

# HOW TO BECOME A SAINT

THE LITTLE WAY,  
SHORT & STRAIGHT  
(based on the writings of St. Therese of Liseux)

Babes Tan-Magkalas

01	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
03	<b>WHO IS A SAINT?</b>
05	<b>HOW TO BECOME A SAINT THE LITTLE WAY</b>
13	<b>SO NOW, DO YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN BECOME A SAINT?</b>
16	<b>AFTERTHOUGHT</b>

# Table Of Contents

*"I have always wanted to be a saint. Alas! I have always noticed that when I compared myself to the saints, there is between them and me the same difference that exists between a mountain whose summit is lost in the clouds and the obscure grain of sand trampled underneath by passers-by. Instead of becoming discouraged I said to myself: God cannot inspire unrealizable desires. I can, then, inspire of my littleness, aspire to holiness. (St. Therese of Liseux, *Story Of A Soul*, p. 207)*

# A MOUNTAIN AND A GRAIN OF SAND

When I was a young girl, around 10 or 11 years old, my Mom gave me a big book about the lives of saints. I thought she gave it to me because she knew I liked to read. But when she said that I should do my best to be like the saints, especially how obedient they were to their parents, I knew she had a hidden agenda!

Maybe she thought that after reading the book, I would be so inspired that I would start obeying her more. :)

You see, I was not exactly a 100% obedient child when I was young. I remember always questioning why I had to do some things my parents asked me to do. Of course, I ended up doing most of them but not all of them!

Anyway, given the human tendency to rationalize or justify one's behaviour, what got my attention while reading the book were "disobedient saints". Saints like St. Claire of Assissi who at 18 secretly left home and her parents; St. Catherine of Siena who refused to marry despite her parents', especially her mother's, urging; St. Thomas Aquinas who did not follow his parents' plans for him; and St. Alexis who disobeyed his parents' arranged marriage wishes.

Well, I didn't exactly feel good knowing that their disobedience was undoubtedly prompted by God while mine was due to my selfish desires. Looking back, I think it was at that point in my life when I developed a belief that I can never be a saint!

I just thought after reading the book that these saints were so up up there with their holiness while I was down down below with my self-centeredness. It felt like the saints were so high up there, at the summit of Mt. Everest while I was down on the ground like a grain of sand which was, as St. Therese said, *"trampled underneath by passers-by."*

Hence, the pursuit of holiness was never on my mind when I became an adult. I wanted a successful career or business doing what I was good at, having fun and earning a lot of money. And I want to do this by working when I want... where I want...and, as little, or as often, as I want.

Why pursue holiness? Why go after something I can never achieved anyway!

Even after I started reading and studying the Scriptures under the wing of a priest who acted as my spiritual mentor and father when my Dad passed away, I still didn't think I could become a saint. I hungered for spiritual food (and I still do) and started to do good works but I did not consider myself as saint material. I felt I was just too broken, too sinful, not good enough, not holy enough to become one.

## UNTIL...

March 2016. Pope Francis, 3 months earlier, declared an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, starting from December 8, 2015 and ending on November 20, 2016, the Feast of Christ the King.

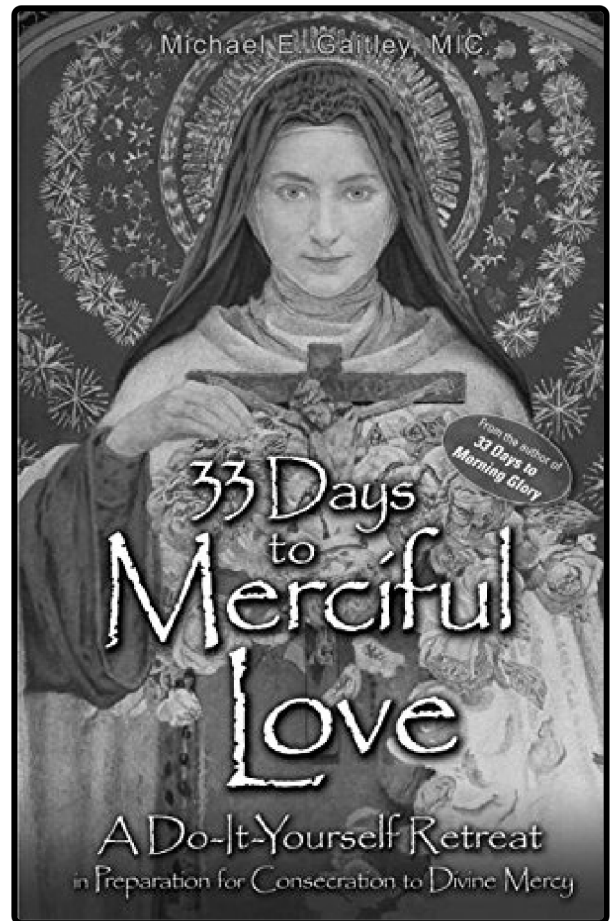
## INTRODUCTION

I can't remember the exact day in March 2016 when a friend of mine gave me a book entitled *"33 Days To Merciful Love: A Do It Yourself Retreat In Preparation For Consecration To Divine Mercy"*. It was written by Fr. Michael E. Gaitely from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

The book expounds on St. Therese of Liseux's spiritual doctrine called the "Little Way" and her consecration to Divine Mercy, also known as her offering to Merciful Love.

I have done a lot of spiritual reading but all the books I have read combined cannot match the joy and hope that filled my heart after reading this book and doing the consecration to Divine Mercy. For me, this book is a life changer!

You see, I never fully and rightly understood what Divine Mercy truly meant until I read this book. I was taught at a young age more about God's justice than His mercy so I grew up thinking that once I screwed up big time (and I did countless times and still do from time to time), God's justice will always prevail over His mercy even if I have repented sincerely.



But all these changed after I read the book. There were times when tears just fell from my eyes while reading this book, out of intense gratitude for God's limitless mercy!

