

1873 – 1897

## Saint Theresa of Lisieux



A Doctor of the Church, Therese Martin was born on January 12, 1873 at Alençon in France into a family that was devoutly Catholic. In 1888, little Therese, at only 15 years of age, crossed the garden into the Carmelite cloister, where she would remain until her death. From the time of her infancy, Therese felt irresistibly attracted to the Eucharist, and with these words describes her First Communion: “What indescribable memories even the smallest details of this day left in my soul!....It was a kiss of love, I felt how much I was loved and within myself I said: “I love you, and I give myself to You forever.” Saint Therese had a special love for processions of the Blessed Sacrament. In her diary, she wrote on this subject: “What joy it was for me to sprinkle flower petals along the path on which our gracious God was moving....I threw the petals as high in the air as I could and I was so happy when I was able to touch the Holy Monstrance with my petals.” Saint Therese says that “it is not to stay in a golden ciborium that Jesus comes down each day from heaven but rather to find another Heaven, that of our soul, where He finds His delight, and when a soul which can receive Jesus in His heart does not wish to receive Him, Jesus weeps. When the devil is not able to enter the sanctuary of a soul with sin, he tries in every way possible to keep the soul far away from the Lord and from Holy Communion.” Therese writes further, “Every morning, Jesus transforms a small white Host into His very self – to communicate to you His own life and to transform you into His likeness.” Therese felt within herself a great missionary vocation: she prayed above all for sinners and for priests.

Saint Therese offered her last Communion before dying for this intention: to obtain the return of a priest who had renounced his vocation. It is now known that the priest repented and died invoking the name of Jesus. Pope Pius XI proclaimed St. Therese and St. Francis Xavier Patrons of all Missionaries and Missions of the world.

