

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 STAFF CAN PRACTICE THE VIRTUE

- **Practice Humility and Patience:** Accept small annoyances or inconveniences with humility and patience, seeing them as a chance to grow in virtue. Choose to react to challenges with love, trust, and understanding.
- **Show Love in Small Ways:** Be intentional in small acts of kindness, like greeting others warmly, offering a helping hand, or encouraging a coworker. Affirm the efforts of others, helping to create a supportive environment.
- **Surrender Daily to God's Will:** Begin the day with a brief prayer, surrendering your work and intentions to God and asking for the grace to fulfill your duties with love. Trust that God's hand is in all events, especially in unforeseen challenges or setbacks, seeing them as opportunities for trust.
- **Practice Spiritual Childhood:** Approach tasks with an openness to learning and ready to depend on God's guidance and help. Keep a sense of wonder and gratitude, seeing the day-to-day work as a gift from God.
- **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.
- **Forgive Quickly and Let Go of Grudges:** In the spirit of charity, let go of misunderstandings or frustrations with others. Choose to forgive quickly without holding onto negativity in order to foster unity and practice mercy.
- **Pray for Others in Secret:** Dedicate a few moments to genuinely pray for the people you encounter each day, especially those who annoy or inconvenience you. Pray for their needs silently, trusting that even hidden prayers can make a difference in their lives and help you grow in patience and love.
- **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.