



Praying with Thérèse

Prayer Sheet: No 1

Preparation:

Adopt a posture which is relaxed yet disciplined and which you will be able to maintain during the prayer period. Quieten yourself by becoming aware of your breathing. Make the sign of the cross slowly and make yourself aware of the presence of God. (Adapt this for a group situation.)

Reading:

Thérèse, just turned 22 and almost 7 years in the convent, looks back in wonder at how God has guided the course of her life.

I wondered for a long time why God has preferences, why all souls don't receive an equal amount of graces. I was surprised when I saw Him shower His extraordinary favours on saints who had offended Him. For instance, St. Paul and St. Augustine, and whom He forced, so to speak, to accept His graces. When reading the lives of the saints, I was puzzled at seeing how Our Lord was pleased to caress certain ones from the cradle to the grave, allowing no obstacle in their way when coming to Him, helping them with such favours that they were unable to soil the immaculate beauty of their baptismal robe. I wondered why poor savages died in great numbers without even having heard the name of God pronounced.

Jesus deigned to teach me this mystery. He set before me the book of nature; I understood how all the flowers He has created are beautiful, how the splendour of the rose and the whiteness of the Lily do not take away (from) the perfume of the little violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy. I understood that if all flowers wanted to be roses, nature would lose her springtime beauty, and the fields would no longer be decked out with little wild flowers. And so it is in the world of souls, Jesus' garden. He willed to create great souls comparable to Lilies and roses, but He has created smaller ones and these must be content to be daisies or violets destined to give joy to God's glances when he looks down at His feet. Perfection consists in doing His will, in being what He wills us to be.

(Story of A Soul, John Clarke pp 13-14)

Scriptural Echo:

O Lord, your search me and you know me
You know my resting and my rising,
you discern my purpose from afar.
You mark when I walk or lie down,
all my ways lie open to you.

Before ever a word is on my tongue
you know it, O Lord, through and through.
Behind and before you besiege me,
your hand ever laid upon me.
Too wonderful for me, this knowledge,
too high, beyond my reach.

Ps 138 (139), 1-6

Questions:

- What made Thérèse wonder about God's dealings with people?
- What did nature teach her about this?
- What does this say to us during this time of uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic?
- How do "small souls" please God?

Concluding Prayers:

(Prayer with a focus on St. Thérèse)

God, Our Father,
you revealed to the young Thérèse your strong yet maternal care.
In this time of uncertainty and fear inspire us with deep trust
that you are looking after all the flowers in your garden.
Inspire us likewise to care for those we live with.
Through Christ your Son.
Amen.

(A Prayer for our family / community)

God Almighty Father, we ask you to bless us.
Following the example of the Martin Family
may we never give up when life is difficult
and have your strength and healing when health is poor.
May the Eucharist be the summit of our lives,
prayer our daily strength;
and the Trinity the source of our love.
We ask this with faith and confidence
through Christ our Lord.
Amen!

Saints Louis, Zélie and Thérèse, pray for us

[Louis and Zélie Martin were the parents of St. Thérèse and were canonised in 2015]

Quote for the day:

Perfection consists in doing His will, in being what
He wills us to be.

In praying the above you might like to access "A Way to Pray" (<https://carmelite.com/the-way-of-prayer/>)
to find help.

Acknowledgments:

*Extracts from The Story of a Soul: © Washington Province of Discalced Carmelites, Inc, 1975,
Third edition published 1996.*

*Psalm verses are taken from The Psalms: A New Translation ©1963, The Grail (England),
published by Collins.*