



The Life of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus 1873-1897

‘Saint Thérèse ... the greatest saint of
modern times.’ (Pope Pius XI).



Do you know that;

- the **relics** of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus are coming to Dublin on 2/3 October 2026?
- the **relics** of her parents, Saints Louis and Zélie are also coming?
- you can read about the life of Saint Thérèse in this Power Point? and also, in the **Grow in Love series** for First Class/P3?



Born and baptised Marie-Françoise-Thérèse Martin is popularly known as:

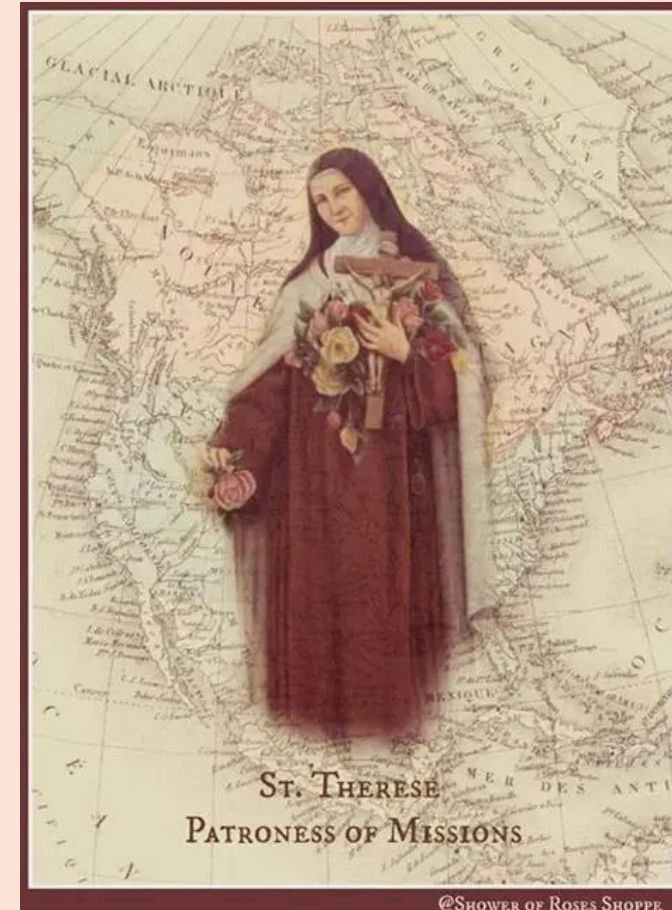
- **Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus**
- The one who 'had a new message, a new mission and a new model of holiness.' It is the 'Little Way' to God.
- **Saint Thérèse of Lisieux**
- **Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face**
- **The Little Flower**
- **Patroness of the Missions**
- **One of the Doctors of the Church**
- **According to Pope Pius XI, 'Saint Thérèse was the greatest saint of modern times.'**

**What's in a
NAME?**



Who is this young woman who lived such a short but exceptional life?

- Saint Thérèse is a **saint** who from her childhood, loved Jesus.
- Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus is one of the **patron saints** of the missions. Her feast day is celebrated annually, by the Church on 1 October. October is Mission Month.
- She never worked on the missions, but she supported priests and missionaries with her letters and prayers.



@SHOWER OF ROSES SHOPPE



On October 19, 1997, Saint Pope John Paul II declared Saint Thérèse a **Doctor of the Church**

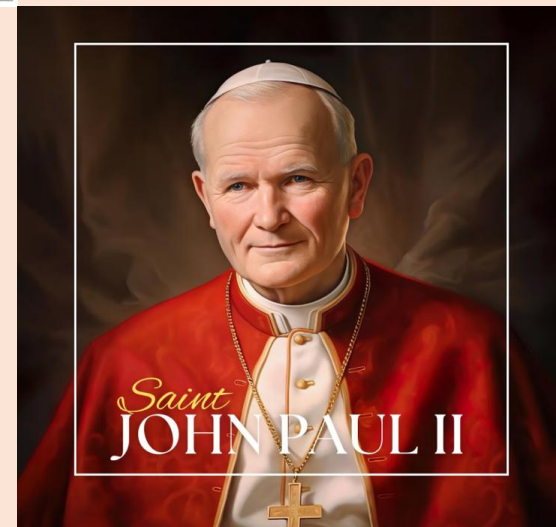
because of her writings and spirituality.

She is **one of four women Doctors of the Church** and the youngest at the time of her death.



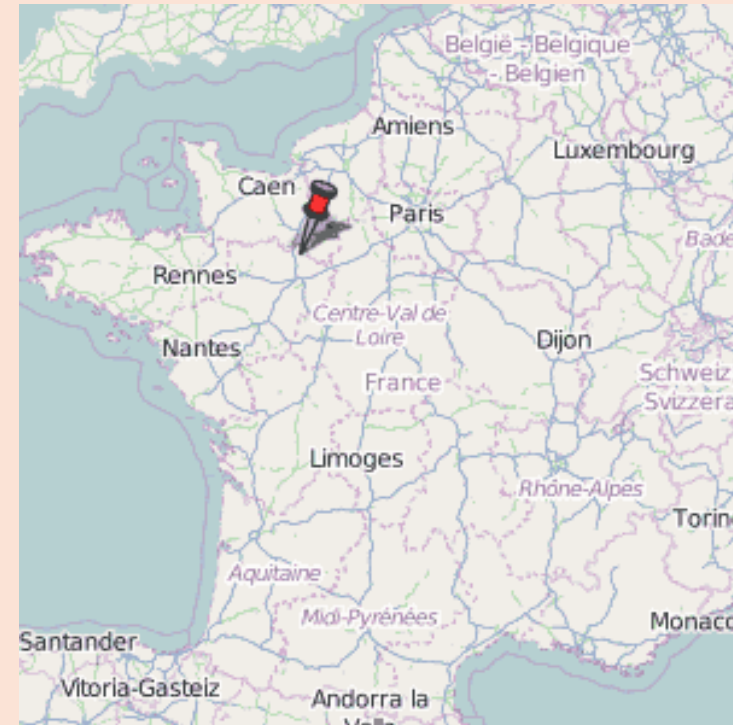
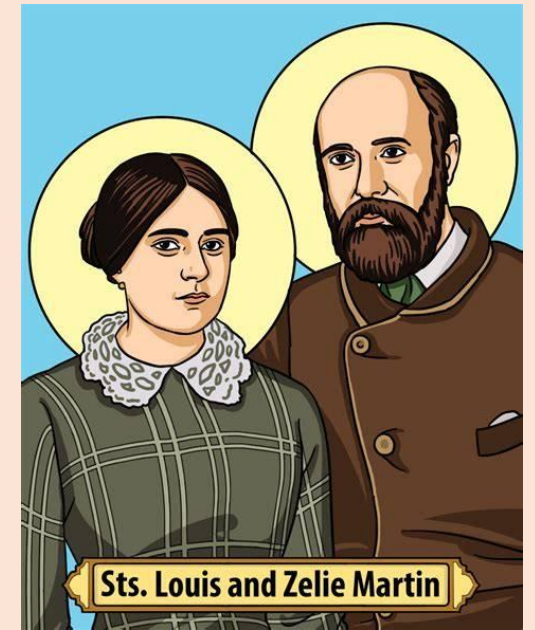
Why did the Pope make Saint Thérèse of Lisieux a Doctor of the Church?

- “...because her ardent spiritual journey shows such maturity, and the insights of faith expressed in her writings are so vast and profound, that they deserve a place among the great spiritual masters.”
- He also confirmed, ‘Saint Thérèse of Lisieux is one of the greatest modern-day saints. Through her ‘Little Way’ and child-like trust she is a shining star in the communion of saints’.



Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus

- Born on 2 January 1873 in Alençon, France.
- Her parents were Louis and Zélie Martin. Both were canonised as saints by Pope Francis on 18 October 2018.
- Baptised in Notre Dame Church, Alençon on 4 January 1873.
- Youngest of nine children.
- Five girls survived: Marie, Pauline, Leonie, Celine and Thérèse
- The other siblings died.



The first parents of a saint, Saints Louis and Zelie to be canonised.

- Her **father Louis** was a **watchmaker** and her **mother Zelie**, was a **seamstress**.
- They were married in 1858 and had nine children (7 girls and 2 boys).
- They wished the best for their children - that they would become saints.
- Their faith was great and unshakeable.
- Prayer was central to their lives.



What was important to her parents, Louis and Zelig?

- The **Eucharist** was at the heart of their day. They went to morning Mass with their children and prayed with them daily.
- They showed **generosity** to one another, to children, employees, neighbours and to people who lived in poverty.
- They always lived their motto, **‘God must be served’**, whatever the cost!



Thérèse's childhood was very special.

- She loved her parents, Louis and Zélie, and showed her love 'in thousands of ways'.
- As a young child she was sensitive, spoiled and stubborn. She wanted to have her own way!
- She was a deeply spiritual child.
- She spent her spare time in prayer and talking to God. This brought her an inner peace.
- She trusted God and she became more loving, as she grew to know and love Him.



