

In His Hand
My Vocation Is Love



Meditations on St Thérèse'

"Story Of A Soul"

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Introduction

This series of meditations draws on the heart of the doctrine of **The Little Way** of St Thérèse, as expressed in her letter to Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart on September 13, 1896. This letter is published in **Story of a Soul** as **Manuscript B**. In this letter, her wisdom is woven as a fresh cloth from a master weaver's loom. Following the bold confidence she teaches, I have attempted to follow a few threads through this cloth, in expressing her wisdom by theme. Only some of the many themes are expressed here, and it is my hope that the most important aspects of **The Little Way** have been made manifest.

**We must strive
to do what little we can
with what little we have
in the place we are now
with the greatest love possible.**

Humility

“Likewise you that are younger be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares about you.” (1 Peter 5.5-7)

Weak And Little

The greatness of humility,
Is nothingness before His throne;
In weakness and fragility,
His loving strength becomes her own.

His strength holds her steadfast in place:
This little bird, gazing above,
Expectant with hope in His grace,
To be transformed in truth with love.

Feathered with fluff, in fledgling down,
She dares to hope for heaven's height.
Enrobed in earthen shades of brown,
In dust, she looks up to the light.

Mercy will wash out all the dust,
And cleanse the fluff that is her robe.
His compassion secures her trust,
As she submits to Him like Job.

Her humble heart remains serene;
Content to stay in place and clean.

May the Strength of His Love hold us secure and content in
the little place He has prepared for us.

Poverty

“Listen, my beloved brothers. Did not God choose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that He promised to those who love Him?” (James 2.5)

“What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift? Already you are filled! Already you have become rich! ...We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all things.” (1 Corinthians 4.7b-8a,10-13)

The Empty Plate

She thanks Him for the empty plate,
Though there is nothing to consume;
Without an appetite to sate,
Her heart is clean and full of room.

Her knife is dull and fork is bent;
She is too weak even to eat.
The poor soul's food is heaven-sent --
In her weakness, His strength's replete.

Her empty cup will overflow,
And spill over onto the floor;
The poorest of poor hearts will know
Divine love cannot stop its pour.

How blessed are the poor in heart!
The kingdom's King is at their call:
The poor, weak ones are set apart --
In their great need, He provides all.

At His banquet, the hungry feast;
The Lord Himself will fill the least!

May the Heavenly Banquet Himself empty our hearts in
poverty so that He may fill our hungry souls with His love.

Presence

“Those live whom the Lord protects; Yours ... the life of my spirit. You have given me health and life; thus is my bitterness transformed into peace. You have preserved my life from the pit of destruction, when You cast behind Your back all my sins.” (Isaiah 38.16-17)

“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.” (Matthew 6.34)

This Moment

The baggage of past guilt and shame,
Has left her heart heavy and cold;
Her pride offers excuse and blame,
To crust her heart with rust and mould.

The worry of what soon could be,
Freezes her heart with fear and dread;
Blind to God's hand in history,
She frets with conjecture instead.

The Lord offers loving mercy:
Her sins behind His back are cast;
Her contrite heart, healed and set free,
Purges the bane of pain long past.

The Lord offers His lasting peace:
The promise of His providence;
Held in His hand, she should not cease,
To trust in Him with confidence.

Freed from the future and the past,
She lives in this moment at last!

May the Eternal Now, without past or future, help to live fully
and freely in the present moment.

Joy

“When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.” (John 16.21-22)

Everything Becomes A Joy

His hand holds all that comes her way;
She receives His gifts gratefully.
Even the burdens of the day,
Are light when love serves faithfully.

His will knows what best suits her need:
At first, her heart may hurt and heave;
As she follows, His love will lead
Her into peace -- He will not leave!

Soon, ev'rything becomes a joy,
As wheat is harvested from weeds:
He transforms all her hands employ,
And His love dominates her deeds.

Her heart dances with levity;
She smiles through the deepest pain.
She seeks His will, not His pity --
Within His rest she will remain.

The Lord loves our joy and laughter;
Joy is a hint of hereafter.

May the joy of the children of God be made complete in our
hearts in the midst of our greatest trials.

Surrender

“He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, 'Whoever wishes to come after Me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and that of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life?’” (Mark 8.34-37)

Embracing Emptiness

The sov'reign rulers of the heart --
The self and senses -- will not stand
Before her Lord, who will impart,
His law of love at His command.

Surrender is a letting go:
The heart concedes all that it clings;
This detachment, painful and slow,
Will free her heart from all its strings.

Surrender must be absolute;
An idol clutched or strength reserved,
Show her will is not resolute --
She'll fall the first time she's unnerved.

The Lord provides her with the storm,
To help her embrace emptiness;
An open space for Him will form --
He is her All in nothingness.

