in the presence of God, vowing to devote her time in heaven to doing good on earth. Her final words resonated with love: "Oh, my God, I love you!"

Within months of her passing, the Carmelites at Lisieux began to receive numerous reports of "favors and graces" attributed to Therese's intercession. Her autobiography, "Story of a Soul," was published in October 1898, which drew pilgrims from all over to visit her gravesite at the Carmel.

The movement for her beatification and canonization gained momentum at the start of the twentieth century, with thousands of letters pouring into the Carmel monastery in Lisieux. Ultimately, her canonization took place on May 17, 1925, at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, where a staggering crowd of 500,000 people gathered in St. Peter's Square to celebrate this momentous occasion.



In 1997, St. Therese was honored with the title of Doctor of the Church by Pope John Paul II, making her the second Carmelite nun to receive this distinguished recognition, following St. Teresa of Avila. The Pope remarked:

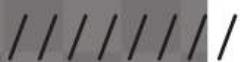
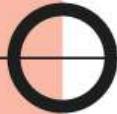
"Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face is the youngest of all the 'Doctors of the Church,' yet her passionate spiritual journey exhibits remarkable maturity. The insights of faith expressed in her writings are vast and profound, deserving of a place among the great spiritual masters."

From the moment of her death, St. Therese's promised "Shower of Roses" began, and it has since transformed into a continuous torrent of blessings within the Church.



4

IMPORTANT DATES IN ST. THERESE'S LIFE



January 2, 1873 – St. Therese's
Birthday

January 4, 1873 – Baptism

August 28, 1877 – Death of her Mother,
Zelie Guerin

October 2, 1882 – Pauline, her sister,
enters Carmel

May 13, 1883 – Our Lady's Smile;
Therese Healing

May 8, 1884 – First Communion

June 14, 1884 – Confirmation

December 25, 1886 – Christmas
Conversion

November 20, 1887 – Audience with
Pope Leo XIII

April 9, 1888 – Entry into Carmel

January 10, 1889 – Therese takes the
habit

September 8, 1890 – Profession of
Vows

July 29, 1894 – Death of her Father,
Louis Martin

5

THE PRAYER OF ST THERESE OF THE CHILD JESUS

O Jesus, I know well that You do not look so much at the greatness of my actions, as to the love with which I do them. It is true I am not always faithful, but I shall not lose courage. I desire to make use of every opportunity to please You.

O my God! I ask You for myself and for those whom I hold dear the grace to fulfill perfectly Your holy will, to accept for love of You the joys and sorrows of this passing life, so that we may one day be united together in heaven for all eternity.

O my God, You see how easily I lose heart at the thought of my imperfections. Nevertheless, I shall continue to strive after virtue. Gladly will I forego all consolation in order to offer to You the "fruit" of all my efforts. I wish to make profit out of the smallest actions and do them all for love.

Eternal Father, since You have given me for my inheritance the Adorable Face of Your Divine Son, I offer it to You and I ask You, in exchange for this infinitely precious Coin, to forget the ingratitude of souls who are consecrated to You and to pardon poor sinners.

O Jesus, my whole strength lies in prayer and sacrifice; these are my invincible weapons, and experience has taught me that the heart is won by them rather than by words.

Yes, O my God, I am happy to feel little and weak in Your Presence, and my heart remains in peace...I am so glad to feel so imperfect and to need Your mercy so much! When we calmly accept the humiliation of being imperfect, Your grace, O Lord, returns at once.

