

Liturgy for the Feast of St Thérèse of Lisieux

1 October 2015 Thursday of Week 26

Preparation

- Decorate the sanctuary or focal point with flowers, particularly roses. If you have a statue or picture of St Thérèse of Lisieux, give it some prominence.
- Bring a block of pink or red Post-it notes and cut and shape them into rose-petal shapes (if you can't buy them ready-made in that shape).
- Distribute one Post-it note to every participant in the liturgy and encourage them to write their intercessory intentions in a few brief words on the Post-it note.
- Prepare a music sheet, or make the words of the chosen hymns available. Hymn numbers refer to the *Celebration Hymnal* (McCrimmons, Great Wakering, Essex, 1994). Suggested hymns have been selected for relevance to the theme and are merely indicative. Other music may be substituted.
- Bring a CD player/laptop/projector for any 'canned' or 'YouTubed' background music or PowerPoint presentations you intend to use.

Gathering Hymn
(see appendix with hymn choices)

Introduction by liturgical leader

St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, virgin and doctor of the Church.

Thérèse Martin (1873-1897) from Lisieux, Normandy, was a Carmelite nun, popularly known as 'The Little Flower' or as 'St Thérèse of Lisieux'. She entered the Discalced Carmelites in 1888 at the age of 15, joining her two elder sisters. After some years as assistant novice mistress, and having wrestled with the dark night of faith, she died of tuberculosis, at the age of 24. Her spiritual autobiography The Story of a Soul appeared soon after her death it had an immediate impact as an innovative and humble approach to religious practice that was called 'the little way'. Because of her intense prayer for missionaries, she was declared co-patron of the missions in 1927, and in 1997 was declared a Doctor of the Church and for this reason, Missio also has a devotion to St Thérèse.



Reading from St Thérèse's autobiography *The Story of a Soul*

When I had looked upon the mystical body of the Church, I recognised myself in none of the members which St Paul described, and what is more, I desired to distinguish myself more favourably within the whole body. Love appeared to me to be the hinge for my vocation. Indeed I knew that the Church had a body composed of various members, but in this body the necessary and more noble member was not lacking; I knew that the Church had a heart and that such a heart appeared to be aflame with love. I knew that one love drove the members of the Church to action, that if this love were extinguished, the apostles would have proclaimed the Gospel no longer, the martyrs would have shed their blood no more. I saw and realised that love sets off the bounds of all vocations, that love is everything, that this same love embraces every time and every place. In one word, that love is everlasting.

Penitential Rite

We confess our failings in penitence and faith:

You are all loving, but we so often fail to love, either you or one another

R: Forgive us, Lord

You show us mercy, but we so often lack mercy towards those we feel have wronged us

R: Forgive us, Lord

You are joy, yet we so often fail to radiate your joy in our lives and our behaviour

R: Forgive us, Lord

Glorious God,

We thank you for your infinite grace and your endless patience with us. We thank you for forgiving us and setting us free.

Scripture Reading

Gospel: **Luke 10:1-12**

Jesus sends out the seventy-two disciples to announce the reign of God.

Hymn (see hymn choices below)

Bidding Prayers

(whilst singing: O Lord hear my prayer (Taizé) CH 542, as many times as appropriate)

People are invited to bring their red/pink Post-it note prayer intention rose-petals up and to arrange these into a series of rose-shapes on a centrally displayed poster in front of the altar.

Reading

Jesus' whole life, his way of dealing with the poor, his actions, his integrity, his simple daily acts of generosity, and finally his complete self-giving, is precious and reveals the mystery of his divine life. Whenever we encounter this anew, we become convinced that it is exactly what others need, even though they may not recognize it: 'What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you' (Acts 17:23). Sometimes we lose our enthusiasm for mission because we forget that the Gospel responds to our deepest needs, since we were created for what the Gospel offers us: friendship with Jesus and love of our brothers and sisters. If we succeed in expressing adequately and with beauty the essential content of the Gospel, surely this message will speak to the deepest yearnings of people's hearts: 'The missionary is convinced that, through the working of the Spirit, there already exists in individuals and peoples an expectation, even if an unconscious one, of knowing the truth about God, about man, and about how we are to be set free from sin and death. The missionary's enthusiasm in proclaiming Christ comes from the conviction that he is responding to that expectation'.^[208] Enthusiasm for evangelization is based on this conviction. We have a treasure of life and love which cannot deceive, and a message which cannot mislead or disappoint. It



penetrates to the depths of our hearts, sustaining and ennobling us. It is a truth which is never out of date because it reaches that part of us which nothing else can reach. Our infinite sadness can only be cured by an infinite love.

Evangelii Gaudium, 265

Closing Prayer

May all our prayers be joined with those of St Thérèse of Lisieux. May her passionate and devoted support for missionaries inspire our own spirituality, and remind us to live our Gospel values.

