

“If I lead you into error with my Little Way of Love, be not afraid that I shall permit you to follow it for any length of time. I would soon re-appear after my death and tell you to take another road. But if I do not return, believe me when I tell you that we never have too much confidence in the good Lord who is so powerful and merciful. We obtain from Him as much as we hope for.”

(Histoire d'un Ame, 246)
St. Therese of the Child Jesus



Marie Françoise Thérèse Martin was born on 2 January 1873 in Alençon, France. She entered the Carmelite Monastery of Lisieux taking the name Sœur Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face. Professed on 8 September 1890, she died of tuberculosis on 30 September 1897.

Pope Pius XI canonized her on 17 May 1925. But from the very beginning of her beatification, Pope St. Pius X already called her the “greatest Saint of modern times”. Why? What did she do?

Can we imitate her?



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The little way



of
***Spiritual
Childhood***

St. Thérèse did not do anything extraordinary in her lifetime, not even a single miracle! But, she left us a doctrine which she herself lived — the Little Way of Spiritual Childhood. By this, she reminded us that sanctity is essentially the perfection of charity. It is not a special prayer or rigorous penance. It is neither a particular virtue, nor the sum of all virtues, but rather, an attitude of mind, of a loving child towards his heavenly Father.



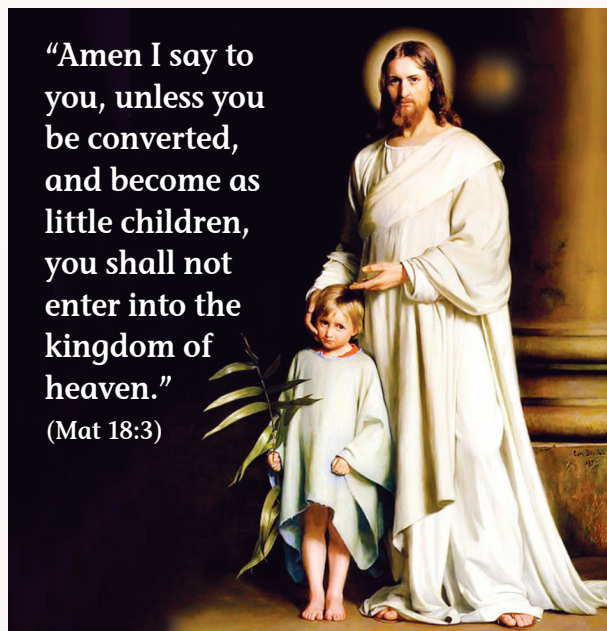
Spiritual Childhood

Spiritual Childhood, however, is not spiritual childishness. Its characteristics are: first, **HUMILITY**. A child is naturally little, weak and powerless. Yet he acknowledges his nothingness and attributes nothing to himself. He depends on his parents for everything and at all times.

Second is spiritual **POVERTY**. The child owns nothing, even if he is the sole heir. He has only what is given him and not everything is given him all at once. So, he constantly seeks his parents' support and he is not ashamed of begging for all his needs and for all his wants.

Nevertheless, a child has total **CONFIDENCE**. He knows that his parents love him. And, he knows that they would never abandon him. So, he frequently has recourse to them and is not anxious of anything. His trust is fearless, boundless and unwavering.

No matter how small and poor a child may be, he possesses one thing in a very charming way — **LOVE**. His heart is cut to his size, but it is strong and vibrant; his love is ardent and tender. He effusively shows it by his hugs and kisses. Simply and securely, he **ABANDONS** himself into his parent's arms. The Oblation to the Merciful Love of God is St. Thérèse's ultimate expression of such love, confidence and abandonment.



Still, all these are done in utmost **SIMPLICITY**. Everything in a child is simple — his thoughts, his words, as well as his actions. He can only do little things yet, how happy and proud his parents are with what he is able to do. Would God be less happy of our little efforts, provided, that we do them all with the greatest love?

Unlike the self-centeredness of natural childhood, Spiritual Childhood does not think of himself only. He thinks of others as well — friends and foes alike. With his burning love, he would do all that he can to charm his parents in favor of them. That is how a child exercises his **ZEAL**.

Lastly, it is thoroughly **MARIAN**. To be a true child of God, one has to be formed in the maternal and Immaculate Heart of Mary, just like Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Although this was not written explicitly in her autobiography, yet it permeated all her writings. In fact, her very last poem was: "Why do I love you, O Mary!"

Therefore, the Little Way of Spiritual Childhood is nothing else but the synthesis of faith, hope and charity all at once, and pushed to their ultimate applications, but retaining their evangelical freshness and candid simplicity.



"I feel that my mission is about to begin, my mission of making souls love the good Lord as I love Him, of giving my Little Way to souls! If my wishes are granted, my heaven will be spent on earth until the end of the world. Yes, I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth."

*(Je Rentre dans la Vie, 85)
St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus*