

Lives  
of  
Saints

# St Theresa of Lisieux

1873 – 1897

Feast day: 1st October



“I prefer the monotony of obscure sacrifice to all ecstasies. To pick up a pin for love can convert a soul.”

**St Theresa  
of Lisieux**

I was born in France in 1873. Tragedy and loss came quickly when my mother died of breast cancer. I was four and a half years old. My sixteen year old sister Pauline became my second mother. Five years later Pauline entered the Carmelite convent. I found this very hard to accept, and a few months later, I became so ill with a fever that people thought I was dying.

When my other sisters, Marie and Leonie, left to join religious orders (the Carmelites and the Poor Clares, respectively), I was left alone with my last sister Celine and our father. I was admitted to the same Carmelite convent of Lisieux, France, in 1888, after having spoken to the Pope and insisted with the Vicar General. I wanted “to save souls and pray for priests.”

Life in Carmelite convent was uneventful and consisted mainly of prayer and domestic work. I saw suffering as my apostolate, and believed it was redemptive. I suffered from illness all my life, and yet I worked hard in the laundry and refectory of the convent. I suffered psychologically as well as physically, especially when my father, whom I loved dearly, became mentally ill. I suffered great dryness in prayer, smiled at the sisters I didn't like, ate everything I was given without complaining. The last year of my life I slowly wasted away because of tuberculosis. During this time, I tried to be valiant, rather than to whimper about my illnesses and my anxieties. I believed in the power of love and I embraced suffering.

My preference for hidden sacrifice did convert souls. My autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, is read and loved throughout the world. I entered the convent at the age of 15 and died in 1897 at the age of 24.

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