Following her example, may we live simply, humbly and in service to the neediest in our world, ever responsive to the cry of creation and the voice of the poor.

AMEN

Closing Hymn

Possible Hymn Choices

Gathering

- Mayenziwe (Your will be done)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtWyzmP-Wwl>
- God has chosen me (Farrell) CH 212
- As the deer pants for the water CH 54

Reflective/Prayer Time

- One bread, one body CH 578
- Taste and see the goodness of the Lord (Boyce/Stamley)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSZfYAd0004>
- Adoramus te Domine (Taizé) CH 11
- Hamba nathi Mkululu wethu
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6gg2ITF56Y>
- Blest are the pure in heart CH 88

Concluding/Mission/Commissioning

- Send me Jesus (Thuma Mina) CH 636
- Take my hands (and make them as your own) CH 676
- Oh the word of my Lord (Song of a Young Prophet) CH 572
- Blest be the Lord CH 91
- I the Lord of sea and sky (Here I am Lord) CH 285

Readings for Liturgy for St Thérèse of Lisieux

1 October 2015

Gospel: **Luke 10:1-12**

Jesus sends out the seventy-two disciples to announce the reign of God.

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him, in pairs, to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, "Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near." I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.'

Missio 23 Eccleston Square London SW1V 1NU

Telephone: 020 7821 9755

Email: worldmissionsunday@missio.org.uk

Web: missio.org.uk



Reg Charity No. 1056651

Liturgy of the Rose Petals – St Thérèse, Pope Francis and *Laudato Si'*

Introduction and Background Notes

St Thérèse loved nature, and would often use the imagery of nature to explain how the Divine Presence is everywhere, and how everything is connected in God's loving care and arms. Thérèse described herself as 'the Little Flower of Jesus' comparing herself to the simple wild flowers in forests and fields, unnoticed by most, yet flourishing nonetheless and giving glory to God. Thérèse did not see herself as a resplendent rose or lily, more like a small wild flower. This is how she understood herself before the Lord – simple and hidden, but blooming where God had planted her.

Thérèse strongly believed that Jesus was delighted in his 'little flower', just as a child can be fascinated by a simple flower. Thérèse understood that she was just like the tiny flower in the forest, surviving and flourishing through all the seasons of the year. Because of God's grace, she knew that she was stronger than she seemed. Following the Carmelite tradition, Thérèse saw the world as God's garden, and each person being a different kind of flower, enhancing the variety and beauty which Jesus delighted in.

Jesus set before me the book of nature. I understand how all the flowers God has created are beautiful, how the splendour of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not take away the perfume of the violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy. I understand that if all flowers wanted to be roses, nature would lose her springtime beauty, and the fields would no longer be decked out with little wild flowers. So it is in the world of souls, Jesus' garden. He has created smaller ones and those must be content to be daisies or violets destined to give joy to God's glances when He looks down at His feet. Perfection consists in doing His will, in being what He wills us to be.

St Thérèse is usually depicted holding an armful of roses. Historians and biographers of her life describe this as both metaphoric and real. On her deathbed in the convent sickroom, Thérèse looked out on the roses blooming in the gardens. They were among her favourite flowers. She had thrown rose petals as a child before the Blessed Sacrament. Reflecting on her

short and unremarkable life, she became aware that she still had a mission beyond her own death. She declared that after her death she would 'let fall a shower of roses'.

I will spend my heaven doing good upon earth. I will raise up a mighty host of little saints. My mission is to make God loved...

Shortly after her death, the rain of roses began. Sometimes roses literally appeared, and sometimes just the fragrance of them. Cures of painful and fatal diseases and many other miraculous experiences were attributed to her intercession.

On Sunday 8 September 2013,¹ the day after the long prayer vigil for peace in Syria – when some passages from texts written by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux were read out – Pope Francis received a white rose as a surprise. Francis considers the flower to be a 'sign' linked to the devotion to the saint. The Archbishop of Ancona and Osimo, Edoardo Menichelli, broke the news, with Francis' authorisation.

Pope Francis told him about the rose a day before the prelate was due to present a

book in Pedaso, in the Italian region of Marche. The prelate recounted the story during the presentation. The book presented was an essay by theologian and writer Gianni Gennari entitled, *Teresa di Lisieux. Il fascino della santità. I segreti di una <<dottrina>> ritrovata* (Thérèse of Lisieux: The fascination of sainthood. Secrets of a rediscovered doctrine), and published by Lindau. This was the book Francis took with him when he flew to Brazil last July.

‘The Pope told me he received the freshly picked white rose out of the blue from a gardener as he was taking a stroll in the Vatican Gardens on Sunday 8 September,’ Mgr Menichelli said. ‘The Pope sees this flower as a “sign”, a “message” from Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, whom he had turned to in a moment of worry the day before.’ The Archbishop passed on the Pope’s greetings to those attending the book presentation, adding that he had been authorised to tell them about the rose. The Pope did not say anything about the white rose having any connection to the peace vigil for Syria the previous evening. But it is not hard to imagine that one of the

Pope’s worries at the time was the international situation, the massacres in Syria and the West’s proposed intervention in the Middle Eastern country.