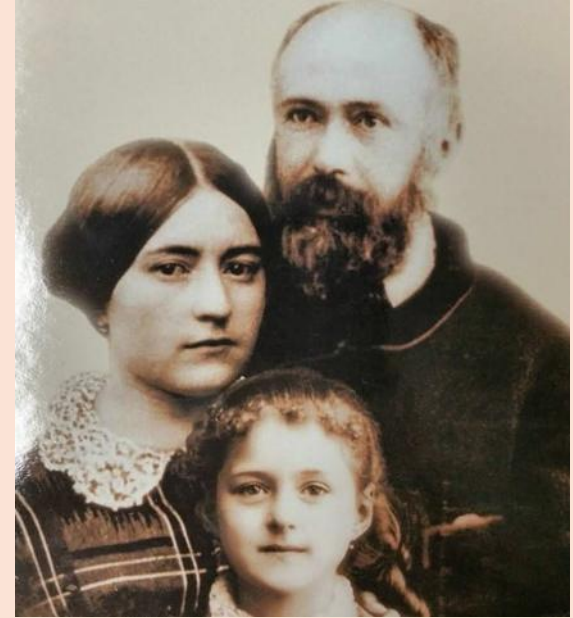
She loved her father ... Papa, as she called him.

- They went fishing and walking together. They loved God's gifts of nature, especially the flowers.
- They visited the Blessed Sacrament in the local churches.
- Thérèse learned in family life to do everything for love of God. Her father loved Thérèse and 'did whatever she wanted'.
- She loved flowers. She said, ***'When I die I will send forth a shower of roses from the heavens.'***
- ***'I will spend my heaven doing good upon earth'***



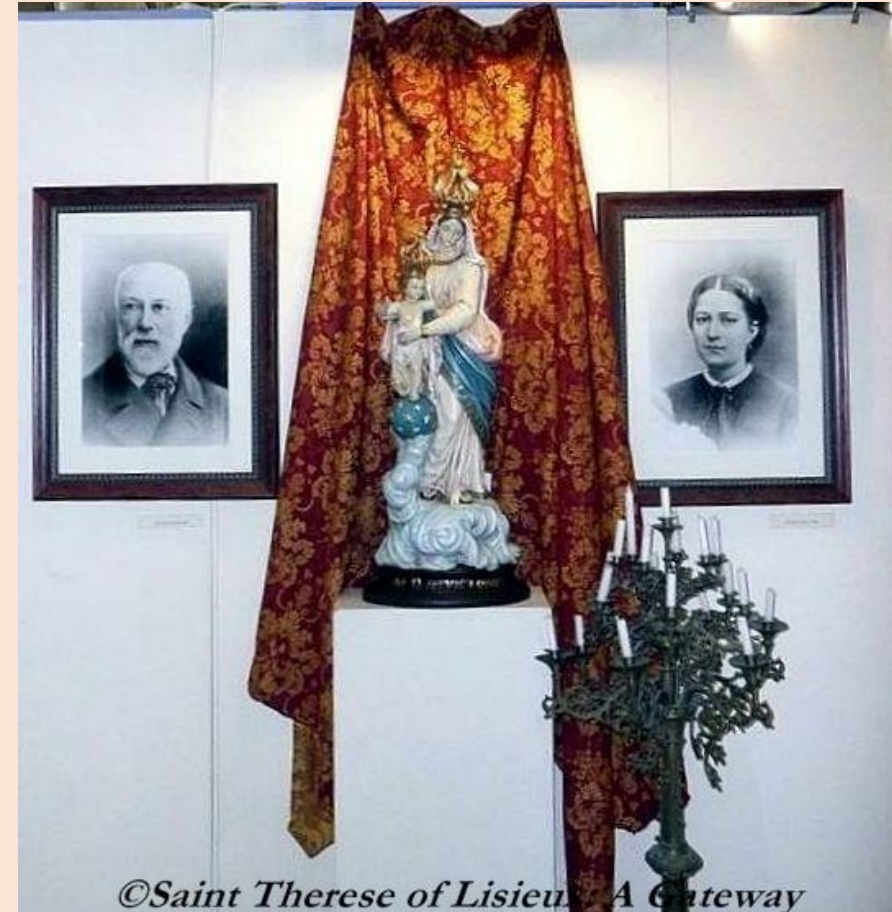
A big tragedy for the family.

- In 1877, Zélie died of breast cancer, when Thérèse was four years old.
- From that day, she spent little time playing with her toys and having fun. She and her family were devastated without their mother.
- She helped her sisters cooking, cleaning and taking care of their home.
- The loss of her mother affected Thérèse for the next eight years of her life. After Zélie's death, the family moved to a new house in Les Buissonnets.



Thérèse had a strong devotion to Our Lady.

