

St. Therese and the Concept of Spiritual Childhood



By Fr. John Russell, O. Carm.

In an age that savours insights related to growth, maturity accountability and responsibility, it might appear jejune to suggest 'spiritual childhood' as an appropriate image for the spiritual journey. The 'little way' associated with St Therese of Lisieux can readily be misunderstood. In her writings, focus on the child does not promote childishness, passivity, immaturity, nor a romantic sphere of eternal play. Rather, it points toward a theocentric view of grace.

God initiates relationship, enables and nourishes us. We recognize, discover, respond, grow within the ambience of God's merciful love. A child develops best in an environment of trust, love, forgiveness, generosity. St. Therese's personal experience led her to recognize that God was at the centre of her existence as Love. In view of the immensity of the world and the complexities of life she saw herself as 'a child,' 'a grain of sand,' 'little' but energized by a God who directed her journey in faith.

Bishop Guy Gaucher, O.C.D., has written that the notion of spiritual childhood as applied to St Therese is a limited expression and can readily distort her spirituality. The words "spiritual childhood" never came from Therese's pen. Mother Agnes (Pauline) willingly admitted that she had inserted the expression into the long synthesis presented to the Apostolic Process. A similar observation in more theological language has been made by Hans Urs von Balthasar: "Her teaching is not a theological system . . . ; it is an immediate, total vision, and on that account requires many forms for its exposition." The vision suggests a 'primitive Christian power' rooted in the paschal mystery of death and resurrection, 'of dying and rebirth.' Thus no one image can capture the depth and breadth of Therese's spiritual journey.

The image of the child or childhood does find a place in the religious experience of Therese in two fundamental ways: (1) she cultivated a personal relationship to the child Jesus; and (2) she employed the image of childhood or littleness as one construct in communicating her own spiritual journey.

Relationship to the child Jesus emphasizes the humanity of Christ and suggests a sense of dependence, poverty, trust, and wonder. The child Jesus theme is found in the sermons of St. Bernard of Clairvaux and in writings of the Franciscan tradition. Devotion to the child Jesus was rather common in France in the nineteenth century. Therese's own relationship to the child Jesus came from initiatives taken by Pauline, her sister.

Pauline believed that the image of the child Jesus would be beneficial for her young sister because Therese was suffering severe emotional strain from the loss of her mother, and also of her sister Pauline to the Sisters of Mt. Carmel. She knew Therese would be able to relate to the child in the crib. She wrote in December 1882 or January 1883: 'I still think that for little girls, very good, very sweet . . . the Holy Child in the crib reserves all kinds of divine caresses.' In a series of letters written by Pauline to Therese as she prepared for her first communion, the child Jesus or 'little Jesus' is frequently mentioned. Therese's sacrifices and acts of virtue would be the flowers offered to little Jesus at her first communion. While the language Pauline employs is rather sentimental and simplistic, the God image is gentle and comfortable for a child.

In due time Therese would reject the 'meritorious acts' approach to spirituality (her act of oblation to God's merciful love stated: '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'). Therese's spirituality would focus on love alone, accepting the push and pull of the ordinary and the everyday in forging a meaning for authentic sanctity.

While never rejecting the image of the child Jesus (she wrote two Christmas plays focusing on divine infancy), the mature Therese holds together the full humanity of Christ who suffered in love for the salvation of all. Thus, her name in religious life became 'Soeur Thérèse de l'Enfant Jesus et de la Sainte Face' (Sister Therese of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face) on 10th January 1889. It was the day that Therese received the habit of the Carmelites. It is important to recognize that St. Therese's literary style can obscure at times the depth of religious experience and commitment that marks her journey.

