



THERESIAN
ANNIVERSARIES
2023-2025

Reading the writings of Theresse of the Child Jesus
Theresian anniversaries 2023-2025
2024: Manuscripts B and C



Introductory summary:
Presentation

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Introductory summary: Presentation

In 2023, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Therese of the Child Jesus (2nd January 1873), as well as the first centenary of her beatification (29th April 1923); and in 2025, we will be celebrating the first centenary of her canonisation (17th May 1925). At this point, the General Chapter of the Discalced Carmelites, held in Rome from 30th August to 14th September 2021, decided to propose to the Order a series of readings of Saint Therese's writings.

The General Definitory, in order to carry out this decision, has collaborated with the Province of Paris to prepare a programme of readings and reflections on the autobiographical Manuscripts and other writings of Therese. This programme will preferably be carried out during community meetings. The writings have been divided up as follows:

- Year 2023 : Manuscript A
- Year 2024 : Manuscripts B and C
- Year 2025 : Prayers and other writings.

Each year, eight texts will be chosen and proposed to you. They will be accompanied by a short commentary and a few questions aimed at encouraging reflection and dialogue. The main goal is to make us aware of the relevance of Therese's experience and her message for us today.

It would be good to read and meditate on Therese's text individually, before the community dialogue. The latter could unfold in the following manner.

1. Reading of the text.
2. One of those present, having prepared a contribution in advance, discusses the text using the commentary (and other aids, if necessary).
3. Community dialogue on the text, following the model below:
 - 3a. *What is the text saying?* Understanding the content and initial meaning of Therese's text.
 - 3b. *What does the text say to us today?* Discern the present-day relevance (social, ecclesial, spiritual. . .) of the text.
 - 3c. *What does the text say to me/us?* Consider the personal and community relevance of the text.

The purpose of this process is to allow Therese to speak to us herself, to question and encourage us, and to open ourselves to allow her to clarify and confirm our own personal and community path. The questions suggested are only indicative, and could perhaps be used in individual meditation and community sharing.

For 2024, the texts chosen from *Manuscripts B and C* are the following:

- 1 My vocation is Love (Ms. B, 2v-3v)
- 2 The Eagle and the little bird (Ms. B, 4v-5v)
- 3 Nothing but confidence (LC 170 and LT 197)
- 4 The little way (Ms. C, 2v-3v)
- 5 The trial of faith (Ms. C, 4v-7v)
- 6 The treatise on charity (Ms. C, 11v-14r)
- 7 The power of prayer (Ms. C, 24v-26r)
- 8 In the arms of Jesus (Ms. C, 35v-37r)

Overall introduction

The origin of Manuscript B

During her last retreat, in solitude, Therese received a message from her sister, Marie of the Sacred Heart, asking her to share the spiritual insights received in the course of the retreat.

Therese replied the same day (13th September 1896), sharing with her sister a long prayer to Jesus that she had written a few days earlier, 8th September 1896, to mark the anniversary of her religious profession. To this text she added a letter, and this, together with the prayer, constitute the whole of what we call Manuscript B. The letter has been placed at the beginning of the manuscript, as an introduction, even though it actually originated later in time.

On receiving this, Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart was deeply shaken by its undeniable power. She wrote again to Therese to express her fear of not being able to follow her on the path of such complete confidence, not having such an immense love of God as Therese. Therese's reply on the 17th September 1896 is an admirable complement to Therese's teaching in Manuscript B, and may be considered as the third part of Manuscript B.

The origin of Manuscript C

On the 2nd June 1897, Mother Agnes, seeing how sick her sister was, ventured to seek out the Prioress who had replaced her. She spoke to her of the memoirs of her childhood that Therese had composed at her request.

She pointed out that Therese developed very little about her life in the Carmel. Now that she was close to death, it would be worth asking her to do that, so as to be able to more easily compose the circular that was usually sent by a Carmel to other Carmels after the death of a sister, as a reminder of the details of her life.

Mother Mary de Gonzague agreed and asked Therese the very next day to start work on this project. Despite the advanced state of her tuberculosis, Therese obeyed. She wrote this third piece of text using a pencil on paper, as she no longer had the strength to hold a pen.



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General Curia of the Teresian Carmel

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