



Priestly People

WE ALL ARE THE PRIESTLY PEOPLE OF GOD. TOGETHER, WE ARE LEADERS IN RESPONDING TO THE EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF PRIESTS AND BROTHERS.

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Women of Carmel

Doctors of the Church
Mystics
Reformers
Authors
Missionary Spirit

“Teresa of Jesus”



Teresa of Avila
1515-1582

“Little Flower”



Thérèse of Lisieux
1872-1897

“We are called to radicality for God”

Mother Mary Joseph, Prioress Carmel of St. Joseph Monastery, St. Louis Discalced Carmelites

Teresa of Avila and Thérèse of Lisieux represent over 350 years of Carmel tradition, legacy and holiness.

Both women became ill at an early age and suffered throughout their lives and also lost parents in their formative years.

While they have their own personal journey to sainthood, there are many similarities and complimentary actions; they appear to be sisters – sisters in community and spirit.

The intense draw of the Eucharist is a common thread for the Women of Carmel. They are devoted to personal and collective prayer, solitude and contemplation. Discalced Carmelites are fully committed to **Praying for Priests.**

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus & the Holy Face

Thérèse was born on Jan. 2nd 1873 and was baptized at the local parish church of Notre Dame and given the name Marie-Francoise –Thérèse Martin. Her parents were Zelie (nee Guerin) & Louis Martin and they lived at that time at 36 St. Blaise Street, Alencon, France. Her parents were exceptional people and they both tried to become religious but this was not what God wanted for them – they were destined to be the parents of one of the greatest saints of modern times, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus & the Holy Face. In fact I believe that all of Thérèse’ sisters are saints and her parents are already named Venerable by the Vatican.

Her parents one day met on the bridge of the river in Alencon – Zelie coming one way and Louis coming from the other and Zelie heard an inner voice say “This is the man you will marry.” She did marry him eventually – he was a well-known watchmaker and mender of watches & jewelry and Zelie was trained in lace making. In fact she enhanced the name of the beautiful Alencon Lace. Soon after this meeting they were engaged and then married at the Notre Dame Church in Alencon, on July 13th 1858. They settled down on the rue du Pont-Neuf.

They had nine children born into their family between 1860 to 1873 losing two boys and two girls in infancy and early childhood. One of these little girls was Helen who was 5 years of age when she died. Five daughters survived and these five all became religious sisters – 4 as Carmelites and the other as a Visitation Sister.

Therese was the last to be born but by now the mother was not in good health and in fact she died of breast cancer on Aug. 28th 1877, when Thérèse was only 4 years old. This was a terrible blow to Thérèse and she was to suffer the consequences of this early death of her beloved mother.

Her sisters were Marie, Pauline, Leonie, Celine and then Thérèse.

The Martin Family was extraordinary in so many ways. Their mother used to get up to go to the early Mass in the parish church at 5 am. Her father too was a very religious man. Pauline the second oldest becomes Thérèse’ mother figure after the death of their mother.

Thérèse had a great love for her mother and yet Thérèse was a very strong willed child and her mother remarked on this to her eldest daughters in letters. Eventually this strong will would be turned in a positive way to her advantage, when she entered religious life and when she had many trials to endure. So God works in mysterious ways and always brings great blessings out of much suffering.

The whole family was devastated by the death of their mother, Zelie. She suffered so much with her cancer. Her cancer was declared incurable in 1876 and died in 1877. The effect on Thérèse was psychologically devastating and she suffered for weeks from this loss. The whole family left Alencon on Nov. 15th 1877 and settled in a beautiful house called “Les Buissonnets” in Lisieux, to be near Zelie’s brother M. Guerin who had a pharmacy in Lisieux and he had some influence on the Martin Family.

In the summer of 1879 Thérèse had a prophetic vision of her father – she was looking out the window at “Les Buissonnets” and she saw her father in the garden, although he was not at home at this time, with his head covered in a cloth or bandage. In later years after Thérèse entered Carmel he did have a series of strokes, which left him incapacitated and he had to go to an asylum in Caen, France. This was a great trial for this family.

Thérèse was educated by religious sisters and then she entered a Benedictine Abbey as a day-boarder but she never liked school even though she was a very intelligent person. The other students used to taunt her because she always knew more than they did. Eventually Therese was educated at home by her sister Pauline.