She was prone to use diminutives in a way that can distract from the demands of the so-called 'little way.' She views herself as 'a little ball,' 'a little hermit,' 'a little boat.' In a letter written to her sister Celine in 1893 she refers to her as 'a little drop of dew.' Other aspects can slow down our desire to read further. She sought an image of the spiritual that would be more simple and direct, like an elevator that ascends directly and swiftly. That construct seems mechanical, to say the least. That is why a number of readers find meaning in the writings of St Therese only by returning to them numerous times. The process leads to insight, to understanding, to a deeper appreciation of her total self-gift to Jesus Christ, to her community, to the mission of the church.

www.littleflower.org

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OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

September 30, 2018

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm
(Anticipated Mass)
Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm
Monday – Wednesday 8am
Thursday Mass/Novena:
8am & 7pm
Friday, Saturday, Holidays: 9am
(Fridays in July & August: 8am)
Children's Mass: 9am 1st
Sunday of the month Oct-June
Children's Liturgy: 11am
All Sundays except the 1st
Sunday from Sept- June
Reconciliation
Saturday: 4-4:45pm
Adoration
Saturday 9:30-10am
Library Hours
Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

STAFF

Pastor

Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.

Associate Pastor

Joseph Horo, C.Ss.R.

In Residence

William Comerford, C.Ss.R.

Office Manager

Virginia Fong

Pastoral Coordinator

Bertilla Watanabe

Bookkeeper

Corinna Siy

Youth Ministry Coordinator

Theresa Barao

OLPH School Principal

Lora Clarke

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Giving is Something We Can Do as A Family

Dear Parishioners,

In last week's Financial Report, along with the dollars and cents of running a parish, we mentioned the people who make up this vibrant community. They are parishioners who not only come to Mass regularly but who share their time and talent with the parish in a variety of ways. It was very encouraging to hear their feedback in support of the good works we have channeled our efforts towards in the last few years.

I am always impressed by the children who come forward with their ideas for supporting the parish and our ministries. See the photo below: A message on bright construction paper with the words "Thank you" written large. Taped to it was a \$5 bill and the line which made me chuckle: "Take the money! Bless you!" On the flip side was a photo of his cute guinea pigs. It was from Max.

Another contribution came in a box of coins in rollers with a bright green card. The penciled message said, "We raised over 10 dollars in our lemonade stand and we would like to give it to the Door Is Open." It was from the Fullers.

Then there was the homemade blackberry and lavender jams made by Alycia and her mother Fiona. The berry picking and jamming was documented and photographed. Proceeds from jam sales were given to the parish. What a great example set by and for our children! Giving can and should be something that we do together as a family for the parish family.

Let us pray that our Blessed Mother may inspire us to give in joyful and creative ways in the name of her Son, Jesus.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Babu Mathew, CSsR



The precepts of the Lord are right and give joy to the heart. – Psalm 19

NEWS & NOTICES

Weekly Collection: Sunday Mass Offering Sept 22 & 23: \$5,495.95. Needs of Canadian Church: \$180. CSsR Pension: \$95. Food Bank: \$728.95 Initial Offering: \$5. Thank you for your faith-filled generosity.

Project Advance Report: On Sept 25 pledges donations including recurring donations up to 31 Dec this year were at \$60,851 with participation from 112 donors. We have now exceeded our archdiocesan goal of \$52,000. All funds raised now will be rebated to the parish. Our total goal is \$104,000 which will go toward the Parish infrastructure renewal. Please make a prayerful contribution to Project Advance this year. Thank you for your support.

Bishop Robert Barron Presentation: Look out for more details on our DVD Presentation on *The Mass* by Bishop Barron starting Thursday Oct 11 after the morning and evening Masses. More info coming soon!

Madonna Group: Next meeting Wednesday October 3 at noon in the Parish Hall. Please contact Monica at 604-739-8837 if you plan to attend.

PREP: PREP classes on Tuesdays at 6:30pm at OLPH School have begun. Please note if your child is in public school, two years of PREP is necessary in order to be ready to receive the sacraments. For more info, please contact Elizabeth Towers at 604-440-8809.

PREP Teachers Needed: We are still in need of teachers for PREP to teach Grades 3, 4 and 5. PREP is Catechism for children in non-Catholic schools. If you can help, please contact Elizabeth Towers 604-440-8809.