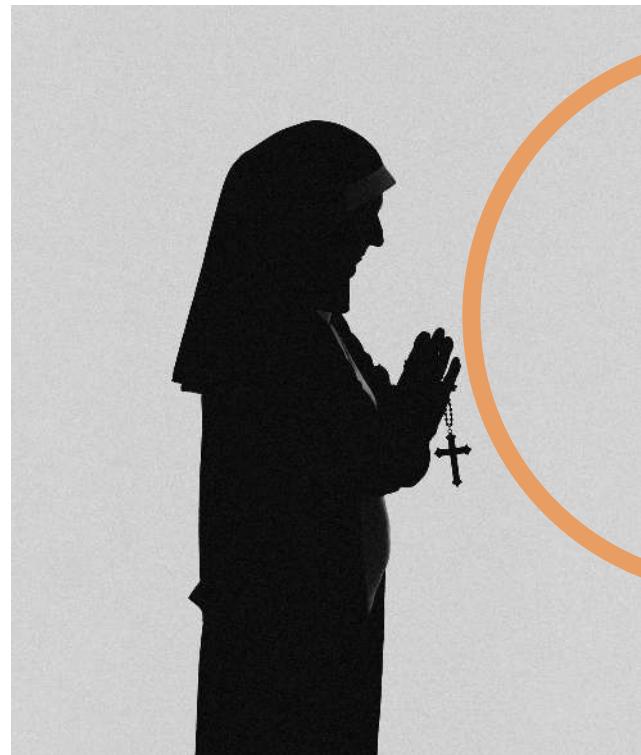
O Jesus, You offer me a cup so bitter that my feeble nature cannot bear it. But I do not want to draw back my lips from the cup Your hand has prepared. ...You teach me the secret of suffering in peace. The word peace does not mean joy, at least felt joy; to suffer in peace, it is enough to will whatever You will. To be Your spouse, Jesus, one must be like You, and You are all bloody, crowned with thorns!

How consoling it is to remember that You, the God of might, knew our weaknesses, that You shuddered at the sight of the bitter cup, the cup the earlier You had so ardently desired to drink.

O Lord, to me You have granted Your infinite mercy; and through it, I contemplate and adore Your other divine perfections! All of these perfections appear to be resplendent with love, even Your justice—and perhaps this even more so than the others—seems to me clothed in love. What a sweet joy to think of You, O God, are just, that is, that You take into account our weakness, that You are perfectly aware of our fragile nature.

What should I fear then? Must not You, the infinitely just God who deigned to pardon the faults of the prodigal son with so much kindness, be just also to me who am with You always?

I know one must be most pure to appear before You, God of all holiness, but I know too that You are infinitely just; and it is this justice, which frightens many souls, that is the basis of my joy and trust. To be just means not only to exercise severity in punishing the guilty but also to recognize right intentions and to reward virtue. I hope as much from Your justice, O God, as from Your mercy, because You are compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy. For You know our weakness and You remember we are but dust.



"Draw me, Lord, we shall run." ...O Jesus, I ask You to draw me into the flames of Your love, to unite me so closely to You that You live and act in me. I feel that the more the fire of love burns within my heart, the more I shall say: "Draw me," the more the souls who will approach me...will run swiftly in the odor of Your ointments.

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O Jesus, what it costs to give You what You ask! Far from complaining to You of the crosses You send me, I cannot fathom the infinite love which has moved You to treat me so. O Lord, do not let me waste the trial You send me, it is a gold mine I must exploit. I, a little grain of sand, want to set myself to the task, without joy, without courage, without strength, and all these conditions will make the enterprise easier; I want to work for love. ...and even if by an impossibility, You should not be aware of my affliction, I should still be happy to bear it, in the hope that by my tears I might prevent or atone for one sin against the faith.

O Lord,...When I find no occasions, at least I want to keep telling You That I love You; it is not difficult and it keeps the fire of love going; even if that fire were to seem wholly out, I should throw little bits of straw on the ashes, little acts of virtue and of charity; and I am sure that, with Your help, the fire would be enkindled again.

THE LITTLE FLOWER PRAYER BOOK

In "The Little St Therese of the Child Jesus Prayer Book," experience the profound faith and heartfelt reflections of St. Therese, who navigated immense sorrow and loss with unwavering trust in God's mercy. Through her trials, she discovered solace in prayer and an extraordinary connection with Jesus, inspiring countless souls to embrace hope amid suffering. This prayer book encapsulates her spiritual journey and offers readers a pathway to deepen their own relationship with the divine.

Thank you for your interest in my book, feel free to contact me anytime at One Monastic Minute (brpatrick.com).

