

# Therese — 'Saint Of The Little Way'

By FRANCES PARRINSON KEYES

Installment XV  
PRAY FOR THOSE IN AGONY

Again, it is necessary to set back the hands of the clock in order not to pass judgment too hastily or too harshly.

In the nineties, the importance of abundant sunshine, abundant sleep, and abundant foods as curatives for tuberculosis was but little understood, much less was their prophylactic values established. This was true even of the most advanced medical centers and of the great specialists of the day. It was even true of the province and of general practitioners, and, above all, it was true of the layman and the laywoman.

The proverb "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is indeed an ancient one, but its application to the science of healing is fairly recent. The same persons who can remember the "sick headaches" and the rite of "putting up one's hair," can also remember the prevalence of "galloping consumption" in their midst, the mistaken methods by which it was treated, and the swift and dreadful end to which it brought its victims.

Though the present generation has been spared much of this knowledge from personal observation, it is still readily available. Therefore, it ill becomes anyone to misinterpret the conditions under which Soeur Therese de l'Enfant-Jesus succumbed to mortal illness.

There is no regulation, either in the Carmel of Lisieux or in any other—since the rules of this Order are, of course, uniform all over the world—which prevents a nun from having proper medical attention. Doctors and dentists, too, for that matter, have access to a cloister when it is evident that their services are needed. In the case of Soeur Therese, she was, as far as anyone could judge, doubly safeguarded in this respect: her cousin by marriage, Francis in Neels, the husband of Jeanne Gherin, and a physician of high standing, was freely admitted to see her as well as Dr. de Corniers, the regular physician of the community.

It is deplorable that they were not sent for so readily and that, having been sent for, the best treatment which they knew how to suggest consisted in massage, plasters, blisters, and pointed ice (heated needles, plunged into the flesh). But they acted to the best of their knowledge and ability, and their actions were in no way impeded.

**NO DELIBERATE DELAY**  
All this must in justice be said, and it is likewise necessary to analyze impartially the reasons for the lateness of the summons. Soeur Therese was courageous and uncompromising both by temperament and by training, but she was so well balanced, to carry consistently these qualities in excess. She had carefully considered the question of discipline when she had entered the convent, and, though she had followed the rigid rules of this inflexibly, she had never

There were no further danger signals immediately, but a few weeks afterwards she began to cough. Not constantly, not violently, but with that light persistent hacking which is so inimitably wearing and did her best to stifle. She did not wish to disturb anyone by it, much less to alarm anyone, especially her sisters. Later then, they had heard no details concerning her condition, though for some time they had been watching her with anxiety, realizing that she did not seem wholly herself.

**PERSISTENT COUGHING**  
The little hacking cough he traced her. They questioned her and rushed at once to the Princess Marie de Gonzague sent for the doctors.

Their first examination revealed nothing especially serious, but wishing to be on the safe side they prescribed the "nasal plasters" and blisters above mentioned. Fortunately it also occurred to them to order a special diet. Adequately nourished and somewhat restored by enforced rest, Soeur Therese made a partial recovery. She stopped coughing temporarily and resumed her regular occupations.

She had a doubt, cogent reason now for wishing to be perfectly well: a new Carmel had recently been established in the French compound at Haoua Indochina, and a letter had come from there to Carmel of Lisieux asking for volunteers. Marie de Gonzague had instantly thought of Soeur Therese and had laid the proposition before her.

It seemed to her like the fulfillment of her heart's desire. At the lack of her mind had always lain the parents longing to give the world a missionary might be fulfilled in her. But she had never dared abandon herself in this yearning, indeed at one time she had visualized it as a temptation rather than as a calling. In the course of her journey to Italy, one of her fellow travelers had lent her some religious annals and after having accepted them with enthusiasm, she had later turned them over to the sister Colum with the remark: "I am not going to read them after all. I have no strong leaning toward the task of conversion, and I do not believe that my real work lies in that direction. I believe that instead I should enter a cloister and con-



THE FINALE

secrate myself completely to the worship of God."

Later she had found compensation for her personal renunciation of the mission field in her correspondence with the young missionaries, priests, De Rouillard and Abbe Beliere who had been designate to her as "spiritual brothers." Now at the eleventh hour she was seized by the thought of opening for her after all. Surely she need not hesitate to take it when it seemed to her clearly marked. She did not even turn to read her own diary in her diary she wrote with a previous to me. That is why I would be unknown where I would undergo the exile of the spirit. I long to go to that where no earthly joy and consolation would be left to suffer in the name of God."

But though she was eager to suffer, she knew she must be able to support her sufferings. She had later turned them over to the sister Colum with the remark: "I am not going to read them after all. I have no strong leaning toward the task of conversion, and I do not believe that my real work lies in that direction. I believe that instead I should enter a cloister and con-

## NOTHING WORTHWHILE

"Well, one said casually to another. "It seems that Soeur Therese de l'Enfant-Jesus is going to die before long. I can't help wondering what the Princess will find to say about her afterwards. Really, I'm afraid she'll be embarrassed, because Soeur Therese is very nice and all that, but when she had never done anything worth talking about." After the death of a Carmelite, her priestess sends a biographical sketch, with appropriate remarks, to another Carmel.

