



OCTOBER
2022

Stella Maris

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS AROUND THE WORLD

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Stella Maris is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 332 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world. We also run 53 seafarers' centres all over the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

To support Stella Maris with a donation visit www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate

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PORT-LOUIS MAURITIUS

Port-Louis Harbour, managed by the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) is the sole national port authority. Over the years, Port-Louis has developed considerably. Presently, it has three Terminals, comprising fifteen operations berths and handling more than 99% of the island's international trade.

It has a range of multi-purpose berths which can handle a variety of commodities and is equipped with a full container terminal. It has also a fishing port which accommodates around 2,000 vessels yearly.

Port-Louis is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the whole year. Dry and liquid bulk vessels are operated round the clock and container vessels on a three-shift basis. Approximately 30,000 vessels pass near Mauritius every year.

Our Mission

As far as Stella Maris mission is concerned, there have been some quite challenging episodes with the Covid epidemic. During 2 years,

shore leaves were restricted which hampered its work. However, we did not give up and attended urgent needs with the help of our partners, namely the Mauritius Sailors Home Society (MSHS), the Seafarers' Welfare Fund (SWF) – a government based organisation – and Mission to Seafarers (MTS). We also worked closely with shipping agents and the Port Authority.

A recent example: in June 2022, five Sri Lankan crew on board F/V Amila Seafood Tune were in difficulty. A bulk carrier vessel M/V Altair, on her way to Port-Louis, deviated its position to rescue this crew, whose fishing boat started to sink. They were rescued and lodged at the Seafarers' Centre. As they had lost their belongings, Stella Maris attended to all their needs. They were repatriated on July 2, 2022.

The Seafarers' Centre is now well equipped to give a better service to seafarers. A new vehicle – a shuttle bus – is available thanks to the Seafarers' Welfare Fund.

Stella Maris is active in the port and its work is recognized. Despite the challenges, it will remain on the forefront and find new ways and strategies to accomplish its mission of serving the People of the Sea with faith and pride!

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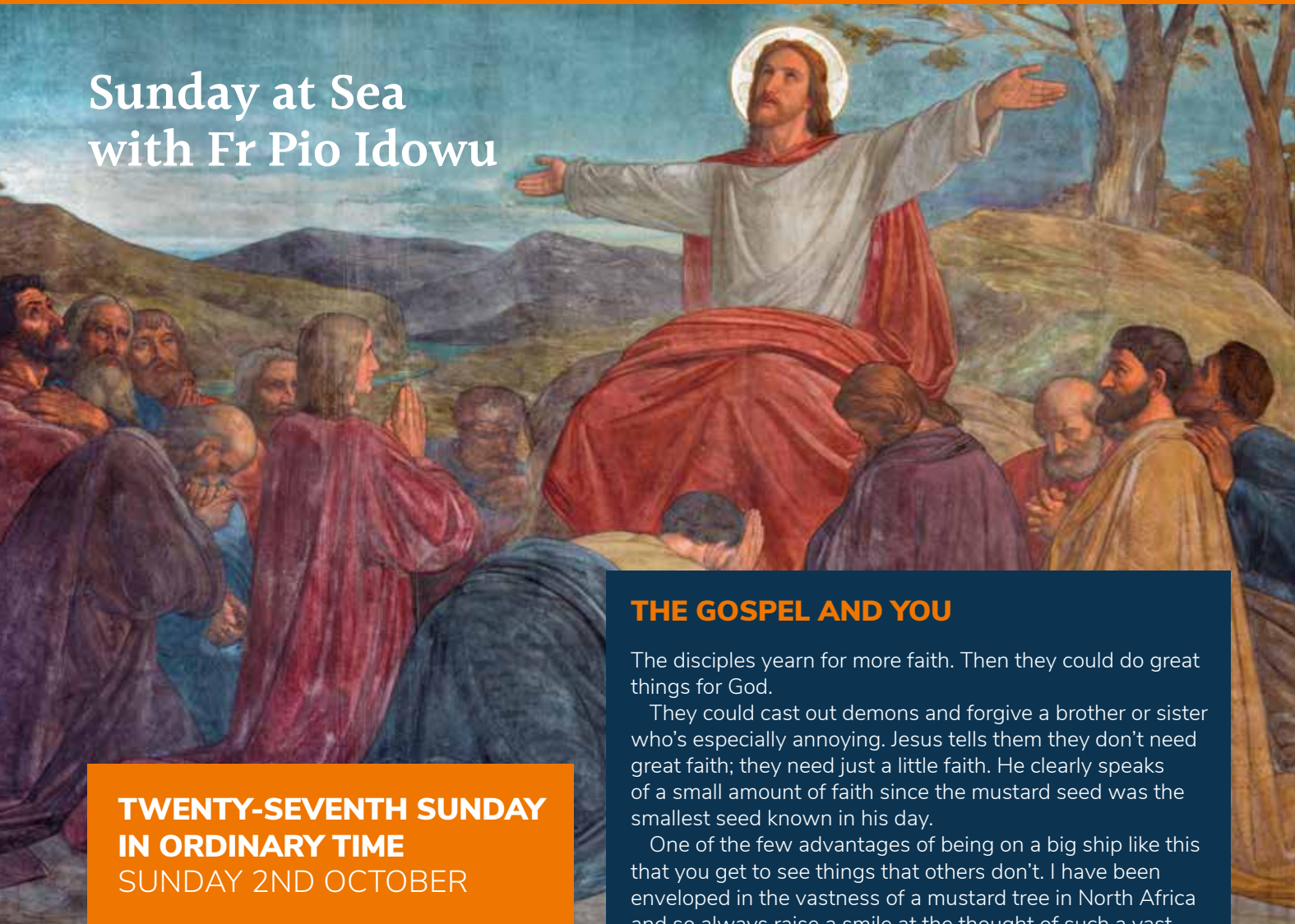
Stella Maris provides seafarers with practical support, information and a listening ear



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Sunday at Sea with Fr Pio Idowu



TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME SUNDAY 2ND OCTOBER

GOSPEL LUKE 17:5-10

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' The Lord replied, 'Were your faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it would obey you.'

'Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the fields, "Come and have your meal immediately"? Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper laid; make yourself tidy and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink yourself afterwards"? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty."'

'The Kingdom of God, as Jesus assures us, is about mustard seeds, about small seemingly unimportant things...'

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

The disciples yearn for more faith. Then they could do great things for God.

They could cast out demons and forgive a brother or sister who's especially annoying. Jesus tells them they don't need great faith; they need just a little faith. He clearly speaks of a small amount of faith since the mustard seed was the smallest seed known in his day.

One of the few advantages of being on a big ship like this that you get to see things that others don't. I have been enveloped in the vastness of a mustard tree in North Africa and so always raise a smile at the thought of such a vast thing being uprooted and cast into the sea

The Kingdom of God, as Jesus assures us, is about mustard seeds, about small seemingly unimportant things, but which, in the long run, become the big things. Small gestures of cruelty or kindness leave their effects long after the of events.

Not much in our world today helps us believe that. Almost everything urges us to think big and to be careless about small things. Likewise what is played out on the smaller stage of life – in the more domestic areas of family, marriage, and our exchanges with our shipmates – is also deemed to be of little consequence. The big stage is what we are told is important.

But we tend to forget quickly who won the big prizes in life but we remember clearly who was kind to us in the apparent little things that caused us much pain and uncertainty at the time.

We remember who encouraged us when we felt insecure.

So too with our ships; people easily see the big picture: the magnificent vessel sailing with great splendour through the waves. But do they ever realise that it is the small things that make this happen: the work of the oiler in the engine room, the much-maligned cook who keeps the crew fuelled?

Maybe today we should think on the mustard seeds in our own lives, the things we should attend to and not allow ourselves to be blinded by what we are told are bigger more important things.

TWENTY-EIGHTTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME SUNDAY 9TH OCTOBER

GOSPEL LUKE 17:11-19

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered one of the villages, ten lepers came to meet him. They stood some way off and called to him, 'Jesus! Master! Take pity on us.' When he saw them he said, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' Now as they were going away they were cleansed. Finding himself cured, one of them turned back praising God at the top of his voice and threw himself at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. This made Jesus say, 'Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they? It seems that no one has come back to give praise to God, except this foreigner.' And he said to the man, 'Stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.'

'...when we reach out to the Lord, there are no barriers that will prevent his coming to us.'



THE GOSPEL AND YOU

How satisfying it is to receive a sincere "Thank you" for a service truly appreciated.

The contrary also holds, of course: how hurtful it is to be consistently taken for granted, without ever a word of appreciation. In our gospel one out of ten was a fairly poor percentage on the gratitude scale. Maybe today we could reflect on another aspect of the story.

The lepers, even though they were a mixed group of Jews and at least one Samaritan, came to him as one. They were bonded by their misery and isolation from the people of the town.

Lepers were locked on the outside; there was no way they could come into the city so they called on Jesus to come out to them. And of course he did and he healed them. The new deal was that Jesus had put himself on the outside so that they could come in. Even if the newly cleansed lepers had wanted to thank Jesus they would have made themselves unclean all over again. Ah the knots in the legal mind!!

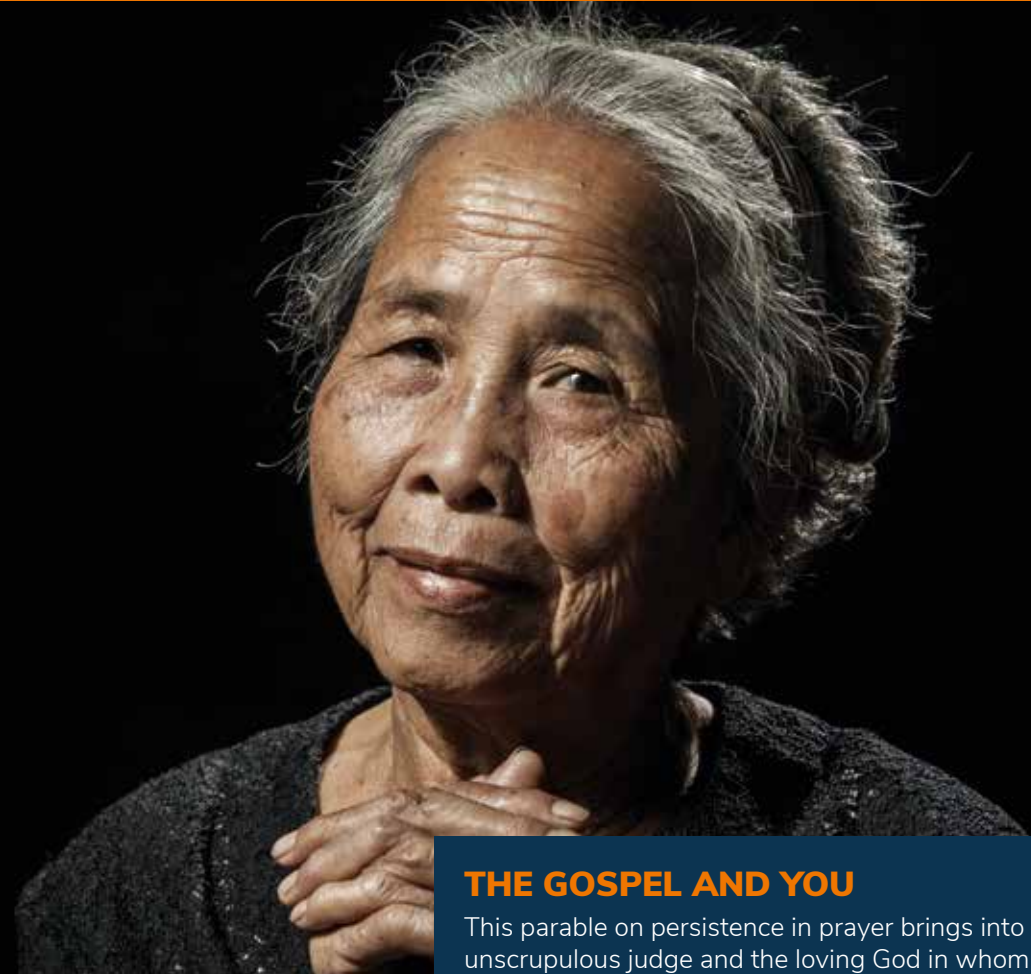
The lesson for me is that when we reach out to the Lord, there are no barriers that will prevent his coming to us. No distance is great enough to stop him reaching out to gather our broken selves into his loving arms