Along with St. Therese's autobiography *"Story Of A Soul"*, Fr. Gaitely's book shifted my belief from *"I can never be a saint"* to *"Yes, I can be a saint!"*.

To me, these 2 books are not to be read once and then put in a book shelf not to be read again. I have read both books three times already and each time, I gain more and more insights on holiness and God's mercy and love.

There is a certain childlike simplicity in the way St. Therese wrote her autobiography and her letters that just resonated with me. Her writings are simple but profound. While reading them, I found myself sometimes saying, *"Wow, this is so me!"*.

What do you do when you discover something which you know can help a lot of people as they go on their spiritual journey? You share it, right? So this is my intent in writing this short e-book.

If you were to ask me, *"Will you summarize these 2 books for me? What have you learned? How can St. Therese's writings help me grow spiritually? What made you change your beliefs about becoming a saint? Do you honestly think I can be a saint too?"*, my response would be in this e-book.

Most of what I have written here are not my ideas. They came from St. Therese's writings and from Fr. Gaitely's inspired insights on her teachings. I am simply re-telling them as if I am talking to a friend.

So I hope and pray you will read on and discover something that would set you, as St. Therese said: *"full sail upon the waves of confidence and love."* (St. Therese of Liseux, *"Story Of A Soul"*, p. 174.)

## WHO IS A SAINT?



## SAINTS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Some people may think that saints are highly exceptional people - they never sinned, always prayed and performing miracles was their favourite hobby! They were born with a halo on their heads and glowed in the dark! Ok, I'm exaggerating :)

My point is saints are ordinary human beings like you and me. They weren't born saints. Like all people, except for our Blessed Mother, they were born in the state of original sin and committed sins throughout their lives.

Broadly speaking, saints are people who made it to heaven. With God's grace, they did their best to live their lives in obedience to God's will. They have sinned but they never gave up and didn't stop to reform their lives to please God. Many were living examples of people who kept screwing up, repenting and trying again.

They came from all walks of life. Some belonged to royal families while some were martyrs, missionaries, widows, parents, religious, and "regular people". They served God in a variety of ways. Some served the poor and the sick; others died for their faith; some were evangelizers; some led contemplative lives; there were those who were writers and thinkers while some were revered for their humility and simplicity.

Some saints are "canonized" which means they have been officially and authoritatively declared a saint by the Catholic Church. However, there are many who have not been formally canonized.

Furthermore, it is only after death that the Catholic Church can declare someone a saint, even if that person is undoubtedly living a saintly life. An example is Mother Teresa of Calcutta who a lot of people called a living saint while she was still here on earth. She couldn't be given the title of saint until after her death and only after undergoing the Church's canonization process.

## HOLY BUT ALSO VERY HUMAN

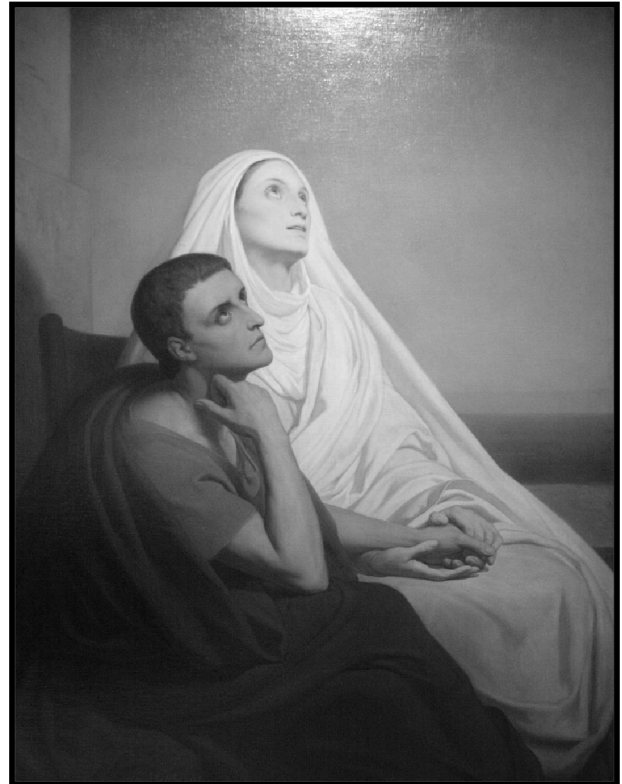
No one is perfect and saints are no exceptions. They certainly were not infallible and flawless, and as I mentioned earlier, they sinned. St. John Paul II went to receive the sacrament of reconciliation everyday (although other sources I read said he did it weekly). But whether he confessed daily or weekly, he obviously thought he was a sinner!

St. Therese was so broken as a child she cried at the very thought that she might have committed a sin. She was holy but she was also quite human. She would often fall asleep after receiving Holy Communion (*Story Of A Soul*, p. 165) and found praying the Rosary difficult (p. 242).

Hagiography, the study of saints, tends to point out the early sinning in the lives of the saints, in other words, their "preconversion badness" and so when you read about their lives, their "postconversion goodness" stand out.

For instance, St. Augustine (image on the right) who said: *"There is no saint without a past, no sinner without a future"* was said to have had a quite colourful and sinful past. His mother St. Monica was a devout Christian but St. Augustine ignored his Christian upbringing, led a hedonist life, did a lot of wild partying, and fathered an illegitimate son. Yet later on, he repented and eventually became a Doctor of the Church.

According to Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, young Francis of Assisi spent lavishly and even ostentatiously his father's money. And St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, may be the only saint with a "notarized police record, for nighttime brawling with intent to inflict serious harm."



Even when the saints made a firm resolve to mend their ways, they still remained stubbornly imperfect. Yes, they did strive to lead lives pleasing to God but, they knew they were also human and were most cognizant of their faults. This served to remind them to rely on God alone.

