

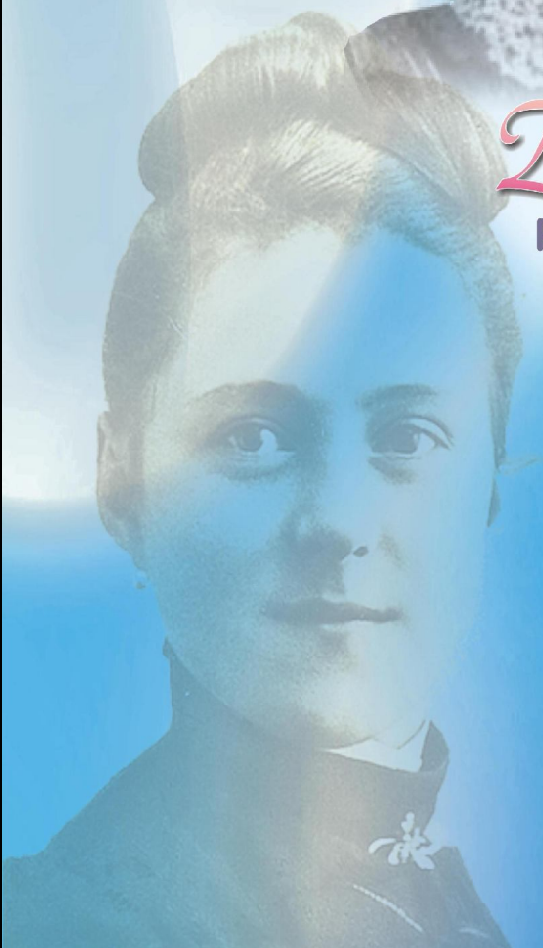
Order of Discalced Carmelite Fathers and Brothers
OCDS - St. Teresa of Jesus Manila Community



Zélie and Louis

Parents for the Modern World

a Lecture Series



NOVEMBER 9, 16, 23, 2008
OCDS HOUSE OF PRAYER

BEATIFICATION of LOUIS and ZÉLIE MARTIN,
parents of St. Therese of Lisieux
October 19, 2008 Lisieux, France

Front cover design by Bro. Jeffrey L. Panganiban, OCD

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for the Parish of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel
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Zélie and Louis

Parents for the Modern World

November 9, 2008

Zélie and Louis: A Portrait of Love

Prof. Eduardo Jose E. Calasanz, NDV

November 16, 2008

Zélie and Louis:

An Example for Modern Family

Thelma S. Balajadia, OCDS

Carmelo F.V. Lopez, OCDS

November 23, 2008

Zélie & Louis and Carmel Today

Fr. Paulo Gamboa, OCD

COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL OF THE SPOUSES LOUIS AND ZELIE MARTIN

1823-1894 1831-1877



THE FRONT SIDE

An engraving of the Martin spouses on the day of their marriage, surrounded by a wreath



THE BACK SIDE

The biblical couple Sarah and Tobias evokes the eminent role of the vocation of marriage

THE INSCRIPTION

"Lisieux, October 19, 2008" recalls the place and the day where the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, inscribed the two spouses jointly in the Book of the Blessed.

THE THEMES

The wreath of roses and the figures of Sarah and Tobias are taken from the commemorative medallion that Louis Martin selected as a souvenir of the night of his wedding to Zélie Guérin, July 13, 1858, at Our Lady's Church in Alençon. The medal was blessed at the moment of their exchange of vows. The original medallion, still in existence, is at the bishopric of the diocese of Sées, in which Zélie was born.

DESCRIPTION

A bronze medal, silver-toned, with an antique patina. Dimension: 60 millimeters in diameter; 14 millimeters thick. The medals are available for 45 euros plus shipping and handling. Shipping charges to the U.S. will be about 15 euros. Revenues will be used to promote the canonization of Blessed Louis and Zélie Martin. To order, please e-mail Father Antonio Sangalli, O.C.D. at sangalli.antonio@carmelovocazioni.it with your shipping address and the number of medals you want. He prefers e-mail, but, if necessary, you may write to him at :

Padre Antonio Sangalli, O.C.D.
Centro Nazionale Carmelitano Vocazioni
Convento S. Maria delle Grazie
Padri Carmelitani Scalzi
Via Cappella del Monte, 17
80066 Montechiaro di Vico Equense (NA)



The Roman Catholic Bishop of Cubao

41 Lantana Street, Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines 1111



It is opportune that on the occasion of the beatification of **Louis and Zélie Martin**, the parents of **St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus**, the OCD Fathers and Brothers and the OCDS St. Teresa of Jesus Manila Community present a lecture series that would introduce who they were and show their relevance to us. *“Zélie and Louis Martin: Parents for the Modern World”* is a fitting title for this lecture because their saintly and exemplary lives are worth emulating for every parent. First, they were pro-life parents. They saw life as a gift from God and children for them were just on loan. Life is sacred and should be respected. God owns everyone and everything in this world. Zélie once wrote to her daughter Pauline: *“As for me, I wish to have many children so that I could raise them for Heaven.”*

Second, they were grateful parents. They thank the Lord for calling their children to consecrated life. When her daughter Céline revealed to him that she too felt called to the religious life, Louis Martin’s reaction was splendid. He invited his daughter: *“Come, let us go together to the Blessed Sacrament to thank the Lord who has given me the honor of taking all of my children.”*

Lastly, they were holy parents. Parents are the first catechists and teachers of their children. Children experience the goodness of God through their parents. Children learn what they live and live what they learn. St. Thérèse said, *“The good Lord gave me a father and a mother more worthy of Heaven than of the earth.”*

Following the example of Zélie and Louis Martin, parents should be pro-life, grateful for the gift of vocation and always aspiring for heaven.

I commend the OCD Fathers and Brothers and the OCDS St. Teresa of Jesus Manila Community for this lecture series. It is remarkably a worthy endeavor. I encourage everyone to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to know more about the parents of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. We need more models like them in this troubled world where the family is attacked on all sides and has to be reenforced with some support systems.

Through the intercession of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, may all our families be blessed all the more especially parents in carrying out their duties with utmost dedication and zeal.

Mabuhay po kayo!

Most Rev. Honesto F. Ongtioco, D.D.
Bishop of Cubao



OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR
Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCD)
Philippine Circumscription

Greetings of Peace!


It is timely that the theme for this year's lecture series is a topic that is very relevant for our society today, especially for the family. The team of the OCD-St. John of the Cross community and the OCDS-Manila have chosen for their lecture series "*Louis and Zelie, parents for the modern world*". Parents are examples for their children; together they form the first community, the family. The family is the basic unit of the society and when the family is threatened, the society consequently, is also affected.

Zelie and Louis Martin, the parents of St. Therese and her three other Carmelite sisters, exemplify heroic Christian virtues. Our present Pope, Benedict XVI, sees the relevance of their spirituality in our contemporary world. Louis and Zelie are proclaimed *Blessed* by the universal church last October, 2008. They are worthy to be emulated.

It is in this regard that I would like to congratulate the collaborators of this lecture series for giving us the opportunity to know these newly beatified husband and wife. I hope and pray that through the intercessions of these blessed couple, may we learn a lot from them through these lecture series.

As Carmelites of the third millennium, may we also be witnesses of faith, hope and love in our own communities, in our own families, amidst the challenges of the post-modern world. Let our spirituality permeate all aspects of society.

The blessing of the Almighty God be upon us!


FR. NARCISO C. REYES, OCD
Provincial Superior



Order of Discalced Carmelite Fathers and Brothers
Provincial Delegate to the OCDS

Peace!

In our society today, the traditional family is being attacked and undermined from all sides. Slowly the marriage and family values are being muddled by issues on rights of a person and other socio-economic issues. The burden of educating the children on faith has been passed on to the Church and the Educational System. This scenario is a lot similar to the era when Louis and Zélie Martin lived. With their beatification, the Catholic Church shows us an example of how a couple can remain faithful to its vocation as parents and as married couple in the midst of trials and joys of daily living. Thru their lives, Louis and Zélie Martin have imparted their unwavering faith to their five children who have reached adulthood. Their witnessing had created in the lives of these daughters a fertile soil for God to work on – one was so fertile it bore a lot of fruit that she is now one of the most loved saint in our Church.

I would like to commend the organizers of this lecture series for choosing to present the life and spirituality of the Martin couple for its 6th year offering. May this lecture series and souvenir program help us know more about this saintly couple and may their lives influence ours, just as they did with St. Therese of the Child Jesus and Holy Face, so that like them, we could be beacons of hope and faith in our society.

FR. ERNESTO R. MONTUERTO, OCD
Provincial Delegate to OCDS



SECULAR ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES IN THE PHILIPPINES (OCDS PHILIPPINES)

The Association of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites in the Philippines rejoices with our Carmelite Order and the Church on the Beatification of Louis and Zelie Martin, parents of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face!


What better way to celebrate this momentous occasion than through a lecture series entitled “ZELIE AND LOUIS MARTIN: PARENTS FOR THE MODERN WORLD”, Now in its 6th year, collaboration between the OCD friars and brothers and the OCDS St. Teresa of Jesus Manila Community has successfully organized not only lectures but retreats, recollections and conferences on Carmelite Spirituality.

The OCDS Philippines joins you in prayer in all your endeavors. In behalf of the OCDS Philippines, I congratulate the organizers. I pray that your commitment to the Order through such activities would further increase and deepen.

In this modern day and age where marriage and family life are very much threatened it is but fitting and relevant to introduce and present the life of the Martin couple as a model on how to attain holiness in one's family. Louis and Zelie Martin's love for the Lord and resignation to the will of the Father, was the seed planted in the hearts of their children which bloomed into fruition when they all chose to consecrate themselves as brides of Jesus. Louis and Zelie lived their daily ordinary life as parents teaching their children how to be friends with Jesus.

Louis and Zelie were able to detach themselves from their individual dreams of becoming a priest and religious and instead they wholeheartedly followed the will of God. While being dedicated to their roles as spouses and parents, they too were the generous friends and neighbors to their companions in the workplace and the community.

May the living witness to a life of holiness in the family, not without struggle and difficulties, of the Martin couple find their way in the spiritual journey of families not only amongst us Carmelites but also in the Church and throughout the world.


THELMA V. ANTONIO, OCDS
President, OCDS Philippines



**Order of Discalced Carmelite Fathers and Brothers
St. John of the Cross Monastery**

“The family is the object of numerous forces that seek to destroy it or in some way to deform it, and aware that the well-being of society and her own good are intimately tied to the good of the family, the Church perceives in a more urgent and compelling way her mission of proclaiming to all people the plan of God for marriage and the family, ensuring their full vitality and human and Christian development, and thus contributing to the renewal of society and of the people of God.”

-FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO POPE JOHN PAUL II

Integral to the Christian call and mission is the defense and the protection of the family. Inspired by this principle the Student Friars of St. John of the Cross Monastery and the OCDS-St. Teresa of Jesus Manila Community has taken the initiative to introduce the Parents of St. Therese of the Child Jesus for the Lecture Series 2008.

This year’s theme “Louis and Zelie Martin: Parents for the Modern World” is our modest way of celebrating the gift that God has given us through the Beatification of Blessed Louis and Zelie Martin on the occasion of World Mission Sunday last October 19, 2008.

To all those supported us in this endeavor we extend our heartfelt gratitude.

BRO. JONALD PANGANIBAN, OCD

Project Coordinator

Carmelite Spirituality Lecture Series 2008



**SECULAR ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES
ST. TERESA OF JESUS MANILA COMMUNITY**

*“God gave me a father and a mother more worthy of heaven than of earth.”
- St. Therese of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face*

All praise, glory and thanks be to God, Father Almighty, for the gifts of Blessed Louis and Zelie Martin, who gave us the greatest saint of modern times and the youngest Doctor of the Church – St. Therese of the Child Jesus. Both felt a calling to the religious life but realized that their vocation was a calling with a specific purpose in life: that is, to raise up a family after the heart of God. Theirs was a truly Christian family with a fertile ground where the seeds of good spiritual formation necessary for solid piety and the practice of human virtues grew and were nurtured. They created a solidly human and supernatural family atmosphere thoroughly permeated with a passionate love for God – a veritable, rich field for vocations and which brought their four daughters to religious life. Their exemplary life shine out today when the sacredness of marriage and the Gospel values that should define the quality of their daily lives are now being systematically undermined.

Like the family of Louis and Zelie Martin, may all Filipino families make God the center of their lives; may fathers and mothers foster love, holiness, and joy in their homes and may every family be a truly domestic Church making family life provide a foretaste of heaven. The renewal of the Church depends much on families like that of the Blessed Louis and Zelie Martin, modeled after the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Generosa L. Gregorio, OCDS
DR. GENEROSA GREGORIO, OCDS
Councilor in-charge of Collaborative Activities,
OCDS St. Teresa of Jesus Manila Community

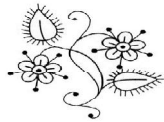


PROF. EDUARDO JOSE E. CALASANZ, NDV

Graduate of AB Philosophy at Ateneo de Manila University, 1974

Took his LICENTIATE IN PHILOSOPHY (Ph. L.) at Universite d'Aix-en-Provence, France in 1984. From the same institution, he had his Ph. M and D.E.A in 1987

An active faculty of the Philosophy Department of Ateneo de Manila University, he teaches various subjects such as Intro to Poetry, Method of Research, The Problem of God in Existentialist Literature, Pilosopiya ng Tao, Pilosopia at Relihiyon and Epistemology. At present, he is the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies at the said University.



THELMA A. BALAJADIA, OCDS

Thelma A. Balajadia is a native Cebuana but turned Ilocano by marriage, wife of (Ret.) MGen. Jose V. Balajadia, mother of 5, grandmother of 5, a secular Carmelite and a quiltmaker par excellence.