On Oct. 2nd 1882 Pauline entered Carmel and this had a serious effect on Thérèse – it reminded her again of her mother’s death and now with Pauline, whom she chose as a second mother, this triggered off psychological problems that most probably had been pushed down into the unconscious by Thérèse, in order to survive.

She had headaches and it got worse because she had tremblings, fevers and hallucinations and she was reduced to





having to stay in bed. On April 6th 1883 Pauline received the Habit in Lisieux Carmel. The family went to witness this and Thérèse was able to embrace her sister Pauline – now Sr. Agnes.

After this Thérèse got much worse and her father, Louis who was still well, and her sisters Marie, Leonie & Celine were greatly troubled and prayed much for the recovery of Thérèse. There was a statue of the Blessed Virgin in Thérèse's room and as her sisters prayed a miracle took place. Thérèse came around and looked at the statue of Mary and it seemed animated to her and the Blessed Virgin Mary smiled and Thérèse was healed. The sisters were astounded at the quick recovery but delighted. This was Sunday May 13th and it was also the Feast of Pentecost.

The next stepping stone in Thérèse's life was her preparation for her First Holy Communion and she looked forward to this meeting with Jesus with great interest and anticipation. On May 5th to the 8th 1884 Thérèse made her retreat before reception of Holy Communion. So this long awaited morning arrived when she would receive Jesus into her heart and soul. She entered the Chapel of the Abbey of the Benedictine Nuns with her companions all dressed in white and they chanted the hymn, "O altar of God where the angels are hovering." Therese felt that she was loved by Jesus and she said, "I love you, and I give myself to you forever." She says of this occasion, "That day it was no longer simply a look, it was a fusion; they were no longer two, Thérèse had vanished as a drop of water in the immensity of the ocean. Jesus alone remained; He was the Master and King."

A short time after her First Holy Communion Thérèse entered into the retreat for Confirmation – the coming of the Holy Spirit into her heart and soul to make her a, 'Soldier of Christ' and she went into this with determination. Jesus was

preparing her for her great work in life to surrender herself completely as a Child of God into her complete 'Surrender to Merciful Love.' The Holy Trinity was preparing this beautiful young woman to become, "The Greatest Saint of Modern Times" – Pope Pius XI.

Marie Martin, Thérèse's second eldest sister decided to enter Carmel with her father's permission and this was going to be another jolt for Thérèse – Marie was very important to Therese. At this time Thérèse suffered from scruples and Marie was her guide and counselor. Thérèse also found great consolation once when she went to confession and the priest told her that she was still in her baptismal innocence. Marie would also be a very important person, chosen by God to get Thérèse to write, "The Story of a Soul." Marie entered Carmel in Lisieux on Oct. 15th, 1886 – this was the Feast of Teresa of Avila, the great Carmelite Saint. The Christmas of 1886 was a special year for Therese because it was on Dec. 25th after Midnight Mass that Thérèse had her conversion experience.

This was an emotional conversion because Thérèse had been hyper sensitive after her mother's death and her own illness. But on this Christmas she received a great grace of conversion. She got very emotional after she overheard her father tell Celine that Thérèse was no longer a child that should expect treats in her stocking by the fireplace. Thérèse was going up to her room and heard her father say this and immediately went into her room and started to weep. But she saw the crucifix on her wall and something happened. She was given a great Grace. She was cured of her sensitivity and she dried her eyes and came down to Celine and her father as if nothing happened. This was a great preparation for her life of a religious. She felt empowered by Jesus and his was to remain with her for the rest of her young life.

Leonie her sister entered the Visitation Convent to become a nun – she was the most troubled of the Martin girls but Thérèse told her that after her death that she Thérèse would obtain the grace for Leonie to persevere and indeed this happened and now they are speaking of her sanctity too. But I really think that all the five Martin girls are saints as are their parents – Louis and Zélie who are both Blessed.

Around this time, Sept. 1st 1887, she received another grace because she was praying for Pranzini who had murdered a woman and her daughter and was sentenced to death. She prayed that he would be converted before his death – she prayed very much for this and her prayers were heard. As he mounted the steps to the guillotine and just before his death he grabbed the crucifix of the priest and kissed it. This was in the newspaper on the next day and Thérèse saw this and she felt deeply in her soul that again Jesus had listened to her prayer of Intercession for a great sinner. This would become her goal in the religious life - praying for sinners.

