

# Saint Thérèse of Lisieux



Date of birth: January 2, 1873  
Birthplace: Alençon, France  
Date of death: September 30, 1897  
Canonization: May 17, 1925  
Feast Day: October 1

**Patron Saint of: Missions, Florists, Pilots, and France**

## About Thérèse:

Thérèse was born the youngest of five daughters to Zélie and Louis Martin. At age 3, Thérèse's mother, Zélie, would die from breast cancer. This loss would have a profound impact on the rest of Thérèse's short life. While her older sisters stepped in to fulfill the role of mother, Thérèse retracted into herself and became profoundly sad. She struggled in school, despite her intelligence, due to bullying from others. Her father pulled her out of school and hired in-home tutors. Her older sister, Pauline, left home to become a Carmelite nun. Shortly after her departure, Thérèse became very ill. While on her deathbed, Thérèse looked upon a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and prayed fervently for a cure. Within a few days, Thérèse miraculously recovered.

Thérèse received First Holy Communion and Confirmation at age 11, and began battling scrupulosity. She lived in constant fear of sinning. At age 13, Thérèse had a conversion of heart and developed a selflessness that reflected Jesus's love for others. She became convinced of her calling to become a Carmelite nun, and began to pursue her calling passionately. Though she was advised to wait to join the convent until she was 21, Thérèse made a pilgrimage to Rome and asked Pope Leo XIII for permission to join the Carmelites. He gave his blessing, and at age 15, Thérèse entered the cloistered monastery. Inside the monastery, she began to develop her "Little Way" of holiness, realizing that sainthood does not have to be achieved only by acts of greatness, but by many acts of smallness, offering everything as a sacrifice of love to God.

Thérèse's life was cut short by tuberculosis. In her final months, her Mother Superior asked that she write her life story. Obediently, Thérèse wrote her "Story of a Soul" - an autobiography that storied her journey to sainthood. Her final words were, "Oh, my God, I love you!" Thérèse was named a Doctor of the Church in 1997 by Pope St. John Paul II.

## A word from St. Thérèse:

"Do not imagine that love can be found without suffering, for we carry with us our human nature; and yet, what a source of merit it is!"

## Find out more:

**Websites:** [littleflower.org](http://littleflower.org)

**Books:** *Story of a Soul* by St. Thérèse of Lisieux

**Podcast:** Doctors of the Church Part 4 by Abiding Together podcast