She received her education from the ICM nuns of St. Theresa's College, Cebu. After graduation in 1964, she worked for three years as a Grade I teacher then turned full-time homemaker to her growing family in Baguio, Pampanga, then finally Quezon City. She joined Radio Veritas Asia in 1976 until her early retirement in 1989.

She became involved in parish organization, especially with the Charismatics. In 1997, she said "yes" to God's call and joined the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCDS) St. Teresa of Jesus Manila Community, where she eventually became a formator and Councilor-in-charge of Apostolate.

Presently, she is a member of the newly installed OCDS St. Therese of the Holy Face Community of Quezon City where she is a formator and the Councilor-in-charge of Spirituality.



CARMELO F. V. LOPEZ, OCDS

Carmelo Francisco V. Lopez, a widower and a father of three, turned 60 last September, 2008. He finished his AB Philosophy at the Ateneo de Manila University and his Masters in Business Administration at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. Presently, he is taking up PhD in Economics at the Ateneo de Manila University where he is an Assistant Professor.

He entered the Benedictine Abbey in Manila as a Postulant at a very young age of 13. Realizing that he is not being called to the religious life, he left the Abbey at the age of 21. He worked in the corporate world for 28 years before finally joining the academe in 1997.

Together with his wife, the late Humildad Y. Lopez, he responded positively to God's call and joined the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites St. Teresa of Jesus Manila Community (STJMC) in 1993. He made his Temporary Promise in 1994. He has handled several positions in the Community and the OCDS Philippines since his Definitive Promise in 1997. At present, he is the President of the STJMC and the Secretary of the OCDS Philippines.



FR. PAULO GAMBOA, OCD

Born in Cebu City

Studies:

Elementary: University of San Carlos, School for boys

High school: Silliman University High School

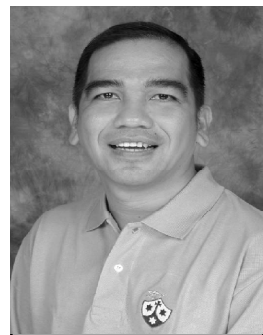
College: BS Psychology.

(MA units in Organizational Psychology).

Bachelor in Sacred Theology,

Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University 2001

Master of Arts in Theological Studies, Ateneo De Manila University, 2003



Entered the Order on June 6, 1993

Professed: April 11, 1996

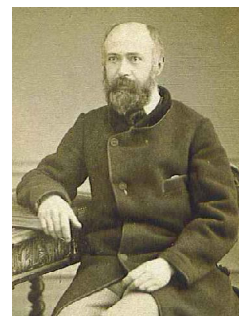
Ordained, May 3, 2002

Birthday: April 23, 1967

WHO ARE LOUIS AND ZELIE MARTIN?

BLESSED LOUIS MARTIN

Born: 22 August 1823 in Bordeaux, Gironde, France
Lifelong layman in the diocese of Bayeux-Lisieux, France.
Son of an army officer. Watchmaker.
Married to Blessed Marie-Azelie Guérin Martin
on 12 July 1858.
In 1889 he suffered two paralyzing strokes followed
by a complete mental collapse, and was hospitalized
for three years.
Died: 29 July 1894 in Arnières-sur-Iton, Eure,
France of natural causes



BLESSED MARIE-AZÉLIE GUÉRIN MARTIN (ZELIE)

Born: 23 December 1831 in Saint-Denis-sur-Sarthon,
Orne, France
Lifelong lay woman. Lace maker.
Married to Blessed Louis Martin on 12 July 1858.
Died: 28 August 1877 in Alençon, Orne, France



THE COUPLE

Parents of nine children; five of them, all girls, survived to adulthood and became nuns;
the youngest was Saint Therese of Lisieux.
Venerated: 26 March 1994 by Pope Paul II
Beatified: on 3 July 2008 Pope Benedict XVI issued a decree acknowledging a miracle
attributable to the couple; the miracle involved the 2002 repair
of a normally-fatal congenital lung condition suffered by the infant Pietro
Schiliro of Monza, Italy; the healing followed a novena said by Pietro's mother
asking for the intervention of Blessed Louis and Blessed Marie-Azelie
beatification was held 19 October 2008, Mission Sunday, at the cathedral
in Lisieux, France

BLESSED ZÉLIE AND LOUIS MARTIN: COMPANIONS ON OUR JOURNEY

BY MAUREEN O'RIORDAN

On July 12, 2008, Cardinal Saraiva Martins, presiding at the celebrations in Alençon and Lisieux of the 150th anniversary of the marriage of the Venerable Zélie and Louis Martin, the mother and father of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus of the Holy Face, announced that the couple will be beatified on Mission Sunday, October 19, 2008.

Louis and Zélie are only the second spouses in history to be declared “blessed” as a couple. Why has God inspired the Church to hold them up as a model for the families of today? What can we learn from them? How can they accompany us on our own pilgrimage?

Fully Engaged in Life on Earth, yet Oriented to Heaven

Both Zélie and Louis worked very hard. She was a maker of point d'Alençon lace, he a watchmaker. Of how hard she worked, Zélie wrote: “My poor Marie feels the whole situation very much, also. She has not a good word for the point d'Alençon. She repeats that she would rather live in an attic than earn her living at what it costs me. I admit that she is not wrong. If I were free and alone, and if I had to go through all I have suffered for the past twenty-four years, I would rather die of hunger; just thinking of it makes me shudder!

I often tell myself that if I had endured half of all that to win heaven I would be a canonizable saint! I think also of my brother [a pharmacist], and if he's undergoing the same troubles as I am, I pity him with all my heart, for I know about it from the school of hard knocks.”¹

The couple had nine children and raised five of them to adulthood. They were fully engaged in business, social, family, and ecclesial life. At the same time they were constantly oriented to eternity. Louis often repeated “Oh! the Homeland! the Homeland! It is beautiful, the Homeland!” Zélie's daughters remembered how often she said “Oh! the Homeland! the Homeland! Heaven . . . !”²

Even in the conflicts of everyday life they turned toward heaven. When a neighbor sued them over a boundary dispute in which even the judge found the Martins blameless, Zélie wrote to her daughter Pauline: “We can but accept contradictions patiently, since we must suffer in this world. If only it enables us to avoid a little Purgatory, we shall bless M. M. in the next world for having made us undergo some of it in this life. But I prefer that it should be he who should do us this wrong, rather than that we should have to reproach ourselves with having caused him a quarter of the trouble.”³

Overwhelmed with Responsibilities, yet Faithful to Prayer

Although Zélie and Louis had five places to put every minute, each was faithful to the contemplative life, the life of family prayer, and the liturgical life of the Church, and they created a family similarly faithful. Husband and wife maintained a demanding

Maureen O’Riordan, a student of St. Thérèse, lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. To learn more about Blessed Zélie and Louis and about St. Thérèse, please visit her Web site at <http://www.thereseoflisieux.org>

schedule. Yet every morning they attended the 5:30 Mass, saying it was the only one the poor and working persons could attend. When the neighbors heard their door shut as they left for church, they would say “Oh, it’s only that holy Martin couple going to church; we can turn over and sleep a while longer.” Every morning and evening they prayed as a family; they observed Sundays and the feasts of the Church with care. Louis was a leader in the nocturnal adoration of the Eucharist. Zélie, always the last to go to bed, was often up till nearly midnight. There were many demands on their time, but they gave it generously to serve God and their neighbor.

Loving Each Other and Our Children, yet Honoring the Life of the Soul Above All

Louis and Zélie loved each other very much. In October 1863, away on business, Louis wrote to Zélie: “My dearest, I cannot get back to Alençon before Monday; the time seems long to me, for I want so much to be with you . . . I embrace you all with my whole heart, while awaiting the joy of being with you again . . . Your husband and true friend who loves you forever.”⁴ In August 1873, when Zélie took the little girls to Lisieux to see their relatives, she wrote to him: “I am with you all day in spirit, and say to myself: ‘Now he is doing such and such a thing.’ I long to be with you, Louis dear. I love you with all my heart, and I feel my affection doubled by being deprived of your company. I could not live apart from you.”

They also loved their children deeply. A few weeks before Thérèse’s birth, Zélie wrote to her sister-in-law: “I love children to the point of folly; I was born to have them. . . . But it will soon be time for all this to end . . . I’m at

an age when I should be a grandmother!”⁵ On March 4, 1877, Zélie wrote to her daughter Pauline: “When we had our children, our ideas changed somewhat. From then on we lived only for them. They made all our happiness, and we would not have found it except in them. Nothing any longer cost us anything; the world was no longer a burden to us. As for me, my children were my great compensation, so that I wished to have many in order to bring them up for Heaven.”⁶ Zélie’s letters are filled with descriptions of good times at home, with chestnuts, cakes, and fritters for feasts; visits to relatives; and the girls’ pleasure over their New Year’s gifts.



In the midst of this family life, however, the parents formed each daughter carefully from childhood in the spiritual life. They

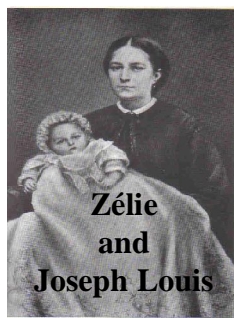
studied each child as an individual, nurtured her confidence in them, and encouraged her to give God a free hand in her life. About the decision to allow Marie to go on a retreat at the Visitation Convent where she had been educated, Zélie wrote, “I did have a good reason for wanting Marie to make the retreat. It’s true that it is an expense, but money is nothing when it comes to the sanctification of a soul; and, last year, Marie came back completely changed.”⁷ Louis had a profound respect for the spiritual lives of his daughters and reverently supported each in fulfilling her vocation.

Loving Their Extended Family

Devoted to each other and to their children, Zélie and Louis reached out lovingly to support their extended families. For years they shared a house with Louis’s parents.

When Zélie's father could not find a good housekeeper, she welcomed him gladly into her own home, and she wrote to her brother "You would not find one in a hundred as good as my husband is to a father-in-law."⁸ When her father died, Zélie wrote to her sister-in-law: "If you only knew, my dear sister, how much I loved my father! He was always with me; I never left him; he gave me all the help he could."⁹ The couple was very close to Zélie's sister Marie-Louise, a nun of the Visitation at Caen, and sent their three oldest girls to school at her convent. They were intimate with Zélie's brother, Isidore Guérin, and his wife, Céline, who lived at Lisieux. After Zélie's death, Louis moved to Lisieux with his five daughters to give them the advantage of the influence of their aunt, uncle, and cousins.

Trusting in God in the Face of Sorrows



**Zélie
and
Joseph Louis**

Suffering acute grief in many trials, Louis and Zélie continued to trust in God's personal love for them and for their children. In six years they lost four children, three infants and one little girl, Marie-Hélène, at the age of five. To her sister-in-law, whose baby had just died, Zélie wrote: "Your dear little child is with God; he is looking down on you and loving you, and one day you will possess him again. This is a great consolation that I have experienced myself, and which I still feel. When I had to close the eyes of my dear children and bury them, I felt deep sorrow, but I was always resigned to it. I did not regret the pains and the sorrows I had endured for them. Many persons said to me: 'It would have been better for you if you had never had them.' I could not bear that kind of talk. I do

not think that the sorrows and the troubles I endured could possibly be compared with the eternal happiness of my children with God. Besides, they are not lost forever; life is short and filled with crosses, and we shall find them again in Heaven."¹⁰

Loving Christ in the poor, and causing charity and justice

While supporting a large family, Zélie and Louis gave generously of their energy and money to the poor, to the Church, and to causing charity and justice in their society. Louis was a member of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, and he also interested himself in the poor persons around them. When he went out, he always carried loose change to give alms to those who begged of him. If he met a drunken man in the street, he helped him get home. At the train station, meeting a poor epileptic man who had no money for his fare, he gave him some money, collected the rest from others, and settled him in his seat. When Louis and Zélie found a homeless man by the side of the road, they brought him home, gave him a good meal, and found better clothes and boots for him. Louis then went to a lot of trouble to get him into the home run by the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Zélie took good care of her maids, nursing them herself when they were ill. She did not want to send them to the hospital or to burden their families. For three weeks she nursed her maid, Louise Marais, day and night. She was kind to the fifteen women who worked as her lacemakers, visiting them on Sundays after Vespers and making sure they lacked nothing. When she found that two women who pretended to be nuns were abusing a poor girl they had taken in, she took them to court. Thérèse's sister Céline testified that she often saw poor people coming into her home to receive food and

clothes from Zélie, who often cried when she heard their tales of distress.¹¹ Both had great reverence for the poor, in whom Jesus still suffers poverty today. After Louis had brought one poor man home from church and given him a meal, he asked Céline and Thérèse to kneel to receive the poor man's blessing.

