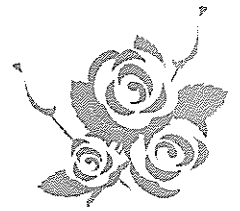
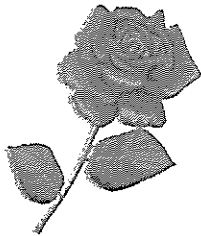


# St Thérèse

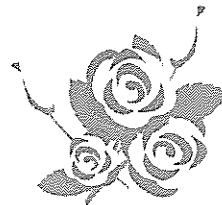


## Assembly



*The Visit of her relics to England*

**Sr Jude RSM**





# Introduction

## What are relics

“Relics in the end point beyond themselves to God, and any veneration or honour given to them is to honour God who has crowned the saints with glory, and who wishes to bless us through our love for, and appreciation of, his special friends.”

Fr Christopher O.Donnell O.Carm

A relic is either part of the physical remains of a holy person after his or her death (called “first class”), or an object that has been in contact with his or her body (“second class” relic). The most important relic is that of the Cross of Jesus Christ, which is traditionally held to have been discovered by St Helena during her famous pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 326.

The veneration of relics is found in many religions and is rooted in the natural human instinct to treat with reverence anything connected with those we love who have died.

## Relics in the Bible

In the Old Testament, miracles were worked through the cloak of the prophet Elijah (2KG. 2:14) and the bones of his follower Elisha (2KG.13:21). The New Testament speaks of healings worked by handkerchiefs that had been in contact with St Paul’s body (Acts 19:12).

## Relics in Church history

From earliest times the bodies of the martyrs were held in special veneration. The relics of St Polycarp (69-155), for example, were described as being “more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold.” In Rome, prayer services were held in the catacombs, and from the fourth century, the Eucharist was celebrated over the tombs of the martyrs. St Jerome (345-430) explained that the relics of the martyrs are honoured for the sake of him whose martyrs they are. St Augustine (345-430) added that their bodies were worthy of veneration since they served them during their lifetime as organs of the Holy Spirit. The Second Council of Nicea (787) laid down that no Church should be consecrated without relics of the saints being placed in the altar stone. This was reaffirmed by the Catholic Church in the 1977 “Rite of Dedication of a Church.”



### **More than bones**

An Irish bishop, reflecting on the visit of the St Thérèse relics in 2001, said that the casket contained “not just bones” but “the remains of a burnt out love for God.”

### **Pope Benedict XVI**

“ By inviting us to venerate the mortal remains of the martyrs and saints, the Church does not forget that, in the end, these are indeed just human bones, but they are bones that belonged to individuals touched by the transcendent power of God. The relics of the saints are traces of that invisible but real presence which sheds light upon the shadows of the world and reveals the kingdom of God in our midst. They cry out with us and in us ‘Maranatha!’- ‘Come Lord Jesus!’ ” (Address to Young People at Cologne, 2005)

### **Why venerate relics today?**

There are two main reasons for venerating relics today:

Firstly, God shows his approval of the veneration of relics by granting healings and other graces. This is especially the case with St Thérèse, where miracles began happening at her tomb soon after her death, and have continued whenever her relics have travelled.

Secondly, God uses a variety of physical things to strengthen our spiritual life. Creation itself helps us to know something of God’s wisdom and love. The sacraments use bread, wine, oil, water and other physical things to give us spiritual life, provided we receive them in faith. Relics help us to feel close to a holy person, thus making more aware that the saints are our friends, and fostering in us a desire for holiness.

Thirdly, we must not stop at the relic, but move deeper to the saint. Neither can we stop at the saint, but we use the example and intercession of the saint to move to God.





## Assembly or Service

### *St Thérèse of Lisieux* (Feast day 1st October)

Her relics visit England and Wales September 16<sup>th</sup> – October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

**Entrance music** (tape or CD) Choose a suitable piece of music

#### **Introducing Thérèse**

Thérèse of Lisieux is one of the best-loved saints in the Church and was known as “the Little Flower”. This is a name she gave herself, when she was writing the story of her life, the book that told the world about the graces the Lord had given her. A best-seller, it has been translated into nearly fifty languages, called *The Story of a Soul*.

Thérèse Martin was born at Alençon, in France on January 2, 1873. She entered the Carmelite Monastery at Lisieux at age 15, where she took the name Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face. She died nine years later on September 30, 1897, when she was twenty four years old loving with a heart as big as the world itself. She said: “I’m not dying, I’m entering into Life.” She was canonised in 1925 and was declared Patroness of the Missions in 1927, and a Doctor of the Church in 1997.

**What are relics and why we venerate them** (see introduction)

#### **Symbolic Focus**

- Images of Thérèse
- Some roses.
- Words of Thérèse “My way is all confidence and love”
- Bible on lectern (Thérèse was nourished and sustained by the Word of God).