She struggles to fulfill His call:
“Surrender all for love of all”.

May His Spirit grant us the grace to surrender all and enter
into our nothingness so that He may infuse His Charity within
us.

Mission

“Your Word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path.” (Psalm
119.105)

Seeking The Path

Each person has a prepared place,
Within the framework of God's will;
To find one's mission is a grace --
A purpose to live and fulfill.

The Spirit stokes a strong desire,
To find the way and seek His will;
The heart's enkindled in this fire,
With strong resolve to climb this hill.

Mission unfolds from mystery:
Wisdom leads from confusion's night;
The Word shines through her history,
To lead her way and clear her sight.

With what great joy the path is found!
The puzzle pieces fall in place;
The mountain seems as but a mound --
Her heart's washed in a flood of grace.

Earnestly, she sought her mission;
“Fulfill His will” found fruition.

May His Wisdom guide us to the path prepared for us and may
the light of His Word shine on us and lead the way.

Simplicity

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And calling to Him a child, He put him in the midst of them, and said, 'Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' ”
(Matthew 18.1-4)

“Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves.” (Matthew 10.16)

Simple Hearts

The cold attachments of the heart,
And complications of the mind,
Divided her further apart --
Leaving her soul both deaf and blind.

A child-like simplicity
Comes to the pure and simple soul:
Her mind is cleared; her heart's set free --
She is congealed into one whole.

She leaves behind her heart's old ways:
Discovering simplicity,
Her mind's silenced with prayer's pure gaze --
Her love joins Love in unity.

Her simple heart's prepared to love,
With joy and freedom unconstrained;
Made pure and simple, like a dove,
Her offerings are not profaned.

The child-like heart's formed to hold
A kingdom's worth of Love's rich gold.

May Pure Wisdom Himself grant us the grace to allow our hearts to be transformed into child-like simplicity so that we may be made ready to receive and share the riches of His love.

Sacrifice

“I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.” (Romans 12.1)

Against Her Will

For love of us, You sent Your Son,
The perfect Lamb of sacrifice;
This greatest love, found in Your One,
Laid down His life to pay our price.

For love of You and our neighbor,
The cross leads us through sacrifice:
For love we live and we labor --
A good intent will not suffice.

She strives to go against her will;
To supplant self and to obey.
This method leads her straight uphill --
The shortest path within His way.

To deny and disown self-love,
A tithe she gives with each step trod,
Finds strength in grace drawn from above --
A sacrifice of joy to God!

The love of self yields all our sins;
Where self-love ends, His love begins.

May Jesus lead us through the cross of self-denial to the joy of
His love.

Offering

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5.1-2)

Rosebuds

The rosebud's formed in deepest prayer:
Petalled with love, nurtured by grace,
Its gentle fragrance lifts the air;
Its pastels vivify her place.

In small events, throughout her day,
The rose is unpetalled and shared:
The bloom is spent without delay;
For love of God, love is squandered.

The petals, strewn upon the wind,
Laden with dew of Mercy's grace,
Spread love with joy she can't rescind --
Souls are refreshed with love's embrace.

As countless little gifts of love,
Petals are strewn before His throne;
Lifted with joy, they drift above,
As love is lived for Love alone.

To live for love, her life's consumed;
For this purpose, her prayer has bloomed.

May the Spirit bless our little offerings of love with the joy of
the children of light.

Interceding

“And behold, men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they sought to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. And when He saw their faith He said, 'Man, your sins are forgiven you.' ... But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins' -- He said to the man who was paralyzed -- 'I say to you, rise, take up your bed and go home.' And immediately he rose before them, and took up that on which he lay, and went home, glorifying God.” (Luke 5.18-20,24-25)

The Sick Child

She carries the sick child in,
And places him before the throne;
She pours out her heart from within --
With love his wounds become her own.

She lifts up his wounds patiently,
Begging for Mercy's healing grace;
Her Mother holds her lovingly --
Binding the wounds with Her embrace.

The Son, in turn, absorbs each wound,
Enduring them upon the cross;
The Father's mercy will redound --
Redeeming him as gold from dross.

With love, we join to intercede:
With one heart, the child is held;
All heaven joins us in our plead --
With compassion, Mercy's impelled.

She cradles him like the bruised reed;
With gratitude, he'll intercede.

May Jesus join us with the power of His redeeming grace as
we intercede for those in need.

Confidence

*“Trust in Him, and He will help you; make your ways straight,
and hope in Him. You who fear the Lord, wait for His mercy;
and turn not aside, lest you fall. You who fear the Lord, trust
in Him, and your reward will not fail;”* (Sirach 2.6-8)

She Will Fly

The insecure cling to the air,
And doubters are tossed with each gust;
The worriers, in constant scare,
Let fear engage them in the dust.