Surrendering Ourselves Completely to God



Fresco of the death of Zélie Martin (1877)

After leading heroic lives, Louis and Zélie surrendered themselves to long and painful illnesses and, in Zélie's case, to a premature death. She died of breast cancer at age forty-six, when Thérèse, her youngest, was only four years old. After she was diagnosed, she wrote "So let us leave it in God's hands. He knows what is for our good much better than we do. It is He who wounds and He who heals. I will go to Lourdes on the first pilgrimage, and I hope that the Blessed Virgin will cure me if that is necessary."¹² When she was not cured at Lourdes, she still kept the faith. About her return to Louis, who had been waiting at Lisieux for news of a cure, she wrote: "He was not a little surprised to see me returning cheerfully, as if I had obtained the hoped-for miracle. It gave him renewed courage, and all the house was filled with cheerfulness."¹³ Not long before her death Zélie wrote asking prayers "if not for a cure, then for perfect resignation to the will of God."¹⁴ The miracle she had hoped for on the feast of the Assumption did not happen. The next day, twelve days before her death, she

ended her last letter, to her brother, with the words: "Obviously, the Blessed Virgin does not want to cure me¹⁵. . . . What would you have? If the Blessed Virgin has not cured me, it is because my time has come, and God wills me to rest elsewhere than on earth."¹⁶

Later Louis became ill with dementia, and he was confined in a mental asylum, the Bon Sauveur at Caen, for three years. He accepted this trial generously and brought many other patients back to God. On February 27, 1889, Céline wrote: "The Sister said to him that he was rendering them a great service by bringing back the fallen-away patients to God. 'You are an apostle,' she told him. 'That's true,' answered dear little Father, 'but I would prefer to be an apostle elsewhere; however, since it is God's will! I believe it is to break down my pride.'"¹⁷ Sister Costard, who looked after Louis, wrote: "He is really admirable;



Louis Martin returned to Lisieux. In May 1892 he lived in a rented house at 7 Rue Labbey where the photo was taken.

not only does he not complain, but he finds that everything we give him is perfect."¹⁸ When his family and friends made a novena that he might be well enough to return to Lisieux, he said "No, you must not ask for that, but only that God's will be done."¹⁹ In 1892 he was well enough to return to Lisieux, where Céline and the Guérins looked after him devotedly. He said "In heaven, I'll repay you for all this!"²⁰ On learning of his death, Father Almiro Pichon, a Jesuit then working in Canada and a close friend of the Martin family, wrote prophetically to Louis's daughters: "Jesus is taking him from you only to beatify him."²¹

God has called the Church to declare these courageous spouses “blessed” not for their glory but to stimulate us, in our circumstances, to imitate their fidelity in loving and serving their Lord and their neighbors, their love for the poor, their commitment to prayer, and their incomparable abandonment. May we not only admire them but also receive the grace that in us, as in them, the desire for Jesus Christ becomes greater and more intense than any other desire.

Footnotes:

[1] See *The Mother of the Little Flower*, by Céline Martin. (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 2005), pp. 31-32.

[2] *Letters of St. Therese of Lisieux*, Vol. I, tr. John Clarke, O.C.D. (Washington: ICS Publications, 1982), p. 515, footnote 3 to LT 79.

[3] Quoted in *Louis and Zélie Martin: The Seed and the Root of the Little Flower*, by Rev. Paulinus Redmond (London, Quiller Press, 1995), p. 139.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[5] *Letters*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 104.

[6] Quoted in Redmond, op. cit., p. 38.

[7] Cited in “Louis and Zélie Martin,” a spiritual newsletter published by the Abbey of Saint Joseph of Clairval and visible online at <http://www.clairval.com/lettres/en/2000/03/19/2220300.htm>

[8] Quoted in Redmond, op. cit., p. 57.

[9] Quoted in *Therese of Lisieux: God’s Gentle Warrior*, by Thomas R. Nevin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 89, September 7, 1868.

[10] Quoted in Redmond, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

[11] *The Mother of the Little Flower*, op. cit., p. 69.

[12] Quoted in Redmond, op. cit., p. 141.

[13] Quoted in *Zélie Martin, Mother of St. Therese*, by Barbara Foley (Boston, Daughters of St Paul, 1960), pp. 44-45.

[14] *Correspondance familiale 1863-1885, Zélie et Louis Martin*, (Paris : Editions du Cerf, 2004), photograph letter.

[15] Nevin, op. cit., p. 72.

[16] Redmond, op. cit., p. 2.

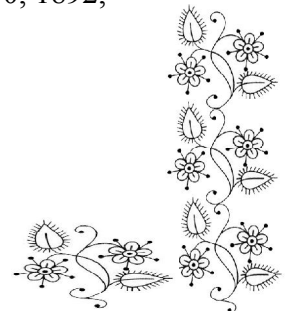
[17] *Letters*, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 535-36.

[18] *Letters*, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 575-76, note 4.

[19] Redmond, op. cit., p. 259.

[20] *Letters of St. Therese*, Vol. II, tr. John Clarke, O.C.D. (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1988), pp. 750-51, LD, May 10, 1892, note 2.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 876-77.



**LOUIS AND ZELIE MARTIN:
AN EXAMPLE OF A CHRISTIAN FAMILY
INTERPRETED ACCORDING TO
POPE JOHN PAUL II'S LETTER TO FAMILIES**

March 19, 2000

Feast of Saint Joseph

Dear Friend of Saint Joseph Abbey,

«Yes, the civilization of love is possible; it is not a utopia. But it is only possible by a constant and ready reference to God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named (Eph 3: 14-15), from whom every human family comes» (John Paul II, Letter to Families, February 2, 1994, No. 15). Indeed, it is within the family that the civilization of love is born and grows.

However, *«For some time now the family institution has been under repeated attack. These attacks are all the more dangerous and insidious since they ignore the irreplaceable value of the family based on marriage»* (John Paul II, June 4, 1999). But *«it is not without importance for children to be born and raised in a home made up of parents united in a faithful covenant»* (Ibid.). Marriage is this covenant by which «a man and a woman constitute between them a community for life, ordained by its natural character for the benefit of the couple as well as for the procreation and education of children» (Code of Canon Law, c. 1055, § 1). Respect for such a union has «a very decisive bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of the individual members of a family, and on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family itself and of human society as a

whole» (Vatican II, *Gaudium et spes*, 48). That is why the Church strongly defends the identity of marriage and the family. To this end, the Church puts forth the example of the «loving spouses that were Louis and Z  lie Martin, the parents of Saint Th  r  se of Lisieux,» whose heroic virtues were recognized on March 26, 1994, by Pope John Paul II.

«IT IS BECAUSE I BELIEVE!»

Louis Martin was born on August 22, 1823, in Bordeaux, the second of five children. His father, a career officer, was in Spain at the time. The childhood of the Martin children was spent going from one of their father's garrisons to another: Bordeaux, Avignon, Strasbourg. At the time of his retirement, in December, 1830, Captain Martin set up house in Alen  on, in Normandy. He was an officer of exemplary piety. The regimental chaplain had once mentioned to him that the soldiers were surprised to see him, during Mass, remain so long on his knees after the Consecration, and he responded without

(This article about Louis and Z  lie Martin and the example they offer for families today, came out in an issue of the spiritual newsletter written by the Benedictine monks of the Abbey of Saint Joseph de Clairval at Flavigny in France. It was posted again in the website <http://www.thereseoflisieux.org>, the website of Ms. Maureen O'Riordan. Fr. Jacques Marie, OSB of the Abbey of St Joseph de Clairval and Ms O'Riordan have both given their permission so it could be reproduce it here.)

batting an eye: «Tell them it is because I believe!» Louis received a very strong religious upbringing, first in the family and then with the Brothers of Christian Schools. He did not choose the traditional family career of the military, but instead became a watchmaker, which went better with his quiet and meditative nature and with his great manual dexterity. He did his apprenticeship first at Rennes, and then at Strasbourg.

At the beginning of Autumn, 1845, Louis made the decision to devote his life entirely to God. He went to the Great Saint Bernard Hospice, in the heart of the Alps, where the canons were dedicated to prayer and to saving travelers stranded in the mountains. He met the Prior, who asked him to return home to complete his studies in Latin, with the eventual possibility of entering the Novitiate. After an unproductive attempt to take up his studies somewhat late, Louis regretfully decided not to pursue his dream. In order to refine his apprenticeship, he moved to Paris. After that, he returned home to Alençon and lived there with his parents, leading a very orderly life, which made his friends remark, «Louis is a saint.» Busy with his different jobs, Louis did not think about getting married. His mother regretted his decision, but at the lace-making school, where she was taking some courses, she noticed a young woman who was talented and had good manners. Could this be the «pearl» that she sought for her son? The young woman was Zélie Guérin, born at Gandelain, in the Orne (Normandy), on December 23, 1831, the second of three children. Her father and mother were from profoundly Christian families. In September, 1844, they moved to Alençon, where their two older daughters received an education at a boarding school under the

guidance of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Picpus.

Zélie considered a religious life, just as her older sister had, who became Sister Marie-Dosithée at the Visitation Convent in Le Mans. But the Mother Superior of the Daughters of Charity, of whom Zélie had requested admission to the order, told her

without hesitation that such was not the Divine Will. Faced with such a categorical statement, the young woman submitted, but she was saddened. In a wonderful supernatural

"My God, I will enter into the state of marriage in order to fulfill Your holy will. Therefore I pray that You give me many children and that they be consecrated to You.." - Zélie

optimism, she cried out, «My God, I will enter into the state of marriage in order to fulfill Your holy will. Therefore I pray that You give me many children and that they be consecrated to You.» Zélie then entered into a lace-making school in order to become expert in making Alençon lace, a highly regarded form of lace - making. On December 8, 1851, she received an inspiration: «Make Alençon lace.» From that time, she set up her own shop.

One day, passing by a young man with noble features, she was very impressed by his reserved appearance and dignified bearing, and she heard an interior voice tell her, «He is the one I have prepared for you.» She soon learned that the name of the passerby was Louis Martin. The two young people quickly came to value and love one another. Their engagement was so quickly arranged that they were able to marry on July 13, 1858, three months after their initial meeting. Louis and his wife proposed to each other to live as brother and sister, following the example of Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary. Ten months of life together in total continence permitted them to mold their souls into an intense spiritual communion. But a prudent

intervention by their confessor and the desire to give children to the Lord made them put an end to this holy experiment. Zélie would later write to her daughter Pauline: «As for me, I wished to have many children so that I could raise them for Heaven.» In less than thirteen years, they would have nine children. Their love would be beautiful and productive.

LIGHT YEARS AWAY

«A love which is not 'beautiful,' but reduced only to the satisfaction of concupiscence, or to a man's and a woman's mutual 'use' of each other, makes persons slaves to their weaknesses» (Letter to Families, 13). From this point of view, people are used as objects: woman becomes for man an object of pleasure, and vice versa; children become a nuisance to their parents; the family becomes an institution that shackles the freedom of its members. Thus, one finds oneself light years away from true love. «If an individual is exclusively concerned with pleasure, he can reach the point of killing love by killing the fruit of love. For the culture of pleasure, the 'blessed fruit of your womb' (Lk 1: 42) becomes in a certain sense an 'accursed fruit,' that is to say, undesirable, which one wants to suppress through abortion. This culture of death is opposed to divine law: The law of God is univocal and categorical with respect to human life. God commands: 'You shall not kill' (Ex 20: 13). No human lawgiver can therefore assert: it is permissible for you to kill, you have the right to kill, or you should kill» (Letter to Families, 21).

«However,» the Pope continues, «there is a new and growing sense of respect for life from the first moment of conception, especially among young people... This is a leaven of hope for the future of the family and of all humanity» (Ibid.) Indeed, in the newborn is the realization of the common good of the

Zélie's trust during the greatest difficulties was fortified by the sight of the faith of her spouse, in particular his strict observance of Sunday rest: Louis never opened his shop on Sunday.

family and of humanity. The Martin parents experienced this truth by welcoming their numerous children. Zélie would write, «We lived only for our children, they were our total good fortune which we only found through them.» Nevertheless, their married life was not without tests. Three children died at a young age, two of them boys. Then there was the difficult passing away of Marie-Hélène at the age of five and a half. Prayers and pilgrimages followed one upon the other during these trials, especially in 1873, during the serious illness of Thérèse and Marie's typhoid. Zélie's trust during the greatest difficulties was fortified by the sight of the faith of her spouse, in particular his strict observance of Sunday rest: Louis never opened his shop on Sunday. It was the «Good Lord's feast» that they celebrated together as a family, first at the parish services, then by taking long walks. They took the children to festivals at Alençon, punctuated by parades and fireworks. The upbringing of the children was at one and the same time joyous, gentle, and strict. Starting at the age when they could understand, Madame Martin taught them the morning offering of their heart to the Good Lord, the simple acceptance of daily difficulties «to please Jesus»—indelible trait that would serve as the basis of the «little way» taught by their youngest child: the future Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. «Thus the home is the first school of Christian life,» as taught by the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC, 1657). Louis helped his spouse with the child-rearing. He got started early at four

o'clock in the morning, seeking a nursemaid for one of his younger children who was ill; he accompanied his wife 10 kilometers from Alençon on a frigid night to be at the bedside of their first son Joseph; he cared for his eldest, Marie, who was stricken with typhoid fever at the age of 13...

LOVE-GIVING ENERGY

Very energetic, Louis Martin was not the «gentle dreamer» that has sometimes been described. In order to help Zélie, who was unable to keep pace with the success of her lace-making business, he abandoned watchmaking to find retail outlets for her work. Louis excelled in this business aspect and considerably increased the revenues of the business. But he also knew how to find time to relax and to go fishing.

In addition, the Martin couple took part in several pious associations: the Third Order of Saint Francis, nocturnal adoration, etc. They drew strength in the loving observation of the precepts and counsels of the Church: fasting, abstinence, daily Mass, frequent confession. Pope John Paul II wrote to families, «God's strength is always far more powerful than your difficulties! Much more influential than the corruption present in the world is the divine power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation... And incomparably greater than all is the power of the Eucharist... In it Christ has given us Himself as food and drink, as a source of saving power... The life that comes from Christ is for you, dear Spouses, Parents and Families! Did Jesus not institute the Eucharist in a family-like setting during the Last Supper?... The words He then pronounced retain all the power and wisdom of the sacrifice of the Cross» (Letter to Families, 18).