#### **Sign of the Cross**

Paintings of Thérèse often show her holding a Cross; there is also a lovely photograph of her standing besides a big cross in the grounds of the convent. We begin then, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

## **Suggested Hymn**

St Thérèse told us that her way was confidence and love so we unite with her in praising God as we sing;

*Old and New Hymnal* My God loves me n.359

Thérèse recognised the Bible not simply as a set of rules but rather as a story of God's love:

“Make me wise in the ways of heaven.  
Show me the secrets hidden in the Gospel.  
Ah! that golden book  
Is my dearest treasure.”



## **Liturgy of the Word**

### **Reading**

I John 3:1

See how much the Father has loved us ! His love is so great that we are called God's children- and so, in fact, we are. This is why the world does not know us: it has not known God. My dear friends, we are now God's children.

This is the Word of the Lord  
R/ **Thanks be to God**

### **Responsorial Psalm**

Psalm 8:1-2

O Lord, our Lord, your greatness is seen in all the world!  
R/ **We thank you for your great love.**

Your praise reaches up to the heavens; is  
Sung by children and babies

**R/ We thank you for your great love.**

## **Gospel Acclamation**

*sung*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

We are already the children of God but what but what we are to be in the future has not been revealed. Alleluia.

## **Gospel**

***Matthew 18:1-3***

The disciples came to Jesus, asking, “who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Jesus called a child, made him stand in front of them, and said, “I assure you that unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**R/Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

## **Comment on Reading**

Jesus is telling his disciples, who were grown-ups, that they must be like children. Jesus knew that not all children are nice, that many children are naughty, and can be mean and selfish, even violent. So what is it that Jesus wants people to copy in children? We find the answer in Thérèse. She taught the Church about what she called “her little way”. It is based on confidence in God’s love and mercy. We can be little before the all-powerful God. What God wants from most of us are not big things, but that we do small things well. In this way, everyone is a child. None of us can do big things for God, but all of us can surely do small things. Thérèse was so good at doing little things that she became a saint. She is very holy and God listens to her prayers, sending what she called, “a shower of roses” to the world. She knew about God so well that she is a big teacher of the whole Church, called “a doctor of the Church” (*from the word docuts/docta, which means a learned man or woman, one who teaches*).

## **Response to the reading**

Pupils from each class place a rose at the picture of Thérèse.

## **Prayers**

We pray for the Church, which Thérèse loved so much.

Thérèse showed the Church how to love.

**R./ *Help us to trust and love like Thérèse.***

Thérèse prayed and suffered for missions and missionaries.

**R./ *Help us to trust and love like Thérèse.***

Thérèse taught us to serve and love God in little things.

*R./ Help us to trust and love like Thérèse.*

Thérèse kept going even in difficulties and bad health.

*R./ Help us to trust and love like Thérèse.*

Thérèse left an example to all laity, priests and sisters.

*R./ Help us to trust and love like Thérèse.*

Other prayers...

*R./ Help us to trust and love like Thérèse.*

**When Therese found it difficult to pray she always turned to the prayer Jesus taught us:**

**Our Father** (*perhaps sung*)

### **Thoughts from Thérèse to ponder**

- *Let us do little things well today.*
- *Be confident of God's love for us.*
- *Let no opportunity for love pass you by.*
- *I will spend my heaven doing good on earth*

### **Closing Prayer**

Loving Father, you promised your kingdom to little ones. Give us the grace to walk confidently in the way of St Thérèse so that we may radiate your love to all.

### **Blessing**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

### **Suggested concluding hymns**

*Old and New*    Let there be love shared among us    n. 726

*Old and New*    Love is his word    n. 338



# *St Thérèse*      **Doctor of the Church**



*Leads us to God through her “little way of confidence and love” we meet Thérèse now through some of her own words:*

Jesus loves a cheerful heart. He loves persons who are always smiling.

It is so much more generous to give than merely to lend.

If we want to live a life of love of God, we must not fail in our love towards our neighbour.

During the short moments that still remain to us on earth, let us not waste our time...  
Let us save souls; let us be apostles.

Sentiments of charity are not enough; they must find expression.



Leave the riches that will fade for those of Heaven.

Serve God. He will take care of the results.

I came to love God more and more as I grew up and often offered my heart to Him ... I used to try hard to please Jesus in everything I did and never offend Him.

You ask me for a method of attaining perfection. I know of love and only love. Love can do all things.

You cannot become half a saint. You must be a whole saint or no saint at all.

To become a saint, one has to suffer much, always aim at perfection and forget oneself.

He does not need our works, only our LOVE.

Our Lord is more tender than any mother. A mother is always ready to forgive her child's little involuntary faults.

I only ask one grace – may I never offend You.



My dresses, lovely as they were, and my presents – these could never fill my heart. Jesus alone could do that.

I wanted so much to love Jesus with my whole heart and prove it in a thousand ways while I still had the chance.

Never be discouraged.



Love of Jesus, and that alone, gave me the strength to face these difficulties.

