

THE PASTOR'S DESK

September 27, 2009 - St. Therese and Year of the Priest



Dear Parishioners,

A Priest friend of mine once commented that this time of the year is one of his favorites. The end of September/first week in October has a string of wonderful feast days. On September 29th we have the feast of the Holy Archangels; on the 30th, St. Jerome; on October 1st, St. Therese of the Child Jesus; on the 2nd, the Guardian Angels; and on the 4th, St. Francis of Assisi.

Just by coincidence (if you believe in those) the first Thursday of October is also the Feast of St. Therese, the Little Flower. During this Year of the Priest, you can gain a plenary indulgence on the first Thursday of every month by praying for priests on that day and fulfilling the usual conditions. Because of this "coincidence" I thought you may be interested in one of the letters sent by St. Therese to a priest with whom she corresponded. He was a missionary priest sent to Africa by the name of Fr. Maurice Belliere. Here is the letter she wrote to him on February 24, 1897 (also a Thursday) while he was still a seminarian. In this letter she beautifully expresses her spiritual union with the mission he will have as a priest:

"Before we enter into the silence of the holy forty days [of Lent], I want to add a little word to our Beloved Mother's letter, to thank you for the one you sent me last month. If you find consolation in knowing that in Carmel a Sister prays without ceasing for you, my gratitude is no less than yours to Our Lord Who has given me a little brother whom He is choosing to become His Priest and Apostle. Truly, only in heaven will you know how dear you are to me. I feel our souls are made to understand each other. Your prose, which you call 'rough and ready,' reveals to me that Jesus has put desires into your heart that He gives only to those called to the highest holiness. Since He Himself has chosen me to be your sister, I hope that he will not take notice of my weakness, or rather that He will use that very weakness to do His work; for the Strong God likes to show His power by making use of nothing. United in Him, our souls will be able to save many others, for this kindly Jesus has said: 'If two among you agree together on something which they ask from my Father, it will be given to them.' Ah! What we ask of Him is to work for His glory, to love Him and make Him loved. How should our union and our prayers not be blessed?"

Monsieur l'Abbe, since the canticle on love has given you pleasure, our good Mother has told me to copy for you a number of my other poems, but it will be some weeks before you receive them because I have little free time, even on Sunday, on account of my sacristan's work. These poor poems will reveal to you not what I am but what I would like to be and ought to

be. In composing them I have paid attention more to substance than to form. Also, the rules of versification aren't always honored. My aim was to convey my feeling (or rather those of a Carmelite) in answer to my Sister's requests. These verses are more suitable for a religious woman than for a seminarian, but I hope they will give you some pleasure. Is not your soul the fiancée of the divine Lamb and will it not soon become His spouse on the happy day of ordination to Subdiaconate?"

Thank you, Monsieur l'Abbe, for choosing me as god-mother for the first child you will have the joy of baptizing. It is, then, for me to choose the names of my future godchild. I wish to give him as his protectors the Holy Virgin, St. Joseph, and St. Maurice, the patron of my little brother [Fr. Maurice himself]. Granted that this child exists as yet only in the mind of God, nevertheless I am praying for him already and doing my duty as a godmother in advance. I pray also for all the souls who will be confided to your care, and above all I beg Jesus to embellish your own soul with every virtue, and especially with His love. You tell me that you pray very often for your sister [Therese herself]. Since you have the goodness to do this, I would be very happy if you will agree to say this prayer for her every day. It sums up all her desires: 'Merciful Father, in the name of our lovable Jesus, of the Virgin Mary and of the Saints, I ask You to set my sister on fire with your Spirit of Love, and to grant her the grace of making You deeply loved.' . . .

I don't know the future, but if Jesus makes my premonition come true, I promise to remain your little sister in heaven. Far from being broken, our union will become a closer one, for then there will be no more cloister and no more grills, and my soul will be free to fly with you to the missions far away. Our roles will still be the same. Yours will be apostolic labor, and mine will be prayer and love. . . .

In the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, which will soon be exposed for our adoration, I am happy to call myself forever: Your very little and unworthy sister, Therese of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face."

Please pray for Priests.

**God bless,
Fr. LaHood**

Mark Your Calendars: October 6th at 7:00 pm

St. Luke Productions presents "VIANNEY", the gripping story of the remarkable priest who battled the devil to save souls. Tickets will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for youth 17 and under. To reserve your tickets, send an e-mail or call the rectory at 301-977-5492. In this "Year of the Priests", this is a great way in the spirit to pray for vocations.