So the lives of the saints imply that holiness doesn't require perfection!

Becoming a saint the Little Way do have some requirements though. In fact, there are three. Let's find out what they are in the following pages.

## HOW TO BECOME A SAINT THE LITTLE WAY

*...I must bear with myself such as I am with all my imperfections. But I want to seek out a means of going to heaven by a little way, a way that is very straight, very short and totally new." (St. Therese of Liseux, Story Of A Soul, p. 207)*

Like most of us, saints are also a product of their times. Hence, before I discuss the Little Way, it is important to know the environment in which St. Therese grew up in especially how she was so much influenced by Jansenism during her younger years, which continued even when she already entered the Carmelite convent.

### WHAT IS JANSENISM?

*"It's a heresy that teaches a joyless moral rigorism, emphasizing fear and justice, punishment and severity, judgment and condemnation. It proclaims not the good news of God's mercy for sinners but its own bad news of God's consuming wrath for whoever commits the slightest infraction against what it sees as his many oppressive rules. It teaches that few are saved, that you have to be perfect to go to Jesus, and that you must earn his love especially by multiplying great works and painful sacrifices." (Fr. Michael E. Gaitely, "33 Days To Merciful Love", pp. 47-48)*

Jansenism affected St. Therese so much at an early age and in her later childhood. In fact, she was so affected by it that everytime she made even a teeny weeny mistake or did something wrong, she would be so anxious and start crying. Even when she was already forgiven, she wouldn't and couldn't stop crying.

This Jansenist influence followed her at the start of her religious life. She was excessively fearful of offending God and was so preoccupied with suffering.

She was so extreme and believed that for a Carmelite, a day spent without suffering is a day wasted. To her at that time, *"Holiness does not consist in saying pretty things, not even in thinking or feeling them!..It consists in suffering and suffering in everything...One must conquer it at sword point, one must suffer..."* (Letters of St. Therese of Liseux, vol. I, p. 42)

This Jansenistic attitude contributed to St. Therese's belief that she was lowly, the littlest of souls. This lowliness was also the result of her being so emotionally fragile when she was a child. Her Mom passed away when she was only 3 years old due to cancer and her elder sister Pauline acted as her mother. When Pauline entered the convent (she became Mother Agnes) when she was 9, she became so emotional and so sensitive that she would cry at the slightest provocation.

Hence, even when she already became a Carmelite nun, she never thought nor admitted that she was a great soul or that she was so spiritually strong that she could do great things, like the saints.

## THE EAGLE AND THE LITTLE BIRD

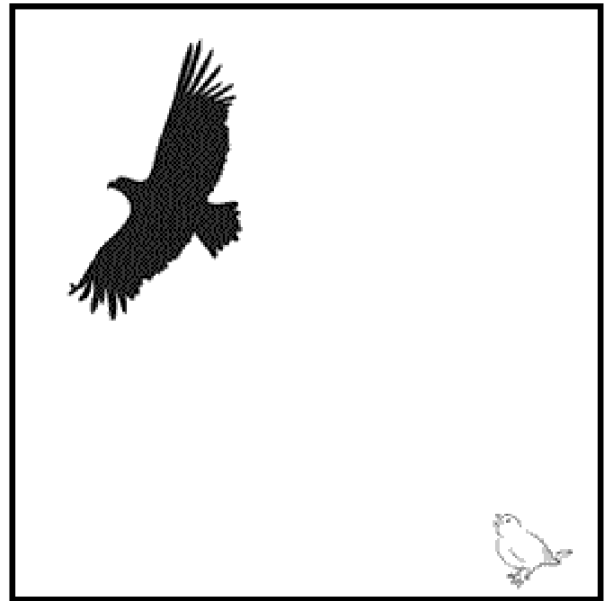
Although she was very much aware of her weaknesses, St. Therese had a certain boldness when it came to her approach to holiness. She wanted to reach greater heights and to love God even more than Teresa of Avila, a Doctor of the Church who like her, was also a Carmelite.

## HOW TO BECOME A SAINT THE LITTLE WAY

She saw St. Teresa of Avila and the other saints like eagles soaring in holiness while she was just a little bird, weak and unable to fly.

Don't you feel that way when you think about the saints? Did you ever feel that the saints were the towering mountains while you were just a grain of sand? To put it another way, do you or did you feel like the saints were eagles soaring in the heights while you were just a weak and tiny bird who cannot even fly? I certainly did!

But with boldness, St. Therese said: *"I am not an eagle but I have...an eagle's eyes and heart. So in spite of my extreme littleness, I still dare to gaze upon the Lord, and my heart feels within it all the aspirations of an Eagle."* (Story of A Soul, p. 198)



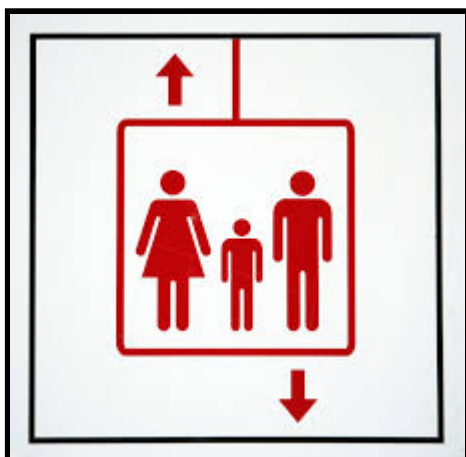
So she had to find a way to attain this greater heights in holiness given her littleness of which she was so deeply conscious.

She sought a way that depended on this very weakness, on this lowliness, on this littleness. After all, didn't she say: *"God cannot inspire unrealizable desires"*?

So she found a way or rather, God revealed to her a way! And what was this way? The **LITTLE WAY!**

## THE LITTLE WAY - STRAIGHT, SHORT AND TOTALLY NEW

So, what is the Little Way? I think the best way to describe this short, straight and totally new path for little souls is to think of an elevator. Yes, an elevator!



I live on the 5th floor of an apartment building. Do you think I take the stairs instead of the elevator to go up? Of course not! Although some people prefer to take the stairs to lose weight, develop stamina, etc., nope, not me!

Why? Because the elevator provides me a **SHORT** (and quicker) way to get into my apartment unit and avoid the long and winding staircase. It also offers me a **STRAIGHT** path, the straightest path to my unit because it is vertical.

Well, an elevator is not "TOTALLY NEW" in this day and age but it was during St. Therese's time.



## HOW TO BECOME A SAINT THE LITTLE WAY

Let me quote St. Therese herself. Read what she has to say about this elevator:

*"We are living now in an age of inventions, and we no longer have to take the trouble of climbing stairs, for, in the homes of the rich, an elevator has replaced these very successfully. I wanted to find an elevator which would raise me to Jesus, for I am too small to climb the rough stairway of perfection. I searched then in the Scriptures for some sign of this elevator, the object of my desires, and I read these words from the mouth of Eternal Wisdom: "Whoever is a LITTLE ONE, let him come to me." And so I succeeded. I felt I had found what I was looking for. ...The elevator which must raise me to heaven is Your arms, O Jesus! And for this I have no need to grow up, but rather I have to remain little and become this more and more." (Story of A Soul, pp. 207-208)*

## Here's the Good News

St. Therese just announced it in the aforementioned quote. It's a new invention for little souls to reach the heights of holiness. It's a "spiritual elevator". And what is this "spiritual elevator"? It is **GOD'S MERCY FOR THE LITTLE AND THE LOWLY!**

The Little Way is about the compassionate heart of Jesus who sees the suffering of lowly souls who long to be holy and become saints but who are just too little to climb the "rough stairway of perfection". It's all about Jesus reaching down out of pity for the trusting little souls to place them on the heights of holiness!

The elevator is the mercy of Jesus in action, lifting up the lowly!

St. Therese's discovery of the Little Way is actually a discovery of Divine Mercy and a rediscovery of the very heart of the Gospel. As Pope Benedict XVI said in his *Regina Caeli* message for Divine Mercy Sunday in 2008, *"Indeed, mercy is the central nucleus of the Gospel message..."*

It is totally new at that time considering the gloomy influence of Jansenism. It was such a joyful discovery which made St. Therese exclaimed in prayer: *"O my God, you surpassed all my expectation. I want only to sing of Your mercies."* (Story of A Soul, p. 208) Oh yes, singing is in order here. If I have my choir friends with me now, I would stop writing at this point, take out my guitar, and start playing *"O Merciful Redeemer"* and we would all sing our hearts out!

Again, what is the Gospel, what is the Good News? Fr. Gaitely summarized it so beautifully. Let me enumerate them below:

- "- It's the Good News of God's mercy for sinners.*
- It's the Good News that Jesus didn't come for the righteous but for sinners.*
- It's the Good News that God has the heart of the Good Shepherd who will even leave behind the 99 to go in search of one lost sheep.*
- It's the Good News that God doesn't love us because we're so good but because He's so good, that he loves us not because we deserve it but because we desperately need it.*
- It's the Good News that God's love is like water, which always goes to the lowest place.*
- It's the Good News that God's ways are not our ways, that God isn't attracted to our gifts, virtues and talents, but rather, to our weakness, brokenness and sin." (33 Days To Merciful Love, p. 53)*

The following quote from St. Therese at the end of her autobiography also speaks about the heart of the Gospel which is filled with mercy:

## HOW TO BECOME A SAINT THE LITTLE WAY

*"I have only to cast a glance in the Gospels... and I know on which side to run. I don't hasten to the first place but to the last; rather than advance like the Pharisee, I repeat, filled with confidence, the publican's humble prayer. Most of all I imitate the conduct of Magdalene; her astonishing or rather her loving audacity which charms the Heart of Jesus also attracts my own. Yes, I feel it; even though I had on my conscience all the sins that can be committed, I would go, my heart broken in sorrow, and throw myself into Jesus' arms, for I know how much He loves the prodigal child who returns to Him." (Story of A Soul, pp. 258-259)*

There is a passage in the Scriptures where Jesus asked: "Who do you think I am?" (Mt. 16:15) Well, St. Therese certainly knew who Jesus was and her image of Jesus was formed out of her favorite stories in the Bible, stories about sinners - Mary Magdalene, the publican and the prodigal son.

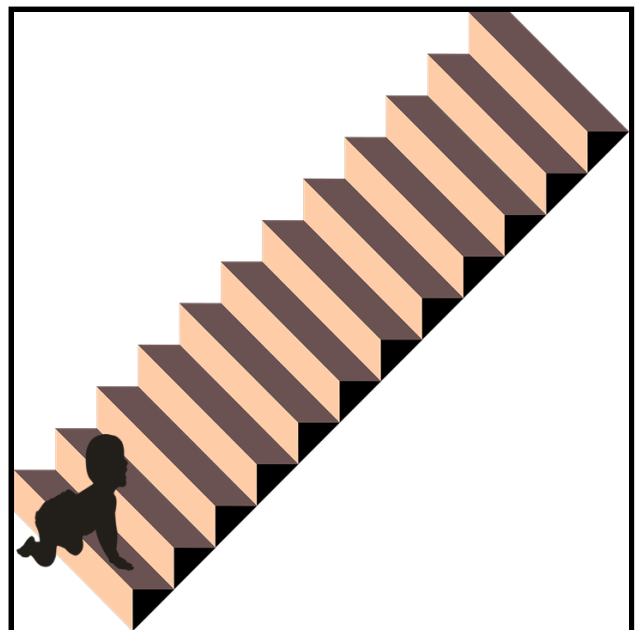
### Are You A Little One?