Thérèse was now thinking seriously of entering Carmel at Lisieux in 1887. She asked her father in the garden one evening and naturally he was surprised and sad that she

was thinking of leaving home but he gave her permission to pursue her dream even though she was only 15 years of age. She did not get permission from her Uncle Ms. Guerin, or the Bishop. She went to Rome with her father and a group of people from France and while she was introduced to Pope Leo XIII on Nov. 20th 1887 she asked him for permission to enter Carmel at 15, even though she was told not to speak to the Pope.

He just said, "My child if it is God's will that you should enter, you will." A very good reply to her question and indeed it turned out to be true. They returned from Rome and other cities on Dec. 2nd 1887. On Jan 1st 1888 Thérèse was given permission to enter Carmel with yet another delay, not until after Lent was over of that year.

Her father took her to the Convent of Lisieux and when Thérèse bid him goodbye her heart raced with emotion. She did have the satisfaction of having two blood sisters in Carmel, Pauline who took the name Agnes and Marie who took the name Marie of the Sacred Heart. On May 22nd of 1888, Marie made her Profession of First Vows. Thérèse became a Postulant on April 9th 1888 to Jan. 10th 1889. She began her Novitiate on Jan 10th 1889 to Sept. 24th 1890. On May 22nd of 1888 her sister Marie of the Sacred Heart made her Profession in this same Carmel in Lisieux, France.

As a religious Thérèse began her crucifixion of sufferings – her beloved father Louis Martin began his own sufferings, which affected his youngest daughter and her sisters very much. On June 23rd of this same year his mental troubles began and on August 12th he had a stroke which left some paralysis. On Oct. 31st 1888 Thérèse is approved by the community to receive the habit and her dear father has a serious relapse at Le Havre.

On Jan. 5th to 10th of 1889 Thérèse begins her retreat for the reception of the habit and she received a grace from God because on Jan. 10th God fulfilled her wish in sending snow on that day and Thérèse took this as a sign from Him. Her father was able to attend this celebration but this was the last time that he was able to attend any of the ceremonies to do with his daughters in Carmel.

Celine was the only sister left at home with the father. Celine was a very good photographer and artist and it is because of her that we have those marvelous photos of Sr. Thérèse in the Convent of Carmel in Lisieux. After her father's death, she too would enter Carmel and so there would be 4 blood sisters of the Martin Family in the same Carmelite Convent in Lisieux. There was also a first cousin who joined this Community.

Thérèse's Novitiate began on Jan. 10, 1889 and ended Sept. 24th 1890. Here again this was not an easy time for Thérèse because her father, whom she loved, was hospitalized on Feb. 12th 1889 at the Bon Sauveur Hospital in Caen, France. She

did receive a special grace from Our Lady and this lasted a week. God in His infinite goodness does this for a soul who is about to undergo a special suffering in order to strengthen that soul. It was at this time also that the family home, "Les Buissonnets" was given up – their father was in hospital and there was only Celine left at home.

During her Novitiate she read the works of St. John of the Cross a great Carmelite Saint. She also discovered texts on the suffering servant (Jesus) by Isaiah. On Aug. 28th to Sept. 8th she did her retreat prior to her profession of vows and she suffered from dryness during this time – no consolation in her prayer life. On the eve of her profession she had another trial – she felt that she did not have a vocation and all this time was therefore a complete lie. This was a deception of the devil, and by God's grace her Novice Director figured this out and calmed Thérèse and on Sept. 8th the Feast of the Birthday of Our Lady she made her profession of vows and on Sept. 24th she receives the veil but her father is not present for this, he was in hospital.

On Dec. 5, 1891 Mother Genevieve died – the founder of the Lisieux Carmel. That same year there was an outbreak of influenza in the Convent and even though Thérèse is not robust, she keeps on going in helping the others who are ill.

On May 10th 1892 her father M. Martin returns to Lisieux and on May 12th he visits the Lisieux Convent for the last time. At this period of her life Sr. Thérèse begins to compose poems and she is good at it. She was also very creative and played the part of St. Joan of Arc in her community play. She was a very talented person and very intuitive and perceptive and she had an extraordinary talent of mimicking and she had the talent to make people laugh. Mother Mary Gonzague her Prioress who accepted her into the Community had said of her, "that one minute she can make you laugh and the next she can make you cry." She also had a retentive memory and she could quote almost any passage from scripture.

