

Your Holy Friend of the Month

Thérèse of Lisieux



Therese Martin was born on January 2, 1873, in Alençon, France. Precocious and sensitive, Therese needed much attention and had a spirit that wanted everything.

At the age of 14, Therese had a conversion that transformed her life. From then on, her powerful energy and sensitive spirit were turned toward love. At 15, she entered the Carmelite convent in Lisieux and took the religious name Sister Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face. Living a simple life of prayer, she was gifted with great intimacy with God. Through sickness, doubt and fear, she remained faithful to God, rooted in His merciful love. After a long struggle with tuberculosis, she died on September 30, 1897, at the age of 24. Her last words were the story of her life: “My God, I love You!”

Therese described her life as a “little way of spiritual childhood.” She lived each day with an unshakable confidence in God’s love. “What matters in life is not great deeds, but great love,” believing in a childlike focus and totally attentive love.

Therese saw herself as the “little flower of Jesus,” who gave glory to God by just being her beautiful little self among all the other flowers in God’s garden. Her inspiration and powerful presence from heaven touched many people very quickly.

She was canonized on May 17, 1925. “My mission - to make God loved - will begin after my death,” she said. “I will spend my heaven doing good on earth.” She has been acclaimed “the greatest saint of modern times.” In 1997, Pope John Paul II declared St. Therese a Doctor of the Church - the only Doctor of his pontificate - in tribute to the powerful way her spirituality has influenced people all over the world.

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- Contact information for college/university where you will study •

October 2023 Newsletter

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Living Always in Communion

Robert M.
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Spiritual Mentor

When I was young, I loved climbing trees. Well, I really loved climbing in general, and my parents were most comfortable with me climbing trees. So climb trees I did. Being in a tree was freeing. I would climb up the tree, reach the highest point, jump down, and climb the tree once again. I was filled with joy, awe, wonder, and a touch of fear.

I wonder how Zacchaeus felt as he climbed the tree. Excited? Nervous? Full of himself? Mad? I bet all that and more. On the other hand, I find it easier to imagine what it was like for Zacchaeus to leave the tree after seeing Jesus. I like to imagine that he left the tree by jumping.

Jesus’ words weren’t just to Zacchaeus. Jesus’ words were to all of us – get out of the tree, join me where I am, and know you are forgiven. Jumping out of a tree takes a touch of courage as does climbing one. Following Jesus takes courage, too, but a different kind – the courage to see ourselves as God sees us: already receiving infinite love. All of us receive this gift, we just need the courage to accept it.

Questions for Reflection

- 1 Are there attitudes, behaviors that exclude me from a community?
- 2 Where am I small in my life?
- 3 Jesus wants to be a guest in my life. How do I imagine his encounter in my home?
- 4 Where do I desire transformation and renewal in my life?

Jesus and Zacchaeus

(Lk 19: 1-10)

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

Daily Ignatian Examen

We invite you to prayerfully reflect:

Presence

Become aware that God’s presence is active at each moment of your life, looking at you with love, desirous of speaking directly to your heart. How do you feel at this moment?

Ask

Ask God for the grace to see the ways God is working in your life.

Gratitude

Be grateful. Thank God for the gifts, both big and small of the day. What are you most grateful for today?

Review

Trust that God is with you at each moment of day, during the good and challenging moments. God never abandons you. What were the good moments of today? What were the greatest challenges of today?

Respond

You are not stuck. Tomorrow is a new day. Ask God to give you the grace to be the loving and generous person you were created to be. What can you do tomorrow to be more generous and loving?

Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

The Walk to Emmaus *(Lucas 24:13-31)*

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.” Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

Questions for Reflection

1 Where am I disappointed in my life - perhaps also by God?

2 What is difficult in my life and I want to tell God?

3 Who is with me in my life and listens to me?

4 Do I know a burning heart also in my life?

5 What does the encounter of the Risen Lord in the presence of bread and wine mean to me?

...but deliver us from evil.

I have a confession – there are a ton of things I say that I don’t mean. “I’ll get this to you ASAP.” “Your food is delicious.” “I’m doing fine.” “I’ll be right there.” “I have it figured out.” “I got this.”

I hate to say it, but when I pray, “but deliver us from evil,” I often don’t mean it. I really wish I did, but I find it helpful to have “evil” swirling around me. As long as “evil” is swirling around me, I have many excuses for my misbehavior. I can excuse my rudeness, my anger at others, my talking over others, or my desire to put myself over others. See, I can’t be blamed for all my sins! And with all the evil around me, why do I feel the need to be better?

I’m being lazy. There will always be evil around us, whether we like it or not. (And, I would actually prefer to be in a world with no evil – but that means that I might have to change.) When I say “but deliver us from evil,” I’m also asking God to change me, to help me be more willing to address the evil both within my own heart and outside my own heart.

There are times when I let myself be transformed, to let go of the evil inside my heart. I often find then I’m at my happiest, most peaceful, and my most relaxed. Alright, I’m ready to be delivered from evil and be changed in the process.