So, are you a little one? If you don't know, let me ask you again. Do the saints seem to you like towering mountains while you're just a grain of sand? Do they seem like eagles soaring in holiness while you're just a tiny weak bird unable to fly? Do you recognize that you're poor in spirit, weak, broken and sinful?

If you said Yes, then you're a little one!

But don't think that just because you're a little one, then you can just go on with your life sitting pretty and the Lord will just stoop down, take you in His arms and raise you to the heights! :)

St. Therese used a metaphor, that of a little child who is at the bottom of a staircase. Now the child represents all the little souls while the stairway is what she calls "the rough stairway of perfection".



Now imagine you are that little child who cannot even climb the first step of a long and high stairway because you're just so little. But St. Therese tells you to try. She says "*Raise your little foot to scale the stairway of holiness.*" (Conrad de Meester, O.C.D., "*With Empty Hands*", pp. 112-113) But obviously, you can't because as I said before, you're so little. But then St. Therese says: "*God requires you only to demonstrate your good will.*" What she means is you just have to keep on trying. And as you do, she says that God will be "*conquered by your futile efforts*" and then will go down the stairway, gather you into His arms and take you to the heights. (With Empty Hands, p. 113)

So it seems that while it is necessary to take action to take one's spiritual life to a new level, it's also useless! It's like what St. Teresa of Calcutta said: "*God does not call us to be successful but to be faithful.*" God doesn't demand that we acquire all the virtues (successful) but that we keep on trying (faithful).

## HOW TO BECOME A SAINT THE LITTLE WAY

In the Little Way, being successful is not that important. Don't get this wrong but sometimes it's better for little souls not to succeed. Otherwise, the success may get into their heads and they might become too "big" for Jesus to lift! Read below what St. Therese said to one of the novices in the convent about this:

*"And if the good God wants you weak and helpless like a child...do you believe that you will have less merit? ...Agree to stumble at every step therefore, even to fall, to carry your cross weakly, to love your helplessness. Your soul will draw more profit from it than if, carried by grace, you would accomplish with enthusiasm heroic actions that would fill your soul with personal satisfaction and pride."*

(Cited in 33 Days To Merciful Love, p. 56)

## A Little Way Of Darkness

Our Lord likes to keep little souls just like that, little and so sometimes He allows them to remain in darkness in terms of vices and sins that they just couldn't get rid of. God allows it so they won't fall into worse ones (like the sin of pride).

In fact, some sins and vices may be chronic which means they may be with you until the day you die. Yikes! Do you struggle with such a sin or vice? Are you taking any step to seriously fight it?

Well, for me, I can think of one sin, or maybe it's a vice. I've been struggling with it for years but so far, I have not been successful in getting it out of my life but I keep on trying and praying that God will help me eliminate it.

But take note I said that God **SOMETIMES** allows us to remain in the darkness of certain vices and sin. I didn't say all the time.

I once had what I thought as a chronic sin. It just kept on coming back. It was like an addiction that no matter how hard I tried not to do it again, I couldn't help myself. And temptations to do it again seemed to be haunting me endlessly.

Finally, I cried out to God and I asked Him to help me because I couldn't fight this battle alone. One day, I was driving to work and all of a sudden, I started crying and a genuine sorrow pervaded my heart. I started saying "I'm so sorry Lord... I'm so sorry... forgive me... forgive me". I think this is one of the best prayers I have ever uttered in my whole life! I realized that I kept on sinning because something was missing – true contrition. That short but heartfelt prayer changed me. Since that day, that sin which I thought was chronic, was no more.

God started to arrange certain life situations which enabled me to avoid the temptations of sin. By His grace, I was able to harness that firm resolve not to do it again.

Don't ever feel discouraged that you have to confess the same sins over and over again. Remember what Pope Francis said: *"The Lord never tires of forgiving, never! It is we who tire of asking His forgiveness."* (Pope Francis, Homily at the Parish of St. Anna in the Vatican, Fifth Sunday of Lent, March 17, 2013)

Yet, don't think that little souls can never be successful in the practice of virtue but if and when they are, their attitude should be, as St. Therese said:

*"To be little is also not to attribute to oneself the virtues that one practices, believing oneself capable of anything, but to recognize that God places this treasure of virtue in the hands of His little child, to be used when necessary, but it remains always God's treasure." (Story of A Soul, p. 228)*

## Magnanimity And Humility - A Revolutionary Approach



Let me start this section with a story. When St. Therese was dying, she encouraged the other nuns to keep the rose petals that have touched her crucifix saying: *"They will help you perform favors later on, don't lose one of them."* (Cited in 33 Days To Merciful Love, p. 58)

She even collected her nail clippings and asked Mother Agnes (her sister Pauline) to keep them, presumably as relics later on.

Perhaps you're thinking or asking yourself right now, "Did her illness affected her mind?" Actually, she was very sane and what she did and said were actually consistent with the Little Way.

St. Therese truly believed that she would become a great saint! And this had something to do with how she viewed magnanimity and humility which was so different from how we would traditionally view the aforementioned virtues.

Let me explain. Thinking that you will become a saint usually will disqualify you from becoming one, right? Because in traditional Catholic spiritual wisdom, that's not humility, that's pride! Well, not in the case of St. Therese.

The word "magnanimity" was derived from the Latin word "magnus" which means great and "animus" which means soul. So magnanimity is kinda like "great-souled-ness" which makes one set high spiritual goals. This magnanimity was quite evident when St. Therese said in her autobiography that she wanted to love God more than He has ever been loved. She was aiming not just for holiness but for great holiness!

Now, the virtue of humility is supposed to keep the virtue of magnanimity in check, just like reining in a horse. So if I were to say, like St. Therese, that I want to love God more than He has ever been loved and make that a goal for my spiritual life, I would think twice.

