



Chaplet of

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

***"My mission - to make God loved - will begin after my death, I will spend my heaven doing good on earth.
... I will send a shower of roses"***

Said on the Chaplet of St. Thérèse, consisting of the medal of St. Thérèse, and a large bead followed by twenty-four smaller beads.



On the first bead recite this prayer:

**St. Thérèse of the Infant Jesus, Patroness of Missions,
Pray for us!**

On each of the twenty-four beads, in honor of the Blessed Trinity, in thanksgiving for giving the world the little saint who lived only twenty-four years,

the following is said:

**Glory be to the Father, and the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

The chaplet is concluded by saying the Prayer to St. Thérèse:
**St. Thérèse, the Little Flower, please pick me a rose from the Heavenly Garden and send it to me with a message of love.
Ask God to grant me the favor I thee implore, and tell Him
I will love Him each day more and more.
Amen.**

About Therese...

Therese was born in France in 1873, the pampered daughter of a mother who had wanted to be a saint and a father who had wanted to be monk. The two had gotten married but determined they would be celibate until a priest told them that was not how God wanted a marriage to work! They must have followed his advice very well because they had nine children. The five children who lived were all daughters who were close all their lives.

Tragedy and loss came quickly to Therese when her mother died of breast cancer when she was four and a half years old. Her 16 year old sister, Pauline, became her second mother -- which made the second loss even worse when Pauline entered the Carmelite convent five years later. A few months later, Therese became so ill with a fever that people thought she was dying.

The worst part of it for Therese was all the people sitting around her bed staring at her like, she said, "a string of onions." When Therese

saw her sisters praying to statue of Mary in her room, Therese also prayed. She saw Mary smile at her and suddenly she was cured. She tried to keep the grace of the cure secret but people found out and badgered her with questions about what Mary was wearing, what she looked like. When she refused to give in to their curiosity, they passed the story that she had made the whole thing up.

Without realizing it, by the time she was 11 years old she had developed the habit of mental prayer. She would find a place between her bed and the wall and in that solitude think about God, life, eternity.

When her other sisters, Marie and Leonie, left to join religious orders (the Carmelites and Poor Clares, respectively), Therese was left alone with her last sister Celine and her father. Therese tells us that she wanted to be good but that she had an odd way of going about. This spoiled little Queen of her father's wouldn't do housework. She thought if she made the beds she was doing a great favor!

Every time Therese even imagined that someone was criticizing her or didn't appreciate her, she burst into tears. Then she would cry because she had cried! Any inner wall she built to contain her wild emotions crumpled immediately before the tiniest comment.

Therese wanted to enter the Carmelite convent to join Pauline and Marie but how could she convince others that she could handle the rigors of Carmelite life, if she couldn't handle her own emotional outbursts? She had prayed that Jesus would help her but there was no sign of an answer.

On Christmas day in 1886, the 14 year-old hurried home from church. In France, young children left their shoes by the hearth at Christmas, and then parents would fill them with gifts. By 14, most children outgrew this custom, but her sister, Celine, didn't want Therese to grow up. So they continued to leave presents in "baby" Therese's shoes.

As she and Celine climbed the stairs to take off their hats, their father's voice rose up from the parlor below. Standing over the shoes, he sighed, "Thank goodness that's the last time we shall have this kind of thing!" Therese froze, and her sister looked at her helplessly. Celine knew that in a few minutes Therese would be in tears over what her father had said, but the tantrum never came. Something incredible had happened to Therese. Jesus had come into her heart and done what she could not do herself. He had made her more sensitive to her father's feelings than her own. She swallowed her tears, walked slowly down the stairs, and exclaimed over the gifts in the shoes, as if she had never heard a word her father said. The following year she entered the convent. In her autobiography she referred to this Christmas as her "conversion."

Therese be known as the Little Flower but she had a will of steel. When the superior of the Carmelite convent refused to take Therese because she was so young, the formerly shy little girl went to the bishop. When the bishop also said no, she decided to go over his head, as well.

Her father and sister took her on a pilgrimage to Rome to try to get her mind off this crazy idea. Therese loved it. It was the one time when being little worked to her advantage! Because she was young and small she could run everywhere, touch relics and tombs without being yelled at. Finally they went for an audience with the Pope. They had been forbidden to speak to him but that didn't stop Therese. As

soon as she got near him, she begged that he let her enter the Carmelite convent. She had to be carried out by two of the guards!

But the Vicar General who had seen her courage was impressed and soon Therese was admitted to the Carmelite convent that her sisters Pauline and Marie had already joined. Her romantic ideas of convent life and suffering soon met up with reality in a way she had never expected. Her father suffered a series of strokes that left him affected not only physically but mentally. When he began hallucinating and grabbed for a gun as if going into battle, he was taken to an asylum for the insane. Horrified, Therese learned of the humiliation of the father she adored and admired and of the gossip and pity of their so-called friends. As a cloistered nun she couldn't even visit her father.

This began a horrible time of suffering when she experienced such dryness in prayer that she stated, "Jesus isn't doing much to keep the conversation going." She was so grief-stricken that she often fell asleep in prayer. She consoled herself by saying that mothers loved children when they lie asleep in their arms so that God must love her when she slept during prayer.

She knew as a Carmelite nun she would never be able to perform great deeds. Love proves itself by deeds, so how am I to show my love? Great deeds are forbidden me. The only way I can prove my love is by scattering flowers and these flowers are every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least actions for love. She took every chance to sacrifice, no matter how small it would seem. She smiled at the sisters she didn't like. She ate everything she was given without complaining -- so that she was often given the worst leftovers. One time she was accused of breaking a vase when she was not at fault. Instead of arguing she sank to her knees and begged forgiveness. These little sacrifices cost her more than bigger ones, for these went unrecognized by others. No one told her how wonderful she was for these little secret humiliations and good deeds.

When Pauline was elected prioress, she asked Therese for the ultimate sacrifice. Because of politics in the convent, many of the sisters feared that the family Martin would taken over the convent. Therefore Pauline asked Therese to remain a novice, in order to allay the fears of the others that the three sisters would push everyone else around. This meant she would never be a fully professed nun, that she would always have to ask permission for everything she did. This sacrifice was made a little sweeter when Celine entered the convent after her father's death. Four of the sisters were now together again.

Therese continued to worry about how she could achieve holiness in the life she led. She didn't want to just be good, she wanted to be a saint. She thought there must be a way for people living hidden, little lives like hers. I have always wanted to become a saint. Unfortunately when I have compared myself with the saints, I have always found that there is the same difference between the saints and me as there is between a mountain whose summit is lost in the clouds and a humble grain of sand trodden underfoot by passers-by. Instead of being discouraged, I told myself: God would not make me wish for something impossible and so, in spite of my littleness, I can aim at being a saint. It is impossible for me to grow bigger, so I put up with myself as I am, with all my countless faults. But I will look for some means of going to heaven by a little way which is very short and very straight, a little way that is quite new.

*from Catholic Online (www.catholic.org)