ENDURING FRUITS

At the source of the Eucharist, Zélie drew energy beyond the reach of most women, and her husband found tenderness beyond the reach of the average man. Louis managed the finances. He happily went along with his wife's requests: «For Marie's retreat at the Visitation,» Zélie wrote to Pauline, «you know how difficult it is for your dad to leave you, and first he had said forcefully that she wouldn't go... Last night, Marie was upset about his stance; I said to her, 'Let me take care of it, I always get what I want without a fight; there's still a month before you go; that's enough time for me to change your father's mind ten times.' I wasn't mistaken, because hardly an hour later, when he came home, he started talking very kindly about your sister (Marie) ... 'Good, I said to myself, 'now is the time!' And I brought up this business. 'You really want to make this retreat?' Dad said to Marie. She answered, 'Yes, Dad.' He answered, 'Fine, then go!'... I did have a good reason for wanting Marie to make the retreat. It's true that it is an expense, but money is nothing when it comes to the sanctification of a soul; and last year, Marie came back completely changed. The fruit has lasted even until now, but it is time that she replenish her supplies.»

Spiritual retreats produce fruits of conversion and sanctification, because under the influence of their energy, the soul, susceptible to the inspirations and actions of the Holy Spirit, always purifies itself more of sins,

***"It's true that it is an expense,
but money is nothing when
it comes to the sanctification
of a soul" - Zélie***

practices the virtues, imitating the absolute model of Jesus Christ, in order to arrive at a more intimate union with Him. That is why Pope Paul VI was able to say: «Faithfulness to annual spiritual exercises in a sheltered milieu assures the progress of the soul.» Among all the methods of spiritual exercise, «one has ever held the foremost place and the full and repeated approbation of the Holy See... the method introduced by St. Ignatius of Loyola, whom we are pleased to call the chief and peculiar Master of 'Spiritual Exercises'» (Pius XI, Encyclical *Mens Nostra*).

The deeply Christian life of the Martin parents was naturally inclined to charity towards their neighbors: discrete donations to needy families, in which the daughters participated depending upon their age, and helping the sick. They were not afraid to engage in legal battles to aid the oppressed. In addition, together they took the necessary steps to help an indigent person enter a hospice, to which he did not have the right, since he was not old enough. These actions went beyond the scope of the parish and showed a great missionary spirit: large annual offerings to the Propagation of the Faith, participation in the building of a church in Canada, etc.

But the intense family happiness of the Martins was not to last long. Starting in 1865, Zélie noticed a tumor in her breast, which first appeared after she bumped into the corner of a piece of furniture. Her brother, a pharmacist, and her husband didn't think it was of any importance. But at the end of 1876, the disease returned and a formal diagnosis was made: «inoperable fibrous tumor» because it was in an advanced stage. Zélie was valiant to the end. Conscious of the void that her passing would leave, she asked her sister-in-law, Madame Guérin, to help her husband raise the youngest children after her death.

Madame Martin passed away on August 28, 1877. For Louis, 54 years old, it was devastating, a deep wound that would only be closed in Heaven. But he accepted it all with an exemplary spirit of faith and the conviction that his «saintly wife» was in Heaven. He would complete, without fail, the task started in the harmony of love: raising five daughters. For that, Thérèse wrote, «Papa's very tender heart joined a truly motherly love to the love that it already possessed.» Madame Guérin offered to help the Martin family and asked her brother-in-law to move the family to Lisieux. Her husband's drugstore would be a second home for the little orphans, and the intimacy that united the two families only grew, in the same traditions of simplicity, work and uprightness. Despite the memories and the faithful friendships that could have kept them at Alençon, Louis accepted the sacrifice and moved to Lisieux.

A GREAT HONOR

Life at the «Buissonnets,» the new home in Lisieux, was more austere and withdrawn than in Alençon. The family had little social interaction and cultivated the memory of her that Mr. Martin always spoke of to his children as «your saintly mother.» The youngest girls were placed under the care of the Benedictines of Notre-Dame du Pré. But Louis knew how to provide them with distractions: visits to the theater, trips to Trouville, a stay in Paris, etc., seeking, through all the realities of life, the glory of God and the sanctification of souls.

His personal sanctity was revealed above all in the offering of all of his daughters, and then of himself. Zélie had already foreseen the vocation of the two oldest girls: Pauline entered the Carmel of Lisieux in October 1882, and Marie in October 1886. At the same time Léonie, a difficult child, began a series

of fruitless attempts, first with the Poor Clares, then at the Visitation convent, where after two failures she was able to enter definitively in 1899. Thérèse, the youngest, the «little Queen,» was to overcome every obstacle in order to enter Carmel at the age of 15, in April 1888. Two months later, on June 15, Céline revealed to her father that she too felt called to the religious life. Faced with this new sacrifice, Louis Martin's reaction was splendid: «Come, let us go together to the Blessed Sacrament to thank the Lord who has given me the honor of taking all of my children.»

Following the example of Mr. Martin, parents should welcome vocations as a gift from God. Pope John Paul II has written, «You, Parents, thank the Lord if He has called one of your children to the consecrated life. As it has always been, one should feel very honored that the Lord esteems your family and has chosen one of its members and invited them to follow the way of the evangelical counsels. Retain the desire to give one of your children to the Lord for the growth of the love of God in the world. What fruit of married love could be more beautiful than that?» (Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata*, March 25, 1996, No. 107).

A vocation is above all a divine initiative. But a Christian upbringing favors a willing response to the call of God: «It is in the bosom of the family that parents are 'by word and example... the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation» (CCC, 1656). In addition, «if parents do not live according to the values of the Gospel, the young boy or girl will have difficulty hearing the call, or understanding the

necessity of the sacrifices to consent to or appreciate the beauty of the goal to be attained. It is indeed in the family that young people first experience the values of the Gospel, of the love that is given to God and to others. It is also necessary that they be raised to responsibly use their freedom, in order to be prepared to live, according to their vocation, the highest spiritual realities» (*Vita consecrata*, *ibid.*).

«I AM TOO HAPPY»

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face would testify to the manner in which her father actually lived the Gospel: «What I noticed the most was the progress that Dad made in perfection; following the example of

Following the example of Mr. Martin, parents should welcome vocations as a gift from God.

Saint Francis de Sales, he was able to come to master his natural vivacity to the point that he appeared to have the most gentle nature in the world... The things of this

world hardly seemed to affect him; he easily overcame the difficulties of this life.» In May 1888, Louis retraced the stages of his life, during a visit to the church where he had celebrated his marriage. He afterwards told his daughters: «My children, I have come back from Alençon, where I received in the Church of Our Lady such great graces, such consolations, that I said this prayer: 'My God, it is too much! Yes, I am too happy, it is not possible to go to Heaven like that, I want to suffer something for you! And I offered myself...'» The word «victim» trailed off on his lips; he dared not pronounce it, but his daughters understood.

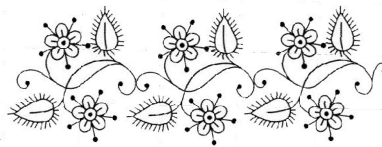
God did not delay in hearing His servant. On June 23, 1888, afflicted by increasing arteriosclerosis that affected his mental capacities, Louis Martin disappeared from his house. After much anxiety, he was found at Le Havre, on the 27th. It was the beginning of a slow and inexorable physical failure. Shortly

after Thérèse took the habit, where he appeared «so handsome, so dignified,» he was the victim of a crisis of delirium that required his admittance to Good Saviour Hospital in Caen: a humiliating situation that he accepted with an extraordinary faith. When he was able to express himself, he repeated: «Everything for the greater glory of God,» and also: «I have never been humiliated in my life, I need to be humiliated.» When his legs were paralyzed, in May, 1892, they brought him back to Lisieux. «Good-bye, see you in Heaven!» he was barely able to say to his daughters during his last visit to Carmel. He passed away

quietly after a heart attack, on July 29, 1894, attended by Céline who had put off her entrance to Carmel in order to take care of her father.

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face would say: «The Good Lord gave me a father and a mother more worthy of Heaven than of the earth.» May we, following their example, arrive at the eternal dwelling place that the Saint of Lisieux called «the Paternal Home of Heaven.»

Dom Antoine Marie osb.



THE PASTORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ZELIE AND LOUIS MARTIN, MOTHER AND FATHER OF ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX

by MAUREEN O'RIORDAN

- Fully engaged in business, social, family, and ecclesial life, Louis and Zélie were constantly oriented to eternity.
- Overwhelmed with responsibilities, each was faithful to the contemplative life, the family life of prayer, and the liturgical life of the Church, and they created a family similarly faithful.
- Surrounding their daughters with love, tenderness, and good times, the parents formed each carefully from childhood in the spiritual life.
- Devoted to each other and to their children, Zélie and Louis reached out lovingly to support their extended families at a personal sacrifice.
- Suffering acute grief in many trials, they continued to trust in God's love for them.
- While supporting a large family, they gave generously of their energy and money to the poor, to the Church, and to causing charity and justice in their society.
- After leading heroic lives, Louis and Zélie surrendered themselves to long and painful illnesses and, in Zélie's case, to a premature death.

This article is posted in the web site of Ms. Maureen O' Riordan. For more articles on the Martin couple, please visit <http://www.thereseoflisieux.org>,

THE HUMAN CHARM OF CHRISTIAN SAINTLINESS

CARDINAL SARAIVA MARTINS

*Céline "lift your eyes to the Celestial Father,
And you will see on the seats of honour
A loving Father ... A dear Mother ...
To whom you owe your immense happiness! ..."*

Dear brothers and sisters,

I wanted to begin this reflection with the words from Thérèse herself, describing the family atmosphere in which she grew up.

The family, from XIX century to today

When the skies are without God, the earth fills with idols. From XIX century, when the Martin family lived, and at the beginning of the XX century people progressively lost interest in education in the family and were more so concerned with socioeconomic issues. Charles Péguy, who was born five days after Saint Thérèse, underlined this point nearly prophetically: *"A Christian child is nothing more than a child who read a million times the childhood story of Jesus."* In the daily rhythm and daily words we can still find unconscious reflections from this Christian population *"who went and sang"* and who *"reseated their chairs with straw in the same state of mind as they sculptured their cathedrals,"* However, we cannot say that little Charles responded to the description of the Christian child so dear to the adult Péguy. Around him, in his family and school, no one lived this way, looking familiarly and affectionately towards Jesus. But this was true for the Martin family.

This refusal of paternity followed through to the XX century in a more complex way, essentially in the adherence to the great totalitarian models who intended replacing

the family by confining education to the communist or national-socialist totalitarian state. This abdication and eclipse of the father figure continues in our consumer society where the career and outer image have taken the place of the children's education.

Education is a question of witnessing

Without long speeches, or with sermons, Louis Martin introduced Thérèse to the ultimate meaning of existence. Louis and Zélie were educators because they had no problems educating.

The family today: Love, ill in the family

At the beginning of this year a daily Italian newspaper, *"Il Mattino di Napoli"* of 14th January 2008, published an article from Claude Risé, under this significant title *"Love has fallen ill in families."*

Love has fallen ill, more precisely, love has fallen ill in the place where each human being experiences love for the first time, being loved and loving others. In our families today there

Homily of Cardinal Saraiva Martins,
Prefect Emeritus of the Sacred Congregation
for the Causes of Saints
Lisieux 13th July 2008
during the 150th Wedding Anniversary
of the Martin Couple

is competition between the love of parents and a number of other things for the affection of their children.

**An exceptional family: as witnessed
by the Martin daughters**

Here is the experience of the Martin daughters

"All of my life the Good Lord has surrounded me with love; my first memories are marked by smiles and tender caresses!" [Ms A, 4v^o] here is the most lively portrait

of the Venerable Servants of God, Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin, as noted by their most illustrious daughter. Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus of the Holy Face described in the first pages of *'Story of a Soul'* the gentleness and the joy of life in her family life. Thérèse, the youngest doctor of the Church, described her family as the earth of a garden, a *"holy land"* where she grew up with her sisters under the skilful and expert guidance of the incomparable parents. She wrote to Father Bellière just a few months before her death: *"The Good Lord gave me a father and mother more worthy of Heaven than of earth"*. This deep conviction of the Martin daughters of the saintliness of their parents was shared by other members of the family, and also others, who talked about them as the saintly couple. Fourteen years after the death of Zélie, in a letter from 1891, Céline Guérin, her aunt, wrote to Thérèse who was already in Carmel:

"What did I do to deserve that the Lord would surround me with such loving hearts! I only

answered the last look of a mother who I loved a lot, a lot ..."

Léonie herself, who created such difficulties for her parents, repeated to the Sisters of the Visitation in Caen: *"Noblesse oblige, I belong to a family of saints; I have to be up to standard."*

"Louis and Zélie were luminous examples of married life . . . lived in an absolute confidence in God that could be proposed to families today. . ."

The Martins are not saints for having given birth to a saint but for having aspired to saintliness as a couple. They were driven by a reciprocal desire, there was in both of them the willingness to look for the will of God in the life that

they were living and the obedience to His commandment: *"Be saints for I am a saint."* Louis and Zélie Martin were the rich and fertile ground where Thérèse was born and lived for fifteen years before becoming *"the greatest saint of modern times."* [Pius X]

**Their secret:
an ordinary "extraordinary" life**

Louis and Zélie were luminous examples of married life lived in faithfulness, in welcoming life and in the education of their children. A Christian marriage lived in an absolute confidence in God that could be proposed to families today. Their marriage was exemplary, full of Christian virtues and human wisdom. Exemplary does not mean that we should copy, photocopy their life reproducing all of their doings and gestures, but that we should use, like they did, the supernatural means that the Church offers to each Christian to carry out his vocation to saintliness. Providence wanted their

Beatification to be announced during the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of their marriage, 13th July 2008.

Why after such a long time? Is such a family not far removed from our time?

In what way are the Martin parents modern? Can they help our families to take on today's challenges?