New Altar Servers: Training for new altar servers will be starting in October. Anyone in Grade 3 or up who has received First Communion is welcome to join. For more info please contact Kate Carr at cecarr@telus.net by Sunday, September 30.

RCIA Begins September 23: If you are interested in the Catholic faith or have been away from the Church for some time and would like to come back, join us on Sunday mornings for The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). It is a beautiful journey of spiritual discovery culminating in Easter celebrations on April 21 next year. If you are already in the faith and know of people who have not discovered Jesus, have missed receiving First Communion and Confirmation, or simply fallen out of the practice of the Faith, extend a personal invitation to them to join us on this spiritual journey. Starting Sunday Sept 23, 9am-10:30am. Application forms available in the church foyer and parish office.

Rosary Rally at Vancouver Art Gallery: "Only I can help you." Come to ask Our Lady to obtain graces for the world and our families, particularly by praying for the fulfillment of the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. We also recall her 6th apparition at Fatima on Oct. 13, 1917. Join us for a Rosary rally on Saturday, Oct. 13, at 10 a.m. at the North Plaza of the Vancouver Art Gallery, facing West Georgia St.

Life Chain: Life Chain is gathering today, Sunday Sept 30 at Oak St at 29th Avenue, Vancouver from 2-3pm with Pastor John Kaptein. Life Chain is a peaceful and prayerful public witness of pro-life individuals standing for 90 minutes praying for our nation and for an end to abortion. It is a visual statement of solidarity by the Christian community that the Church supports the sanctity of human life.

Men's Hostel Needs Belts: We are so thankful for the many gifts of socks and underwear, but did you know we have a real shortage of another clothing item we don't often talk about – belts! We have over 1,000 men who stay with us at our Emergency Homeless Shelter. Drop them off at the Men's Hostel or at JPII Centre.

Handmade Sacred Artifacts for Sale: The Sisters of St Elizabeth from Belarus will be at OLPH to sell icons crosses, crucifixes and handmade crafts on Thanksgiving weekend. Please support their cause.

Archbishop's Dinner 2018: Join us on Tuesday, Oct. 30, at 7 p.m. at Hyatt Regency, Vancouver. Reception at 6 p.m. Archbishop Miller has designated the proceeds of the Seventh Annual Archbishop's Dinner to help the Archdiocese meet the costs of its intensive and comprehensive formation program for our future permanent deacons, along with the continuing education of those already ordained. Purchase tickets today at <https://rcav.org/dinner2018/>

Stewardship Reflection

"Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward." MARK 9:41

Does your life reflect the life of Jesus? Remember, we were made in His image. We tend to forget this. When others see you, do they see the face of Jesus? When you look at others, do you see the face of Jesus in them?

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

12-week Marian Meditations

Missed a few? You can still join us on Thursdays between the Birthday of Mary (Sept 8) and the start of Advent (Dec 2) for a series of Marian Meditations with prayers and music. Thursdays at our parish have been dedicated to novenas to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. This will be another beautiful way to invoke the help of Our Blessed Mother for the spiritual and temporal needs of your family and friends for the coming year. Starting: Thursday Sept 13, 2:30pm-3pm.

OLPH Youth Fundraiser



Pumpkin, apple and blueberry pies with yummy buttery crusts will be on sale this weekend and next as part of an OLPH Youth Fundraiser to Yellowknife. Pies are going for \$15. Cash and cheques only. You can also make a donation to the OLPH Youth Ministry on the Parish website www.olphchurch.ca. Thank you for your generous support!

School Harvest Fair



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Serve in Hope

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) figures prominently among those apostolic institutions which owe their beginnings to the free decisions of lay people. It is an international lay organization, founded in Paris in 1833 by Frédéric Ozanam and his friends. A Catholic Society, it is open to all those who desire to live their faith in love and service of their neighbour. Under the patronage of Saint Vincent de Paul, it draws its inspiration from his thoughts and his works. Members strive, in a spirit of justice, charity, mutual help, and solidarity with the poor, and by personal commitment, to ease the hardships of those who suffer.

