

# SHARING THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

## *St. Thérèse of Lisieux & The Little Way*

This month's saint is Thérèse of Lisieux and our focus is the Little Way. This involves doing even the small things with great love, finding holiness in our everyday tasks, and trusting completely in God's love.

### IN DEPTH

The "Little Way" of St. Thérèse of Lisieux is a perspective toward everyday living that can guide each of us toward holiness. It is an invitation to a life of simplicity and childlike trust, emphasizing that small acts of love, done with great intention, can glorify God and sanctify the soul. Smiling at someone, holding open a door, bearing an insult graciously, humbly completing a chore, and all such daily tasks and interactions are opportunities to grow closer to God or further from God. Offering these tasks to the Lord and intentionally doing them with as much love as possible for the greater glory of God will bring us closer to Him! You do not need to do anything grand to be one of the greatest saints, you simply need to love.

### CONNECTION TO THE SAINT

St. Thérèse of Lisieux is another Doctor of the Church, though not for a grand intellectual work that is studied in philosophy courses around the world. Instead, she is a Doctor of the Church because she understood the simplicity of a holy life, as illustrated in her autobiography, *Story of a Soul*. She was the youngest daughter of Sts. Zélie and Louis Martin, and she felt the calling to be a nun from a very young age. She began her fight to join the Carmelites at 9 years old, and finally entered at 15 years old after getting permission from the Pope. She knew God's will for her, and she was determined to see it through. During her journey to the convent, she grew in sanctity through her understanding of holiness as doing all things, even the smallest acts, with great love and for God's glory. St. Thérèse gives hope to those living ordinary lives with mundane daily tasks as she emphasized that holiness is found in doing these small things with love. She recognized her littleness before God and His great love and care for her. These truths helped her live with full trust in the Lord and His will for her, including suffering from illnesses that led to her death at 24 years old.



## WAYS ADULTS CAN PRACTICE THE VIRTUE

- **Look for Christ in Everyone:** St. Thérèse treated each encounter with others as an opportunity to love Jesus in them. Aim to see Christ in every person, especially those who may be difficult to connect with. This perspective can transform even the most ordinary interactions into moments of grace.
- **Offer Sacrifices Quietly:** When faced with stress or extra demands, offer up these small sacrifices silently as a form of prayer, dedicating them for the good of others. Approaching inconveniences and hardships with sacrificial love, following Christ's example and picking up your cross.
- **Practice Patience in Daily Situations:** Embrace daily annoyances as opportunities for holiness. Practice staying calm in frustrating situations—like traffic, long lines, or delays—offering these moments to God with patience.
- **Express Gratitude Regularly:** Make a habit of thanking God for the little things throughout the day. Expressing gratitude for joy and challenges fosters a joyful heart and a spirit of humility.
- **Accept Personal Weaknesses:** Instead of focusing on shortcomings, embrace them as reminders of the need for God's grace. We can lean on God in our weaknesses, turning self-criticism into a deeper reliance on His love.
- **Serve Others with Joy in Small Ways:** Look for small, unnoticed ways to help others—doing household chores, listening patiently, etc. Serve with joy and without expectation of recognition, making every act a gift to God.
- **Turn Ordinary Tasks into Prayer:** Approach daily routines like cooking, cleaning, and commuting as ways and opportunities to pray. By offering each task to God with love, you make everyday life a continuous act of worship.
- **Embrace a Childlike Trust in God's Plan:** Approach each day with trust, surrendering fears and anxieties to God. Practice this childlike trust by saying a short prayer when facing uncertainty or trials, remembering that God guides each step. Keep a sense of wonder and gratitude, seeing everything as a gift from God.
- **Seek Contentment in the Present:** Live in the present, appreciating the simplicity of each moment. Instead of worrying about the future or dwelling on the past, focus on God's presence here and now, finding contentment in each day as a gift.