Faith is much more than passive creed;
How can muttered words not deceive?
With clear conviction, in her need,
Her whole heart cries out: “I believe!”

Her little wings of fluff won't flap
Enough to lift her to the sky;
Will she beat the air in mishap,
Until she falls with plaintive cry?

Her heart knows her reality;
Of each weakness, she is aware.
She calls to Him confidently --
Omnipotence stoops down to care.

With confidence, to Him she clings;
His mighty hand becomes her wings.

May the gift of unwavering confidence in God be imbued into
our hearts by the power of His Spirit.

Tribulations

*“through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of
God.”* (Acts 14.22)

*“One day He got into a boat with his disciples, and He said to
them, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake.' So they
set out, and as they sailed He fell asleep. And a storm of wind
came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and
were in danger. And they went and woke Him, saying, 'Master,
Master, we are perishing!' And He awoke and rebuked the
wind and the raging waves; and they ceased, and there was a
calm. He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' And they were
afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, 'Who then is
this, that He commands even wind and water, and they obey
Him?'”* (Luke 8.22-25)

Beyond The Clouds

Though dark clouds gather overhead,
And thunder rumbles underneath,
Her heart knows neither fear nor dread --
Anchored steadfast by her belief.

Unwavering in confidence,
That God knows what's best for her soul,
She relies on His providence --
Trusting His will is in control.

She surrenders her self and fate,
Beneath the mighty Hand that storms;
All that's not God He will negate,
Within her soul as He transforms.

Through tribulations, love will form;
His kingdom is not hers by right:
She must surrender in the storm --
Her self negated through the night.

Beyond the clouds, her heart perceives,
The Sun blazing as she believes.

May the Lord infuse our hearts with unwavering confidence
and faith in His merciful love to sustain us as we are
transformed by trial.

Contrition

*“For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity,
whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and
also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive
the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.
For I will not contend for ever, nor will I always be angry; for
from me proceeds the spirit, and I have made the breath of
life...I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him
and requite him with comfort.’” (Isaiah 57.15-16,18)*

Out of the Depths

The little bird, crusted in muck,
Shivers in the cold gale of guilt:
Weakened, fallen -- in sin she's stuck;
Flattened feathers all soaked in silt.

Out of these depths, her mournful cries,
Full of remorse, beg for mercy.
His compassion rains from the skies
To wash her clean with His pity.

With grateful heart, she lifts her wings,
To praise His mercy with a song:
“He came to call sinners”, she sings,
“To save them and to make them strong!”

She sets her former ways aside;
With strong resolve, she perseveres.
When weakness causes her to slide,
Conversion wipes contrition's tears.

The contrite heart He will not spurn;
With each fall she will live and learn.

May the Merciful One have pity on us and heal our contrite
hearts when we have fallen.

Fidelity

“And you who once were alienated and hostile in mind because of evil deeds He has now reconciled in His fleshly body through His death, to present you holy, without blemish, and irreproachable before Him, provided that you persevere in the faith, firmly grounded, stable, and not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven.” (Colossians 1.21-23a)

Harvest Moon

The faithful heart has one motto:
Mary's fiat -- "Your will be done";
By keeping His commands she'll show
Loyalty to the Faithful One.

She accepts her reality,
Without excuses or complaint;
Her heart clings to humility,
And her desires know restraint.

To serve with steadiness, she'll strive:
Should she fall from weakness or sin,
She bounces back, with dogged drive,
To forge ahead through thick and thin.

When feathers fail and strength is low,
The little bird's heart will not yield;
Love is proven by deeds that show
The harvest's not left in the field.

The faithful heart works through the night;
His harvest moon leads with its light.

May the grace of His Spirit strengthen and steady our hearts
so that we may serve His people with faithful perseverance.

Beacon of Love

"I wait for You, O Lord; I lift up my soul to my God. Make known to me Your ways, Lord; teach me Your paths. Guide Me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior. For you I wait all the long day, because of your goodness, Lord...Good and upright is the Lord, who shows sinners the

way, guides the humble rightly, and teaches the humble the way. All the paths of the Lord are faithful love...My eyes are ever upon the Lord, who frees my feet from the snare.” (Psalm 25.1-5,8-10,15)

The Star Of Love

The beacon of His Divine love,
Shines like a star in the night sky;
To chart her course, she looks above,
And greets Him with her deepest sigh.

He receives her sigh from afar;
To greet His bride, he does the same.
A flicker from the Divine Star,
Soon re-ignites her torch's flame.

Beneath the light of love she walks,
Along the twisting mountain trail;
His light guides her amongst the rocks,
Despite her state -- weakened and frail.

Through wash-outs in the winter rains,
And scorching stones in summer's heat:
Within His presence, she remains --
Life flows from Love with strength replete.

