

Pierre Goursat

'Emmanuel' Weekend

22nd -23rd November 1975

St. Therese of the Child Jesus

The theme of this section: "Experiencing God in the lives of the saints". This talk, by Pierre Goursat, follows a teaching given by Francis Kohn on St. Francis of Assisi, St. Theresa of Avila, and St. Therese of the Child Jesus. Pierre talks on the subject of the latter.

My dear friends, I would like to talk to you a bit about Therese of the Child Jesus. Francis gave you a magnificent sermon, but success is not so easy, practically speaking!

Therese of the Child Jesus understood [this]: if we really want to go to the Lord, she thought that in the houses belonging to the rich, there were lifts. So, to go to Heaven, the simplest thing is to take the lift. So, this is what I propose to you today, it's less tiring!

There are three especially important parts in the life of Therese. I have to tell you that Therese died in 1897, [3 years later the Pentecostal Renewal was born] ¹. I truly have the impression that it's her who triggered, as soon as she arrived in Heaven, this cluster of graces for our time, this "*pluie de roses*" ["shower of roses"] (because she spoke with the language of her century). She was sure that the Lord would do her will because she had done his on Earth.

Therese was a very sensitive child. You know that she lost her mother at 13 years old, she was, how to put it, a bit neurotic. People love to say that nowadays. As it's been a century since she died, it's very good to be talking about her, people don't really care much but they've heard a lot of books about it, they explain a lot that she was a neurotic², we should really have locked her up. She was locked up in Carmel, but anyway...

So, our dear Therese was at the age of 13, 14 years – at a formative moment – she was highly sensitive. There are a lot of girls like that. And as she wanted to enter Carmel at 15 years, you understand [it wasn't easy because] she cried all the time. It was also endearing, she cried like a Madeleine – you know the song, I'm not going to sing it for you! She cried like a Madeleine and now what was even better was, she cried like a Madeleine but she then cried for the fact she had been crying! She's the one who says it!

So, I won't [go into detail] concerning the text as we are a bit pressed for time, we will [advance] a bit further. So, she was in over her head, being like that. I will read it to you anyway, because it's very short:

Text read by Francou Morin (MsA, 45r): "We were coming back from Midnight Mass (...) She must preserve it forever."

So, now is the famous grace where she understands what the Holy Spirit is. Therese [then received] this grace of strength. Deep down, she had a great energy, I don't know if you've ever seen her jaw! You know, when we see her with the jaw she had, the gentle little Therese from holy pictures is not all that really! So, she said: "I want to love Jesus, and you'll see if I love him! I will give love for love. And you will see, it'll heat up!" She entered Carmel and it worked like that. Right until the moment where it all went wrong, she exhausted herself so much that her body didn't react anymore, her nerves didn't work anymore, she was completely exhausted. She still wanted to be a great saint and she felt that despite her energy she wasn't going anywhere.

¹ According to certain sources, it's in the 1900s that the spiritual awakening of the Pentecostals was born.

² An allusion to Jean-François Six's book, *La véritable enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux – Névrose et sainteté*, Seuil, 1972.

It's really important to see this, yes, the Lord really took her up to this point.

She didn't lose her trust but she didn't understand anymore. She thought: "But what can I do? And yet, I want, but I can't." Then, one day, she really asked the Lord to enlighten her, and a grace of illumination was given to her. It's always like that: in the really simple texts, which we've read 36 times, and that she had read as well, she hadn't seen anything in particular, and abruptly, the light arrives. So, we'll read you the text.

Text read by Françoise Morin (MsC, 2v-3r): "My mother, you know that I have always desired to be a saint (...) And I want to sing of your mercies.

So, you see, it's simple, it's really simple. The truth is that it is indeed so simple that it seems complicated to us. This is because we lack simplicity. God is essentially simple and the closer we get to God, the more simple we become. So, you see, we're always correcting ourselves, looking at ourselves, navel-gazing, we always come back to this: "Ah, my God, what have I done?", this, that. Péguy said: "We always talk to God about our sins, we'd do better to talk to him about him, that would be more magnificent, we are always ungenerous. [We can say to him:] "Sorry" [but then tell him] "You are good and merciful, now it's over and I then turn the page and now I praise you! I am happy to be with you." You have a charming fiancé, you go to see him and you're a few minutes [late]: "I'm sorry because I'm late... and I'm sorry again (...)" Oh, and then you see, I stained my dress, on the metro... I'm sorry to look like this..." Actually, she's annoying her fiancé! Well, that's what we do with Jesus all day: we always present him with our sins. In the first place, it's not really fun to have sinned, but if we carry on shoving them under his nose all day, it's not much fun for him! So, be simple, say we've found an extraordinary individual, and look at him, adore him. He adores being adored; you see. In Heaven, that's how it is. It's really worth it. Truly [if we have the spirit] adoration, we are so happy, we don't think about ourselves anymore, we think about him and so, it simplifies everything.

