

## Lenten Reflections 2020



As we watch the daily local, national, and world news, it is hard not to realize that there is an increase in violence and unrest across the globe. At times like these that require much prayer and self-sacrificing love so as to give witness to the love of Christ that dwells in our hearts.

St. Therese realized that she was a little soul that was incapable of great deeds despite her great desires to serve God in so many ways. One of these desires was to be a missionary so as to bring souls to know and love God. As a cloistered nun, she could not realize this. In prayer, the Holy Spirit enlightened her to realize that God had given her the vocation to be **Love** in the heart of the Church. That was her calling from the Lord.

We can often think that we are insignificant and can do little to better the world or serve God as we wish. However, that is not true. If we love God with our whole being and in turn love our neighbor for the love of Him, then we cooperate in God's plan.

The following are some of St. Therese's reflections on the love of God and neighbor. May they give food for thought and prayer as you journey through this Lenten season.

*There is one ONLY THING to do here below: to love Jesus, to win souls for Him so that He may be loved. Let us seize with jealous care every least opportunity of self-sacrifice. Let us refuse Him nothing - He does so want our love!*

*VI letter to her sister Celine*

*Love!...that is what I ask...I know but one thing now - to love Thee, O Jesus! Glorious deeds are not for me, I cannot preach the Gospel, shed my blood...what does it matter? My brothers toil instead of me, and I, the little child, I keep quite close to the royal throne, I love for those who fight.*

*Story of A Soul, Chapter XI*

*Seeing the eternal recompense so disproportionate to the trifling sacrifices of this life, I longed to love Jesus, to love Him ardently, to give him a thousand proofs of tenderness while yet I could do so...*

*Story of A Soul, Chapter V*

*In times of aridity when I am incapable of praying, of practicing virtue, I seek little opportunities, mere trifles, to give pleasure to Jesus; for instance, a smile, a pleasant word when inclined to be silent and to show weariness. If I find no opportunities, I at least tell Him again and again that I love Him; that is not difficult and it keeps alive the fire in my heart. Even though this fire of love might seem extinct I would still throw little straws upon the embers and I am certain it would rekindle.*

*XVI letter to her sister Celine*

*I know of one means only by which to attain to perfection: LOVE. Let us love, since our heart is made for nothing else. Sometimes I seek another word to express Love, but in this land of exile the word which begins and ends (St. Augustine) is quite incapable of rendering the vibrations of the soul; we must then adhere to this simple and only word: TO LOVE.*

*But on whom shall our poor heart lavish its love? Who shall be found that is great enough to be the recipient of its treasures? Will a human being know how to comprehend them, and above all will he be able to repay? There exists but one Being capable of comprehending love; it is Jesus; He alone can give us back infinitely more than we shall ever give to him.*

*Letter to her cousin, Marie Guerin*

*Ah! since that day love penetrates me and surrounds me; this Merciful Love each moment renews and purifies me, leaving in my heart no trace of sin. No, I cannot fear Purgatory; I know that I do not merit even to enter with the Holy Souls into that place of expiation, but I know too that the fire of Love is more sanctifying than the fire of Purgatory, I know that Jesus cannot will needless suffering for us, and that He would not inspire me with the desires I feel if He were unwilling to fulfill them.*

*Story of A Soul, Chapter VIII*

*Charity gave me the key to my vocation. I understood that the Church being a body composed of different members, the most essential, the most noble of all the organs would not be wanting to her; I understood that the Church has a heart and that this heart is burning with love; that it is love alone which makes the members work, that if love were to die away apostles would no longer preach the Gospel, martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. I understood that love comprises all vocations, that love is everything, that it embraces all times and all places because it is eternal!*

*Story of A Soul, Chapter XI*

*Her last words - looking at her crucifix: "OH!...I LOVE HIM!...MY GOD, I...LOVE...THEE!!!"*

*Story of A Soul, Chapter XII*

May the Lord bless you and your families abundantly during this Lenten season. We remember you all during our prayers before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

*The Poor Clare Nuns of Andover*