

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

WAY OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE



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

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you, so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ, and God is faithful. *1 Corinthians 1:3-9*



'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad; he has gone from his home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own work to do; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow or dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I am saying to you I say to all: Stay awake!' *Mark 13:33-37*

From Pope Francis and Saint Therese of Lisieux

The earthly life of Saint Therese was brief, a mere twenty-four years, and completely ordinary, first in her family and then in the Carmel of Lisieux. The extraordinary burst of light and love that she radiated came to be known soon after her death, with the publication of her writings and thanks to the countless graces bestowed on the faithful who invoked her intercession.

(Pope Francis, *C'est La Confiance*, 4)

It is confidence and nothing but confidence that must lead us to Love.

(Pope Francis, quoting St Therese of Lisieux in *C'est La Confiance*, 1)

... her boundless confidence encourages all who feel frail, limited and sinful to let themselves be elevated and transformed in order to reach greater heights. "If all weak and imperfect souls felt what the least of souls feels, that is, the soul of your little Therese, not one would despair of reaching the summit of the mount of love. Jesus does not demand great actions from us, but simply *surrender and gratitude*".

(Pope Francis, *C'est La Confiance*, 21)

One of the most important insights of Therese for the benefit of the entire People of God is her "little way", the path of trust and love, also known as the way of spiritual childhood. Everyone can follow this way, whatever their age or state in life. It is the way that the heavenly Father reveals to the little ones.

(cf. Mt 11:25) (Pope Francis, *C'est La Confiance*, 14)

But I want to find how to get to Heaven by a little way that is quite straight, quite short: a completely new little way.

(Therese of Lisieux, quoted in: *The Way of Trust and Love*, 9, 11)

She had come full circle. "C'est la confiance". It is trust that brings us to love and thus sets us free from fear. It is trust that helps us to stop looking to ourselves and enables us to put into God's hands what he alone can accomplish. Doing so provides us with an immense source of love and energy for seeking the good of our brothers and sisters.

(Pope Francis, *C'est La Confiance*, 45)

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

from the words of Pope Francis

God of Love,

may our confidence and our trust in you,
set us free from constant worry about the future,
from the fears that take away our peace.

May we trust, come what may,
knowing we are in your hands, loved without limits.
Help us to move beyond whatever happens to us
with confidence that your plan of love and fullness,
for each one of us,
will come to fulfilment in our lives. Amen.

(Based on words of Pope Francis, *C'est La Confiance*, 24)

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