



TERESIAN  
ANNIVERSARIES  
2023-2025

Reading of the writings of Therese of the Child Jesus  
Theresian anniversaries 2023-2025  
2023: Manuscript A



Study guide 6:  
**On the waves of confidence and love**  
(Ms A, 80r-81v)



# Reading of the writings of Therese of the Child Jesus

## Theresian anniversaries 2023-2025

### 2023: Manuscript A

#### Study guide 6: On the waves of confidence and love (Ms A, 80r-81v)

*Prior note: texts studied in worksheets 6, 7 and 8 (Ms A, 80r-84v) together form the conclusion of Manuscript A. It may be useful to do a complete first reading of these pages.*

Proposal for the Community meeting:

1. Reading of the text.
2. One of the participants, who has already prepared his contribution, presents the text with the help of the reading schedule (and other supports, if necessary).
3. Community dialogue on the text.

It would be good if the community meeting was preceded by a personal reading and meditation on the text of Therese.

## MANUSCRIPT A, 80r-81v

[ICS pp. 173 – 175]

The year that followed my Profession, that is, two months before Mother Geneviève's death, I received great graces during my retreat. Ordinarily, the retreats that are preached are more painful to me than the ones I make alone, but this year it was otherwise. I had made a preparatory novena with great fervor, in spite of the inner sentiment I had, for it seemed to me that the preacher would not be able to understand me since he was supposed to do good to great sinners but not [80v<sup>o</sup>] to religious souls. God wanted to show me that He was the Director of my soul, and so He made use of this Father specifically, who was appreciated only by me in the community. At the time I was having great interior trials of all kinds, even to the point of asking myself whether heaven really existed. I felt disposed to say nothing of my interior dispositions since I didn't know how to express them, but I had hardly entered the confessional when I felt my soul expand. After speaking only a few words, *I was understood* in a marvelous way and my soul was like a book in which this priest read better than I did myself. He launched me full sail *upon the waves of confidence and love* which so strongly attracted me, but upon which I dared not advance. He told me that my faults caused God no pain, and that holding as he did God's place, he was telling me in *His name* that God was very much pleased with me.

Oh! how happy I was to hear those consoling words! Never had I heard that our faults *could not cause God any pain*, and this assurance filled me with joy, helping me to

bear patiently with life's exile. I felt at the bottom of my heart that this was really so, for God is more tender than a mother, and were you not, dear Mother, always ready to par-don the little offenses I committed against you involuntarily? How often I experienced this! No word of reproach touched me as much as did one of your caresses. My nature was such that fear made me recoil; with love not only did I advance, I actually *flew*.

O Mother, it was especially since the blessed day of your election that I have flown in the ways of love. On that day Pauline became my living Jesus.

[81r<sup>o</sup>] I had the happiness of contemplating for a long time the *marvels* Jesus is working by means of my dear Mother. I see that *suffering alone* gives birth to souls, and more than ever before these sublime words of Jesus unveil their depths to me: "*Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it will bring forth much fruit.*" What an abundant harvest you have reaped! You have sown in tears, but soon you will see the result of your works, and you will return filled with joy, carrying sheaves in your arms. O Mother, among these ripe sheaves is hidden the little *white flower*; however, in heaven she will have a voice with which to sing of your *gentleness and your virtues* which she sees you practice every day in the darkness and the silence of life's exile!

Yes, for the past two years I have understood very well the mysteries hidden from me until then. God showed me the same mercy He showed to King Solomon. He has not willed that I have one single desire which is

not fulfilled, not only my desires for perfection but those too whose vanity I *have understood* without having experienced it.

As I have always looked upon you, dear Mother, as my *ideal*, I desired to be like you in everything; when I saw you do beautiful paintings and delightful poems, I said to myself: How happy I would be if I were able to paint and to know how to express my thoughts in verse and thus do good to souls. I would not have wanted to *ask for* these natural gifts and my desires remained *hidden away* at the bottom of my *heart*. *Jesus hid-den* also in this poor little heart was pleased to show it that *everything is vanity and affliction of spirit under the sun*. To the great astonishment of the Sisters I was told to paint, and God permitted that I profit by the lessons my dear Mother gave me. He willed also [81v<sup>o</sup>] that I write poems and compose little pieces that were considered beautiful. And just as Solomon, when he *considered all the works of his hands in which he had placed so much useless toil, saw that all is vanity and affliction of spirit*, in the same way I recognized from EXPERIENCE that happiness consists in hiding oneself, in remaining ignorant of created things. I understood that without *love* all works are nothing, even the most dazzling, such as raising the dead to life and converting peoples.

Instead of doing me any harm, of making me vain, the gifts which God showered upon me (without my having asked for them) drew me to *Him*; and I saw that He alone was *unchangeable*, that He alone could fulfill my immense desires.

## Introduction to the text:

“During my retreat” (Ms A, 80r): these are the Exercises preached from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 1891 by Father Alexis Prou, a forty-seven-year-old Franciscan recollect from Caen. This renowned preacher had given over one hundred retreats to men and women religious of all Orders in the West of France.

“Ordinarily, the retreats that are preached are more painful to me” (Ms A, 80r): Let us keep in mind that starting from Father Alexis’s retreat, Therese was freed from her worries, but until her death she kept a strict eye on herself, avoiding the slightest fault.

“On the waves of confidence and love” (Ms A, 80v): Mother Agnes recounted that “although she felt attracted to the path of love and abandonment, Therese took it with total confidence only after Father Alexis had confirmed that she was on the right path, something that several previous directors had not said” (from the Apostolic Process).

“Since the blessed day of your election” (Ms A, 80v): Sister Agnes of Jesus was elected prioress on February 20, 1893. Manuscript A gives very little indication of Therese’s spiritual evolution during her novitiate, from September 1890 to February 1893, apart from the Spiritual Exercises of Father Alexis Prou; to find out more, consult the correspondence. The time her sister (Mother Agnes) was prioress was for her a period of undeniable growth and maturing, but she will not let herself be chained by family belonging, especially when the two prioresses, Marie de Gonzague and Agnes of Jesus, clashed, sometimes violently.

“How happy I would be if I were able to paint” (Ms A, 81r): at the end of her office as sacristan, Therese received the task of painting on the occasion of the election of Mother Agnes. Among other things, she painted the fresco in the chapel in June 1893. Then, probably in September, she was appointed assistant turn-sister.

“He willed also that I write poems and compose little pieces that were considered beautiful” (Ms A, 81v): her first poem, *The Divine Dew*, is from February the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1893, 18 days before the election. Previously, it was Mother Agnes who composed poems, hymns and recreations for the community. For these works, Therese could have only one hour from noon to 1.00pm and another from 8.00pm to 9.00pm.



## For the community dialogue:

1. *What does the text say?* Understanding the content and primary meaning of Therese's text.
2. *What does the text say to us today?* Grasping the relevance (social, ecclesial, spiritual...) of the text.
3. *What does the text say to me / us?* Making relevant and applying the text to personal and community life.

The purpose of doing things in this manner is to allow Therese to speak to us, to question us, to encourage us, and to welcome her to shed light upon and confirm our personal and community journey. The questions proposed are therefore only indicative and can possibly accompany personal meditation and community sharing.

## *Questions:*

1. Therese is very sensitive to human mediations and to those of events. What is the main spiritual fruit of her acceptance of mediations? How is this reflected in our personal, community and apostolic life?
2. When Therese is asked to exercise her gifts at the service of the community, how is her desire transformed? How do we put our gifts at the service of the community and others?
3. Therese establishes here a connection between God's merciful action and the fulfilment of her desires, especially her spiritual ones. What place do our desires have in our relationship with God? Does our relationship with God through our history participate in the expansion and transformation of the nature of our desires?





**THERESIAN ANNIVERSARIES**  
2023-2025



**DISCALCED CARMELITES**

General Curia of the Teresian Carmel

[www.discalcedcarmelite.com](http://www.discalcedcarmelite.com)