So, Therese of the Child Jesus, you're going to tell me: "But she was a girl who prayed pretty funnily in Carmel!" I think they have one hour of prayer time, and a lot of Offices. But as she said: "I fell asleep all the time during prayer time." She was so tired that she slept. Well, she didn't hold it against herself. And as she had common sense, instead of saying: "Oh, my God, I haven't taken a time of prayer", she found a simpler form, she would pray all the time, at prayer time or not at prayer time. At prayer time, she slept, and whilst she was working, she would pray. You see, it's really simple! You're a stay-at-home mum with five kids, you could do it like this, you see! It's the simplicity of a child, it helps us rather a lot.

So, I promise you, it seems silly, but it's really very important. If you ask the Lord for this grace, he'll give it to you. It's really what is needed for our time: we are all tired, we are all sorry individuals, we speak too quickly³... "Jesus, what I'm saying, what I'm muttering on about, it doesn't have any importance, what matters is what you will say in each soul." And I am sure that today, the Lord will speak to you deeply.

That's why we can laugh, we don't need to put on stilted airs, he'll work on you on the inside, you won't understand why but you'll change. Especially if during Mass and during all the time you're here, you say: "Lord, make me simple!" I never hear the people who accuse themselves of being complicated, of lacking in simplicity, yet we all lack simplicity! It's very important.

So, now, after all that, it simplified her so much that she went much faster, she had a lift, it was easy! So, what happened, well, she thought: "I would like to be a great saint." She wanted to be a warrior, Joan of Arc, she wanted to be all the saints at the same time, martyr... it wasn't going very well at one point, it started to explode on all sides. So, we'll read you the last text, don't worry it's the last.

3 Allusion to the fact Pierre was often asked to slow down his pace

Text read by François Morin (MsB, 3r-3v): "At prayer time, desire made me suffer a true martyr (...) My vocation, is love."

So, this love that she discovered, she truly understood it to be her vocation. She understood it even further: she wanted to offer herself as a victim, to this Love. She said: "The great saints offered themselves as victims of divine Justice, for sinners", this is also what Jesus did, whereas she said: "I am too little to do that, so I want to offer myself as a holocaust victim to Merciful Love, asking it to burn me without ceasing." And so, during this purification, which gave her the burning love of the Lord in her heart, all is consumed, all is transformed. So, this is what we must ask of the Lord, because she then asked that a legion of little souls, simple, small, weak, might offer themselves in this way, for the sins of the world, but [also] to calm the suffering of the Lord's heart. This is not at all for the merit, like the victims from before our time, for the sins of the world, but simply because this immense love is not understood, is not loved. And this Heart of God, which became a heart of flesh, and so can suffer, and who did suffer for us to eternity, well, this love suffered to see it was misunderstood and it's this love which chokes from the love it would like to give to every soul who refuses it, and asks to pour itself at least into those who accept to understand and who accept to receive it.

So, you see what the Lord is asking, it's very simple. There are billions of beings on the Earth, a lot – we can't say how many – a great number, refuse it. Yet, in his Heart he has treasures for each soul, it compresses his Heart, He suffocates with love, so He asks certain souls if they'll accept to receive more of it than they need, for them but also for the others; at that moment it'll burn them, it'll consume them. That's what the Lord is asking us: to receive. So, stop going on about your sins, say yes to the Lord and you'll see what happens after that.

And above all, don't say yes for the practical things that scare you, say a general "yes": "Take my will, take everything, because I am incapable [to do whatever it is by myself] and as you are love, you're better placed!" All the same, love is fantastic. You've understood!

(...) [John XXIII] made mistakes, it was terrible! For a diplomat, it was truly a success! He didn't care about them, he loved Jesus. So, one fine day, this Church [you've seen] how it happens, she was crumbling on all sides; so, the restorers said: "If we touch it, everything will fall down..." And they were right! So, you must understand that one fine day, the Holy Spirit said to John XXIII: "Yes, you must hold the council." He was inspired. So what happens. ? It more or less breaks everything, but it regrows! So, people ask "What's happening now?" Simply, it's what John XXIII asked for. He asked for Pentecost of Love in the world, and well, it's coming. So, the rationalists don't understand, too bad for them. We pray that... you understand!

Pierre Goursat
and his brothers and sisters

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