

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**WAY
OF
HOPE**



WAY OF TRUST AND LOVE

Reflection and Prayer for Advent 2023 in the Jubilee Year in Honour of St Therese of Lisieux.

From The Readings

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to bind up hearts that are broken;
to proclaim liberty to captives,
Freedom to those in prison;
To proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. *Isaiah 61:1-2*



Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus. Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil. May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you. *1 Thessalonians 5:16-24*

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness to the light ... So he said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: A voice of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord. Make his paths straight!' ... 'I baptise with water; but standing among you -- unknown to you — is the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandal.' *John 1:6, 23,26-27*

From Pope Francis and Saint Therese of Lisieux

... the blind hope that I have in his mercy ... That is my only treasure.

(Therese of Lisieux, quoted in: *The Way of Trust and Love*, 62)

What most attracts God's graces is gratitude because, if we thank him for a gift, he is touched and hastens to give us ten more, and if we thank him again with the same enthusiasm, what an incalculable multiplication of graces! I have experienced this: try it yourself and you will see! My gratitude for everything he gives me is limitless, and I prove it to him in a thousand ways.

(Therese of Lisieux, quoted in: *The Way of Trust and Love*, 111)

The memory of my faults humiliates me and leads me never to rely on my own strength, which is only weakness; but still more, the memory of them speaks to me of mercy and love. When, with filial trust, we throw our faults into the devouring furnace of love, how could they not be completely burned away?

(Therese of Lisieux, quoted in: *The Way of Trust and Love*, 99)

In the Story of a Soul ... To describe [her little way], she uses the image of an elevator: "the elevator which must raise me to heaven is your arms, O Jesus! And for this, I had no need to grow up, but rather I had to remain little and become this more and more". Little, incapable of being confident in herself, and yet firmly secure in the loving power of the Lord's arms.

(Pope Francis, *C'est La Confiance*, 15-16)

Prayer for me is an upward leap of the heart, an untroubled glance towards heaven, a grateful and loving cry from the deepest depth of sorrow as well as from the height of joy. Its supernatural grandeur enlarges the soul and unites the soul with God.

(Therese of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul*)

FOR THINKING AND TALKING

- **What words or phrases stand out for you in these readings and insights of Pope Francis and Saint Therese?**
- **What insights might you take with you on your own journey?**

PRAYER

A prayer of Saint Therese

O my God!

I ask You for myself
and for those whom I hold dear
the grace to fulfil perfectly Your holy will,
to accept for love of You
the joys and sorrows of this passing life,
so that we may one day
be united together
in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

(Adapted from Therese of Lisieux, Carmelite of Boston: www.carmelitesofboston.org/prayer)



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