I am certain that a vast debate will begin around this couple at their Beatification. Conferences, debates, discussion groups, will try to analyse and compare their experience with our very complex times. On this, however, one must be very clear: The Church did not canonize a period of time, but examined their saintliness. With the Martins, the Church proposes to the faithful the saintliness and the perfection of a Christian life that this couple achieved in an exemplary manner and, to use the language of the process, to a heroic degree. The Church is not interested in the exceptional but underlines how in their daily lives they were the salt of the earth and the light of the world [Mathew 5.13.14]. The Servant of God, John Paul II declared: *"It is necessary that the heroic becomes daily and that the daily becomes heroic."* The Church established that Louis and Zélie made something heroic out of their daily lives and from heroism something daily. This is possible for each Christian, whatever his/her state in life. I am pleased to quote here a passage from the famous letter to Diognete on marriage and which the Martin couple knew exactly how to carry out:

"Christians do not differentiate themselves from other men by their territory nor by their language, nor by their clothing. They marry as others do and have children, but they do not abandon the newly-born. They live in the body but not according to the body. They

spend their life on earth but are citizens of heaven. They obey established laws, but their way of living surpasses the laws."

This letter traces a concrete model of a possible life, a route that all disciples of Jesus are called to follow, even today: to announce the beauty of a Christian marriage with its authentic experiences that are credible and attractive. To carry out this one needs couples and parents who are mature in love. Louis and Zélie embraced this form of married life to follow Christ. Husband, wife, and parents in Christ, where marriage is welcomed as a call and a mission given by God. With their life they announced to all the good news of love *"in Christ"*: the humble love, love that spares nothing to start anew every morning, love capable of confidence and sacrifice. This communion clearly emerges from the letters exchanged between the two.

In one of his brief letters, which is practically a synthesis of matrimonial love, Louis signs in the following way: *"Your husband and true friend, who loves you for life."* To these words, Zélie echoes: *"I follow you in spirit throughout the day, I tell myself: 'He is doing such and such at the moment'. I am so impatient to be with you, my dear Louis; I love you with all my heart and I can feel my affection doubling in your absence; it would be impossible for me to live far from you."*

What is the secret of this communion? Maybe the fact that before looking in each other's eyes, they looked directly at Jesus. They lived sacramentally reciprocal communion, through Communion that they both cultivated with God.

This is what is new *"Hymn of hymns"*, not only must Christian couples sing it, but only they can sing it. Christian love is a *"Hymn of hymns"* that the couple sings with God.

Vocation in a family

Vocation is, above all else, a divine initiative. But a Christian education favours a generous response to the call of God: It is in the heart of the family that parents should be for their children by their words and their example, the first announcers of the faith, and they should favour vocations in everyone and in a special way the consecrated vocation [CCC, 1656]. So if the parents do not live the evangelical virtues, young men and young women cannot hear the calling, understand the necessity of the sacrifices and appreciate the beauty of the goal to be reached. In fact, it is in the family that young people experience evangelical values of the love that is given to God and to others. They must be educated to understand their responsibility in their freedom, to be ready to live, according to their vocation, the highest level

of spiritual realities. [John Paul II, *Vie consecrate*].

All of the Martin children were welcomed as a great gift of God to be given back to God. The mother, her heart broken with pain, offered to Him her four children who had died at an early age. The father offered to Him his five daughters, on their entry to the convent. For their children they not only suffered the pain of physical birth, but also the pain brought on in faith until Christ was formed within them [Galates 4, 19].

They were truly ministers of life and saintly parents who engendered saints; they guided and educated saintliness. The Martin family, like the family in Nazareth, was a school, a place of learning and a place of preparation for virtue. A family who, today, will become the landmark for each Christian family.



The medallion Louis gave to Zelig during their wedding ceremony July 13, 1858

As a souvenir of their marriage, Louis Martin designed a medallion as a gift for Zelig. At the moment they exchanged their vows, the priest blessed the medallion. Louis slipped the wedding ring on the finger of Zelig's right hand, and then placed the medallion in her left hand, saying "Receive the symbol of our wedding promises." Shown below are photographs of both sides of the original medallion. The medallion is now located at the bishopric of the diocese of Sees, the place where Zelig was born.

Louis chose the Biblical figures of Sarah and Tobias for this souvenir. Written below the biblical figures are the couple's baptismal names, "Louis" and "Zelig."



"M. L. uni a G. Z." stands for "Louis Martin united to Zelig Guerin"
13 July 1858

Photo and explanation were taken from <http://www.thereseoflisieux.org>



LOUIS AND ZÉLIE MARTIN: A MARRIAGE OF LOVE

BY GUY GAUCHER, O.C.D.,
AUXILIARY BISHOP EMERITUS OF BAYEUX AND LISIEUX

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<http://www.feuetlumiere.org/rencontrer-dieu/amis-de-dieu/louis-et-zelie-martin.html>
translated by Susan Ehlert for <http://www.thereseoflisieux.org>*

"I", said Zélie Martin, "love children to madness. I was born to have them." This home, however, might never have existed. Louis Martin, at age 20, was in Switzerland as an apprentice in watchmaking. He discovered the highest monastery in Europe, the Hermitage of the Great St. Bernard of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, helpers to mountain climbers during avalanches. The prior was firm: no knowledge of Latin, no postulancy in the monastery. Disappointed, Louis returned to the plain of Alençon and became a watchmaker.

For her part, Zélie Guérin, who wanted to be admitted to the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul of Alençon, met with the superior, who said she had no vocation. Zélie decided then to go to lacemaking school to be initiated into the formidable art of precision of making Point d' Alençon lace, a "collective masterpiece."

In 1853, at twenty-two years of age, she established herself, with her sister Elise as a "manufacturer of Point d' Alençon," employing women who worked at home, then brought their work to her to assemble. She had also to find clients, fill their orders, and keep her "office" in their house on the rue Saint-Blaise.

The watchmaker married the lacemaker on July 13, 1858 in the Church of Notre Dame at Alençon. "They were married and had many

children." Thus ended the tales that delighted us in childhood.

An idyllic tale?

One must read the letters of Zélie (there are 218 left) that were spread out from 1863 to 1877, the year of her death. Republished as a book, *Correspondance Familiale*, they follow the ordinary life of this family according to the rhythm of the births, the mourning periods, throughout the War of 1870, the economic crises, above all the family joys, but they end brutally with a drama: the death of Zélie, of cancer, at age forty-six, leaving Louis in charge of his five minor daughters: Marie, Pauline, Léonie, Céline, and Thérèse.

In fact, the nine children all had "Marie" for their first Christian name; they were distinguished by the name that followed. How could one be surprised that Therese might write of "the maternal preferences of heaven's Queen for our family" (Ms. A, 2r).

After the death of Zélie, under the friendly urging of his brother-in-law, Isidore Guérin, a pharmacist living in the shadow of the Cathedral of Lisieux, Louis agreed to uproot himself from his friends and his environment for the good of his daughters. He moved to Lisieux, where their education was facilitated by the family friendship of the Guérin

household, which itself had two girls, the cousins Jeanne and Marie. This is how there came to be a "Thérèse of Lisieux."

AN ORDINARY FAMILY....HARDLY ORDINARY

The Martins in Alençon? A family like others. Merchant craftsmen: a watchmaker who works alone, puts together and repairs watches for twenty-one years at 17 rue du Pont Neuf. He helps his wife with her business, she who unceasingly works her "Point d'Alençon."

The life of their family, which grows regularly, is one of their centers of attention. Their recreations, within the family, are simple. Zélie and Louis lost four children because of infant mortality: Marie-Hélène, Marie-Joseph, Marie-Jean-Baptiste, Marie-Mélanie-Thérèse, a terrible reality in this 19th century.

What is less ordinary is the place that God holds in their personal and communal life.

Few parishioners of Notre Dame Church go every day to the 5:30 a.m. Mass, the "workers' Mass." In all things, God is first. The family prayer is twice daily, governed by the liturgy and the Angelus. Christmas; Lent; Easter; May, the month of Mary; the feast of the Assumption on August 15th all have a central place in the family life. The children are profoundly marked by this rhythm. Masses, Vespers, Compline, missions, often with very long sermons, bring the family together in church.

Louis Martin respects scrupulously not working on Sunday, preferring to lose all his clientele, and he respects the rigorous fasts the Church requires during Advent and Lent.

Zélie's spirituality is marked by that of the Visitation Order, where her sister, who has become Sister Marie-Dosithée, entered in

1858. Zélie, who is a member of the Third Order of the Poor Clares, also has affinities with Saint Francis of Assisi.

From her childhood, which was not happy (her mother was very harsh), she kept her worry and fear to herself, as many people did during that epoch. Her deeper life is union with God in the daily life of a mother of a family of five children, with the worry about Léonie, more difficult than the others; elderly parents; and young country maids who bring her worries more often than effective assistance.

Louis Martin had kept his sense of the inner life; of personal prayer; in fact, of contemplation; of his desire to be a monk. He loves pilgrimages and participates in several, including pilgrimages to Chartres, Lourdes, and Our Lady of Victories.

His favorite pastime is fishing. He is also a good billiard player. He meets his Alençon friends at the Catholic Circle and participates in the nocturnal adoration of the Eucharist.

One might fear that such a household might not be much fun. According to the daughters who lived there, it wasn't like that at all. It had atmosphere, gaiety, games, celebrations, and family outings.

These Christians are not wrapped up in their piety. "If you do not love your sister or brother, whom you have seen, you cannot love God, whom you have not seen." (1 John 4:20)

They quietly live a concrete charity in which they engage themselves physically. Thus Zélie, in spite of her fears, will help two little girls terrorized by two women posing as nuns. She was obliged to testify at the police station. Louis welcomes an epileptic he met at the train station and helps to take care of him. They had

the same concern for the homeless of their time. They didn't hesitate to invite to their dinner table the tramps they met in the street. They visit the elderly and teach their children to honor the poor and to treat them as equals. Thérèse would be forever marked by this attitude.

A MOTHER STRICKEN

Louis and Zélie live a Passion, each in her or his own manner. When, in December 1876, Zélie learns that she has an inoperable cancer that leaves her without hope, Louis is "overwhelmed;" panic takes over his household.

These Christians are not wrapped up in their piety. They quietly live a concrete charity in which they engage themselves physically

With a heroic courage, Zélie faces death, working until the limit of her strength, going to Mass each morning until the end. A pilgrimage to Lourdes, filled with deplorable incidents, will add still more to her sufferings. Her worry is the future of her five daughters. She worries above all for "poor Léonie," who, as Zélie knows, is more fragile than the other girls, Zélie will leave her family on August 28, 1877.

A FATHER HUMILIATED

The passion of Louis will be of another kind. From November 1877 onward, he lived as a renter in the house of the Buissonnets, which he leased in Lisieux. He accepted giving all his daughters in turn to God: Pauline (1882); Marie (1886); Léonie (who would make several tries in religious life and would finally become a Visitation nun in Caen in 1899); next his little Queen, Thérèse (1888). Céline enters the Carmel in 1894.

Louis's shaky health deteriorated more and more until a serious attack made it necessary for him immediately to enter the Bon Sauveur

asylum in Caen. Today we call it a psychiatric hospital, but in 1889 people called it the "insane asylum" instead.

Here is the venerable "Patriarch" in the middle of five hundred sick people of all kinds. He became number 14449. The man so esteemed and so respected sank into the worst kind of decline. He drank "the most bitter and most humiliating of all chalices," wrote Thérèse in Ms. A, 73r. Most of the doctors diagnosed him with cerebral arteriosclerosis and kidney failure. This is how the family broke apart. The lease of Les Buissonnets was terminated. Three of the daughters were Carmelites.

Unhealed, Louis Martin was returned to the Guérin family, who lodged him next door to their house in Lisieux, where Céline aided him night and day. He spends his vacations on the property of La Musse, which the Guérins inherited. He is like a child who perpetually asks for help. He dies on July 29, 1984, and is buried in the Lisieux cemetery.

In 1888, when the priest of St. Pierre's Cathedral, Louis's parish church, announced that he was starting a fundraising drive for a main altar, Louis donated the entire sum for the altar. Thérèse commented, "Papa had just made a donation to God of an altar, and it was he who was chosen as victim to be offered with the Lamb without spot." (Ms A, 71v).

Re-reading the life of her family in the light of Merciful Love in 1895, Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus wrote, evoking the day of her reception of the habit in Carmel where she was on the arm of her "dear King": "January 10 . . . was my King's day of triumph. I compare

it to the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on the day of the palms. Like that of our Divine Master, Papa's glory of a day was followed by a painful passion, and this passion was not his alone. Just as the sufferings of Jesus pierced His Mother's heart with a sword of sorrow, so our hearts experienced the sufferings of the one we cherished most tenderly on earth. I recall that during the month of June 1888, at the moment of our first trials, I said, "I am suffering very much, but I feel I can still bear greater trials." I was not thinking then of the ones reserved for me...I didn't know that on February 12, a month after my reception of the Habit, our dear Father would drink the most bitter, the most humiliating of all chalices.

Ah! that day, I didn't say I was able to suffer more! Words cannot express our anguish, and I'm not going to attempt to describe it. One day, in Heaven, we shall love talking to one another about our glorious trials; don't we already feel happy for having suffered them? Yes, Papa's three years of martyrdom appear to me as the most lovable, the most fruitful of my life; I wouldn't exchange them for all the ecstasies and revelations of the saints. My heart overflows with gratitude when I think of this inestimable treasure that must cause a holy jealousy to the angels of the heavenly court...." (Ms A, 73r).

On July 26, 1897, very close to her death, Thérèse, herself living a physical and spiritual "passion," wrote to Fr. Bellière a resume of the history of her family. She began thus: "The good God gave me a father and a mother more worthy of Heaven than of earth" (LT 261).

In 1888, shortly before Louis Martin fell ill, he wrote to his three Carmelite daughters, "I insist on telling you, my dear children, that I am urged to thank and to have you thank God, for I feel that our family, though very lowly,

has the honor of being numbered among our Creator's privileged ones."