"If that was the Sister's opinion, it was doubtless the opinion of many others. Soeur Therese did not wish the sting of it for herself. She had tried hard she had done her best, and that was as far as the community was concerned. Had she succeeded better, as far as God was concerned? She had not the consolation of feeling sure of this either. She had begged not to be moved from her cell to the infirmary. From the day that she entered the convent she had attached herself to her own simple surroundings. The need of soil had had a way in her mind in sorrow and pain she wished to suffer alone. There was suffering enough before her. God knows, but perhaps she still did not realize how much.

The doctors had pronounced her hopeless. She was never to rise from her bed, and she was wholly confined to her bed. Much of the time she was in the garden, her portable desk on her lap. She did not write under duress any longer. Even now, however, she did not compose and create in peace. The novices and the Soeurs Converses who worked in the garden kept coming to her, as if she were the common belief that a person can be laid down as easily as a rake and with no more disastrous effects on the final result of the work at hand. Therese gave each one a smiling welcome, without the slightest sign of impatience. It was Marie Agnes de Jesus who finally gave vent to this on her behalf, and when that happened Soeur Therese was ready in her response. "I am supposed to be writing about brotherly love," she reminded her sister. "Well, this is an instance when I can show that I believe in it."

It was sometimes in the garden which the cloister enclosed with the great cross in the middle where she wrote, sometimes in the avenue of Chestnut trees or where she had always had a special attachment. Once some time before she had hastened to the avenue at the recreation period on a spring Sunday. It was the only place left where she could still indulge her undying love for nature in its simpler forms. And when she had

reached it, she had found that the trees had been pruned with the unsparring severity of the French and that their branches, already covered with fresh buds lay withering on the ground. "In seeing this disaster," she wrote, "and realizing that it would take years to repair it, my heart sank. Nevertheless, my disappointment did not last long. If I were in another convent, I thought 'what difference would it make to me if all the chestnut trees at Carmel in Lisieux were cut down instead of pruned?' I will not let myself be upset by transitory things."

## DEATH DOESN'T FRIGHTEN

The trees had grown out again and they were lovelier and more luxuriant than ever as it is their wont to be after cutting back. And though she would not be there much longer, she was still at Carmel in Lisieux, instead of in another convent far away. Here palms instead of chestnuts would cast their shade over her path, as she had hoped and dreamed. An invalid's chair had been secured for her which could be wheeled back and forth over the sun-dappled ground, and under the shelter of the trees she loved so well, she continued her writing. Her penmanship was less delicate now than it once had been. It was growing harder for her to handle her tools simple though these were. The spaces between the lines grew wider and less even. But the record went on.

The infirmary overlooked the avenue of chestnuts. Perhaps that was one of the reasons why Soeur Therese consented to be moved there when she was no longer able to go out of doors, when the little wheeled chair was parked, empty under the trees. The moment had come when she could not get up at all. She had to be down all the time so she was persuaded to leave the little cell she loved so much and the bare hard cot where she had lain so long. She lay instead between cool coarse linen sheets on a narrow bed draped with long white curtains as spotless as virginity as the bed in which she had slept in the long paved dormitory of the Abbaye des Benedictines during the week before she made her First Holy Communion.

She was not afraid. She smiled when she was questioned on that point, with the same ineffably lovely expression which had transfigured her face from time to time ever since her childhood.

"Death does frighten me when it is represented as a gruesome specter," she confessed. "But after all, what is it really? Not that in the least! So I do not think of it in that way. I think instead of the definition I learned in my catechism class. 'Death is the separation of the soul from the body.' Well, how could I be afraid of a separation which would divide me from earth but which would unite me forever with heaven?"

# 30,000 At Rally In Toronto For Rosary Crusade

Toronto (RNS) Thirty thousand Roman Catholics attended a rally organized here for the Family Rosary Crusade. The rally was preparatory to house-to-house calls by 10,000 women praying families to start praying the rosary together daily.

Guest speaker at the rally was Irish-born Father Patrick J. Peyton, C.S.C. of Albany, N. Y. who founded the Family Rosary Crusade. He said that the practice of the daily rosary would "enable husbands and wives to forget their little differences" and to "ignore the foolish advice that if they had no more children the youngsters would be neglected."

The rally was presided over by James Cardinal McGuigan, Archbishop of Toronto who declared that "nothing can be more pleasing than to see a family kneeling in prayer together. At the conclusion of the rally, the Cardinal led prayers for a woman who had suffered in the Red River valley floods.

# American Catholics Donate Two Churches

Amman, Jordan (NC) — Two new churches, nearing completion, being built through generous donations of American Catholics through the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, will greatly extend church activities in the Near East.

The association's relief projects include the erection and maintenance of churches, schools, hospitals and refugee centers in areas around Israel, Palestine and Jordan and some Middle East lands.

She was not afraid but she suffered unspoken agony. Her days were a succession of stragglings and suffocations. One in the swooning that followed complete exhaustion did she find temporary respite temporary oblivion. "If we only realized how fervently we should pray for those in agony how greatly they need our prayers, we would never forget them," she exclaimed. But the words were wrung from her involuntarily. She did not talk about her own sufferings when she could avoid it. She was very eager that she should not be a bother to anyone. She made no requests, far less any demands as far as her own comfort was concerned. She could not find her peace any longer she could not move. Often she could not even stand, but she could still pray, and she could still think. (To be Continued)

# Near East Missions

Francis Cardinal Spellman, President  
Magn. Thomas J. McManis, Nat'l Sec'y  
Rev. Wm. Keller, Quinn  
Rev. Andrew H. Rogosh  
Rev. Joseph F. Connelly

## The Unknown Soldier

There's a sad note of loneliness in that title. But there is an even sadder note of loneliness in another title, THE FORGOTTEN SOLDIER. The Unknown Soldier is remembered. Many known soldiers are forgotten. And that's why we have Memorial Day... to remind us to remember. And we suggest enduring remembrance that will last for all eternity, remembrance in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We can arrange and send Memorial Cards for single Masses, novenas of Masses or sets of Gregorian Masses.

## FIVE CLUBS

One of our many cards in helping the Missions. We have five clubs, \$5 monthly makes you a member of all five. And with this one card you help educate, train, advise, buy, all the things support schools and add lepers. The names of the clubs? CHRYSE, DORIS, MARY, BAZEL, MONICA, GUILD, BABY, AND DAMIEN LEFER-FUND. Will you take five clubs for \$5 monthly?

## EVERYBODY'S SWEETHEART

Is that pretty little girl in her First Communion dress. The gentle innocence in her heart leaves her on the side of the Angel. The shy vanity in her eyes keeps her in the world of women. To help her, remember that day when vanity is innocent we want to dress up the little girl in the mission lands for her First Holy Communion. But we need your help. \$10 for each outfit. Please.

## THE HUB

That is what the altar is in church. On it centers the weight of all attention. From it radiates the glow of Divine Sacraments. It should be worthy of its place. We want to put a marble altar in the Shrine Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in Trivandrum when it's finished, \$500 is the cost.

## SHE'S A GEM!

That she is, indeed, one of God's most precious jewels. A holy soul possessing a conscience as true as the service of God at a mission. Her name? Gemma. And that's her name. Gemma. But her worth is on the side of the spirit. Materially she's very poor. In fact she counts on us for the \$300 needed for 3 years of novitiates. Write us.

## THEY WILL BE DONE

Your will can help the doing of God's will. The will that disposes of your worldly possessions when you have returned to God. The Missions are the will of God. Remember them in your will.

## PICTURE OF THE MONTH

For the month of June... we predict... it will be the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. That picture is deeply impressed upon the soul of every Christian. It should be on the walls of every Christian Church. \$50 will supply one for a mission church.

## NO MORE PENCILS

... no more pencils, remember? It meant the beginning of vacation. In the missions it can mean the end of education. A mission school in Estrera needs help badly. We want to raise \$2 per child. That's easy.

## UNDER THE PALMS

... no life of luxurious ease, but the hustling energy of a zealous young priest who is truly trying to build a parish "from the ground up." Wants in upper Egypt is the town. The ester missionary has a church building and a building used as a school. But both are almost empty of furniture. He can do a lot with \$1,000.

## SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

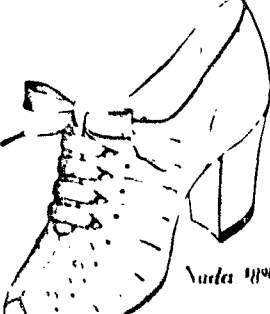
This is the season, the day of joy, for the June bride. But June for any other time, let's offer something new as an idea for a wedding gift... a family membership in this association.

## THAT'S MY POP!

A ground fast. Do something about it on Father's Day. We have a nice gift card. \$10 buys a Sanctuary Lamp for the missions in Pop's honor. He keeps light and warmth in your house.

## THREE KINGS

... came at the birth of Christ and they offered gifts. If you are to be present at the birth of another Christ, in kindly spirit you may want to offer a gift. We suggest a membership in this association. \$5 annually, \$40 for perpetual membership. Write us.



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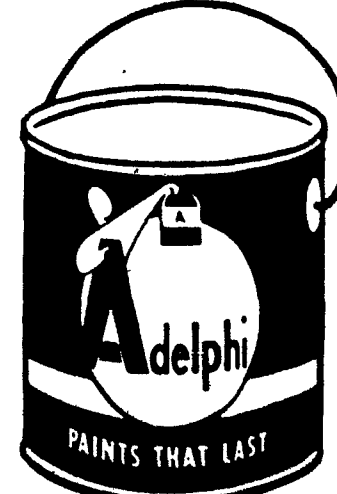
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