And so too the racial barriers that leprosy had broken down. Did they stay down or, with the restoration of health, reappear?

The loneliness of some crew on ships is often made worse by feelings of isolation, as if not part of the crowd for whatever reason, almost treated like lepers.

I know that on ships, usually with multinational crews, barriers of language and culture disappear when the crew act together to express a complaint. Their shared grievance always gets a better hearing if the crew stand as one.

May our eyes and hearts always be open to the plight of others and not blinded by prejudice or fear of the unknown.



**TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
SUNDAY 16TH OCTOBER**

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

This parable on persistence in prayer brings into contrast the unscrupulous judge and the loving God in whom we place our trust. There was no doubt about the justice of her case, but the problem was to get a judge to hear it. Her prayer undoubtedly came from the heart.

I read recently of a young mother who had been returned to her family after years of captivity. Her husband and family had campaigned for many years, promising never to give up.

There is a way to pray with the heart, which reaches out to God, who is sure to answer. To speak from the heart is also to speak to the heart. God can read the human heart, and knows me better than any words I might use; better than I know myself he can read the heart, and knows whether we really want and need what we ask for.

After speaking about the evil judge Jesus speaks of his Father. The judge gave in to persistence, so how much more will our heavenly Father respond to our prayers? The persevering widow encourages us to pray constantly, for ourselves and for those in great need.

Seafarers tell me that when they come aboard, their prayer seems to change. They no longer have the comfort of sharing prayer and worship with loved ones. They may even be the only one on the vessel who feels the need for prayer. Of course they continue to pray for those back home but their prayer may demonstrate a new set of anxieties; danger from the sea, difficult relationships on board, uncertainty about the next voyage. They tell me how they value the visit from the port chaplains who understand their need for prayer and will accompany them in it.

Pray for seafarers, who like the widow in the parable have rights that may often be denied them too. Hard to imagine in this day. And what if our great frustration in prayer is that it goes unanswered? God gives us what we ask, unless he has something better to give us.

GOSPEL LUKE 18:1-8

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart. 'There was a judge in a certain town' he said 'who had neither fear of God nor respect for man. In the same town there was a widow who kept on coming to him and saying, "I want justice from you against my enemy!" For a long time he refused, but at last he said to himself, "Maybe I have neither fear of God nor respect for man, but since she keeps pestering me I must give this widow her just rights, or she will persist in coming and worry me to death."

And the Lord said, 'You notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now will not God see justice done to his chosen who cry to him day and night even when he delays to help them? I promise you, he will see justice done to them, and done speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?'

**THIRTIETH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
SUNDAY 23RD OCTOBER**

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

In today's gospel Jesus warns against contempt, thinking ourselves better than others. He had many things in mind when he said that, but I suspect he was cautioning his listeners about how they feel about themselves when looking at what is happening in the lives of others.

This parable is addressed directly to the self-righteous. When we do good things we feel good about ourselves. Virtue really is its own reward, and that's good. We should be pleased when we have done good things. However, feeling righteous can soon turn into feeling self-righteous, as depicted by the Pharisee in the parable.

The Pharisee is practising virtue, his actions are exactly what they should be, but what this produces in him is not humility, nor a sense of his need to thank God, but self-righteousness and a critical judgement of others.

So too for all of us, we easily become the Pharisee: whenever we look at another person who's struggling and say: there but for the grace of God go I, our seeming humble gratitude can show two very different things. It can express a sincere thanks for being undeservedly blessed or can just as easily be an expression of a smug self-righteousness about our own sense of superiority.