A MIRACLE FOR THEIR BEATIFICATION

A very serious investigation of the Martin parents has been conducted by the Church from 1967 until now. To declare them blessed a miracle was missing. Here it is:

Little Pietro Schiliro, born at Monza on May 25, 2002 into a family of four children, was healed on June 28th, 2002, of a very serious and fatal pulmonary illness after two novenas to the Martin parents.

A Process was conducted in the diocese of Milan and came to a favorable conclusion. Cardinal Tettamanzi closed it in Milan on June 10th, 2003. The medical dossier of the healed child numbers 967 pages!

Pietro Schiliro was born with a fatal lung problem. His miraculous healing fulfilled the final requirement for the beatification of the Martin couple.



Pietro sitting on the bed of the Martin couple in Saint Blaise, Alencon

THE PARENTS OF ST. THÉRÈSE

BY FR. JAMES GEOGHEGAN, O.C.D.

Because you are members of the secular branch of the Order, I was going to entitle this lecture "The Secular Life of St. Thérèse." This was to bring out some dimensions of Carmelite spirituality in a secular situation. I also thought of entitling the lecture "Thérèse: The Grammar School Drop-out who Became a World-Famous Teacher." Fr. Bonaventure, however, asked me to speak on the parents of Thérèse. This is wise, for here we have two people connected with Carmel who lived full secular lives, just like you.

Sometimes we are inclined to think of Thérèse's father as a dreamer, an old man who did not have to work, who spent his life reading, fishing, and visiting chapels. We do not think of him as a successful businessman who retired in his late fifties. When Thérèse entered Carmel, he was 65.

Something similar might have happened to our thoughts about Thérèse's mother. We know her only from Story of a Soul, where we have Thérèse's few childhood memories. What I shall try to do is to show the background of this man and this woman, and find out what we can know of them, seeing them not so much as Thérèse's parents but in their own right.

MILITARY BACKGROUND

One of the most important aspects of the backgrounds of Louis and Zélie Martin is that both came from military families. Louis's grandfather, Jean Nicholas Boureau, was in the retreat of the Grand Army of Napoleon from Moscow; a year later he was captured in the Silesian campaign. His twelve-and-a-half-year-old son was a prisoner of war with him. This child, who died in prison, was an uncle of Louis. Both families had taken part in the glories and the defeats of Napoleon.

They recalled the days of triumph, and a mystique of the "good old days" was handed down. Later, Louis would refer to his youngest daughter as "the orphan of the Berezina" and "Queen of France and Navarre."

With this military tradition went a marvelous Norman tradition of loyalty to the faith. One story handed down in the family concerned a grand-uncle of Zélie, a Fr. William Marin-Guérin, a priest at the time of the French Revolution. The family hid him from the Jacobins, who sought to kill him. One day when he was carrying the Blessed Eucharist, some thugs found him. He took the Blessed Sacrament out of his pocket, laid it on a rock, and said "Now, Jesus, You can take care of Yourself; let me take care of myself"--and he proceeded to beat up the thugs and throw them into a pool. This is the heritage of the Martin family: loyalty to country and to the faith: a strong, simple, tested faith.

In 1823, Louis's father was serving as a captain in the 19th Light Infantry, garrisoned at Bordeaux. Some trouble arose in Spain, and he was sent down there on a campaign, leaving behind his pregnant wife. While he was away, his son Louis was born. Returning from Spain, the family moved to Avignon and then to Strasbourg. The boy lived there until he was about seven years

We thank Fr. James Geoghegan, OCD for giving his permission to reproduce this conference, which appeared in the Proceedings of the Second Regional Congress, Discalced Carmelite Third Order. San Francisco, 1974, pp. 21-31.

of age. One of the things that fascinated him was the famous clock in the town's Cathedral. This clock is one of the masterpieces of European craftsmanship. From traveling with the army, Louis acquired a flair for exploration and also a breadth of vision. From seeing nature at its most majestic, and growing up during the Romantic period, he also developed a love of nature.

VOCATION

Eventually Louis's father retired from the army and gravitated back to Normandy, to the market town of Alençon, where he settled down. Louis studied there, and, at the age of twenty, decided to become a watchmaker. He went back to Strasbourg to learn the trade. During his studies, he went on a pilgrimage to the Monastery of the Great Saint Bernard. It is interesting that he brought back with him a little white flower as a souvenir. After his death, this flower was found among his belongings. Louis worked diligently as an apprentice watchmaker. At this time he began to have a sense of a calling to the priesthood. He set out once more to climb the Alps to the monastery of the Great Saint Bernard. He was drawn there because he was a man of great charity, a sensitive lover of nature, and a truly contemplative soul. Charity, nature, and contemplation sum up the meaning of the Hospice of those Augustinian monks. He was 23 when he sought admittance.

It might seem very romantic to us, almost as if he were going to live at Lake Tahoe. But the average winter temperature in that Alpine region, 6000 feet above sea level, is 20 degrees below freezing. After some years in that climate, many of the monks have had to come down to warmer areas because of ill health. Louis, like Dante before him, asked to be admitted. When the abbot learned that Louis did not know Latin, he told him, "I'm sorry, you have to study Latin first."

Disappointed, Louis came back to Alençon, where he studied Latin. He was a meticulous bookkeeper who kept a record of every penny he spent. In his records we find entries for textbooks and for weekly lessons. Then suddenly we find the entry, "Sold my French-Latin Dictionary" He just gave up. Whatever the reason, he saw that he did not have a vocation to the priesthood.

WATCHMAKER IN ALENÇON

He settled into contented bachelorhood and continued his studies as a watchmaker. He went to Paris, where he perfected his art for two or three more years.

If we are ever tempted to think of him as a lazy, idle man in later life, we should remember his putting in five years of apprenticeship in a difficult, mentally strenuous work which demanded superb concentration and application. In Paris he became a master watchmaker. He returned to Alençon, bought a house, and set up a watch-making and watch-repairing store. He did so well that he later added a jewelry store. He loved to read, to swim, to pray, to play billiards, to fish and go for long walks in the country. He bought some property with a pavilion where he could work or take it easy. Here, with his own "bachelor's pad," he could lead an ideal, quiet, peaceful life. He had no intention of getting married.

His mother had other ideas. At a lacemaking class she had met a young woman, Zélie Guérin. Mme. Martin arranged for her son to meet Zélie. They met and soon were married, at midnight on July 13, 1858, in the Church of Our Lady of Grace.

ZÉLIE

Zélie's father was a retired soldier who returned to Normandy after serving in several campaigns. He worked as a cabinetmaker,

while his wife opened a small café. Unfortunately, the café was a failure, owing to the fact that Mme. Guérin had a tendency to give sermons to the patrons. The family moved into the city of Alençon so that the two daughters could attend the Catholic school run by the Sacred Heart Sisters.

Zélie was quite brilliant. She got first place in French composition ten out of eleven times. She had a deep faith. She seems to have had an unhappy childhood and did not get on well with her mother. Later in life she writes to her younger brother, Isidore, and speaks of "mother being so severe with me, but you she spoiled." She was forever arguing with her brother, but she loved him deeply. Later we find her trying to mother him. When he was studying in Paris, she made him promise her that he would go to Our Lady of Victories every day and say a "Hail Mary." She him, "Our Lady has never let me down. Our trust in her is never lost." When Isidore graduated, she told him how happy she would be to have him back, and even though they would be arguing, she would love to have him around.

LACEMAKER

Alençon is a center of lacemaking in France. Zélie became an expert in this accurate, detailed, and demanding work. Eventually she organized a group of women around her. She designed the patterns and bought the thread. On Thursdays the ladies came to her home, and she assigned a certain amount of work to each, which they would do in their houses. The following Thursday they would bring the completed pieces to Zélie. She would assemble the pieces, mend broken threads, and assign new work for the coming

week. She became very successful in this business venture. She used the ground floor of her family home in the Rue Ste. Blaise as her office and workrooms. Realizing that she was not destined to be a nun, she decided to marry and have a family. It was in this frame of mind that she met the eligible bachelor Louis Martin. When they married she was 27 years of age; he was 35.

It is interesting that when she got married,

The husband and wife worked very hard and were conscientious employers. They had a developed sense of social responsibility, with a practical concern for the poor.

Zélie had no idea of what we call "the facts of life." Discovering them on her wedding day, she went to her sister (now Sister Marie-Dosithée, a Visitation Sister in

Le Mans) and poured out her heart in a flood of tears. Later on we have a letter where she says, "I never regretted having married." Louis was an idealist, almost a romanticist, and he convinced her that they would live together as brother and sister. After ten months, they realized that was not really what God wanted, especially in view of Zélie's desire to have children. The next year Marie was born, then Pauline, and then Léonie.

Zélie's lace business was doing so well that Louis sold his watch-making and jewelry business to his nephew and became manager and salesman for Zélie. They moved into the home where Zélie had her offices, on the Rue Ste. Blaise. Louis traveled a lot getting orders for the Point d'Alençon. He also did designs for the lace, being an accomplished artist. He was often away on business. We see references to this in Zélie's correspondence: "Your father is away." And we notice that he was away when Thérèse was born.

The husband and wife worked very hard and were conscientious employers. They had a developed sense of social responsibility, with a practical concern for the poor. Louis insisted that the lace workers be paid as they finished

their work, and he took good care of them, especially when they were sick. During the first year of their marriage, Zélie and Louis took care of a young boy whose mother had died. This child was one of eleven children, and the Martins welcomed him as if he were their own. Anybody in need received help from them. Both were diligent workers, so much so that Louis was concerned for Zélie's health. He wrote to her from Paris: "Look, I've been telling you to take it easy. You're working too hard; you're tiring yourself out. We'll work hard, but God will take care of the rest. We'll build up a small, prosperous business, but don't be killing yourself in the process."

Again he writes, "My dearest, again I repeat, do not be over-anxious. With God's help we shall build up a good little business."

"I embrace you with my whole heart while awaiting the joy of being with you again. I hope that Marie and Pauline are being very good."

"Your husband and true friend who loves you forever," etc.

In a sense, he was more detached than she. Zélie was a tremendously energetic woman who put everything she had into whatever she was doing. She was running a business, and at the same time raising a large family. Her mother-in-law died, so she brought her father-in-law into her home and took care of him. Though busy, she was faithful to prayer, daily Mass, and prayers with the children. Her letters reveal her concern for the realities of life and of the world in which she lived. At the same time, that world is permeated with a spirit of faith. Her letters, written to her sister at Le Mans, or to Isidore in Paris, or to her two eldest daughters away at boarding school, bring her very close to us. We have more than 200 letters from her.

HAPPILY MARRIED

They are filled with descriptions of the antics of the children. For example, "Pauline

was saying to Marie that 'my godfather is better looking than your godfather because my godfather has hair—yours is bald.'" Or a letter about Thérèse: "She gurgles and babbles from morning to evening. She sings us little songs, but is necessary to be accustomed to her to understand her." "She says her prayers like an angel." Her letters are full of daily happenings, and you have a sense that she is a happily married mother. Her letters also contain many references to the illnesses of her children, mostly ordinary childhood sicknesses. You can discern her worry for them. She has an extraordinary and objective judgment of the children: "Thérèse was the brightest but the most willful, but I think she will turn out well. She's good-willed, and she doesn't want to hurt anybody. Céline is far more cheerful, far more obedient, far kinder."

From Zélie's letters we learn of an interesting incident during the Franco-Prussian war. In 1870 the Prussians invaded France. They were billeted in the homes of Alençon. This was a terrible humiliation for the descendants of the soldiers of Napoleon. Zélie says in a letter, "The Prussians destroyed the order of my home in the twinkling of an eye. The town is desolate, and everyone, except ourselves, is in tears." At this time an incident happened which brings out the character of Louis. Nine soldiers were billeted in their home. One of them stole a watch from the house. Louis saw him, caught him by the nape of the neck, and threw him out. The next day he registered a formal complaint. The day after that he heard of an order that all looters were to be shot, and that a German soldier had already been executed for looting. Immediately, Louis went back to the commanding officer, withdrew his complaint, and asked him not to shoot the thief who had stolen his watch. It seems that this event reveals a strong temper that could burst into violent anger; he could make a decision on the

spur of the moment and then put it into effect. Later his daughters could not understand how he had learned to control his temper and his impulsiveness. The peaceful character we meet later was won on the battlefield of his own soul.

FAMILY CROSSES

The disaster of the German occupation was not the only sorrow in the life of the family. Within the family, the cross descended with a crash. In 1865 Louis's father died. Zélie wrote: "I would never have believed how his death could have affected me. I'm desolate." Her own father died in 1868. At this time she wrote, "I hope, in fact I am certain that my father has been well received by the good God. I only wish that my death will be like his. I have already had Masses said for him, and we will have many more. His tomb will be near that of my two little Josephs." This last sentence refers to her two boys, Joseph, who died at the age of one year in 1867 and Joseph-Jean-Baptiste, who also died at the age of one in 1868. In 1870 her little girl, Hélène, died at the age of five and a half years. In 1870 Mélanie also died, less than two months old. In five years Zélie went to the graveside six times. In this multiple experience of grief we see how affectionate she was, how sensitive to suffering, and how imbued with a strong spirit of faith.

She says of the deaths of her children, "When I closed the eyes of my dear children and prepared them for burial, I was indeed grief-stricken, but, thanks to God's grace, I have always been resigned to His will. I do not regret the pains and sacrifices I underwent for them." She then goes on to say that she

"doesn't understand people who say 'You'd have been better not to have gone through all of that.' She adds, "They're enjoying heaven now. Moreover, I have not lost them always. Life is short, and I shall find my little ones again in heaven."