On Feb. 20th of 1893 Sr. Agnes her blood sister was elected Prioress and Sr. Thérèse is associated in the spiritual



formation of her companions in the novitiate. On June 24th 1893, Leonie enters the Visitation Convent in Caen for the second time and Thérèse tells her that this time she will succeed because after Thérèse's death, she told her sister, "I will intercede for you in Heaven and you will succeed." And indeed this happened and not only that but Leonie did succeed and went on to persevere to the end.

On July 29th 1894 Thérèse's beloved father Louis died. This was a great sadness for Thérèse and her other sisters in Carmel, Mother Agnes (Pauline) Sr. Marie (Marie) and Sr. Leonie in the Visitation Convent in Caen and for her sister Celine at home. Their sister, Celine entered Carmel in Lisieux on Sept. 14th of 1894 – so now there were 4 blood sisters in Lisieux's Carmel and one first cousin. Celine was very important because as I already said she was a photographer and an artist and she took many of the beautiful photos of Thérèse in Carmel.

One evening in the year 1895 the Martin sisters were reminiscing and Thérèse waxed eloquent about her childhood memories and other memories and Sr. Marie, said to Mother Agnes (Pauline), "Oh Mother wouldn't it be lovely if Sr. Thérèse wrote these down?" Thérèse laughed in amusement but the Reverend Mother Agnes turned to Thérèse and said, "In holy obedience I ask you to do this?" And so "The Autobiography of a Saint" "The Story of a Soul" was born!

It was in 1895 that Sr. Thérèse was inspired on Trinity Sunday June 9th of 1895 to offer herself to merciful love. This she did on June 11th of 1895. She offered herself in complete trust and self-surrender to the merciful love of God. Soon after her offering to God she had a transport of love while she was making the Stations of the Cross – it felt as if a fiery dart pierced her heart and she was in a transport of love. It only lasted a minute because as Thérèse said, "If it had lasted longer I would have died." She continues to write her "Story of a Soul" for Mother Agnes.

This was the beginning of the end of the life of this modern Saint. On Jan. 20th Sr. Thérèse brings the copybook of her memories to Mother Agnes. Mother Agnes accepts it and leaves it in her office and forgets about it until sometime later. Little did she know then that this would be a world famous account of the life of Thérèse of Lisieux. This was referred to as manuscript A (there would be manuscripts B & C later). On Feb. 24th her sister Celine now Sr. Genevieve makes her profession of vows. Sr. Thérèse was in charge of the spiritual life of Celine as a Postulant and Novice, and Celine was difficult because she had a strong personality. Remember Sr. Thérèse was in charge of the Postulants and Novices in the Novitiate.

On March 21st of 1896 they had an election and Mother Marie de Gonzague was re-elected as Prioress. She was the one who accepted Thérèse into the Carmelite Convent. On April 2 – 3 of 1896 Thérèse had her first hemorrhage during the night after she had put her light out – she



refused to relight the lamp to verify the fact – she waited till it was morning and sure enough there was blood on her handkerchief. This was the night of Holy Thursday.

She went to Mother Gonzague and told her what happened during the night. It was a cold day and she was down for cleaning the windows outside and she told the Reverend Mother that she was fine. The Reverend Mother permitted her to do so. Well this was the first real sign that Thérèse was suffering from Tuberculosis and she went through a most difficult time and kept on working. She could not sleep at night and had a persistent cough and she gave the impression that she was fine and so she kept on working until there was a crisis in her health and she was admitted to the Infirmary.

Afterwards there was a lot of turmoil among her blood sisters and Mother Gonzague... we have to see in her illness the mystery of God. Remember Thérèse had said, "I have come to Carmel to pray for souls but especially the souls of priests." Besides she had surrendered herself to the merciful love of God to save sinners. In the midst of all her illness she kept on writing manuscript B to explain her surrender to merciful love and complete trust and then manuscript C - her memories of religious life in Carmel. When you put these 3 manuscripts together it makes up her complete autobiography, "The Story of a Soul."

On Easter Sunday April 5th of 1896 began Sr. Thérèse's "Dark Night of the Soul." Here she was in the midst of her

terrible illness. Not many people know that Thérèse had gangrene of the intestines, which caused her enormous suffering and she was not permitted by the Reverend Mother to have morphine. Thérèse went through this with a smile on her face most of the time. God permitted this dark night for Thérèse because she was going to be “The Greatest Saint of Modern Times” It was all for the salvation of souls. This dark night consisted in Thérèse not knowing that there was a heaven after all of this pain and the devil tormented her. But she kept firm in her beliefs.