The tax collector, on the other hand, is conscious of his sinfulness. He knows he does not deserve praise for anything he has done. His prayer is "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner".

It is this helplessness and dependence upon God that opens us to receive the special grace He has for us. As Jesus says of the tax collector "He went away justified".

This parable asks each one of us to examine our personal prayer life. Whether on land or at sea, in a vast church or in the privacy of our cabin our prayer is heard by the God who knows and loves us.

When we approach God, are we like the Pharisee or the tax collector?

'It is this helplessness and dependence upon God that opens us to receive the special grace He has for us.'

GOSPEL LUKE 18:9-14

Jesus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else: 'Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, "I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get." The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'





**THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**
SUNDAY 30TH OCTOBER

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

On our ship some of us meet to discuss the Sunday gospel. Of course the numbers vary depending who is on duty. Although Christian, indeed mostly Catholic crew, various interpretations of the gospel emerge. Among the more modern trends especially among the new "Evangelistic Churches" I hear a lot spoken about our need to seek out Jesus. I feel uncomfortable with that and am more inclined to accept a telling phrase in today's gospel which makes clear the mission of Jesus. His purpose in life was always "to seek out and save what was lost." We need to recognise a certain lostness in ourselves, and let him find us, just as he found Zacchaeus.

Being found by Jesus meant that Zacchaeus the tax collector had to let go of any arrogance based on his wealth. He humbled himself by climbing the sycamore tree, and then promised to hand over much of his wealth, to pay back those he had defrauded. In return, Jesus set aside his dignity as rabbi and a man of God by going to dine in the house of such a notorious sinner.

Jesus looked up into sycamore tree and called Zacchaeus, "Hurry on down!" – for he knew the man was ready for a change of heart. St Luke adds that the conversion of Zacchaeus brought such joy not only to himself but to everyone around him. Truly, "the Son of Man has come to search out and save what was lost."

Whatever his faults there may have been in his life, Zacchaeus took great trouble to look for some contact with Jesus. He wanted to see what kind of man Jesus was. He went to extravagant lengths to see Jesus, really to encounter him. In the process he found that the one he was searching for was also searching for him. "Come down, for I must stay at your house today," said Jesus.

Like Zacchaeus, our searching for God is preceded by God's search for us. Whenever we seek the presence of Jesus, he is already there, willing to share and dine with us.

GOSPEL LUKE 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the town when a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. He was anxious to see what kind of man Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd; so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way. When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him: 'Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I must stay at your house today.' And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully. They all complained when they saw what was happening. 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house' they said. But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost.'

St Thérèse of Lisieux's Little Way and the Love of the Father

by Mgr Vernon Johnson

➤ Towards the end of her last illness, St Thérèse of Lisieux said to her sister, Mother Agnes of Jesus: 'I feel that my Mission is soon to begin, my Mission to teach souls my little way'. Her sister asked her: 'What is the little way that you would teach to souls?' 'It is The Way of Spiritual Childhood, the way of trust and absolute self-surrender'.

The Little Way of Spiritual Childhood is all based on the heavenly Father's love. The little soul, created purely for the Father's love, moves among the path of spiritual childhood in complete dependence upon His goodness and His power. Now what response can the little soul make to that love? How can it co-operate with the heavenly Father's plan of love? In the natural sphere, what is the activity of the little child? Watch any little one with its mother. How does it show its love? By little things – just anything that comes across its path in its little world, a flower, a picture, or a toy – it takes it straight to its mother for her to see; something so small that it has no value except insofar as it expresses the love of the little one, which is so precious in its mother's eyes.

Loving like a Child

A little child relates everything to its mother in little acts of love. And, all the time, it can only do it because its mother is there, watching it, supporting it with her care and ready to receive its offering. Without her its love would have no object; all would be chaos and confusion. In the

Little Way of Spiritual Childhood it is precisely the same. The little soul can only co-operate with the Father's love, can only express its own love, by little things, by relating everything to the heavenly Father as an expression of its love. In other words, by doing everything to please the heavenly Father. St Thérèse

tells us so herself. 'I have always been very little and I have never been able to do anything but very little things. How shall I show my love since love is proved by works? Well, the little child will strew flowers... No other means have I of proving my love than to strew flowers – that is, to let no little sacrifice escape me, not a look, not a word, to make use of the very least actions and do them all for love.'

