St. Thérèse
Feast Day Novena
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“I say very simply to God what I want to say, without composing beautiful sentences, and He always understands me.”

-St. Thérèse of Lisieux
Day One
Center Me Lord

Words of St. Thérèse

“My life is but an instant, an hour that passes by; a single day that slips my grasp and quickly slides away. O well, you know, my dearest God, to love you, I only have today.”
Our Novena Prayer

Dear St. Thérèse you wanted everything and dreamed beyond. Teach me today your way of focusing on every detail, every person, and every situation. Your heart embraced each opportunity and moment with great love and attention. You are about the simple details – that is why you are so real to me, St. Thérèse.

Help me to be where I am – focus my heart to seek and see Jesus present wherever I am. Inspirit me with your childlike faith that God is wherever I am. Center me to be present to each breath I breathe, as God gives me life moment by moment.

Help me to allow Jesus to be my center, as He was the total center, focus, and love of your life. Befriend me, today, Little Flower, and help me be present to today as the best way to love God, the source and center of my life.
"For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven; it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy."
Our Novena Prayer

Thérèse, Doctor of Prayer, you heard Jesus’ gospel call to quiet prayer of communion with God our Father. Teach me to pray. Help me get in touch with my heart so that I can focus on Jesus and pray from my heart – not in others’ words, but in the words His Spirit speaks and breathes within me.

Slow me down and calm me to listen more than I speak. Gentle me, gentle Thérèse, so that I can peacefully be in the presence of Jesus and let my heart commune in silence.

Little Flower, teach me to pray deep within and let God have the claim on my heart that He has on yours.
Words of St. Thérèse

“I always wanted to become a saint...Instead of being discouraged, I told myself that God would not make me wish for something impossible...I will look for some means of going to heaven by a little way which is very short and very straight. It is your arms, Jesus, which are the elevator to carry me to heaven. So there is no need for me to grow up. In fact, just the opposite: I must become less and less.”
Our Novena Prayer

Gentle Thérèse, teach me your little way of trust. Teach me to be childlike enough to let Jesus be my elevator Who raises me above confusion, darkness, need, hurt, and fear.

Save me from thinking that I must do all the work of salvation. Give me your innocent trust so that I can throw myself into God’s arms. Like you, Little Flower, I want to be God’s child.

Instill confidence in me that I will allow God to lift me in His strong arms. Make me light again so that I can fly to the heights of God’s embrace like you, gentle St. Thérèse, my friend. Help me be a dependent and trusting child of God like you!
“No doubt, it is a grace to receive the sacraments. When God does not permit it, it is good too! Everything is grace! When I shall have arrived at port, I will teach you how to travel...on the stormy sea of the world: with surrender and the love of a child who knows his Father loves him and cannot leave him alone in the hour of danger...The way of simple love and confidence is really made for you.”
Our Novena Prayer

Gentle Child of God, you traveled so well on the stormy seas of life. Teach me how to travel through the ups and downs of life with your vision of faith. You surrendered to God’s purpose and loving plans, even when they did not make sense to you. Thérèse help me to walk through life as a child of grace. Share your faith that I might see every opportunity and experience of life as God calling me closer and refining my love. Help me believe that God is truly involved in everything, even if it looks like disaster from my petty vision. Little Flower of Jesus, make me a child of grace, because everything is grace. Give me your great vision of faith – of our awesome God Whose fingerprints are on every detail of my life.
Words of St. Thérèse

“Nature seemed to share in my bitter sadness, for during these days, the sun did not shine and the rain poured down in torrents. I have noticed in all the serious circumstances of my life that nature always reflected the image of my soul. On days filled with tears, the heavens cried along with me; on days of joy, the sun sent forth its joyful rays in profusion, and the blue skies were not obscured by a single cloud.”
Our Novena Prayer

St. Thérèse, you knew and believed that the God of the universe is the God of all seasons of our life. Your faith that Jesus would always be with you expanded your vision that the seasons reflect God’s relationship with us.

Give me your innocent leap of faith, Little Flower, that I may blossom like you. Help me to enjoy summers of warm comfort, flowers, and sunshine. Help me embrace falls of transformations. Help me not to fear the winters of coldness. Help me bloom in the spring times of hope and rebirth.

Give me your child-like wonder which knows that God is acting, speaking, and present amid frightening thunderstorms, tear-filled rains, buffeting winds, confusing clouds, hopeful sunrises, and longing sunsets of my life. Empower me, gentle servant of Jesus, to trust the seasons of God’s love for me. Give me your childlike wonder and trust today.
Words of St. Thérèse

“There is one sister in the community who has a knack of rubbing me the wrong way at every turn; her manner, her speech, her character just strikes me as unlovable… I was not going to let this natural antipathy get the better of me. I reminded myself that charity is not a matter of fine feelings; rather it means doing things. So I determined to treat this sister as if she were the person I loved best in the world. When I felt tempted to take her down with an unkind retort, I would put on my best smile instead, and change the subject… when the struggle was too much for me, I would turn tail and run.