- When Thérèse wrote 'The Story of a Soul' before she died, she described how she knelt *'before the statue of Our Lady which had given my [her] family so many proofs of Our Heavenly Mother's loving care.'*
- *'As I knelt I begged of that dear Mother to guide my hand, and thus ensure that only what was pleasing to her should find [a] place here.'*
- At age ten, *'she was cured of a strange illness.'*



Stories about Thérèse, the child.

- Thérèse tells many stories about her early childhood and you will find them in her autobiography 'The Story of a Soul'.
- She loved her family and they too cherished her. They were a close-knit family who enjoyed family life together.
- She relates memories of being with family at the sea and in the park, and recalls everyday life in the family homes of Alençon and Les Buissonnets.

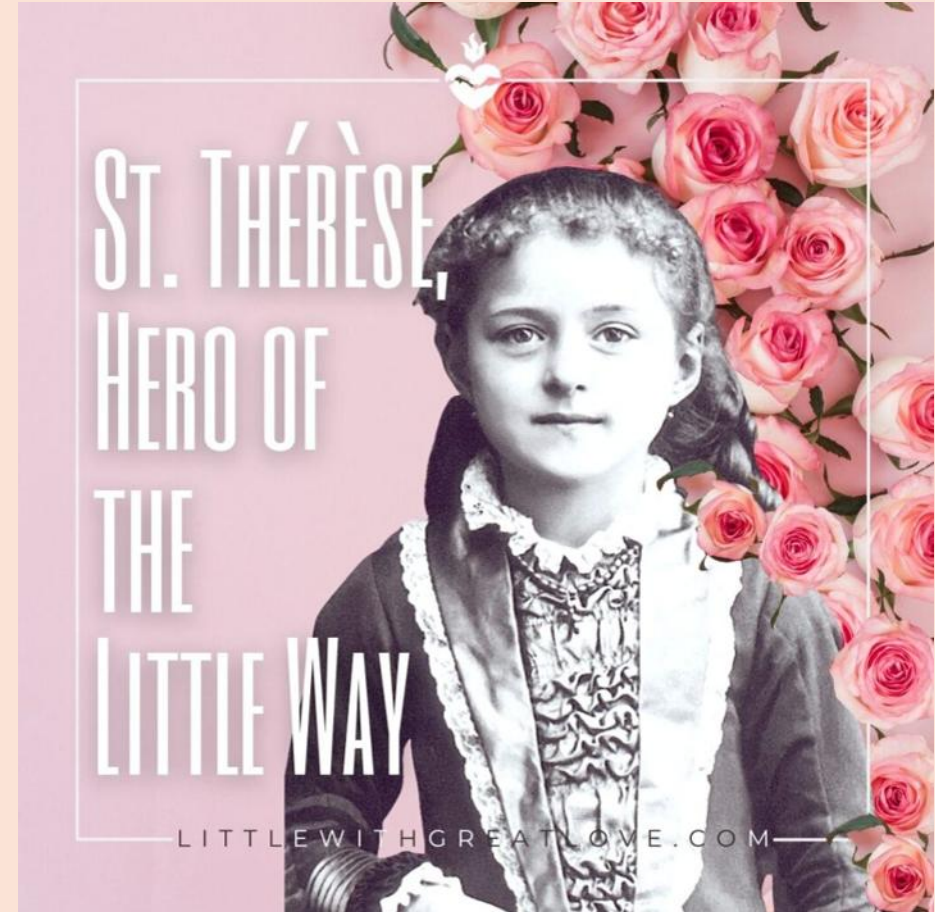


Thérèse gave us her **'little way'** of confidence and love.

Thérèse lived with a special spirit which she called the **'little way'**. She lived a life of holiness and loved God. She did this not by doing great works, but by doing the small things with extraordinary love.

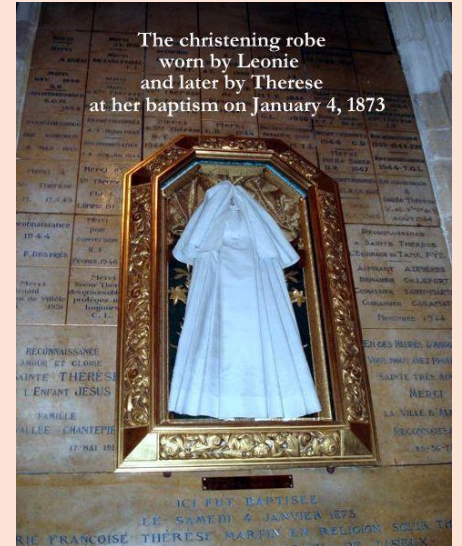
This **'little way'** she offered as a gift to God.

All of us can follow Thérèse's **'little way'** in loving God and other people.



Thérèse received Baptism on 4 January 1873.

