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“I am sending you out like lambs among wolves” (Luke 10:3).

*Job 19:21-27; Luke 10: 1-12*

### **Commemoration of St. Therese of Lisieux**

The missionary discourses of Jesus to his disciples are important to today's commemoration of St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897) for two reasons. First, her brief life in the cloistered Carmelite in France was focused on praying for missionaries. Second, her purity of heart characterized the total trust and simplicity Jesus asked of his disciples as he sent them to proclaim the Gospel in the villages he intended to visit.

Though Therese, who died of tuberculosis at age 24, never did any missionary work, her intense devotion and humility were seen as the heart of evangelization and the contemplative source of all ministry. The autobiographical and spiritual journal she kept in her final year at the insistence of her older sister and religious superior was published after her death, and it became the Catholic bestseller of the time, inspiring millions of readers to imitate her “little way” of entrusting her life to God's mercy.

Canonized in 1925, she was named co-patroness of France with St. Joan of Arc in 1944, declared a Doctor of the Church in 1997, and is said to be the most popular saint along with St. Francis of Assisi. A NYTimes article once called her the “Emily Dickinson of the Catholic faith.”

St. Therese of Lisieux is often cited by Pope Francis for her emphasis on God's mercy as the path to holiness instead of spiritualities based on rigor and asceticism. Ida

Goerres' 1944 biography, "The Hidden Face," describes her spiritual journey as a conversion story from a childhood of neurotic scrupulosity based on Jansenist piety to the mature freedom of a life entrusted to God's mercy and unconditional love. In the preface to the book, Goerres describes a group of students looking at an untouched photo of Therese that moved one of them to say, "This is the face of the female Christ." Isn't this what a saint does? Like a missionary, Therese of Lisieux has evangelized many people by introducing them to Jesus. Like the disciples sent ahead to places Jesus intended to visit, Therese's influence has prepared many to welcome him into their lives.

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