

About SAINTS THÉRÈSE, LOUIS & ZÉLIE

We desire earnestly that all the Faithful of Christ should render themselves worthy of partaking in the abundant profusion of graces resulting from the intercession of "little Thérèse." But we desire much more earnestly that all the faithful should study her in order to copy her, becoming children themselves, since otherwise they cannot, according to the oracle of the Master, arrive at the Kingdom of Heaven.

Homily of Pope Pius XI at the Canonisation of St Thérèse,
17 May 1925



Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Generations of Catholics have admired this Saint, referred to as the "Little Flower", and found in her short life more inspiration for their own lives than in volumes by theologians.

Thérèse was born in France in 1873, and died when she was 24, after having lived as a cloistered Carmelite for less than 10 years. She never went on missions, never founded a religious order, and never performed any explicitly great works.

The only book of hers, published after her death, was a brief edited version of her journal *Story of a Soul*. Collections of her letters and restored versions of her journals have been recently re-published. Within just 28 years of her death, the public demand was so great that she was canonised.



Thérèse in 1886, age 13

Saint Zélie Martin



Zélie Guerin (1831 - 1877) was a lace maker. Born into a military family, Zélie described her childhood and youth as "dismal". Her mother and father showed her little affection.

As a young lady, she sought unsuccessfully to enter the religious life. Zélie then learned the Alençon lace-making technique and soon mastered this painstaking craft. Richly talented, creative, eager and endowed with common sense, she started her own business and became quite successful.

Notable as these achievements were, Zélie was yet to reveal the depths of the strength, faith and courage she possessed until she wholeheartedly undertook her life as a wife and mother.

Louis and Zélie understood that they could sanctify themselves not despite marriage but through, in, and by marriage, and that their nuptials would be considered as the starting point for a rising together. Today the Church does not only admire the holiness of these children of Normandy, a gift for all, but She is reflected in this Blessed couple who contribute to make more splendid and beautiful the gown of a bride married in the Church. She doesn't only admire the holiness of their life; she recognises in this couple the eminent holiness of the institution of conjugal love as conceived by the Creator himself. The conjugal love of Louis and Zélie Martin is a pure reverberation of the love of Christ for his Church, but it is also a pure reverberation of the love "resplendent, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and immaculate" (Ephesians 5:27) in the manner that the Church loves her spouse: the Christ.

Homily of Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, at the beatification of Louis and Zélie Martin, Lisieux, World Day of Missions, October 19, 2008

Saint Louis Martin



Louis Martin (1823 - 1894) was a watchmaker by trade. He also skilfully managed his wife's lace business and was born too into a family of soldiers. Louis absorbed the sense of order and discipline that army life engenders, but his temperament tended toward things of the spirit.

At age 22, young Louis sought to enter religious life at the monastery of the Augustinian Canons of the Great St Bernard Hospice in the Alps. The Abbot insisted the young candidate learn Latin, which he found extremely challenging, and he eventually had to leave the monastery due to illness.

Fortunately, Louis' desire for holiness was realised through his love for his wife, his redemptive suffering, and his later years as a single father following Zélie's death.

He is now venerated as a Patron Saint of mental health issues due to his struggles with dementia toward the end of his life.