

Living the Jesus Way: Simplicity II



AIM

To discuss and reflect on the call of Jesus which is different in each of our lives.

MEDIA

<http://youtu.be/yVYKe8iqGh0> short biography of Therese of Lisieux 1:55

<http://youtu.be/2A96cT-1pHM> short biography and interview of Mother Teresa 2:32

INTRODUCTION

Each Teresa had her own call from the same Jesus Christ. Each lived out her call. Both would say that they lived simply. But one was world famous for fifty years of her life travelling all over the globe and running many charitable organisations. The other was unknown outside of her convent until after her very early death. But each was faithful to her call and has changed people's lives as a result.

BODY

The Two Teresas and the Little Way.

DISCUSSION

- Therese wanted to become a Roman Catholic saint, known for deep commitment to Christ. But she often felt severely inadequate. Are there times in your life that you feel you cannot achieve your dreams because you aren't 'enough'?
- Does Therese mean that people shouldn't try to achieve highly- that they should be content to be the smallest person on earth?
- How can "The Little Way" transform your life here, today? What are the tiniest of actions that can change someone else's life for the better?
- Mother Teresa spent half of her life teaching. Was she avoiding God's call during that time?
- Mother Teresa struggled deeply with the feeling that she had no faith. Why then is she hailed as one of the most faithful Christians? What can this tell you about yourself and your experience of God?
- Mother Teresa's Christian 'hero' was Therese of Lisieux. Do you think Mother Teresa lived out "The **Little Way**" even though she is one of the biggest figures of the 20th century?
- The past and present are filled with people faithfully living out their call from Christ. What other Christian heroes do you have? Whom do you identify with? Is that a possible indication of your personal call from Jesus?
- What does all this have to do with living simply?
- Is living simply a call from God? Is it a call for everyone or only for some? Does Jesus call us all to the same simplicity?

Quote for the day: **"Live simply that others may simply live."** -Mahatma Gandhi (1869- 1948) giant of 20th Century non-violence and non-discrimination.

PRAY

ACT

Perform at least one "Little" act each day that you wouldn't normally do.

CLOSE

<http://youtu.be/gJWrBjdI4HY> Acts of Kindness Caught on Camera

<http://youtu.be/eu9UtVaWYal> Simple Acts of Kindness - Give it a try.



The Two Teresas and the Little Way

Thérèse of Lisieux

Therese Martin was the last of nine children born to Louis and Zélie Martin on January 2, 1873, in Alençon, France. However, only five of these children lived to reach adulthood. Precocious and sensitive, Therese needed much attention. Her mother died when she was 4 years old. As a result, her father and sisters babied young Therese. She had a spirit that wanted everything.

At the age of 14, on Christmas Eve in 1886, Therese had a conversion that transformed her life. From then on, her powerful energy and sensitive spirit were turned toward love, instead of keeping herself happy. At 15, she entered the Carmelite convent in Lisieux to give her whole life to God. She took the religious name Sister Marie Françoise Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face. Living a hidden, simple life of prayer, she was gifted with great intimacy with God. Through sickness and dark nights of doubt and fear, she remained faithful to God, rooted in His merciful love. After a long struggle with tuberculosis, she died on September 30, 1897, at the age of 24. Her last words were the story of her life: "My God, I love You!" She was made a Roman Catholic saint on May 17, 1925 and so is often known as "St Thérèse of Lisieux."



The world came to know Therese through her autobiography, "Story of a Soul". She described her life as a "little way of spiritual childhood." She lived each day with an unshakable confidence in God's love. "What matters in life," she wrote, "is not great deeds, but great love." Therese lived and taught a spirituality of attending to everyone and everything well and with love. She believed that just as a child becomes enamored with what is before her, we should also have a childlike focus and totally attentive love. Therese's spirituality is of doing the ordinary, with extraordinary love.'