- On January 4th, 1873, Thérèse was carried to the Church of Notre Dame, to receive the Sacrament of Baptism. Her eldest sister, Marie was her godmother. She was given the name Marie Françoise Thérèse.
- Thérèse was sick as a baby but she regained her strength.



Thérèse received her First Confession in 1879.

- Thérèse from an early age knew right from wrong. She tells stories of herself behaving badly, because she looked for attention from her sisters and family. These incidents are recorded.
- She brought her Rosary beads for a blessing to her First Confession.
- This occasion was one of great joy and blessing for Thérèse.



I MADE MY CONFESSION ... MY SISTER HAVING ASSURED ME THAT AT THIS SOLEMN MOMENT THE TEARS OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS WOULD PURIFY MY SOUL. I REMEMBER WELL THAT [THE PRIEST] EXHORTED ME ABOVE ALL TO A TENDER DEVOTION TOWARDS OUR LADY, AND I PROMISED TO REDOUBLE MY LOVE FOR HER WHO ALREADY FILLED SO LARGE A PLACE IN MY HEART.

ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISEUX,
STORY OF A SOUL



She recorded a story about her First Confession.

Her sister Pauline told her,

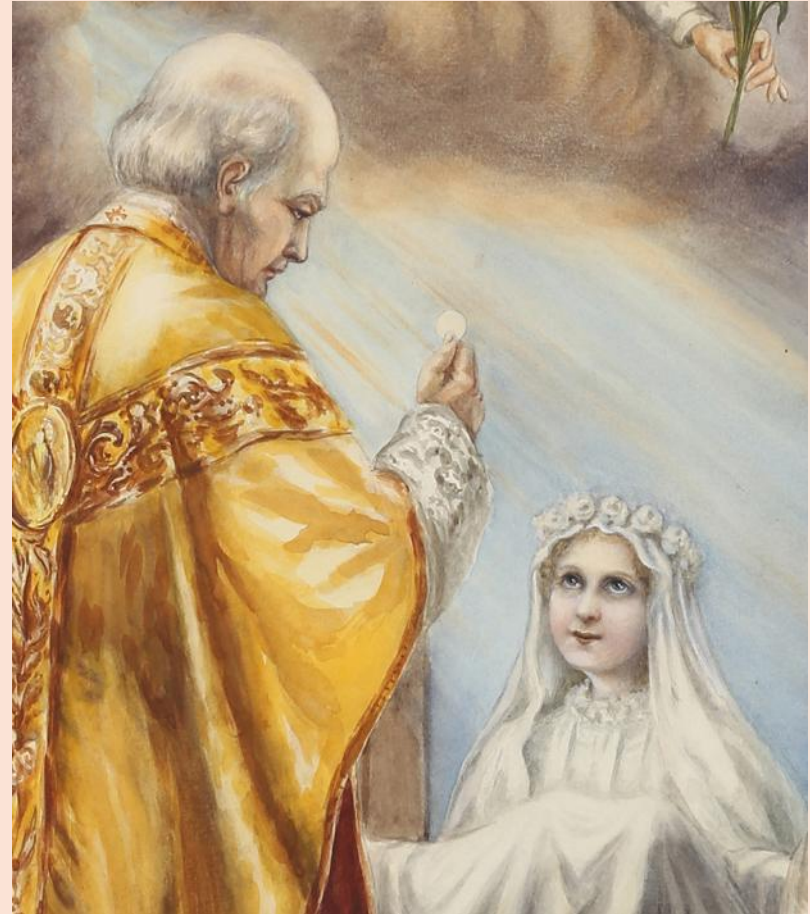
“Thérèse, darling, it is not to a man, but God Himself that you are going to tell your sins”.

‘I was so persuaded of this that I asked her quite seriously if I should not tell Father Ducellier that I loved him, “with my whole heart” as it was really God I was going to speak to in his person.’



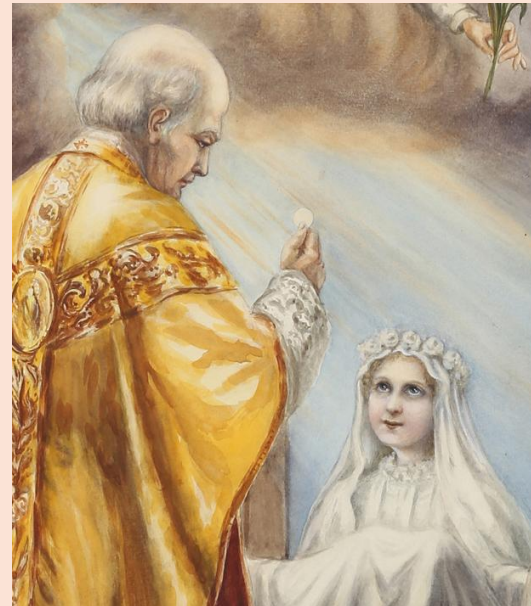
Thérèse received her First Holy Communion on the 8 May 1884.

