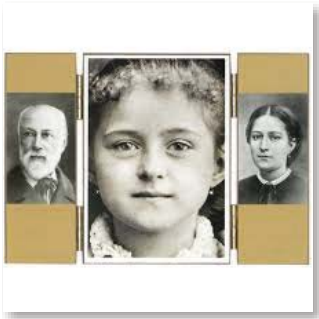

THERESA OF LISIEUX - MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE

Theresa of Lisieux (1873-97) should be the patron saint of teenage girls and young women who want to make the most of their lives, despite being constrained by family and school or work.



Theresa grew up in a strict, devout Roman Catholic middle-class family in France, one of four sisters. Her father was a watch-maker. Like her sisters, she entered a Carmelite convent at 15, and stayed there. She

was never able to go anywhere, do anything extraordinary, or hold any responsibility. She died at the age of 24 of tuberculosis. Yet this quiet young Carmelite nun became so nationally popular that she was declared patroness of France 50 years after her death. Not bad for someone who didn't get out much!

So how did Theresa do it? By not intending to do it at all! Theresa never set out to become famous: instead, she quietly determined in her spirit to seek God, and, having found Him, to honour Him in her life, to live as closely as she could to the teaching in the gospels.

The result was a life so spiritually radiant that her convent asked her to write a short spiritual

autobiography of her pilgrimage. Theresa obliged with 'L'Histoire d'une Ame', which soon became so popular that it was translated into most European languages and several Asiatic ones. Theresa also prayed for people who were ill, and there are many reports of miraculous healings that took place in answer. After Theresa died in 1897, her book just went on selling. People found the artless sweet simplicity of her observations on her pilgrimage as a Christian compelling. Theresa reminded people of what Christianity was really all about: simple but utter devotion to Christ, empowered by the sacramental life of the Church, not endless outward observance of religion. Theresa helped

many in the Church in France to remember the first principles of their faith and continues to remind all Christians of any denomination that essential truth of the Faith: simple but utter devotion to Christ empowered by the sacramental life of the Church.