BIRTH OF THÉRÈSE

When Thérèse was born in 1873, Zélie knew that this would be the last child she would have. Thérèse became very ill right after her birth. By now acquainted with death, Zélie feared for Thérèse's life. After her first three children, Zélie could not breast-feed her babies and so had them fed by a wet-nurse. She describes Thérèse's illness in this way:

If it had not been so late, I would have set out that night to find a nurse. How long that night was! Thérèse would not take the least nourishment, and, all that night, all the sad signs that preceded the deaths of my other little angels manifested themselves, and I was sad that this last-born could not receive from me the least help in her weak and feeble condition.

At first light she set off, and on the way she saw two rough-looking men coming toward her on a deserted road. She said to herself, "If they kill me, it will make no difference. I have the grief of death already in my heart." She finally reached Semallè and asked Rose Taillè to come to Thérèse. Rose had nursed some of the other Martin children. She asked Rose to come and stay in Alençon. But Rose had a baby of her own and refused to go—both mothers drawn to protect the children they had brought into the world. Finally Rose agreed to go and bring Thérèse back to Semallè, where she would care for her. When

they got back to Alençon, Rose saw Thérèse and said, "It is too late." Zélie rushed upstairs to the statue of St. Joseph and begged him to help the baby. When she came downstairs, Thérèse was drinking away to her heart's content.

Out on the farm, Thérèse grew strong. Zélie's mind was at ease, "knowing my little one is safe and in good hands." We have noticed that Zélie could not breast-feed Thérèse. As a young girl, she had fallen against a table and hurt her breast. In 1865 she mentioned to her brother in a letter that she was experiencing pain. She did not do anything about it, probably hoping it would go away. Later she developed lumps in her breast, and, with the pain, was unable to feed the children herself. Finally, because of the pain, she realized that she had cancer—but it was too late; the doctors pronounced it terminal. Zélie took Marie, Pauline, and Léonie on a pilgrimage to Lourdes, a journey that caused much hardship and suffering. The girls were disappointed that Our Lady did not cure their mother, but Zélie said, "Our Lady said to me as she said to Bernadette, 'I will make you happy, not in this world but in the next.'" When we remember that Bernadette was still living, this statement is very touching.

ZÉLIE'S DEATH

In her autobiography, Thérèse has a beautiful, delicate passage describing her mother on her deathbed: "The ceremonies of Extreme Unction impressed themselves deeply upon my imagination. I can still see the place where I knelt beside Céline. All five of us were there in order of age, and poor, dear father knelt there too, sobbing." In her biography of her father, Céline mentions that

she saw her father crying only twice, and this time was one of them. Zélie died on August 28, 1877, aged 46, after 19 years of marriage. Her youngest daughter, Thérèse, was four.

Louis was deeply concerned for the motherless girls. That they might have the influence of a woman, he moved to Lisieux, where Isidore Guérin lived with his wife, Céline, and two daughters, Jeanne and Marie. While he remained in Alençon to clear up some matters, he wrote to the girls, who had

"When I think of what this good God, in whom I have put all my trust, and into whose hands I have resigned the care of my affairs, has done for me and for my husband, I cannot doubt that his Divine Providence watches over his children with a special care." - Zélie

gone on ahead to Lisieux, "Remember, it's costing me a lot to go, but I'm going for your sake When your aunt and uncle tell you what to do, do it—and learn from them."

For the sake of the children he left Alençon, where he had many friends, where his mother still lived, and where his wife was buried. In going, he left many dear friends and associates; he was a friendly man who belonged to Catholic social clubs and folk-singing and folk-dancing clubs. He loved to dress in the native costume of Brittany, to sing her songs and dance her dances. He loved to sing in his fine, deep voice. It must have broken his heart to leave Alençon, but he was willing to do so for the sake of his children. The fifty-four-year-old widower invested his money in property and safe investments and retired to Lisieux.

In Lisieux he could spend his time leisurely. He read a lot: history, poetry, and spiritual books. He went for long walks in the country and took the girls fishing. Thérèse describes these outings, when she would sit and hear the music of the soldiers, marching in the distance. He did some gardening, continued watchmaking as a hobby, delighted in making gadgets for the children, and took an interest in some small business affairs.

Above all, he prayed much and visited the churches and chapels of Lisieux. Sometimes he took his family on vacation to the seaside resorts of Deauville and Trouville, and once he took Thérèse and Céline to the Exhibition at Le Havre.

PAULINE AND MARIE TO CARMEL

Pauline and Marie's entrance into Carmel was a big sacrifice. He had the normal worries of a father, bringing up five daughters without the help of a mother. Not the least of his problems was the health of his "little Queen," Thérèse. At the time of her miraculous cure in 1883 he wrote to a friend in Brittany: "Thérèse, my little queen—that is what I call her—is a lovely young girl, I assure you. She's quite all right now. The many prayers carried heaven by storm, and God, who is so good, was willing to give in."

We have some letters of Louis to the children. Like many men, he was a hopeless letter-writer. His wife had done all the correspondence for him. We have so many letters from her, so few from him. In the letters of Louis we notice a certain formality linked with an underlying tender affection. "Fortunately I have finished all my business and am eager to return to you. Bye-bye for the present. A thousand good wishes to M. and Mme. Guérin and a big kiss for the five of you."

On one occasion he went with a priest to visit Constantinople, Athens, and Rome, and on that trip he wrote home. He finishes his letters with such expressions as "A thousand kisses to all my own. Your father, who loves you," or "One who loves you all and carries you in his heart." "I embrace you with all my heart." He also took the famous pilgrimage to Rome with Thérèse, and some smaller journeys, but mostly he was home with his family.

In 1887 Louis had a slight stroke on his way to Mass. Céline believed that the cause of it was a sting he had received behind the ear one day while he was fishing. He neglected the swelling until it grew and became intensely painful. Only then did he go to the doctor. Céline remembers seeing him pacing up and down the garden, his hands to his head, begging the children, "Pray for me, pray for me." Some time after the stroke, he was sitting in the garden, having come back from Pentecost Vespers at the Cathedral. Thérèse came out. When he saw her, he stood up and they walked up and down as he embraced her and held her close to his heart. She said "What's wrong, dear?" for she was crying. She then asked him for permission to enter the Carmelite Monastery in Lisieux. He told her that she was too young, only 14. She convinced him, and he said that she had his permission and blessing, if that was what God wanted. From the wall he plucked a little white flower and gave it to her. It would become the symbol of her life.

.... AND THÉRÈSE

Louis became her support and ally in winning permission from her Uncle Isidore, the Bishop, and even the Pope. Having come back from Rome, after receiving a blessing from Pope Leo XIII in a moving ceremony, he began the preparations for Thérèse's departure. She left Les Buissonnets and her father on April 9, 1888. That night a friend said to Louis, "You are really better than Abraham." He answered, "Yes, if I were in Abraham's place I would have made the same offering, but at the same time I'd have been praying and praying and praying. I'd have been lifting the knife terribly, terribly slowly and asking God to send the angel and the ram." The next day he wrote to his Breton friend, "Thérèse, my little queen, entered Carmel yesterday. God

alone can exact such a sacrifice, but he helps me mightily so that in the midst of my tears my heart overflows with joy. (Signed) One who loves you, Louis Martin.

LOUIS'S LAST ILLNESS

After Thérèse entered, he began to have more strokes. His mind was beginning to go. He would wander from the house and disappear, to be found three or four days later at Le Havre or some other place. He became unable to visit Marie, Pauline, and Thérèse at the Carmel. Because he could not visit his daughters, Pauline asked a priest, who was in the convent with a contractor for gas lighting, to take a photo of Thérèse in her Carmelite habit. These are the two magnificent photos of Thérèse as a novice at the Cross. In one she wears the white mantle. On the back of these photographs Pauline wrote, "Make sure nobody sees them. People might be scandalized at nuns having their photos taken." As Louis's disappearance and wanderings became more frequent, it became impossible for Léonie and Céline to take care of him. In February 1889 they had to commit him to the mental institution in Caen. This was the same year that Van Gogh entered the asylum at San Remy. Van Gogh's drawings of this time give us some insight into the nature of the mental institution where Louis was. When he arrived, the nurse said to him "You can exercise a wonderful apostolate here." He replied, "I know, but I would prefer to exercise it anywhere else. Well, all my life I've been in command and giving orders, so maybe God is purifying me—to control my pride and officiousness by being subject to orders now." Once a week, for three years, Léonie and Céline took the train to Caen to visit their father. After three years, he had a severe stroke and was paralyzed. As he could not wander, they were able to bring him home to Lisieux.

For a while they stayed with the Guérins. Later they rented a house nearby. From time to time they went to stay at the beautiful house in the country, "La Musse," that the Guérins had inherited. During his lucid intervals Louis asked his children to pray for him. In all his sufferings he was patient, putting his trust and confidence in God. On July 29, 1894, after a heart attack, he died peacefully at La Musse. He was buried in Lisieux.

FAITH AND TRUST

We have seen the life story and situation of Louis and Zélie Martin. We have seen their sufferings and their joys, their faith and their trust in God. Zélie once wrote, "When I think of what this good God, in whom I have put all my trust, and into whose hands I have resigned the care of my affairs, has done for me and for my husband, I cannot doubt that his Divine Providence watches over his children with a special care." Though Louis was more contemplative, more reflective, more poetic and profound than Zélie, this letter of hers seems to sum up the essence of their spirituality. There are a number of reasons why this couple is close to you today. The basis of their spirituality is found in God's will and love, discovered in their daily lives. They found holiness in secular life. Can you be more secular than running a lace and jewelry business?

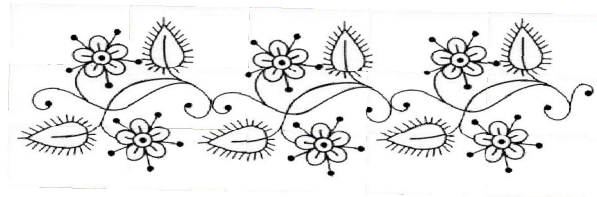
***"Thérèse, my little queen,
entered Carmel yesterday.
God alone can exact such
a sacrifice, but he helps me
mightily so that in the midst
of my tears my heart
overflows with joy. "***

- Louis

In their love for each other, in raising a large family with all its attendant worries and responsibilities, and in their love of God, shown when they were tried in the furnace of suffering, in their concern for the poor—in all this they stand as models for any married man or woman living today. They also speak, and with great force and tenderness, to some of the saddest but most prominent problems of today: how modern the tragedy of a young mother seems, dying of cancer and leaving a large family; the heartbreak of a dearly loved member of the family being in a mental institution; and the problem of caring for a sick and elderly relative. The story of Louis and

Zélie Martin speaks to us today because they teach us how and where to find God's love and how to respond to that love with our own.

It is appropriate that the bodies of Louis and Zélie were exhumed and buried side by side near the apse of the Basilica of Lisieux, dedicated to their child. Over their graves are written the words of Thérèse, "God gave me a mother and father more worthy of heaven than of earth." It was also appropriate that in 1956, at the Golden Jubilee of Céline's Profession as a Carmelite, the bishop made this announcement: "I have good news for Sister. I can announce the introduction of the cause for the beatification of her parents."



Special thanks to Ms. Maureen O’Riordan, owner of the website <http://www.thereseoflisieux.org>, Fr. Jacques Marie, OSB of the Abbey of St. Joseph de Claival, Fr. James Geoghegan, OCD, Ms. Susan Ehlert, Catholic News Service and Sister Mary of the Visitation, Editor of Feu et Lumiere for giving permission to print the articles and pictures in this souvenir program. Special thanks also to all the advertisers, patrons, sponsors, the speakers and all who have helped in any way to make this lecture series and souvenir program a reality.

To God be the glory!

POPE JOHN PAUL II's PRAYER FOR THE FAMILY

Lord God, from You every family
in heaven and on earth takes its name.

Father You are Love and Life.
Through Your Son, Jesus Christ,
born of woman,
and through the Holy Spirit,
fountain of divine charity,
grant that every family on earth
may become for each
successive generation
a true shrine of life and love.

Grant that Your grace may guide
the thoughts and actions
of husbands and wives
for the good of their families
and all the families in the world.

Grant that the Young may find
in the family

solid support for their human dignity
and for their growth in truth and love

Grant that love,
strengthened by the grace
of the sacrament of marriage,
may prove mightier than all
the weakness and trials
through which our families
sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy
Family of Nazareth,
grant that the Church may fruitfully
carry out
her worldwide mission in the Family
and through the family.

Through Christ our Lord, who is the
Way, the Truth and the Life
for ever and ever. Amen





Greetings and prayers from

Carlos Uy
and
Family

“You, Parents, thank the Lord if He has called one of your children to the consecrated life. As it has always been, one should feel very honored that the Lord esteems your family and has chosen one of its members and invited them to follow the way of the evangelical counsels. Retain the desire to give one of your children to the Lord for the growth of the love of God in the world. What fruit of married love could be more beautiful than that?”

POPE JOHN PAUL II
Apostolic Exhortation
Vita consecrata
March 25, 1996, No. 107



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HAVE NO FEAR OF LOVING THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY TOO MUCH;
YOU WILL NEVER LOVE HER ENOUGH, AND JESUS WILL BE
PLEASED SINCE THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IS HIS MOTHER.

—St. Therese of the Child Jesus



Members of the Flos Carmeli -STC South Manila are: Carmencita Abaquin, Lana Minda Monje, Teresita Osuna, Socorro Martinez, Yolanda Estrrella, Carmelita Arceo, Marcela Leus, Vicenta Gumia, Irene Lim , Amelita Panganiban, Teresita Pizarro, Bernardita Ortega, Bibiana Zafra, Alfredo Zafra, Connie Corpuz, Teodorica Banzon, Erlinda Catibog, Estrella De Vera, Daisy Di , Caridad Mabagos, Gloria Dee, Fe Esperanza Caridad Gonzales, and Nelly Rodriguez. In memoriam: Josefina Garcia

The FLOS CARMELI SMALL TERESIAN COMMUNITY (STC) was established on June 8, 2003 after the plan was introduced on July 4, 2002 to subdivide the big community St. Teresa of Jesus Manila Chapter into smaller communities.

