

TUESDAY *Ah! what peace floods the soul when she rises above natural feelings.*

- Thérèse was speaking of annoyance and impatience. Rise above such feelings and welcome peace.

WEDNESDAY *It is not enough to give to everyone who asks; I must even anticipate their desires, appear to be very much obliged and honored to render service.*

- Seek out opportunities to serve others and thank them for allowing you to be of help.

THURSDAY *I set myself to doing for this [very disagreeable] Sister what I would do for the person I loved the most.*

- Thérèse writes of a sister she would not naturally befriend. That sister later asked Thérèse what she found so pleasant in her! Can you set the bar this high?

FRIDAY *A word, an amiable smile, often suffice to make a sad soul bloom.*

- Practice amiability today.

SATURDAY *I can see with joy that in loving Him the heart expands and can give to those who are dear to it.*

- Lent is a time to become more loving—and giving. What have you given? Search your heart for more to give.

HOLY WEEK: ENTER INTO THE PASSION

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION *I am far from being on the way of fear; I always find a way to be happy and to profit from my miseries.*

- This is a week of tension between fear and courage, life and death. Like Thérèse, you can sing Hosanna. Walk with Jesus toward his passion, death, and resurrection.

MONDAY *Suffering opened wide its arms to me and I threw myself into them with love.*

- The passion of Jesus might well have inspired these words written by Thérèse of her early days as a Carmelite. Ponder the suffering servant in Isaiah 42:1-7.

TUESDAY *Jesus does not demand great actions from us but simply surrender and gratitude.*

- What have you surrendered to God? What else are you called to give? Be grateful for the strength surrender brings.

WEDNESDAY *Now I am astonished at nothing. I am not disturbed at seeing myself weakness itself.*

- Some call this Spy Wednesday, when the weakness of Judas led to betrayal. Thérèse chose, like St. Paul, to glory in her weakness. If you have any regrets about your Lent and your life, let them go now.

HOLY THURSDAY *I have only to cast a glance in the Gospels and immediately I breathe in the perfumes of Jesus' life.*

- In the final pages of *Story of a Soul*, Thérèse transcribes Jesus' words at the Last Supper (see Jn 17). Breathe in the promise, the joy, and the affection of that passage.

GOOD FRIDAY *The cry of Jesus on the Cross sounded continually in my heart: "I thirst."*

- On Good Friday of 1896, Thérèse coughed up blood, beginning her own slow march toward death. She was resolved to remain at the foot of the cross, as she had said 10 years earlier. Spend time before the cross—at home or in church.

HOLY SATURDAY *I ask Jesus to draw me into the flames of His love, to unite me so closely to Him that He live and act in me.*

- Thérèse recorded this plea in the final pages of her soul's story. Dare to pray it with her.

Carol Ann Morrow is an Associate of the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana, and author of other Catholic Updates and books, including *Forgiving Is Smart for Your Heart* (Abbey Press).

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(Ken Overberg, SJ)

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ST. THÉRÈSE'S LITTLE WAY: OUR GUIDE THROUGH LENT



St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897) spent her short life almost entirely in France. She made one exceptional trip to the feet of Pope Leo XIII in Rome. There, at age 15, she boldly asked to become a cloistered Carmelite.

In 1894, Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus was asked to write her childhood memories, the beginning of her spiritual autobiography, *Story of a Soul*. Its pages detail the "Little Way of Spiritual Childhood," which is our path this Lent.

May the wisdom of the Little Flower guide your growth in everyday goodness and greater awareness of grace.

by Carol Ann Morrow

ASH WEDNESDAY *I come to sing the mercies of the Lord.*

- On the first page of her autobiography, Thérèse writes that her story is a tale of God's mercies. Recall the many mercies you have experienced. Begin this season with gratitude.

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY *Love attracts love.*

- Near the end of her story, Thérèse speaks eloquently of love. She acknowledges that she is able to love only because Jesus has first loved her. Acknowledge the love Jesus has placed in your heart as the source of your own acts of love.

FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY *It is in my weakness that I glory and I expect each day to discover new imperfections in myself.*

- For many, Lent is about the quest to be more perfect. Thérèse freely admitted she was not perfect but was counting on God's merciful love. When you sense your imperfection, ask Jesus to borrow from the rich mine of God's mercy.

SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY *True glory is that which will last eternally, and to reach it, it isn't necessary to perform striking works but to hide oneself and practice virtue in such a way that the left hand knows not what the right is doing.*

- At Lent's beginning, Thérèse's observation about hiding one's good works is an appropriate caution. Keep your resolutions to yourself. Bask in God's merciful love.

FIRST WEEK: SEEK OUT YOUR IMAGES

SUNDAY *Just as the sun shines simultaneously on the tall cedars and on each little flower as though it were alone on the earth, so Our Lord is occupied particularly with each soul as though there were no others like it.*

- Consider what flower or tree best describes your soul. Reach up to the sun in your prayer.



MONDAY *Thérèse had vanished as a drop of water is lost in the immensity of the ocean. Jesus alone remained.*

- Allow every experience with water—as cleanser, refreshment, relaxation—to remind you of Jesus.

TUESDAY *God is more tender than a mother.*

- Recall a happy experience of being mothered by someone. Imitate that tenderness to another.

WEDNESDAY *I feel the vocation of the WARRIOR, THE PRIEST, THE APOSTLE, THE DOCTOR, THE MARTYR.*

- Name your spiritual calling. Pray within that calling—as warrior, priest, apostle, doctor, or martyr.

THURSDAY *I am a little brush that Jesus has chosen in order to paint His own image in the souls . . . entrusted to my care.*

- What is your favorite image of Jesus? Use that image to inspire your prayer.