- Chapter 4 in the 'Story of a Soul' talks about Thérèse's preparation for her First Holy Communion.
- You can read about how her family helped her to pray and they taught her about Jesus' love. She learned how important it was to make sacrifices for Jesus.
- Thérèse writes her memories of her First Communion celebration.



When Thérèse received Holy Communion, the Body of Christ, for the first time, she said,

‘How sweet was the first embrace! It was indeed an embrace of love. I felt that I was ever loved, and I said: ‘I love You, and I give myself to You for ever.’



Thérèse received the Sacrament of Confirmation on 8 June, 1884.

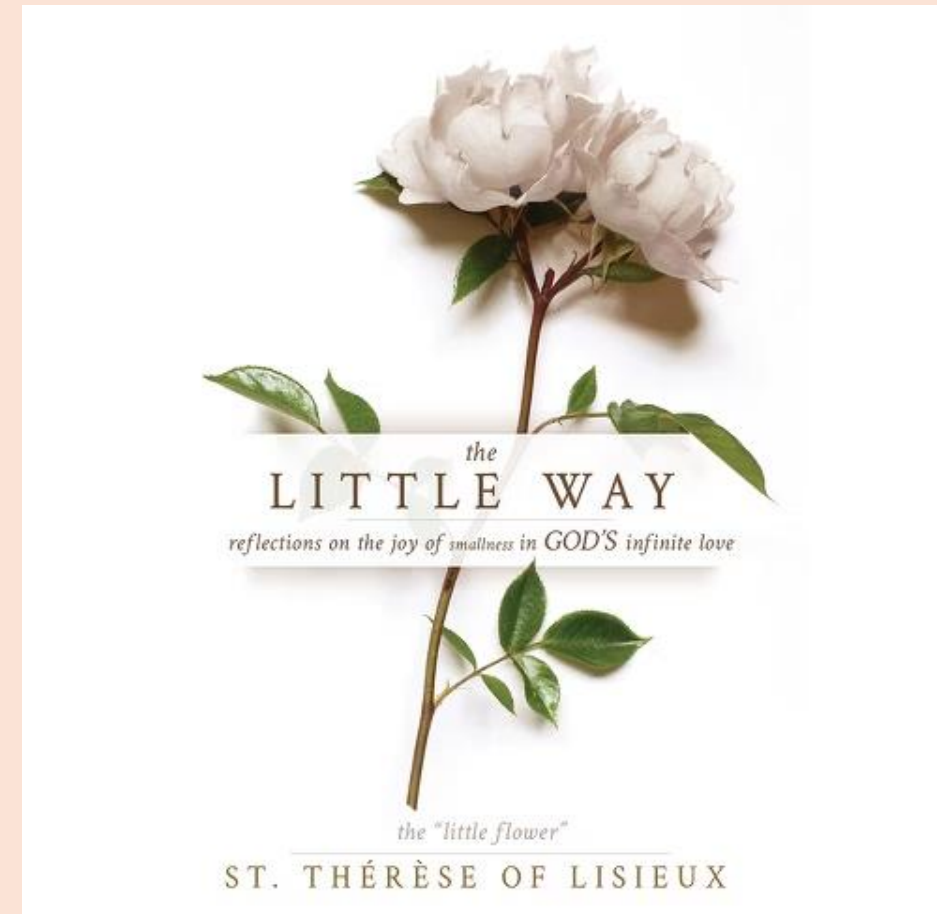
Thérèse went on a **retreat** with the Carmelite nuns before being confirmed. She said '***I prepared myself with the greatest care for the coming of the Holy Spirit.***'

She felt like the Apostles waiting and praying for the Holy Spirit. She looked forward to being 'a perfect Christian and have the **Holy Cross** traced upon her forehead.'



On Christmas day, 1886...

- Thérèse experienced a profound change in her life at 13 years of age. She let go of self-love and self-centredness and turned towards loving God.
- She developed a great love for the missionary life of the Church. That meant she wanted to continue the mission of Jesus, sharing the Good News.
- Her desire to pray grew very strong.



As a child, Thérèse wanted to be a nun ...

- She began to make plans to enter the Carmelite convent in Lisieux, where her two older sisters, Marie and Pauline were nuns.
- As a child, she travelled to Rome for a private meeting with the Pope.

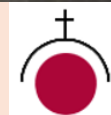


- The Pope granted her request to become a Carmelite nun at age fifteen. On 9 April 1888 she settled into her new home, the Carmelite convent in Lisieux.
- She was professed (became a nun) on 8 September 1890.