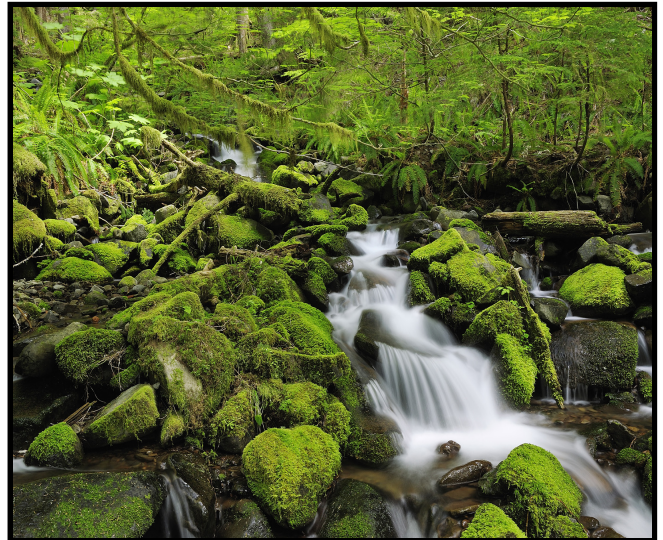
Perhaps later I will tell myself, "C'mon Babes, be a little humble and realistic, will you? Look at you, you're so weak and so sinful. Do you honestly think you can do that? Why not just aim to be good and who knows, you can even be a saint. But definitely not a great saint!"

## HOW TO BECOME A SAINT THE LITTLE WAY

Do you see what I mean? But it wasn't that way with St. Therese. She did not see the virtue of humility like "reining in a horse" for the virtue of magnanimity. Rather, she saw humility as *"being what smacks magnanimity's horses in the rear, sending them racing to the moon! In other words, it is not in spite of humility but rather, because of humility that she believed she could become one of the greatest of saints. And this firm belief stemmed from her insight into God's amazing mercy."* (33 Days To Merciful Love, p. 59)

I want you to instill this in your heart and mind - God's Merciful Love is like water rushing to the lowest place. And St. Therese knew this! She knew that her humility which was her deep awareness of her littleness, attracted God's Merciful Love. She knew that because of her littleness and her complete trust in this Divine Mercy, God's mercy would surely rush to the lowest place, her little lowly soul, and would fill it to the brim and spillover!

And this has everything to do with becoming a great saint. In Romans 5:5, St. Paul said: *"and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."*



Isn't that what holiness is, the merciful love of God poured into our hearts? For St. Therese, it is the true and greatest holiness. Moreover, it is God's work, not ours. It is a work of Divine Mercy rushing to the lowest places. And what makes this mercy come rushing down, down to the lowest souls? TRUST - it is what opens the floodgates of God's mercy! It is TRUST that unleashes the power of mercy.

This is the reason why our Lord asked St. Faustina to have an image of the Divine Mercy painted with the inscription "Jesus, I trust in you."

So going back to the virtues of magnanimity and humility, she firmly believed that her soul was the weakest and the littlest (humility) and it is this belief that made her feel so confident that she will become a great saint (magnanimity).

Hence, her humility didn't temper her desire for great holiness but instead sent it flying to the heights. And this humility brought her down into a hollow abyss, so deep that God's super abundant merciful love could come rushing down! Literally, that is the deepest holiness and it isn't pride if we hope for it but humility!

Let me end this section of this e-book with a hopeful quote from St. Therese:

*"O Jesus! why can't I tell all little souls how unspeakable is your condescension? I feel that if you found a soul weaker and littler than mine, which is impossible, You would be pleased to grant it still greater favors, provided it abandoned itself with total confidence to Your Infinite Mercy... I beg you to cast Your Divine Glance upon a great number of little souls. I beg you to choose a legion of little Victims worthy of your Love!*  
(Story Of A Soul, p. 200)

Hopefully by now, you can already glean the 3 requirements to become a saint the Little Way. But just to be sure, I created a poster for you on how to become a saint the Little Way in the next page :)

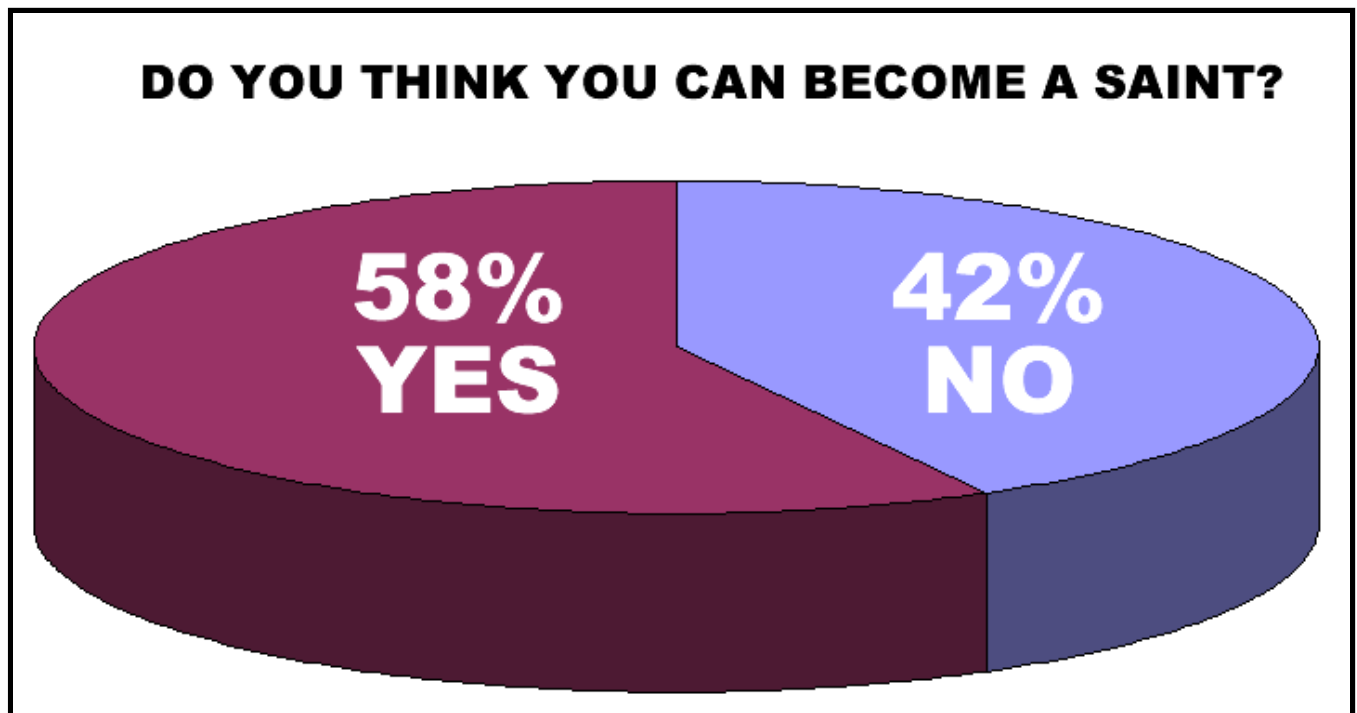
*"If you truly live the little way - if you recognize the darkness of your littleness, keep trying to grow in holiness, and trust in the Lord's promise of mercy - then you will become a saint. It's that simple. And if you're very little and your trust is great, you may even become a great saint, like St. Therese."*