What significance does the white rose have for the Pope? Pope Francis mentions it in *El Jesuita* (literally translated as The Jesuit but published in English as *Pope Francis: Conversations with Jorge Bergoglio*), a book-length interview written by Sergio Rubin and Francesca Ambrogetti when he was still a cardinal. In a description the two journalists give of Francis’ library in Buenos Aires, they write: ‘We pause before a vase full of white roses standing on a shelf in the library. In front of it is a photograph of Saint Thérèse.’

‘Whenever I have a problem,’ Pope Francis explained to the journalists, ‘I ask the saint not to solve it, but to take it into her hands and to help me accept it and I almost always receive a white rose as a sign.’ Pope Francis’ devotion for the Carmelite mystic – who died at the young age of 24 in 1897, was canonized by Pius XI and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church by John Paul II in 1997 – is common knowledge. Francis himself

told journalists about it on the flight back from Rio de Janeiro after World Youth Day. When she was still alive, Thérèse had promised that when she died she would shower ‘rose petals’ down from the sky, a sign of her intercession. ‘A soul inflamed with love can not remain inactive... If only you knew what I plan to do when I’m in heaven... I will spend my heaven by doing good on earth.’ So during the peace vigil held in St. Peter’s Square on 7 September, the mysteries of the rosary were recited along with passages from the Gospel and verses from a piece of poetry written by the saint.

In 2015, Pope Francis published his encyclical letter *Laudato Si’* in which he calls upon all peoples everywhere to respect the natural world, and work together to avert the damage that humanity has been wreaking upon its ecosystems and climate. He refers to several saints in the text, including St Francis of Assisi and in paragraph 230, St Thérèse.

St Thérèse is the patron saint of Missionaries, for whom she always prayed. Pope Francis calls to us all to be missionaries too – for the care of creation and the care of the poor.

¹ <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/the-vatican/detail/articolo/28151/>

Reflection on Rose Petals in the light of *Laudato Si'* and of St Thérèse's 'Little Way'

This reflection might best be conducted with a focal display/altar display which might include pictures of nature, a statue of St Thérèse of Lisieux and vases of flowers – roses as well as the simpler flowers to which St Thérèse often compared herself.

Participants would each be given a rose. At the end of the prayer and reflection period, possibly whilst listening to music or singing a hymn, participants could lay the rose down and make it part of the focal display. Alternatively, participants may wish to scatter rose petals around the statue and other images. A reader will be required to read the reflections, and all will be invited to pray the prayers.

Reflection: The petals of a red rose are simple, and modest. In this reflection we invite you to imagine that each petal of a rose represents the problems faced by our world.

The outermost four or five petals – those that wrap the inner ones protectively – these denote the earth. The fabric of our globe – our environment, the air, the earth, the seas, are ailing due to the misuse and abuse which humans have inflicted on them.

Prayer: Help us Lord, to adopt your own simple lifestyle, so we can rein in the destructive, selfish and greedy human habits and mend our 'throw-away culture' and learn to appreciate our world in all its beauty. Help us to change for the better the flawed socio-political and economic structures which so often lock us into processes which are consuming our planet.

Reflection: The next few petals, inside the outer layer – these are our human bodies – which bear the scars of illness, wounds from war and conflict, misshapen by over-indulgence or undernourishment.

Prayer: Help us Lord, to share our resources fairly so that all may flourish. Purge us from greed and selfishness, gift us with humility, sowing peace and friendship through witness which avoids 'violence, exploitation and selfishness' and the mistreatment of life in all its forms.

Reflection: The small, soft, scented petals which envelop the centre of the rose – these represent our hearts. Our hearts cry out to be changed through God's grace.

Prayer: Help us Lord, to be open – to change, conversion and tenderness of heart – through your intercession and

your accompaniment on our life's journey. Show us how to remain open to your love through the turbulence, heartache and pain we might encounter. Help us through living lives that are simple and sustainable to both bear witness and reach out to others in solidarity, through acts of love and charity and the courageous defence of justice, peace and creation.

Reflection: Inside the rose are the pistils and stamens – representing the meeting of souls and bodies which reproduce our kind, spark ideas and unleash our creativity.

Prayer: We pray, Lord, that you will imbue our imaginations with an eternal sense of mission and encounter, the discernment to map our path, and insight and wisdom to navigate it to your glory.

St Thérèse, we pray that you continue to hold the roses to your heart. We pray for the earth, our bodies, hearts, minds and spirits to be kept safe in that embrace, as you present them to our Lord.

AMEN

Suggested Hymns: 'I the Lord of sea and sky' CH 285 or 'God has chosen me' CH 212 or 'Blest be the Lord' CH 91