<http://youtu.be/yVYKe8iqGh0> short biography 1:55

The Little Way

"Yes, my Beloved, it is thus that my life's brief day shall be spent before Thee. No other means have I of proving my love than to strew flowers; that is, to let no little sacrifice escape me, not a look, not a word, **to avail of the very least actions and do them for Love.** I wish to suffer for Love's sake and for Love's sake even to rejoice; thus shall I strew flowers. Not one shall I find without shedding its petals for Thee... and then I will sing, I will always sing, even if I must gather my roses in the very midst of thorns - and the longer and sharper the thorns the sweeter shall be my song." The Story of A Soul, Chapter XI

Her "Little Way" teaches us to do the ordinary things of life with extraordinary love. A smile, a note of encouragement, a phone call, suffering in silence, always having a positive word, a simple unnoticed task to brighten the life of another, and so many other simple deeds, done with love - these are the examples of her spirituality. The smallest action, done with love, is more important than great deeds done for personal glory, gratification or simply out of obedience. Therese teaches us that Jesus is everywhere and is the power for love and goodness operating within us. Therese's life was hidden. To many even in the convent, she seemed like such an average, ordinary person. **Her greatness showed in the constancy of her love for others in the most simple ways.**

"You know, Mother, that I have always wanted to become a saint. Unfortunately when I have compared myself with the saints, I have always found that there is the same difference between the saints and me as there is between a mountain whose summit is lost in the clouds and a humble grain of sand trodden underfoot by passersby. **Instead of being discouraged,** I told myself: God would not make me wish for something impossible and so, in spite of my littleness, I can aim at being a saint. It is impossible for me to grow bigger, so I put up with myself as I am, with all my countless faults. [...] It is your arms, Jesus, which are the lift to carry me to heaven, And so there is no need for me to grow up. In fact, just the opposite: I must stay little and become less and less." -Thérèse of Lisieux, The Story of a Soul. (New York: Double Day, 2001), 113

Reproduced from the website of the Society of the Little Flower accessed on 5/8/13 <http://www.littleflower.org/abouttherese/index.asp>

Two Teresas

Mother Teresa

Anjezë (Agnes) Gonxha was the youngest born to Nikola and Drane Bojaxhiu on 26 August 1910 in Skopje, Macedonia. Involved with a Roman Catholic Parish and moved by a desire to become a missionary at age 18, Agnes joined the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland where she received the name Sister Mary Teresa after Therese of Lisieux, who had recently been made a saint. In 1929, before she had been in the order for six months, she arrived in Calcutta to teach at a school for girls. After teaching for 15 years (as well as being the school's principal) Mother Teresa received her inspiration when suffering from tuberculosis, she felt Jesus love for the suffering so strongly that it became the driving force in her life. She gradually began to notice Jesus' pain at the neglect of the poor and his sorrow at their ignorance of him. It took four years (1950) for Mother Teresa to establish the Missionaries of Charity Sisters, dedicated to service of the poorest of the poor.



The work undertaken by Mother Teresa and soon, many former students, was going out into the slums, visiting families, washing the sores of children, caring for people dying of hunger and disease. Mother Teresa sought to serve Jesus through the "unwanted, the unloved, the uncared for."

By the early 1960's Mother Teresa was sending sisters and co-workers all over India and other houses of the Missionaries of Charity opened around the world. By 1979, Mother Teresa had received many prestigious prizes including a Nobel Peace Prize for her work.

In the eighties and nineties, Mother Teresa was travelling all over the world, at the coalface of the worst suffering: the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, starving orphans in Ethiopia, homes for drug-addicts, and the first hospices set up in the world for AIDS victims in the USA.

Mother Teresa's work is famous throughout the world as an unparalleled example of care for least desirable members of society. By the time of her death in 1997, over 4000 sisters were established in 610 foundations in 123 countries. However, what is not well known is her deeply personal struggle with a very painful sense of being separated from God and not having enough faith. Beginning only after she started her work for the poor, she called this experience of pain and separation "the darkness" and she did not let it defeat her. Instead, she drew strength that she was sharing the deep desolation of the people who live in agonising poverty.

<http://youtu.be/2A96cT-1pHM> short biography and interview 2:32

"There is a terrible hunger for love. We all experience that in our lives - the pain, the loneliness. We must have the courage to recognize it. The poor you may have right in your own family. Find them. Love them."

"At the end of our lives, we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made or how many great things we have done. We will be judged by 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless and you took me in.'

Hungry not only for bread-but hungry for love.

Naked not only for clothing-but naked of human dignity and respect.

Homeless not only for want of a room of bricks-but homeless because of rejection.

This is Christ in distressing disguise."

"Little things are indeed little, but to be faithful in little things is a great thing."