Even when her sigh's not returned,
She walks the way she's lived and learned.

May the Beacon of Love re-ignite the torch of love in our hearts and guide us on the way He has charted out before us.

God's Love

“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that He may grant you in accord with the riches of His glory to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (Ephesians 3.14-21)

Melting

The icy cold November rain
Soaks little bird right to the bone.
Her heart struggles under the strain;
Longing, she looks up to His throne.

“Your Love shines like the summer sun
To melt ice-clad humanity;
This furnace of the Triune One
Burns with a perfect constancy.

Your Love yields love with healing rays
In souls that bask under the shine;
With humble gratitude and praise,
They pulse love back to the Divine.

Love yields new life, with strengthened hope,
To serve with patient, grateful love.”
She finds new strength to heal and cope;
Despite her state, she looks above.

The icy rains soon melt away;
Warmed from within, her strength will stay.

May the Love of God strengthen and instill new life in us.

Praise

“Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; cry out to the rock of our salvation. Let us greet Him with a song of praise, joyfully sing out our psalms.” (Psalm 95.1-2)

Morning Canticle

The little bird meets each new dawn
With melodies of grateful praise:
The grumblings of her heart are gone;
With gratitude, she greets her days.

A sweet staccato canticle
Rings from her heart to heights above;
Each note exalts how bountiful
Life is from Him who is ALL LOVE.

Her heart is lifted with the praise;
Though she is stranded on the ground.
The warmth of joy, like sun's first rays,
Floods her heart 'til it's nearly drowned.

She basks her feathers in this light,
And spreads her wings to catch its rays;
Her soul rebuffs the waning night
With its motto: “Praise Him Always!”

Her morning song touches heaven;
Praise is the Kingdom's sweet leaven.

May the Lord grant us the grace to praise Him with our whole being as we greet each dawn with morning Lauds.

Indwelling

“In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be...Whoever loves Me will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him.” (John 15.2-3,23)

Heaven's Hermitage

The altar of self-sacrifice,
Becomes the footing for His home;
Forgetting self with all its vice,
She prepares for His kingdom come.

The walls of peace are raised with prayer,
And gratitude tiles the floor;
Sweet scents of love pervade the air,
And confidence attends the door.

With songs of thanksgiving and praise,
Her soul proclaims His awesome reign;
Her spirit dances as it plays --
All heaven joins in the refrain:

“The Father's strong and gentle arms,
Cradles the soul next to his chest:
Secured in peace; safe from all harms --
The greatest joy's found in His rest!”

He stoops and lifts her up by grace;
All heaven joins in His embrace.

May we be cradled in the arms of Our Father in the eternal
embrace of grace.

His Little Ones

*“Like a shepherd He feeds his flock; in His arms he gathers
the lambs, carrying them in His bosom, and leading the ewes
with care.”* (Isaiah 40.11)

*“The sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by
name and leads them out. When He has brought out all His
own, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they
know His voice...I am the good shepherd; I know My own and
My own know Me...I came that they may have life, and have it
abundantly.”* (John 10.3-4,14,10b)

Flock Of Little Souls

His little lambs, gentle and meek,
Trust in their Lord who shepherds them:
Greener pastures they do not seek;
When He calls they cry, “Here I am!”

If one lost lamb should go astray,
With contrite heart, she hears His call:
He meets her in the disarray;
His mercy saves her from the fall.

His little ones trust in His love;
In all their needs He will provide.
Even at night, they look above;
Held in His hand, they will abide.

To Him they offer up their fleece,
With all the love their hearts can hold;
Their praise and gratitude increase
As they serve others in the fold.

Lord, call Your lambs to follow You;
We are a flock scattered and few.

May the Good Shepherd call many little ones to His side to
follow Him along the little way.

Consecration To Merciful Love

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”
(Matthew 5.7)

*“through the tender mercy of our God, when the day shall
dawn upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in
darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the
way of peace.”* (Luke 1.78-79)

Offering All

Abba! Father, our Creator,
O Son! Love Incarnate, as One,
You spawn the Spirit, Mercy's Myrrh --
Announcing Love like a new dawn.

O Living Flame of Love Most Pure,
Consume my imperfections whole;
Enflame more than I can endure --
Within Your Love, engulf my soul!

To love You, Lord, with Your pure love;
To call souls home to Your embrace;
To draw Mercy down from above --
Lord, consume me to wield Your grace!

May Infinite Tenderness flow,
Through me in all Your will demands;
Martyr me, Lord -- Your cross bestow,
I beg Your love with empty hands.

Through Mary's hands, in Jesus' name,
Consume me whole, O Living Flame!

May the Infinite Tenderness of God's Merciful Love overflow
our souls in everything we are and will become through the
power of His grace.

References

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