

# HOLY HEROES

## Saint Therese of Lisieux-The Little Flower

Feast day- Oct.1

Therese Martin was born in 1873 in Alencon, France. She was the youngest in a family of five girls. Her mother died of breast cancer when Therese was only 4 years old. Her 16 year old sister, Pauline, became like a second mother to her.

When she was only 10 years old, Therese became very sick with a fever. One night in her room, she prayed for healing in front of a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Mary smiled at her. The fever left instantly and from then on, Therese knew the power of prayer.

Therese joined the convent at age fifteen and became a Carmelite nun in the town of Lisieux. She said her mission was to make God loved on earth. She knew as a Carmelite nun she would never be able to perform great deeds.

*"The only way I can prove my love is my scattering flowers and these flowers are every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least actions for love."* She was convinced that anyone could become holy who truly loved God and did each small thing well.

In spite of her imperfections and littleness, Therese wanted to become a saint. She read the words in Holy Scripture, "Whosoever is a little one, come to me." She wrote, *"It is your arms, Jesus, that are the lift to carry me to heaven. And so there is no need for me to grow up. I must stay little and become less and less."*

She became sick with tuberculosis in 1896. She tried to remain smiling and cheerful through her terrible sufferings. She felt herself united with Jesus-on the cross. She died on September 30, 1897 at the age of 24. After she died her sister Pauline, also a nun, had her journals published into a book called, *The Story of a Soul*. Therese's "little way" of trusting in Jesus to make her holy and relying on small daily sacrifices and humility instead of great deeds appealed to thousands who were trying to find holiness in ordinary lives. She was canonized in 1925, only 28 years after her death.

Let us never be annoyed by little problems and sufferings, but let us offer them to God as acts of love, because it is the little things that keep the kingdom of God going. To learn more of the life of St. Therese, see the movie, "Therese" on DVD.