In the meantime Sr. Thérèse is offering all of this up for missionaries and for priests. Thérèse had a very special interest in the missions, having contemplated serving in the missions, especially Vietnam. And she did offer herself as a “Victim to Merciful Love.” On Sept 8th of 1896 Thérèse writes Manuscript B for her sister, Sr. Marie of the Sacred Heart. This is to do with surrender to merciful love, her message and her vocation.

Now we come to the final nine months of this wonderful Saint. She is very weak and suffering much but she is still asked by Mother Gonzague to write Manuscript C. She starts this on June 3rd of 1897 and this has to do with her life as a religious in the Carmel of Lisieux. She is extremely weak when she finished this. On July 8th 1897 she is brought to the infirmary. On July 30th she is anointed and on Aug. 19th she receives Holy Communion for the last time.

This was her last most painful detachment because this was her only consolation at this time. This very holy and special sister continued to suffer terribly. Her blood sisters try various ways to help her and they do but often they are a distraction and another form of suffering. Sr. Thérèse lingered on to the end of September and at 7:30 pm on Sept. 30th she breathed her last. A minute before she died she had some sort of

visitation because she was completely spent but she was able to lift herself up from the bed and look slightly to the right and her face glowed with light then her head fell to the pillow again and she breathed her last.

In July of 1914 Pope Pius X signs the Decree for the Introduction of the Cause of Canonization. On Aug. 14th 1921 Benedict XV promulgates the Decree on Heroic Sanctity. On April 29th 1923, Pope Pius XI beatified Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face and he calls her “The Star of his Pontificate.”

Her fame has grown and spread all over the world and she appeared to many people and to soldiers who were fighting in the awful World War 1 – she would appear to them as they fought in the trenches because their parents were praying to her for them. Carmel was receiving over 1,000 letters a day telling of her miracles.

On May 17th of 1925 was the Solemn Canonization of Thérèse of Lisieux who had now become great – this took place in St. Peter’s Square by Pope Pius XI in front of an audience of 60,000 people. That evening there were as many as 500,000 pilgrims in St. Peter’s Square in Rome.

On Sept 30th 1929, just 32 years after her death the foundation stone was laid for the Basilica dedicated to her in Lisieux, France and on July 11th 1937 Cardinal Pacelli (Papal Legate and future Pope Pius XII) opens and blesses the huge Basilica in Lisieux in her honor.

Before she died and while in excruciating sufferings she predicted, “I will spend my Heaven doing good upon earth. I will come down and I shall scatter a multitude of Roses (Graces).” This she has done and she continues to do. Blessed Pope John Paul II made her a Doctor of the Church.

Submitted by BR. BERNARD SP

Teresa of Avila

Sister in Carmel

Christ has no body but yours,

No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he looks

Compassion on this world,

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,

Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,

Yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now but yours,

No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he looks

compassion on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Teresa of Avila (attributed)



Prayer of Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Pope Francis consecrates the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

*Holy Mary Virgin of Fatima,
with renewed gratitude for your maternal presence
we join our voice to that of all the generations
who call you blessed.
We celebrate in you the works of God,
who never tires of looking down with mercy
upon humanity, afflicted with the wound of sin,
to heal it and save it.
Accept with the benevolence of a Mother
the act of consecration that we perform today with
confidence,
before this image of you that is so dear to us.
We are certain that each of us is precious in your eyes
and that nothing of all that lives in our hearts is
unknown to you.
We let ourselves be touched by your most sweet regard
and we welcome the consoling caress of your smile.
Hold our life in your arms:
bless and strengthen every desire for good;
revive and nourish faith;
sustain and enlighten hope;
awaken and animate charity;
guide all of us along the path of holiness.
Teach us your own preferential love*



*for the little and the poor,
for the excluded and the suffering,
for sinners and the downhearted:
bring everyone under your protection
and entrust everyone to your beloved Son, Our Lord
Jesus.
Amen.*

*Translation by Joseph Trabbic
October 13, 2013 Zenit*



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October
 Newsletter

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MASS STIPENDS

We appreciate the many mass stipends that we receive. We thank you for supporting that part of our ministry. The Servants of the Paraclete receive mass stipends from our donors and they look forward to celebrating liturgy with those who offer masses for loved ones, friends and family members.

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