**Fr. Michael E. Gaitely,  
MIC**

## SO NOW, DO YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN BECOME A SAINT?

Before I started writing this short e-book, I sent out an email blast to selected blog subscribers (about 5,000 people) who have participated in my 28-week Make Prayer A Habit program or have downloaded some of the free-ebooks I give away in **my website**.

I asked them if they think they can become a saint and if they said NO, to email me why. Out of the 5000, about 70% (3,485) responded. Below is the result that I got:



I am happy that there are more YES responses (58% or 2,021) than NO (42% or 1,464). But a 42% NO response is still substantial. Below are some comments from those who responded NO. Note that I selected them randomly.

-----  
-----  
*"I can't become a saint because I am not enough—I care about people, but not enough. And on and on and on. I just don't hit the mark! I try, sometimes more than others, so I'm inconsistent too."*

*"I feel that I am not good enough to be a saint. I have much unfinished business to be even a good catholic. I have been divorced and remarried. I have not been to confession in 50 years. When I spoke to a priest about getting divorced I was told I would be excommunicated. I attend church every Sunday but can not receive communion. I pray every day and try to say the rosary. I wrestle with this situation every day."*

*"I find it hard to become one. I am a sinner, but I know God loves me even though I am a sinner."*

*"I don't think I can become a saint, not because I don't want to, but because I'm nowhere near in the kind of intimate relationship I need to be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to become a saint. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to try and become a saint."*

*"I don't think I can ever be good enough. I have way too many faults."*

*"I chose NO because I feel that I am sometimes too ambitious. I want to do everything for my family and the people I am indebted to. I feel that I should allow God and the Holy Family to completely take over my life and my plans but sometimes I am so hardheaded. If the possibility of sainthood is a gift that I am given, I would give it to my mom who also does everything that she can to give us a better life even until now that we are all grown up."*

## SO NOW, DO YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN BECOME A SAINT?

*"I just don't think I have the willpower or focus to stay prayerful every day and keep negative thoughts out of my mind- nor the patience."*

*"I do not know if I could. My faith is strong but I do not know."*

*"There have been so many times in my life that I have done the wrong thing and I have asked for forgiveness and all I want is to continue to move forward and do the right things. I need my heart and soul to be able to continue to move forward in continued faith and love."*

*"I think I am too old now. I don't have enough time left to make up for all my mistakes. I know that God has forgiven me and is still forgiving me but it takes more than that on my part to become a saint."*

*"I had clicked on the 'No' button, obviously because I do not see any saintly signs in me."*

*"I did not think I could become a Saint. The reason for my reply was that I think the best we can do is aspire to be saints and do our best to live moral saintly lives."*

*"I wan to become a saint but I don't have the humbleness in me."*

*"Although I am and have been a faithful Roman Catholic for as long as I can remember, I truly believe I could never be a Saint because I don't pray like I should, I'm too human, too many times concerned with worldly affairs instead of my spiritual affairs..."*

-----  
-----  
There are many more comments I got from those who think they cannot become a saint but they are too many to include in this e-book. But I read all of them and the most common reason why they responded NO is because they think they are not enough - not good enough, not caring enough, not humble enough, not prayerful enough, not helpful enough, etc.

From all the responses I got, I can sense that many are little souls but they are just not aware of it. Many have the desire to be a saint but feel hopeless, not realizing that God cannot inspire unrealizable desires. Some seem to be already following the Little Way but they just don't know it. Now I may be wrong because I don't really know them that well.

As I said earlier, I once felt that I just wasn't good enough to be a saint. Admittedly, even after reading St. Therese's autobiography and letters as well as Fr. Gaitely's book, and being so hopeful that I can be a saint, there were still times when I felt discouraged.

I'm the type of person who thinks a lot, I like analyzing things and sometimes much to my detriment. So there were times when my thoughts went something like this: *"Don't fool yourself. St. Therese was not a little soul. She was big. She's a Doctor of the Church! How can she be a tiny weak bird? You have read her autobiography. Can't you see how virtuous she was? Her sins were nothing compared to yours. Her Little Way is not little for you. If you really think about it, the Little Way is too big for you!"*

Well, I didn't like feeling discouraged so to fight it, I read portions of Fr. Gaitely's book again and this time, St. Therese's Letter 197 struck a chord in my heart.

## What Is In Letter 197?

Let me give you a brief backgrounder about this letter. This letter was actually St. Therese's response to a letter from her sister Marie who was also a nun. Prior to this letter, she wrote to Sister Marie telling her about the Little Way and her being like a little weak bird who cannot fly. Sister Marie wrote her back saying she didn't exactly agree with the little bird example.



