

**Reading the writings of Therese of the Child Jesus
Teresian Anniversaries 2023-2025
2025: Prayers and other writings**

**Text 1:
Act of Oblation to Merciful Love (Prayer 6)**

Suggestion for the community meeting:

1. Read the text together
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.

It would be helpful to have made individual readings and reflections on Therese's text before the community meeting.

J.M.J.T.

**Offering of myself as a Victim of Holocaust
to God's Merciful Love**

O My God! Most Blessed Trinity, I desire to *Love* You and make you *Loved*, to work for the glory of Holy Church by saving souls on earth and liberating those suffering in purgatory. I desire to accomplish Your will perfectly and to reach the degree of glory You have prepared for me in Your Kingdom. I desire, in a word, to be a saint, but I feel my helplessness and I beg You, O my God ! To be yourself my Sanctity.

Since You loved me so much as to give me Your only Son as my Savior and my Spouse, the infinite treasures of His merits are mine. I offer them to You with gladness, begging You to look upon me only in the Face of Jesus and in His heart burning with *Love*.

I offer You, too, all the merits of the saints (in heaven and on earth), their acts of *Love*, and those of the holy angels. Finally, I offer You, O Blessed Trinity! the Love and merits of the Blessed Virgin, my Dear Mother. It is to her I abandon my offering, begging her to present it to You. Her Divine Son, my Beloved Spouse, told us in the says of His mortal life: "Whatsoever you ask the Father in my name he will give it to you!" I am certain, then, that You will grant my desires; I know, O my God! that the more You want to give, the more You make us desire. I feel in my heart immense desires and it is with confidence I ask You to come and take possession of my soul. Ah! I cannot receive Holy Communion as often as I desire, but, Lord, are You not all-powerful? Remain in me as in a tabernacle and never separate Yourself from Your little victim.

I want to console You for the ingratitude of the wicked, and I beg of you to take away my freedom to displease You. If through weakness I sometimes fall, may Your Divine Glance cleanse my soul immediately, consuming all my imperfections like the fire that transforms everything into itself.

I thank You, O my God! for all the graces You have granted me, especially the grace of making me pass through the crucible of suffering. It is with joy I shall contemplate You on the

Last Day carrying the scepter of Your Cross. Since You deigned to give me a share in this very precious Cross, I hope in heaven to resemble You and to see shining in my glorified body the sacred stigmata of Your Passion.

After earth's Exile, I hope to go and enjoy You in the Fatherland, but I do not want to lay up merits for heaven. I want to work for Your *Love Alone* with the one purpose of pleasing You, consoling Your Sacred Heart, and saving souls who will love You eternally.

In the evening of this life, I shall appear before You with empty hands, for I do not ask You, Lord, to count my works. All our justice is stained in Your eyes. I wish, then, to be clothed in Your own *Justice* and to receive from Your *Love* the eternal possession of *Yourself*. I want no other *Throne*, no other *Crown* but *You, my Beloved!*

Time is nothing in Your eyes, and a single day is like a thousand years. You can, then, in one instant prepare me to appear before You.

In order to live in one single act of perfect Love, I OFFER MYSELF AS A VICTIM OF HOLOCAUST TO YOUR MERCIFUL LOVE, Asking You to consume me incessantly, allowing the waves of *infinite tenderness* shut up within You to overflow into my soul, and that thus I may become a *martyr* of Your *Love*, O my God!

May this martyrdom, after having prepared me to appear before You, finally cause me to die and may my soul take its flight without any delay into the eternal embrace of *Your Merciful Love*.

I want, O my *Beloved*, at each beat of my heart to renew this offering to You an infinite number of times, until the shadows having disappeared I may be able to tell You of my *Love* in an *Eternal Face to Face!*

*Marie, Françoise, Thérèse of the Child Jesus
and the Holy Face, unworthy Carmelite religious.*

*This 9th day of June,
Feast of the Most Holy Trinity,
In the year of grace, 1895*

Introduction to the Text

We are starting this new cycle with a prayer that you probably know well, it is long and also full of rich teachings.

We know that in October, 1894, Saint Therese discovered the key elements that were essential to her 'little way' : childhood and mercy. At the end of 1895, Saint Therese returns in her Manuscript A (Ms. A, 84r), to the illumination of 9th June, 1895 (which, according to her sister Geneviève, occurred during the Eucharist). She abandoned herself in the secret of her heart during the Mass of 9th June, but she already knew that this grace was not for her alone.

Shortly after her *Oblation to Merciful Love*, Saint Therese was to draw in her sister Marie of the Sacred Heart. Some months later, it was to be 'her' novice Sister Marie of the Trinity who would make her Oblation, on 1st December of that same year of 1895.

Questions and objections from the first disciples, and particularly her own spiritual experience, which was constantly evolving, led Therese to clarify the content and meaning of her offering. For that, it would be interesting to reread her dialogue in September, 1996 with Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart (Ms. B, 2r/5r). Spiritual childhood and oblation to merciful Love are henceforth inextricably linked in her doctrine.

This *Act of Oblation*, pronounced the 9th June, Sunday of the Holy Trinity that year, certainly accentuated the strongly trinitarian nature of the prayer. Concerning the term 'Victim of Holocaust', Therese had received extensive religious instruction and knew the different forms of sacrifice in the Old Testament. This term comes from Wisdom 3:6, found in Celine's scripture notebook, copied for Therese.

Concerning the term 'Merciful Love', this is the first time Therese uses it. It refers each time to the merciful love of Jesus.

Therese's oblation, however personal for her, was made as part of the Church, in that communion of saints which delighted her with joy and hope.

In 1896-1897, Therese had to incorporate into her Oblation to Merciful Love a dimension of pain that was not foreseen at the start. The morning of 9th June, 1895, she was carried by joy alone. We know how, at first, Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart refused the Oblation as a victim of love out of fear of suffering.

For community discussion:

1. *What is the text saying?* Understanding the content and initial meaning of Therese's text.
2. *What does the text say to us today?* Discern the present-day relevance (social, ecclesial, spiritual. . .) of the text.
3. *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 us up to her clarifying and confirming our own personal and community path. The questions suggested are only indicative, and could perhaps be used in individual meditation and community sharing.

Questions:

1. What are the objects of Therese's desire at the start of the prayer? Do we also have great desires, immense desires? Let us share our desires with each other.
2. How do we understand or desire or experience what Therese expresses by 'empty hands'? In our apostolate or our work, do we really have 'empty hands'?
3. In the *Act of Oblation* itself at the end, what is most striking to us and why? What are Therese's essential attitudes? In what way could this prayer be considered as the expression of spiritual maturity? What does it mean to be spiritually mature?
4. This prayer is like a summary of the little way; is this a way which attracts us? If so, how are we living it out?