FRIDAY *I had offered myself . . . to the Child Jesus as His little plaything. I told Him . . . to use me like a little ball of no value which He could throw on the ground, push with His foot, pierce, leave in a corner, or press to His heart if it pleased Him.*

- What "plaything" might you be for the Child Jesus? In prayer, picture yourself entertaining Jesus.

SATURDAY *One feels that to do good is as impossible without God's help as to make the sun shine at night.*

- Bask in the sunlight literally or figuratively. Experience the divine warmth and energy.

SECOND WEEK: MEASURE YOUR LITTLENESS

SUNDAY *I applied myself to practicing little virtues, not having the capability of practicing the great.*

- Choose a small challenge: to smile, to be silent, to be thankful.

MONDAY *God cannot inspire unrealizable desires. I can, then, in spite of my littleness, aspire to holiness.*

- Focus on a virtue to which God is calling you. Seek opportunities to express it.



TUESDAY *Little children are as pleasing to their parents when they are asleep as well as when they are wide awake.*

- Extend your night prayers. Experience your self cradled in God's arms as you close your eyes in sleep.

WEDNESDAY *I look upon myself as a weak little bird. . . . I have only an eagle's EYES AND*

HEART.

- Imagine yourself as a wren. Hide yourself, as the psalmist says, in the shadow of God's wings.

THURSDAY *The elevator which must raise me to heaven is Your arms, O Jesus! And for this I had no need to grow up, but rather I had to remain little.*

- Thérèse saw herself as too small to climb the "stairway of perfection." She invites you to surrender strenuous effort and allow yourself to be lifted by—and to—the Lord.

FRIDAY *You can see that I am a very little soul and that I can offer God only very little things.*

- Nothing is so small that it escapes heavenly notice. Like Thérèse, choose not to complain about petty annoyances.

SATURDAY *I am but a poor little thing who would return to nothingness if Your divine glance did not give me life from one moment to the next.*

- Thérèse sees herself as a little bird, nourished by the Eucharist. Visit the Blessed Sacrament.

THIRD WEEK: FIND WAYS TO PRAY

SUNDAY *If the big feasts were rare, each week brought one that was very dear to my heart, namely Sunday! What a day Sunday was for me! It was God's feast day, and feast of rest.*

- Observe a day of rest. Thérèse was confident that God loved her just as much at rest as awake.

MONDAY *I would try to fish with my little line, but I preferred to go alone and sit down on the grass. . . . Without knowing what it was to meditate, my soul was absorbed in real prayer. I listened to distant sounds, the murmuring of the wind, etc.*

- Thérèse's childhood experience can be yours. Prayerfully attend to the sounds of God's creation.



TUESDAY *When I saw all these beauties very profound thoughts came to life in my soul. I seemed to understand already the grandeur of God and the marvels of heaven.*

- Thérèse is speaking of the Swiss mountains and lakes. Visit a natural setting and drink in the beauty created by God.

WEDNESDAY *It is especially the Gospels that sustain me during my hours of prayer, for in them I find what is necessary for my poor little soul.*

- Use the Gospels to inspire your prayer. You, too, will find in them what you need.

THURSDAY *Jesus has no need of books or teachers to instruct souls; He teaches without the noise of words.*

- Set aside your usual pattern of prayer. Listen—for comfort, inspiration, and instruction.

FRIDAY *I find just when I need them certain lights that I had not seen until then, and it isn't most frequently during my hours of prayer that these are most abundant but rather in the midst of my daily occupations.*

- Focus on your most humdrum activities. What does God whisper as you drive or wash dishes or eat lunch?

SATURDAY *I say very simply to God what I wish to say, without composing beautiful sentences, and He always understands.*

- Write a short prayer. Repeat it frequently throughout this day.



FOURTH WEEK: LIVE IN LOVE

SUNDAY *Without love, all works are nothing, even the most dazzling, such as raising the dead to life and converting peoples.*

- Thérèse wanted to be both missionary and martyr, but she acknowledged that the greatest vocation is love. How will you embrace the vocation to love this week?

MONDAY *I experienced a great desire to work for the conversion of sinners.*

- Young Thérèse was inspired to pray for the conversion of a condemned criminal. Pray about the day's news.

TUESDAY *See, then, all that Jesus lays claim to from us; He has no need of our works but only of our love.*

- Thérèse made this observation regarding the scriptural woman at the well. Bear public witness to your love of God.

WEDNESDAY *In the heart of the Church, . . . I shall be Love.*

- Though Thérèse was cloistered, she embraced the world in prayer. Focus today's prayers of petition on another continent. Expand your knowledge as well as your prayer.

THURSDAY *I understood that LOVE COMPRISED ALL VOCATIONS, THAT LOVE WAS EVERYTHING, THAT IT EMBRACED ALL TIMES AND PLACES. . . . IN A WORD, THAT IT WAS ETERNAL!*

- Thérèse emphasizes what she had pondered in St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12–13). Reach beyond your usual boundaries to include someone new.

FRIDAY *A soul . . . burning with love cannot remain inactive.*

- When Thérèse wrote this passionate phrase, she was in her final illness. Should you experience pain of any kind today, unite yourself to the life and death of Jesus.

SATURDAY *Love is repaid by love alone.*

- This phrase from St. John of the Cross is on the coat of arms Thérèse designed for herself. What motto would you choose?

FIFTH WEEK: EMBRACE OTHERS WITH LOVE

SUNDAY *The most beautiful thoughts are nothing without good works.*

- Review your journey with Thérèse this Lent. What has been most difficult? Try it again.

MONDAY *He is always using His creatures as instruments to carry on His work in souls.*

- Be alert for messengers of God in disguise.

