

**St. Thérèse of Lisieux**  
October 1



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1873–1897 • France

Thérèse was born to Zélie and Louis Martin, who later were known as saints. She was lively and cheerful and grew up with four older sisters, but sadness overclouded her at the age of four when her mother died. Her older sister Pauline became like a second mother to her. But when Pauline left home to become a Carmelite nun, little Thérèse fell terribly ill. She turned to the statue of Mary in her room and pleaded for Mary's help. Suddenly, the statue gave her a smile full of such radiance and love that Thérèse was instantly cured.

Thérèse knew from a young age that Jesus was calling her to become a Carmelite nun. When she was fifteen years old, she and her father asked the Carmelites if she could enter, but they told her to return when she was twenty-one. Thérèse desperately wanted to become a nun as soon as possible. Doing up her hair to appear older, she visited the bishop to request permission to enter the convent. The bishop was impressed by the eager girl and told her he would consider her request.

But this was not enough for Thérèse.

She accompanied her father to Rome for an audience with the pope. There, she was sternly warned not to speak to the pope. But nothing could stop her from speaking what was in her heart. She knelt at the pope's feet and tearfully begged him to let her enter the convent. Everyone was shocked that Thérèse had been so daring. The pope kindly told Thérèse that she must do as the superiors of the convent told her. But Thérèse would not give up. She pressed his knees and told the pope that if he gave his permission, everyone would have to do as he said. The pope gazed into Thérèse's eyes and said, "Well, well, you will enter if the good God wills it." God did will for Thérèse to enter the Carmelite convent early. The bishop gave Thérèse his permission less than a month after she returned from Rome.

Thérèse's time in the convent was ordinary. None of the sisters knew that this little nun was an extraordinary saint! Thérèse knew that she was like a little child and could not do great, extraordinary things on her own. So she practiced her "little way," which meant that every little thing she did, she did for love of God. The prioress ordered Thérèse to write down her life in a book, which we can read today to learn all about her little way. She died a holy death from illness, offering her suffering to God with love.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux, help me to follow your little way out of love for God!