



YEAR OF FAITH 2012

WALKING WITH SAINTS

October 2013

ST. THÉRÈSE of LISIEUX

HISTORY and REFLECTION: THÉRÈSE MARTIN was born at Alençon, France on 2 January 1873. Two days later, she was baptized Marie Frances Thérèse at Notre Dame Church. Her parents were Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin. After the death of her mother on 28 August 1877, Thérèse and her family moved to Lisieux. On the Feast of Pentecost 1883, she received the grace of being healed from a serious illness through the intercession of Our Lady of Victories and she received First Holy Communion soon after.

She wished to enter contemplative life like her sisters but was prevented from doing so by her young age. During an audience granted by Pope Leo XIII she asked the Holy Father with childlike audacity to be able to enter the Carmel at the age of fifteen and entered the Carmel of Lisieux. There she embraced the way of perfection outlined by the Foundress, Saint Teresa of Jesus, fulfilling with genuine fervour and fidelity the various community responsibilities entrusted to her. Her faith was tested by the sickness of her beloved father who died in 1894. Soon after she offered herself as a sacrificial victim to the merciful Love of God and wrote her first autobiographical manuscript. Several months later, she suffered a haemoptysis, the first sign of the illness which would lead to her death; she welcomed this event as a mysterious visitation of the Divine Spouse and entered a trial of faith that would last until her death. While her health declined, new graces led her to higher perfection of her writing and she discovered fresh insights for the diffusion of her message in the Church, for the benefit of souls who would



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follow her way. Meanwhile her sufferings and trials intensified and she accepted them with patience up to the moment of her death in the afternoon of 30 September 1897

Thérèse was beatified on April 29, 1923 and canonized on May 17, 1925, by Pope Pius XI. **She is the patron saint of aviators, florists, illness (es) and missions. She was made Universal Patron of the Missions**, alongside Saint Francis Xavier, on 14 December 1927. **Pope John Paul II declared her one of the thirty-three Doctors of the Universal Church** on October 19, 1997, one of only four women so named.

St. Therese discovered early on that love gave people a reason for living and a sense of hope. She translated her desire for love by developing her relationship with Jesus Christ. Seized by the love of Christ, her only Spouse, she penetrated ever more deeply into the mystery of the Church and became increasingly aware of her apostolic and missionary vocation to draw everyone in her path. Saint Therese was awed by the marvel of creation and she found ways to thank God in all creation and all that she could see around her and even about those things she could not see. She translated her love by taking up assignments which were simple, direct, yet calling for amazing fortitude and commitment. Her 'little way' seems to put holiness of life within the reach of ordinary people. Prayer, for her, was a way of walking with God- whether it was a period of meditative prayer, communal prayer in the chapel with the other nuns in the community or the aspirative prayer of lifting her heart to God in short prayers of intercession or praise. In suffering Therese always united her heart to Jesus Christ. She believed that every suffering, however difficult, had a place in Gods redemptive love for us. She was convinced that our suffering, in union with the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, could help to transform the world. She continues being an apostolic presence on behalf of souls in the Communion of Saints, in order to shower a rain of roses upon the world.

WEEK I

Quote of St. Therese

"In times of aridity when I am incapable of praying, of practicing virtue, I seek little opportunities, mere trifles, to give pleasure to Jesus; for instance a smile, a pleasant word when inclined to be silent and to show weariness. If I find no opportunities, I at least tell Him again and again that I love Him; that is not difficult and it keeps alive the fire in my heart. Even though this fire of love might seem extinct I would still throw little straws upon the embers and I am certain it would rekindle."

-XVI letter to her sister Celine

consumed with the desire of loving Thee and of making Thee loved by all mankind. The tears that streamed in such abundance from Thy Eyes are to me as precious pearls which I delight to gather, that with their infinite worth I may ransom the souls of poor sinners. Oh Jesus, Whose Face is the sole beauty that ravishes my heart; I may not behold here upon earth the sweetness of Thy Glance, nor feel the ineffable tenderness of Thy Kiss. I bow to Thy Will - but I pray Thee to imprint in me Thy Divine Likeness, and I implore Thee so to inflame me with Thy Love, that it may quickly consume me and I may soon reach the Vision of Thy glorious Face in Heaven.

Amen

WEEK II

Quote of St. Therese

"True Charity consists in bearing with all the defects of our neighbor, in not being surprised at his failings, and in being edified by his least virtues; Charity must not remain shut up in the depths of the heart, for no man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel, but upon

Prayer by St. Therese

Oh Jesus, Who in Thy cruel Passion didst become the "Reproach of men and the Man of Sorrows," I worship Thy Divine Face. Once it shone with the beauty and sweetness of the Divinity: now for my sake it is become as the face of a leper. Yet in that disfigured Countenance I recognize Thy infinite Love and I am





a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. (Cf. Matthew 5:15). It seems to me that this candle represents the Charity which ought to enlighten and make joyful, not only those who are dearest to me, but all who are in the house."

Story of a Soul, Chapter IX

Prayer by St. Therese

O my God! I offer Thee all my actions of this day for the intentions and for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I desire to sanctify every beat of my heart, my every thought, my simplest works, by uniting them to Its infinite merits; and I wish to make reparation for my sins by casting them into the furnace of Its Merciful Love.

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

Amen.

WEEK III

Quote of St. Therese

"Prayer is, for me, an outburst from the heart; it is a simple glance darted upwards to Heaven; it is a cry of gratitude and of love in the midst of trial as in the midst of joy! In a word, it is something exalted, supernatural, which dilates the soul and unites it to God. Sometimes when I find myself, spiritually, in dryness so great that I cannot produce a single good thought, I recite very slowly a Pater or an Ave Maria; these prayers alone console me, they suffice, they nourish my soul."



Story of A Soul, Chapter X

Prayer by St. Therese- Prayer for Priests

O Jesus, eternal Priest, keep your priests within the shelter of Your Sacred Heart, where none may touch them. Keep unstained their anointed hands, which daily touch Your Sacred Body. Keep unsullied their lips, daily

purpled with your Precious Blood. Keep pure and unearthly their hearts, sealed with the sublime mark of the priesthood. Let Your holy love surround them and shield them from the world's contagion. Bless their labors with abundant fruit and may the souls to whom they minister be their joy and consolation here and in heaven their beautiful and everlasting crown. Amen.

WEEK IV

Quote of St. Therese

"If it is hard to give to whoever asks, it is still harder to let what belongs to us to be taken, without asking it back, or rather, I ought to say it seems hard; for the yoke of the Lord is sweet and light (Cf. Matthew 11:30): when we accept it we feel its sweetness immediately"

-Story of A Soul, Chapter IX

Prayer to St. Therese

O little St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, who during your short life on earth became a mirror of angelic purity, of love strong as death, and of wholehearted abandonment to God, now that you rejoice in the reward of your virtues, cast a glance of pity on me as I leave all things in your hands. Make my troubles your own - speak a word for me to our Lady Immaculate, whose flower of special love you were - to that Queen of heaven "who smiled on you at the dawn of life." Beg her as the Queen of the heart of Jesus to obtain for me by her powerful intercession, the grace I yearn for so ardently at this moment, and that she join with it a blessing that may strengthen me during life. Defend me at the hour of death, and lead me straight on to a happy eternity. Amen

