

## OCTOBER 15 2025 FATHER JOHN BERTAO

Over 25 years ago, a friend of mine introduced me to the saint who we celebrate today—Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. My friend at that time gave me a little prayer card that I now use every morning. I was told that if I pray it regularly, with great devotion, I will get what I need—not necessarily what I want, but definitely what I need for that day. It still works to this day.

I'll share the prayer I'm talking about at the end of my reflection, at the end of my homily. Maybe you've heard of it, maybe you know it. Maybe you haven't, so you'll learn something new today.

Just in case you forgot or didn't know, here's a little bit about Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. Saint Therese was born in Avila, Spain, on March 28, 1515. During her life, Saint Therese wrote many accounts of her experiences before and after joining the convent. She had a gift for prayer and writing that the Church still benefits from to this day.

In reading about her life, I learned that Saint Therese often found it hard to pray. Do you find it hard to pray? Besides that, she had very poor health. How is your prayer life? Are you one of those people who just doesn't have time—or doesn't take time—to pray? Maybe you're not feeling well, or you're too busy with other things to make time for prayer. Many of us, myself included, find it hard to concentrate on prayer when we're not feeling well.

However, please keep in mind that it is when we're not feeling very well or don't feel like praying that our prayers are heard most deeply and answered by God, who wants the very best for all of us.

As Saint Therese matured in prayer, she never gave up on God. The same can be true for us. In return for her love, the Lord gave her the privilege of hearing Him speak to her. Imagine—He spoke to her! She learned to pray in a marvellous way and with great love for her good friend, Jesus. Maybe the same can happen to us as well.

Further, she opened sixteen Carmelite convents around the world. These convents were filled with nuns who wanted to live holy lives for Jesus, making many sacrifices for their beloved friend and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. In 1970, Pope Paul VI declared her the first woman Doctor of the Church. What an honour indeed.

In today's first reading, from Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans, he condemns those who think that because they are further along on the path of holiness, they should be exempt from having their own sins examined, even as they condemn others for theirs. As you and I know, we're all sinners, my dear friends in Christ—sinners in need of love and the mercy of God. None of us can claim to be perfect. Therefore, Paul encourages us to extend mercy and forgiveness to one another so that we may be treated in a similar manner when we are called to account for our sins.

Do you need to forgive someone in your life? What condemnations are you holding onto?

I'll share a true story that someone shared with me in confidence. I'll only give a little hint of what happened. This person had to encounter someone in their life every single day, and they did not like that person at all. They said to me, "What do I do? What do I

do, because I don't like this person, and I have to work or see them all the time on a regular basis?"

What we discussed was this: pray for that person, no matter what. Pray for them, because you need, and they need, forgiveness—no matter what they do. The result was that this individual prayed for this person, for reconciliation, and after many, many days of trying and working very hard, it worked.

Today, that individual texted me, "We're not the best of friends, but we are able to stand, to cooperate, and to work with one another." It is such a relief in their life. God is merciful and forgives us. We can forgive others and live free, without anyone taking over our conscience, because that's not fair to anyone.

It's important to keep in mind that God cannot be appeased, but humans can repent and return to God, who is kind and merciful.

In short, as the Gospel reminds us, the law of God should be a joy, enabling us—His children—to live a life of holiness, in imitation of God's holiness, love, and mercy.

As I said before, whenever we need a spiritual push, pray. Pray more and more, always. As Saint Therese turned to Jesus for help, ask for the practical ways to fit prayer into your life. It's so important that we have prayer first, in the middle, and at the end of everything. Because it is then that God gives us the courage to forgive others, to be forgiven, and to live free.

Sin can be such a heavy weight in our lives, and we don't need it. So please, no matter how you're feeling—no matter who you live with, who you work with, or who your roommate might be—put

them to prayer. Give them to God. Don't let them live in your conscience, because it's not fair for you to carry a heavy burden for someone you don't like. We're all children of God, and we all need to be forgiven, no matter what.

As promised, here is the little prayer that I like. Hopefully you can remember it. Maybe you already know it—if you do, share it with someone.

And I quote the prayer:

O Little Therese of the Child Jesus,  
please pick for me a rose from the heavenly gardens,  
and send it to me as a message of love.

O Little Flower of Jesus,  
ask God today to grant the favours I now place  
with confidence in your hands.

Then you place your petition.

Saint Therese, help me to always believe as you did  
in God's great love for me,  
so that I might imitate your "Little Way" each day.  
Amen.

I'll repeat it very quickly:

- > O Little Therese of the Child Jesus,
- > please pick for me a rose from the heavenly gardens,
- > and send it to me as a message of love.
- > O Little Flower of Jesus,
- > ask God today to grant the favours I now place
- > with confidence in your hands.

Then you place the favour that you are seeking and conclude:

- > Saint Therese, help me to always believe as you did
- > in God's great love for me,
- > so that I might imitate your "Little Way" each day.
- > Amen.