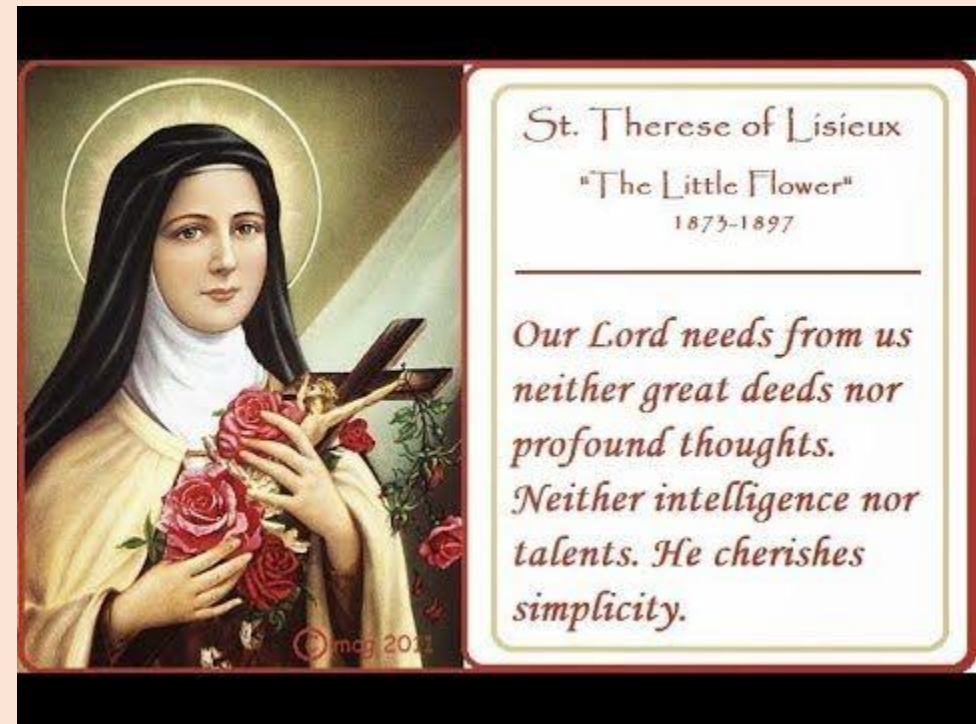
Convent Life ...

- At fifteen, she was very young and given lots of work to do.
- The Sisters didn't understand her, as her family at home did, and she experienced a hard time.
- The Sisters had never met anyone like Thérèse, but her deep love for God was an example to everyone who knew her, and soon they realised how special and good she was. She struggled through the challenges of community life to become a saint.



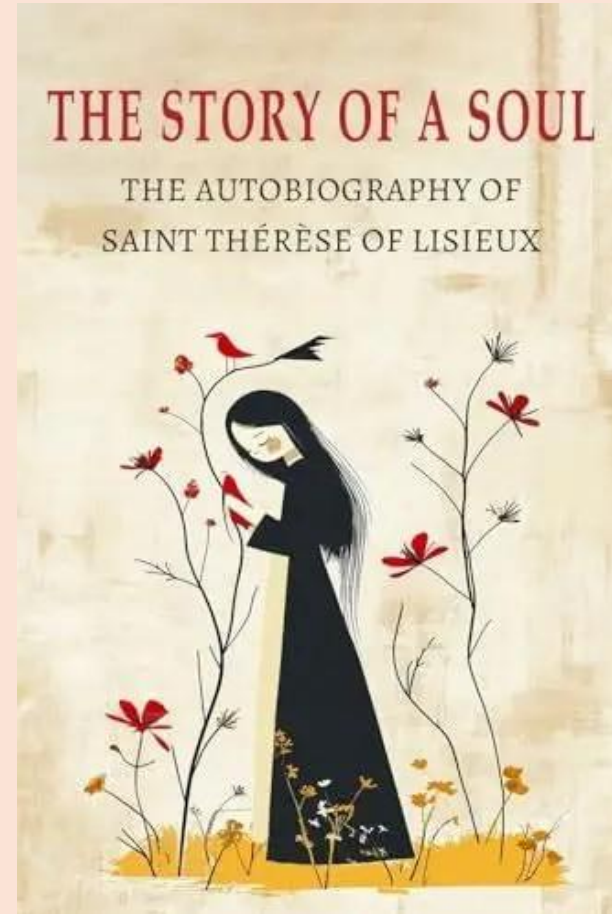
For the next seven years...

- Thérèse lived a life of prayer and work, and fulfilled her routine duties with extraordinary faithfulness and love .
- She guided the novices (the younger nuns) for the last four years of her life.
- She told them that we are all like little children and that our relationship with God was like that of a small child with our father.