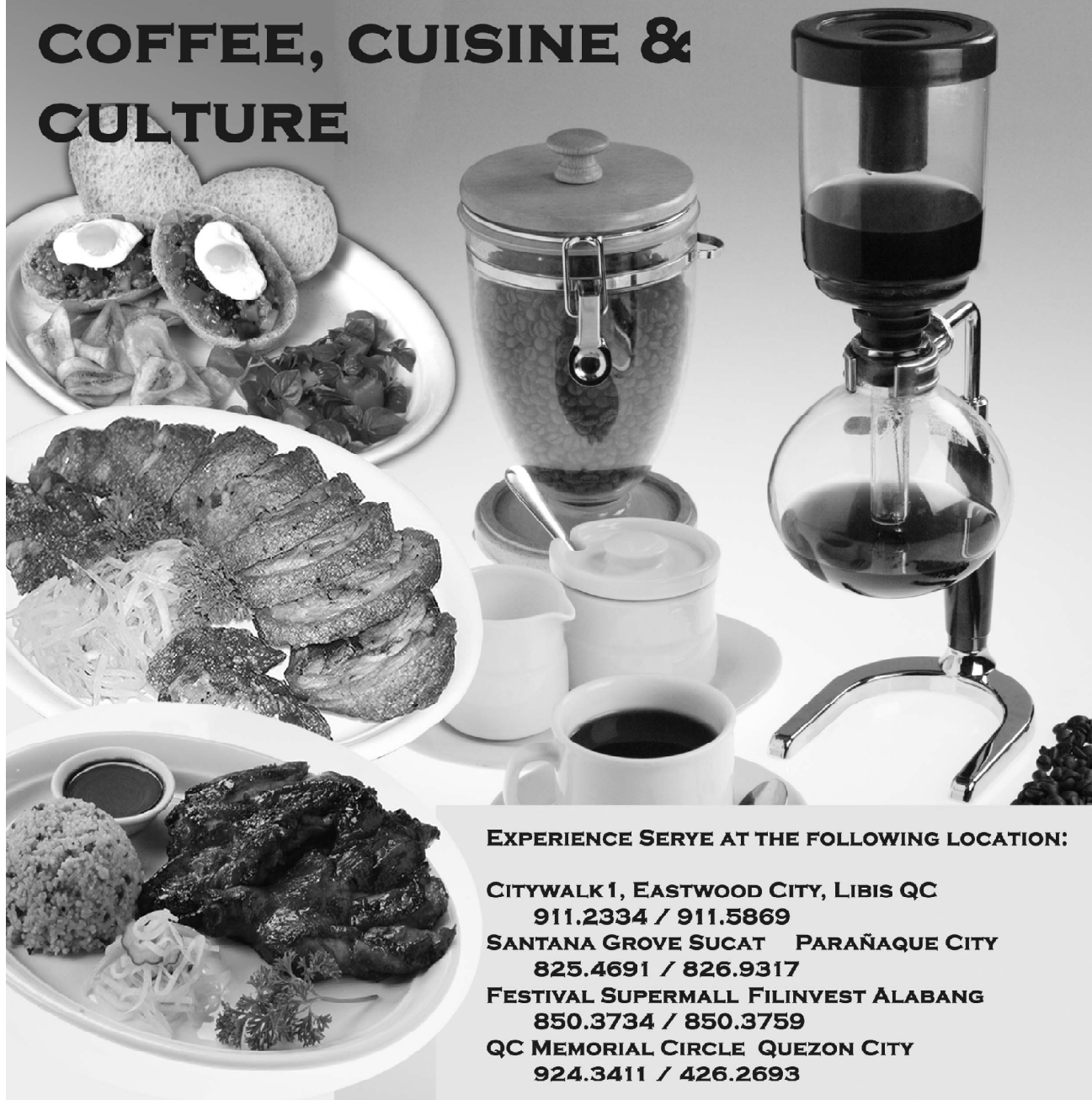


Our Community is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Carmel known as FLOS CARMELI. Aside from PRAYER and WITNESSING, the members of the STC are also involved in the APOSTOLATE such as outreach in “Bahay Puso” in Balanga, Bataan and promoting devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary especially the holy rosary.

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Greetings from:

Dr. Zenaida Santiago

***“So let us leave it in God’s hands.
He knows what is for our good
much better than we do. It is He
who wounds and He who heals.”***

- ZÉLIE

CONGRATULATIONS



from:

The Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation

*La Consolacion Convent
273 Santolan Road, San Juan City
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to

*OCDS St. Teresa of Jesus
and the OCD Fathers and Brothers*

*for organizing the
Carmelite Spirituality Lecture
Series 2008*

entitled:

**"Zelie and Louis Martin:
Parents for the Modern World"**

Compliments of:

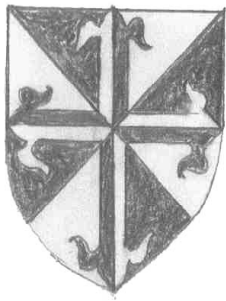
Imelda Dalmacion, M.D.

Estrella Flores, M.D.

Roselyn Garcia, M.D.

Aurora Quiambao, M.D.

Roselyn Navarro, M.D.



Greetings from:

Araceli Luna, M.D.

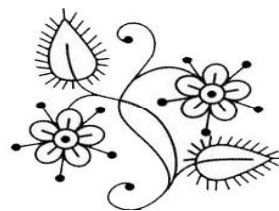
All of the Martin children were welcomed as a great gift of God to be given back to God. The mother, her heart broken with pain, offered to Him her four children who had died at an early age. The father offered to Him his five daughters, on their entry to the convent. For their children they not only suffered the pain of physical birth, but also the pain brought on in faith until Christ was formed within them [Galates 4, 19].



Prayer to the Blessed Zélie and Louis Martin

TRANSLATED BY GREG AND BETSY KILBRAI FOR WWW.THERESEOF LISIEUX.ORG
WITH THANKS TO THE TOURISM OFFICE OF LISIEUX

*God of eternal love,
you gave to us in the blessed spouses Louis and Zélie Martin
an example of holiness lived out in marriage.
In the midst of the duties and difficulties of life,
they sustained faith and hope.
They raised their children to become saints.
May their prayers and their example
support all families in their Christian life
and help us all to grow in holiness.
If it is your will,
deign to grant us the grace we ask you right now
through their intercession,
and include them in the number of the saints of your Church.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.*



With special thanks to the
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Seating L to R: Tess Ramos, Vivan Corpuz, Lulu Dizon and Ghyia Arreglado

Not in photo: Sonia Imus, Gloria Candido, Mercy Pine, Rosita Visalda, Belle Ilagan and Clarise Legaspi.

PRAYER for PRIESTS by St. Therese of Lisieux

*O Jesus, eternal Priest,
keep your priests within the shelter
of Your Sacred Heart,
where none may touch them.*

*Keep unstained their anointed hands,
which daily touch Your Sacred Body.*

*Keep unsullied their lips,
daily purpled with your Precious Blood.*

*Keep pure and unearthly their hearts,
sealed with the sublime mark of the priesthood.*

*Let Your holy love surround them
and shield them from the world's contagion.*

*Bless their labors with abundant fruit
and may the souls to whom they minister
be their joy and consolation here
and in heaven, their beautiful
and everlasting crown.*

Amen.



Greetings from:

Justice and Mrs. Eduardo Abaya

*Congratulations and Prayers
For the
Beatification of the
Parents of
St. Therese of the Child
Jesus and of the Holy Face*



*Blessed Louis Martin
Blessed Zelig Guerin*

St. Elijah of Carith Community, Paranaque

*"Everything that is received within the soul
works in a formative way, shaping the soul and
the entire person. Thus every contact with
people, their example, their
conduct, can have the strongest
effect upon formation. The most essential
ingredient for the forming of a human being is
the human being himself."*

St. Edith Stein



St. Edith Stein Community-in-Formation
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Tony and Fely Pedro

Thessa, Egay & Hannah Jun
Jess, Marilie & Kate Aissa & Allan
Jaypee

*"What pleases God is to see me love my littleness
and poverty, the blind hope I have in His mercy.
That is my sole treasure."*

-St. Therese of the Child Jesus

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In prayerful thanksgiving of:

Teresita Ela, OCDS

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Rose Rivera, OCDS

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Abito Family

OCDS St John of the Cross STC

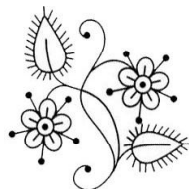
Special thanks to

Paz M. Del Rosario, M.D.

Mary Jane Yu

Dalmacio Cueto

Isabel Inlayo



Greetings from:

Lilia Cid, OCDS

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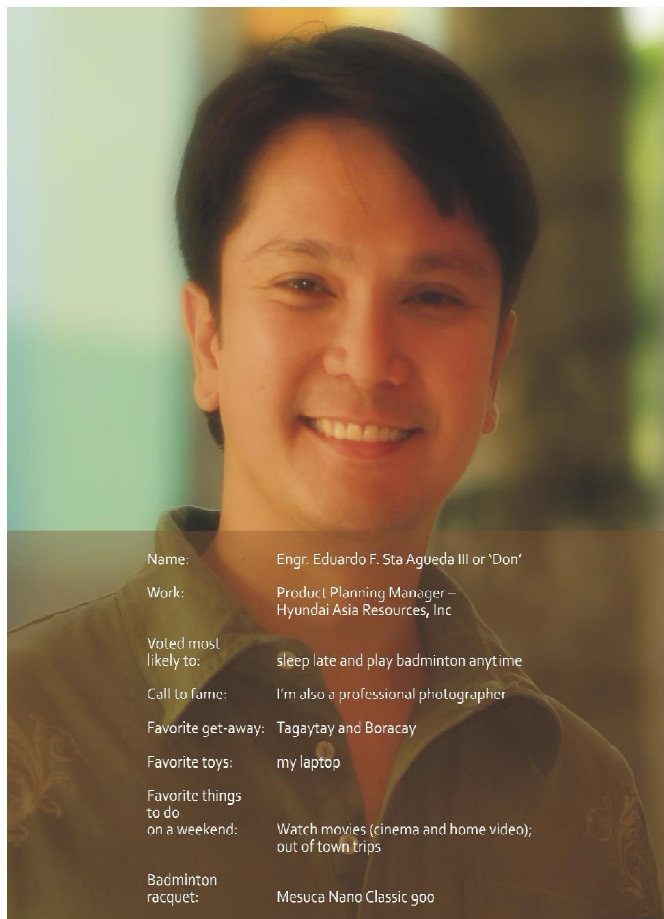

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<p>Name: Engr. Eduardo F. Sta Agueda III or 'Don'</p> <p>Work: Product Planning Manager – Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc</p> <p>Voted most likely to: sleep late and play badminton anytime</p> <p>Call to fame: I'm also a professional photographer</p> <p>Favorite get-away: Tagaytay and Boracay</p> <p>Favorite toys: my laptop</p> <p>Favorite things to do on a weekend: Watch movies (cinema and home video); out of town trips</p> <p>Badminton racquet: Mesuca Nano Classic goo</p>	<p>Name: Francis Robert A. Ang or 'Rob'</p> <p>Work: Assistant Vice President – Sales & Marketing, Robinson's Land Corp.</p> <p>Voted most likely to: surf and get a massage</p> <p>Least likely to do: work on weekends</p> <p>Call to fame: hmmm ... still to come ...</p> <p>Favorite get-away: Baguio, Pangasinan and Tagaytay</p> <p>Favorite toys: Wii, PDA-XDA IIs</p> <p>Favorite things to do on a weekend: go to the spa, get a massage, go out of town for a quick get-away; have coffee or tea with friends; watch movies --- and other relevant unwinding endeavor</p>

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When I had my procedure, it took me some time to adjust. It felt great to not wear glasses! I also had to go back for adjustment on my left eye --- which the doctors readily treated at no extra cost!”

Procedure done on Don:

Lasek is an evolution from an earlier version known as PRK or Photorefractive keratectomy. LASEK and PRK are an alternate to LASIK especially in cases where the cornea is very flat or thin. The difference between LASEK and PRK from LASIK is the cornea is not cut. Instead, the uppermost layer of the cornea (the epithelium) is temporarily removed. Following PRK treatment, the epithelium is returned to its original position.

“My eye prescription isn’t as high as others, but wearing prescription glasses is so inconvenient. I often misplace or leave my glasses in the oddest places --- which is such a hassle.

Friends told me about Fatima Eye Laser Center and the research they (friends) did. They presented me with good, reliable facts and so I decided to have the procedure as well.

I experienced minor pain while recovering but it soon passed. After that I felt so free to be rid of my glasses.”

Procedure done on Rob:

The procedure involves a high-precision laser beam that sculpts the cornea, correcting its curvature so that images are sharply focused on the retina. During treatment, an infrared camera records any involuntary eye movements. The “eye-tracker” ensures that the laser beam is always aimed at the right spot.

Fatima Eye Laser Center uses the CARL ZEISS MEL 80 EXIMER LASER has PrecisePulse Technology that assures every beam of laser energy is precisely placed on the cornea to ensure the best possible outcomes. Using its ultra-fast eye tracker, an extremely small spot laser beam, and the latest in advanced wavefront analysis, the Mel 80 is one of the most sophisticated excimer laser systems ever created.



For more information, please call or visit:



fatima eye laser center

120 McArthur Highway, Valenzuela City
Tel. No: 291 2020; www.fatimaeyelaser.com



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