One day she asked me: “What is it about me that gets the right side of you. You always have a smile for me.” What really attracted me about her was Jesus hidden in the depths of her soul; Jesus makes the bitterest mouthful taste sweet. I could only say that the sight of her always made me smile with pleasure – naturally I did not explain that the pleasure was entirely spiritual.”
Our Novena Prayer

Dear Thérèse, it is so refreshing that you also experienced people who irritated or challenged you. Like you, I have trouble seeing good qualities in people who aggravate me and how they might image God.

Clarify my sight about the people whose goodness is blinded from me. Inspire patience with imperfection. Give me your eyes. Help me to see the image of God and the presence of Jesus in each person I meet, especially where it is not obvious to me. Soften my negative judgments about them. Teach me to smile rather than grimace. I want your heart, Thérèse, your heart which seeks Jesus deep within each person. Enlighten me, Little Flower of Jesus, to see the beauty of God’s artistry in each one of His creatures.
Words of St. Thérèse

“Great deeds are forbidden me. I cannot preach the Gospel nor shed my blood – but what does it matter? Others toil instead of me, and I, a little child, keep close by the throne of God and I love for those who fight. Love proves itself in deeds. I will scatter flowers, perfuming the Divine Throne, and I will sweetly sing my hymn of love. These flowers are every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least of actions for love.”
Our Novena Prayer

Little Flower, child of God, you had great and heroic dreams to embrace everything. You had to learn your limits and focus the divine energy of love into the ordinary details and routines of life.

Inspirit me with your “little way” to learn to focus my energy and God’s love on the little things. Help me sweetly perfume life by simple smiles, words of encouragement, kind eyes, and peaceful judgments. Let my actions speak more powerfully than my words of Jesus’ great love for each and every one of God’s children.

Keep me faithful to the details and small things that are so significant in our lives. Give me your childlike and tender spirit. Teach me how to do ordinary things with your extraordinary love.
Day Eight
Trust Amid Suffering

Words of St. Thérèse

“Our Lord never asks sacrifices from us beyond our strength. At times, it is true this Divine Savior makes us feel all the bitterness of the chalice that He is offering our soul. When He asks the sacrifice of all that is precious in this world, it is impossible, without a very special grace, not to cry out like Him in the garden of agony: “Father, let this chalice pass from me – but not my will, but Your will be done.” It is very consoling to think that Jesus, the Strong God, knew our weakness, that He trembled at the sight of the bitter chalice, this chalice that He had in the past so ardently desired to drink.”
Our Novena Prayer
Thérèse, sensitive and precious as you are, you learned the wisdom that alone we are helpless; in God we are powerful. Teach me the lesson of trust and surrender. Like you, I am sometimes overwhelmed by sorrow, challenges, disappointments, and worries.

Sensitive Little Flower, I need your faith that we are not abandoned. Give me your generous spirit which places my sufferings, hurts, and hopes in the hands of Jesus. Teach me to humbly drink the chalice of what life offers, teach me the childlike trust that allowed God to transform your fears into a joyful life of faith in God’s love. Empower me to drink of God’s tender love and strong protection.
Words of St. Thérèse

“I feel within me the vocation of the warrior, the priest, the apostle, the doctor, the martyr. I feel the need and desire of carrying out the most heroic deeds for you, Jesus...My desires caused me a real martyrdom, until I found Ch. 12-13 of 1st Corinthians, that we cannot all be apostles, doctors, etc....Charity gave me the key to my vocation. I understood that love comprises all vocations – that love is everything, and because it is eternal, embraces all times and places. My vocation is love...Love will descend into my nothingness and transform this nothingness into living fire.”
Our Novena Prayer

Thérèse, you wanted everything as you searched for meaning in your life. You had to learn your limits and your emptiness so that God could make everything of you. Give me your simplicity and humility, gentle Little Flower. Teach me again that God is love, and that the more I love, the more I am like God in whose image we are created. Inspire me to believe that loving in the most simple and profound ways is the most heroic of vocations.

Reintroduce me to my own truth, tender Thérèse, so that I may be authentic and honest before God and others – and be God’s living flame of love in this world. Transform me in your “little way” of love and confidence. Make me as open to the mysterious movement of God’s grace as you are, and I will be more than I ever imagined!
St. Thérèse, Flower of fervor and love, please intercede for us.
Fill our hearts with your pure love of God.
As we approach and celebrate your Feast Day, make us more aware of the goodness of God and how well He tends His garden.
Instill in us your little way of doing ordinary things with extra-ordinary love.

Give us the heart of a child who wonders at life and embraces everything with loving enthusiasm.
Teach us your delight in God’s ways so that divine charity may blossom in our hearts.
Little Flower of Jesus, bring our petitions

(mention in silence here)

before God, our Father.

With your confidence, we come before Jesus as God’s children, because you are our heavenly friend.
As we celebrate the Feast Day of your homecoming in heaven, continue to shower roses and grace upon us.

Amen
The mission of the Society of the Little Flower is to promote devotion to Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, the Carmelite Nun and Doctor of the Church. Through prayers and donations, friends of St. Thérèse enable Carmelites to throughout the world to make a difference in peoples life through their ministries and in the education of seminarians.