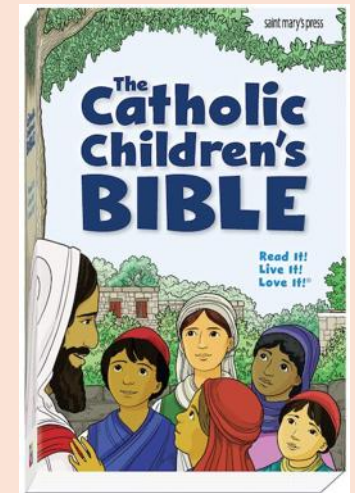
Her leader in the Carmelite community ...

- invited Thérèse to write her spiritual autobiography. It is 'The Story of a Soul', and in it, she reveals her remarkable interior life, of which many of the sisters with whom she lived in the convent were unaware.
- It was translated into 35 languages and is still read by many people throughout the world.



About two and half years before she died

- she contracted tuberculosis, and wanting to be holy, she thought 'if only I could find a lift to God.' She found her 'Little Way' in the following two Scripture texts:
- *'If anyone is a very little one, let him/her come to me.'* Proverbs 9:4.
- *'as a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you.'* (Is 66:12-13).



'The Little Way' helped Thérèse:

- *'To live love and consideration in the smallest things.'*
- *'Even when people were unkind to her in community, she went out of her way to help them.'*
- *'Her life was made up of thousands of small things.'*
- Her *'little way is simple and straight forward but it's not easy.'*



In her sickness she was very patient ...

- The last words she wrote in her life story were 'I lift myself to him in confidence and love.'
- This is her 'Little Way', her legacy to all of us in the Church.

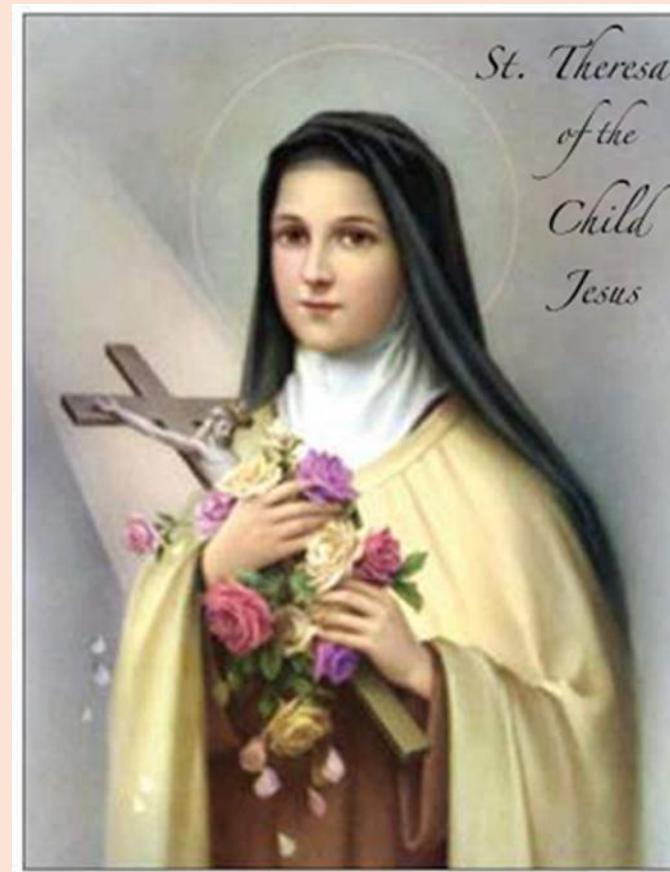


A prayer to Saint Thérèse

O Saint Thérèse, the little flower, please pick me a rose from the heavenly garden and send it to me as a message of love.

O Little Flower of Jesus, ask God to grant the favours I now place with confidence in your hands (make your request).

Saint Thérèse help me always to believe as you did in God's great love for me, so that I may imitate your 'Little Way' each day. Amen.



THINK about Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

- Thérèse realised that God was close to her in the little things and ordinary feelings every day. How can you become aware that God is close to you in all the ordinary events in your life?



Songs to honour Saint Thérèse

- You might like to sing these songs from *Grow in Love*:
- ‘**This Little Light of mine, I’m going to let it shine**’, from ***Grow in Love 1st Class/P3***.
- ‘**Love**’ - ***Grow in Love 3rd Class/P5***
- ‘**The Great Commandment**’ - ***Grow in Love 4th Class/P6***.



More hymns to Saint Thérèse include

- *Thérèse's Canticle of Love*
- *Child of Grace* (album)
- *Walk with us, Dear Thérèse.*
- *These hymns are available on You Tube*

