

**Reading the writings of Therese of the Child Jesus**  
**Theresian anniversaries 2023-2025**  
**2025: Prayers and other writings**

**Introductory summary: Presentation**

In 2023, we celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Therese of the Child Jesus (2<sup>nd</sup> January 1873), as well as the first centenary of her beatification (29<sup>th</sup> April 1923); and in 2025, we will be celebrating the first centenary of her canonisation (17<sup>th</sup> May 1925). At this point, the General Chapter of the Discalced Carmelites, held in Rome from 30<sup>th</sup> August to 14<sup>th</sup> 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 2025, the texts chosen are as follows :

- 3.c.1. Act of Oblation to Merciful Love (Prayer 6)
- 3.c.2. Living on Love (Poem 17)
- 3.c.3. Abandonment is the Sweet Fruit of Love (Poem 52)
- 3.c.4. Why I Love You, O Mary ! (Poem 54)
- 3.c.5. To Celine, 7<sup>th</sup> July 1894 (Letter 165)
- 3.c.6. To Father Roulland, 9th May 1897 (Letter 226)
- 3.c.7. To Abbé Bellière, 18th July 1897 (Letter 258)
- 3.c.8. Yellow Notebook, 6/7/12 August 1897

## General introduction

We continue our reading of the writings of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus for a third year, and for this new year we are going to read various texts taken not from the Manuscripts that we have perused in the last two years, but texts taken from her prayers and her letters, a selection of eight encounters in the works of the saint.

If Saint Therese is renowned for anything, it is of course firstly for her saintliness, but also for her writings published under the name of 'Story of a Soul'. Their accessibility and their depiction of daily life allow people to feel close to the saint. Mystical graces are not really present in these writings, the standard content is her daily life, and her spiritual intuitions are carried by the Holy Spirit. It is truly a holiness of the everyday, of little things performed in faith and hope, all lived in great charity.

Most people read the three manuscripts, but do not venture much into the other works, which are nonetheless quite numerous. If one wants to understand Saint Therese better and discern her doctrine so as to become disciples of her 'little way', we need to discover some of the rest of her works. This year of 2025, centenary of her canonization, is a year offered to everyone, to be able to immerse themselves more in Saint Therese's other writings, to become more familiar with them and discover all her genius. You will realize of course that these 8 texts are only a tiny part of the works of Saint Therese of Lisieux. It would really be a huge benefit for every person to be able to plunge into all of her works, to make them bedside reading. In any case, we issue that invitation for this year of grace, in the company of Saint Therese of Lisieux.