Our volunteers seek people in need, wherever they live - in their homes, on the street, in shelters, in hospital or in prison. The activity of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is always based on love of neighbour in the local community. Volunteers work in their own area, and respond to local needs. This means that the Society's work around the world is extremely varied: health, agriculture, education, housing, employment support, help for elderly, disabled, isolated or excluded people, and more. Funded by donations, it also provides emergency assistance and rehabilitation for victims of natural or humanitarian disasters, and finances development projects.

SSVP's work in Canada:

- home visits
- friendly visits (sick, elderly, prisoners)
- food aid (food bank, soup kitchen)
- material help (clothes, accessories and furniture)
- educational support (school supplies, scholarships)
- help to refugees and immigrants
- shelters (homeless, single mothers, abused persons)
- summer camps
- twinning with conferences from another country
- international and national emergency relief (natural disasters and humanitarian catastrophes)



THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL IN CANADA

The first conference of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) in Canada was founded by Doctor Joseph Painchaud in 1846, in Quebec City. During this period in Quebec, the members did not have far to look for needs that must be met. The most serious were the epidemics that broke out in the city from the waves of immigrants. To this were added the frequent economic depressions which called for the establishment of savings banks or banking co-ops to encourage the poor to save money. Two such were founded at that time.

In 1848, a few days after the foundation of the Society in Montreal, the members visited a prison and immediately afterward prepared a report for the government on reforms that they considered should be introduced into the management of the prison. Throughout its history, the Society has always been able to adapt to new needs and has developed programs, either permanent or temporary, to assist families; to aid the poor; to help drifters and derelicts, the homeless, the elderly and the orphans.

In 2018, Canada has 781 conferences, 88 particular councils, 13 central councils, as well as 5 regional councils: BC & Yukon - West - Ontario - Quebec - Atlantic. The poor can count on receiving help from our 14,771 members, who made 226,485 visits last year, thus helping 325,410 needy people, from sea to sea, across Canada.

www.ssvp.ca

If you would like to serve with the St Vincent de Paul Society, please contact Mark Thompson at mrkthompson39@gmail.com



Donna Trasolini, New Chair of Pastoral Council

Donna Trasolini has been a parishioner at OLPH for 26 years and has been married to her husband, Franco, for 30 years. Together they have 4 children (Marc, Cristina, Andrew and Sarina) who all attended OLPH preschool and elementary school followed by Vancouver College for the boys and Little Flower Academy for the girls.

As a long standing, active member of the parish and school communities, Donna has been involved in community building events, fund raising and various committees over the years. A former nurse (BScN 86) teaching in the VGH and UBC Schools of Nursing, Donna is currently the Administrative Assistant of the Vancouver College Learning Centre.

MINISTRY PROFILES



Redemptorist Pilgrimage: May 2-14

As part of our 150th Jubilee Icon of Love celebrations, the Redemptorists all over the world have organized several pilgrimages to visit the actual icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, places where St Alphonsus and St Gerard Majella lived and prayed as well as a few other places of interest in Italy.

12-DAY ITINERARY

Day 01: May 02 2019 - Canada to Rome / Naples

Day 02 May 03 - Arrive in Rome – Marianella – Naples

Day 03: May 04 - Pompeii – Amalfi Coast

Day 04: May 05 - Excursion to Scala

Day 05: May 06 - Sites of St. Alphonsus and St. Gerard Majella

Day 06: May 07 - Amalfi – Montecassiano – Rome

Day 7: May 08 - Papal Audience – Holy Doors of Rome – Relics of Jerusalem

Day 8: May 09 - Rome (Vatican)

Day 9: May 10 - Assisi – Sites of St. Francis and St. Clare

DAY 10: May 11 - Pisa – Padua

DAY 11: May 12 – Venice – St. Mark's Square - Murano Glass Factory

DAY 12: May 13 – Goodbye Italy

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Pastor: Father Babu Mathew

Asst. Pastor: Fr Joseph Horo

Chair: Donna Trasolini

Bro. John Gale

Jesse Gemmill

Josephine Wong

Kate Carr

Stan Liu

William Wingson