

St. Therese, The Little Flower

Therese Martin was born to Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin on January 2, 1873. At the age of 15, she entered the Carmelite convent at Lisieux, France. With the religious name of Sr. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, she lived a hidden life of prayer. She was gifted with great intimacy with God. Through sickness and darkness, she remained faithful, rooted in God's powerful love. She died on September 30, 1897, at the age of 24.

The world came to know her through her autobiography, "The Story of a Soul." She described her life as "a little way of spiritual childhood." She lived each day with unshakable confidence in God's love. What matters in life is "not great deeds, but great love."

The inspiration of her life and her powerful presence from heaven touched so many people so quickly that she was solemnly canonized on May 17, 1925 by Pope Pius XI. Had she lived, she would have only been 52 years old at the time of her canonization. In 1997, St. Theresa was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope John Paul II.

"My mission -- to make God loved -- will begin after my death," she said. "I will spend my heaven doing good on earth. I will let fall a shower of roses." Countless lives have been touched by her intercession, and millions have imitated her "little way." She has been acclaimed the "greatest saint of modern times." Everywhere in the world, her roses continue to fall.

*The portrait of St. Therese by her sister Celine, is considered the most authentic representation of the Saint ever done. The original is at the National Shrine of St. Therese in Darien, Illinois.