She took every little incident, every joy, every disappointment and misunderstanding, everything that came her way, some little word or action, something easy, something difficult, she grasped each, as a little child plucks a flower, and laid it at our Lord's feet as an expression of her love for Him. 'I work for His pleasure alone'.



Love in the Little Things

Here then is the way by which the little soul shows its love to the heavenly Father. It is so simple, so all-embracing. The greater part of our daily life is made up of little things, very ordinary things indeed; and the beauty of the Little Way is that it gathers in all these apparently unimportant things and fills them with a supernatural glory. The little soul, realising that it has been created by the heavenly Father solely to love Him and to be loved by Him, knows that all the circumstances of life in which it finds itself placed are therefore the setting ordained by the heavenly Father whereby the little soul is to express its love. This entirely puts an end to the temptation to divide our life into spiritual and secular, the temptation to think of God only when we are upon our knees and to forget Him in our work. Everything is an instrument to express our love; every humiliation taken patiently, every difficulty faced calmly, every sorrow borne courageously, every disappointment met bravely, every weary detail taken cheerily, every little duty in the home or business done to the best of our ability, all of these are offerings, little flowers by which to express our love to our heavenly Father.

Writing to her sister, the Saint says: 'It is the little things done for love which charm the heart of the good God'. So, here and now on earth, in little, unimportant things, begins that very life of Union, through supernatural love, which is to be our glory in heaven. This is precisely what theology teaches us, namely, that all creatures around us,

all we meet in life, are to be used as means to glorify God through love; that all our life is just a means to our last end, love; and, apart from that last end, it has no meaning. And, just as the little child can only offer its little tokens of love to its mother because she is there, enveloping the little one with her love and protection, so the soul, though free, can only offer its acts of love through the power of God's grace.

St Thérèse was never tired of saying: 'I have never been able to do anything by myself'. The little soul makes these acts of love just as much in the grey days as in the days when all is bright and sunny. 'In times of dryness, when I am incapable of praying and practising virtue, I seek little opportunities, mere trifles, to give pleasure to Jesus; for instance, a smile, a pleasant word when inclined to show weariness. If I have no opportunities I at least tell Him again and again that I love Him. That is not difficult, and it keeps alight the fire of love in my heart.' Is there anybody who cannot do this, with a good will and with the help of grace? The Little Way once more is so safe, for it does not ask the little soul to do any great work. For the heavenly Father does not look at the greatness of the work, but at the love which lies behind it. 'Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even at their difficulty, as at the love with which we do them. What then have we to fear?'

Perfect Confidence

Again, the little soul treads this Way with perfect confidence in its effort to show its love through little things. It knows it will often fail and make mistakes. But, in the natural life, if a little one brings a picture to its mother upside down, the mother does not punish the little one. She does not even trouble to turn the picture the right way up. She is not looking at the picture but at the love of the little one behind it. And the little soul knows that it is the same with the heavenly Father's love, and so all temptations to scruples disappear.



1st October is the Feast of St Thérèse of Lisieux

THIS MORNING OFFERING WAS COMPOSED BY ST THÉRÈSE

O my God! I offer you all my actions of this day for the intentions and for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I desire to sanctify every beat of my heart, my every thought, my simplest works, by uniting them to its infinite merits; and I wish to make reparation for my sins by casting them into the furnace of its merciful love. O my God! I ask of you for myself and for those whom I hold dear the grace to fulfil perfectly your holy will, to accept for love of you the joys and sorrows of this passing life, so that we may one day be united together in Heaven for all eternity.

Amen.



STELLA MARIS

Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world. We improve the lives of seafarers and fishers through our network of local chaplains and seafarer centres, expert information, advocacy and spiritual support.



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