God's mercy exercises endless patience.

Every moment He is guiding and inspiring me... Most often it is not at prayer that they come, but while I go about my daily duties.

The cross has followed me from the cradle, but Jesus has taught me to love it passionately.

My way is the "Way of Spiritual Childhood", the way of confidence and total abandonment to God.

Love can accomplish all things. Things that are most impossible become easy where love is at work.

Remember that nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all that you do with love.

God has given me such a faithful heart that once I love, I love for always.

How little we know of the goodness and merciful love of Jesus.



Leave everything in His hands without keeping anything in reserve.

Yes, my God! Yes, my God. I accept anything.

Nothing is impossible to love.

A place is kept for us if we but love Him dearly together with our Father and the Spirit of Love.

All the friends of God have followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

What I seek is love. I want nothing else but to love you, O Jesus.

Little things done out of love are those that charm the Heart of Christ... The most brilliant deeds, when done without love, are but nothingness.

I longed for Heaven, my true home, where it would always be Sunday.



It is only that which is eternal that is capable of satisfying our hearts.

I like to hide my pains from the good Lord, because I want to give Him the impression that I am always happy; but I hide nothing from the Blessed Virgin; to her I tell everything.

She has given us so many proofs that she cares for us like a Mother.

A mother's heart always understands, even when her child can do no more than lisp.

The insight of the most skilled doctors can't compare with that of a mother's heart.

I made up my mind that I must consecrate myself in some special way to Our Lady.

We must set to work and pray very hard.

The power of prayer is certainly wonderful. One might liken it to a queen who always has free access to the king and can obtain everything she asks.

I just act like a child who can't read; I tell God, quite simply, all that I want to say, and he always understands.

Do you realise that Jesus is there in the tabernacle expressing for you, for you alone?

All Heaven entered my soul when I received Jesus... it was joy alone, deep ineffable joy that filled my heart.

I longed for nothing but to receive Him.



If only I were a priest! How lovingly I would bear You in my hands, my Jesus, when my voice had brought You down from Heaven.

Feast Days! Those words conjure up more wonderful memories! I did so love them... that again was a foretaste of Heaven.

Missionaries are best helped by prayer and sacrifice.



One mission field alone would never be enough; all the world, even its remotest islands, must be my mission field.

I saw that the Church must have a heart, that this heart must be on fire with love.

I offer every step for some missionary who, far away, is exhausted by his work for souls; I offer my exhaustion to relieve his.

During meditation I am sustained above all else by the Gospels. They supply my poor soul's every need.

The Gospels are always yielding up to me new lights and mysterious hidden meanings.

Draw upon the riches opened up by Our Lord in the Gospels. I search the depths of His adorable words.

Peace soon filled my soul, and I knew that I was loved, not only by those on earth, but by those in Heaven too.

*[Taken from: Sermon in a Sentence Vol 1 St Thérèse of Lisieux – John P McClernon]*

## **Tour dates and locations for the visit of her relics are as follows:**

“The heart of St Thérèse’s message is, in her own words, that God ‘burns with the desire to come into your heart’.

*Mgr Keith Baltrop Tour Organiser*



- 16 Sept. Portsmouth Cathedral**
- 17 Sept. Plymouth Cathedral**
- 18 Sept. St Teresa of Lisieux, Taunton**
- 19 Sept. St Chad’s Cathedral, Birmingham**
- 21 Sept. Sacred Heart & St Teresa, Coleshill, Birmingham**
- 22 Sept. Cardiff Cathedral**
- 23 Sept. St Teresa’s, North Filton, Bristol**
- 24 Sept. Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool**
- 25 Sept. Salford Cathedral**
- 27 Sept. Manchester University Chaplaincy**
- 28 Sept. Lancaster Cathedral**
- 30 Sept. St Andrew’s Newcastle-upon-Tyne**
- 1 Oct. York Minster**
- 2 Oct. Middlesborough Cathedral**
- 3 Oct. Leeds Cathedral**
- 5 Oct. Nottingham Cathedral**
- 6 Oct. National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham**
- 7 Oct. Oxford Oratory**
- 8 Oct. St Joseph’s, Gerrards Cross**
- 9 Oct. Aylesford Priory**
- 11 Oct. Carmelite Church, Kensington, London**
- 12-15 Oct. Westminster Cathedral, London**

“I would like to preach the Gospel on the five continents... Until the consummation of the ages.”



## Thoughts on Thérèse from one of her Carmelite family today.

St. Thérèse wanted to be a missionary, to bring the knowledge of Jesus Christ to many peoples, but she remained in her monastery in France and died at the age of 24.

Yet in our days we are witnessing the fulfilment of her dream. Her relics are being taken to many parts of the world. Now it is our turn. These relics bring us into contact with the saint herself who teaches us all to trust in God's amazing love for us. *Let us welcome her.*

*Fr Joseph Chalmers O.Carm (Former Prior General)*