## SO NOW, DO YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN BECOME A SAINT?

They lived in the same convent so Sister Marie saw how her sister behaved, what she said and did and so to her, St. Therese was no little bird but an eagle! Furthermore, she saw herself as the little bird instead and felt hopeless that she could never love God as much as St. Therese loved Him.

The response of St. Therese was contained in Letter 197. This letter spoke to me and I'm sure it will speak to you so please read it with your heart, prayerfully:

*"Dear Sister,...How can you ask me if it is possible for you to love God as I love Him?...If you had understood the story of my little bird, you would not have ask me the question. My [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] (fill in the blank: virtues, talents, many gifts, etc.) ] are nothing, they are not what give me the unlimited confidence that I feel in my heart. They are, to tell the truth, the spiritual riches that render one unjust, when one rests in them with complacency and when one believes that they are something great...Ah! I really feel that it is not this at all that pleases God in my little soul; what pleases Him is that He sees me loving my littleness and my poverty, the blind hope that I have in His mercy...That is my only treasure...Why would this treasure not be yours?*

*Oh dear Sister, I beg you, understand your little girl, understand that to love Jesus, to be His victim of love, the weaker one is, without desires or virtues, the more suited one is for the workings of this consuming and transforming Love...But we must consent to remain always poor and without strength, and this is the difficulty... Ah! let us remain then very far from all that sparkles, let us love our littleness, let us love to feel nothing, then we shall be poor in spirit, and Jesus will come to look for us and He will transform us in flames of love.*

*... Oh! how I would like to be able to make you understand what I feel!...It is confidence and nothing but confidence that must lead us to Love." (Cited in 33 Days To Merciful Love, p. 65)*

So there you go...this letter is so consoling I wrote it down in my journal and access it whenever I felt that the Little Way is way too much for me. That seldom happens now though.

And oh, one final note before I go to the last part of this e-book. If you do the Little Way, you can become a saint but a canonized saint? I don't think so! The chances of any one of us becoming the Head of State in our respective countries is more than the chances of us being canonized! :) So that means, if you become a saint, that is, if you get to heaven, hardly anyone would know. I certainly hope though that the anonymity doesn't affect your desire to become a saint! :)

## AFTERTHOUGHT

You can skip this part of the e-book but I was just wondering so let me ask you: Of the three things that you have to do to follow the Little Way to holiness, which one do you find most difficult:

1. Recognize the darkness of your littleness
2. Keep trying to grow in holiness
3. Trust in the Lord's promise of mercy

OR

Which one is harder - being and remaining little while growing in holiness or having great trust in God?

If you read this far and do not mind answering the aforementioned questions, please email me at [support@digisaints.org](mailto:support@digisaints.org). Thanks in advance!

Central to the Little Way is TRUST IN GOD. As I mentioned earlier, it is trust that unleashes the power of God's mercy. But most of us find it so hard to trust God, others and at times even ourselves. Trust is a word that is easier said than done.

Our pastor once said that the hardest part about being a priest is to help people to believe that they are loved by God. True. But for me personally, the hardest is not to believe that God loves me but to trust God fully. I know people who say that they believe God loves them but in difficult times, doubt creeps in, anxiety follows and their trust in God evaporates! I am the same.

But that's part of being human, right? The saints were holy but also very human, were they not?

This trust issue has been around since the time of Adam and Eve. Sometimes I wish there's a magic potion that we can just take which would make us fully trust God no matter what. And this world will be a much better place.

I don't have children but I have a dog named Jomar and I love him like he was my only child . Every morning, after we have finished our morning cuddles, I would go the kitchen and he would follow me and wait with expectancy for his food. Why? Because I have done it so many times before so he expected to be fed.

It should be the same with us. Our God has been providing for us for so long and for so many times that it should come natural to us by now to trust Him.

And what about a baby? How does a baby learn to trust a parent? Well, first he/she has a need (hungry, wet diaper, in pain, etc). Then he/she expresses that need (by crying, for instance) and Mom or Dad comes to fill that need. And that's how the baby learns to trust his/her parents.

God uses the same way to teach us how to trust Him. First, we have an unmet need, then we express that unmet need to God and then God meets that need so we learn to trust Him more. If you're not expressing your needs to God, then how could you learn to trust Him more and more and more?

A lot of people try to fulfill their needs on their own and only after they cannot do it, will express it to God. If we are like that, how can we grow our trust in God? Asking Him to meet our needs is an excellent way to learn to trust Him. It is His design! We can feel His goodness, His love and His mercy when we ask for it. Then we wait patiently...and He always delivers!

And because He always delivers, we learn to trust Him more. To some people, trusting Him comes easily, to others, it might take a lifetime.

TRUST is a key to receiving the graces of God's mercy which turns us into saints. I will conclude this short e-book with one of my favorite passages from St. Faustina's Diary when our Lord Himself talked about the importance of trust :

*"Let souls who are striving for perfection particularly adore My mercy, because the abundant graces which I grant them flows from My mercy. I desire that these souls distinguish themselves by boundless trust in My mercy. I myself will attend to the sanctification of such souls. I will provide them with everything they need to attain sanctity. The graces of My mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only, and that is -- trust. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive. Souls that trust boundlessly are a great comfort to Me, because I pour all the treasures of My graces into them. I rejoice that they ask for much, because it is my desire to give much, very much..."*

*(Diary of St. Faustina, 1577-1578)*

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS EBOOK

If you want to know...

**How To Be Holy By Using An Authoritative But Simple Blueprint You Can Apply And Practice In Your Daily Life Without Feeling Overwhelmed Or Discouraged...**

**(...Even If You Think You Can Never Be Holy Or Become A Saint)**

**[CLICK HERE](#)**