

October 1: St. Theresa of the Child Jesus (1873-1897)

"I prefer the monotony of obscure sacrifice to all ecstasies. To pick up a pin for love can convert a soul." These are the words of Theresa of the Child Jesus, a Carmelite nun called the "Little Flower," who lived a cloistered life of obscurity in the convent of Lisieux, France. And her preference for hidden sacrifice did indeed convert souls. Few saints of God are more popular than this young nun. Her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, is read and loved throughout the world. Thérèse Martin entered the convent at the age of 15 and died in 1897 at the age of 24.

Life in a Carmelite convent is indeed uneventful and consists mainly of prayer and hard domestic work. But Theresa possessed that holy insight that redeems the time, however dull that time may be. She saw in quiet suffering redemptive suffering, suffering that was indeed her apostolate. Theresa said she came to the Carmel convent "to save souls and pray for priests." And shortly before she died, she wrote: "I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth."

On October 19, 1997, Pope John Paul II proclaimed her a Doctor of the Church, the third woman to be so recognized in light of her holiness and the influence of her teaching on spirituality in the Church. Her parents, Louis and Zélie, were beatified in 2008.

Theresa has much to teach our age of the image, the appearance, the "sell." We have become a dangerously self-conscious people, painfully aware of the need to be fulfilled, yet knowing we are not. Theresa, like so many saints, sought to serve others, to do something outside herself, to forget herself in quiet acts of love. She is one of the great examples of the gospel paradox that we gain our life by losing it, and that the seed that falls to the ground must die in order to live (see John 12).

Preoccupation with self separates modern men and women from God, from their fellow human beings and ultimately from themselves. We must relearn to forget ourselves, to contemplate a God who draws us out of ourselves and to serve others as the ultimate expression of selfhood.

OCTOBER 2020

Prayer from Taizé

The exchange with God becomes real for us in prayer: by his Holy Spirit, God comes to dwell within us. By his word and by the sacraments, Christ gives himself to us. In return, we can surrender everything to him.

Prayers of Intercession for our parish

- As we start a new term, let us pray for all of those who lead, enable, and participate in the works of prayer, evangelisation, and charity undertaken by our parish, that we may bring ever more people to hope and joy in Jesus Christ.
- Let us pray that everyone in our parish will hear and respond to Bishop Philip's invitation to 'come back to the Lord' who is truly present in our churches, whilst continuing to pray for those who are still unable, for whatever reason, to be there physically.
- Let us pray for young people facing new challenges or struggling with difficulties, that they may be filled with the strength and peace of Christ.

Some tweets by Pope Francis

- We are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what He dreamed of when he created it and correspond with His plan for peace, beauty and fullness.
- The Kingdom of Heaven is the opposite of the superfluous things the world offers, the opposite of a dull life; it is a treasure that renews everyday life and leads it to extend towards wider horizons.
- Men and women who pray know that hope is stronger than discouragement. They believe that love is more powerful than death, and that love will surely triumph one day, even if it be in times and ways that we do not know.

October 17: Blessed Contardo Ferrini (1859-1902)

Contardo Ferrini was the son of a teacher who went on to become a learned man himself, one acquainted with some dozen languages. Today he is known as the patron of universities.

Born in Milan, he received a doctorate in law in Italy and then earned a scholarship that enabled him to study Roman-Byzantine law in Berlin. As a renowned legal expert, he taught in various schools of higher education until he joined the faculty of the University of Pavia, where he was considered an outstanding authority on Roman law.

Contardo was learned about the faith he lived and loved. "Our life," he said, "must reach out toward the Infinite, and from that source we must draw whatever we can expect of merit and dignity." As a scholar he studied the ancient biblical languages and read the Scriptures in them. His speeches and papers show his understanding of the relationship of faith and science. He attended daily Mass and became a lay Franciscan, faithfully observing the Third Order rule of life. He also served through membership in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

His death in 1902 at the age of 43 occasioned letters from his fellow professors that praised him as a saint; the people of Suna, where he lived, insisted that he be declared a saint. Pope Pius XII beatified Contardo in 1947.

Thanks to people like Contardo, our Church long ago laid to rest the idea that science and faith are incompatible. We thank God for the many ways science has made our lives better. All that remains to us is to help ensure that the rest of the world, especially impoverished nations, gets to enjoy the fruits of scientific advance.

CALLED TO BECOME

You are called to become
A perfect creation.
No one is called to become
Who you are called to be.

It does not matter
How short or tall
Or thickset or slow
You may be.
It does not matter
Whether you sparkle with life
Or are silent as a still pool,
Whether you sing your song aloud
Or weep in darkness.
It does not matter
Whether you feel loved or admired
Or unloved and alone
For you are called to become
A perfect creation.
No one's shadow
Should cloud your becoming,
No one's light
Should dispel your spark.
For the Lord delights in you,
Jealously looks upon you
And encourages with gentle joy
Every moment of the Spirit within you.
Unique and loved you stand,
Beautiful or stunted in your growth
But never without hope and life.
For you are called to become
A perfect creation.
This becoming may be
Gentle or harsh,
Subtle or violent,
But it never ceases,
Never pauses or hesitates,
Only *is*-
Creative force-
Calling you
Calling you to become
A perfect creation.

Edwina Gately