

INTRODUCTION

During her life, Mother Teresa of Calcutta was universally recognized as a “living saint.” Now, Pope Francis has made it official; she is Saint Teresa of Calcutta.

Not because she founded a religious community (Missionaries of Charity), and not because she received numerous humanitarian awards, including Pope John XXIII’s Peace Prize, the Nobel Peace Prize, and the Medal of Freedom, and not because she was the confidant of popes and bishops, and not even because she did extraordinary things for the poor, the sick, and the dying on the streets of Calcutta and the world.

Why then? Because she, like Thérèse of Lisieux before her, saw the value of doing little things with great love. She helped one person at a time, act by act, day by day. For much of her life, she did not (by her own admission) have profound spiritual experiences; quite the contrary. Yet, her way was a simple way and her words offer a simple spirituality.

Here in this little book, I invite you to ponder the words of this humble saint and let them take hold of you.

WHERE STRENGTH LIES

“Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.”

Scripture

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. MATTHEW 5:8

Prayer

Great and loving God, you ask so little of us; only that we be faithful in the small tasks of our daily lives. Through our daily fidelity in our homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces, you call us to greatness. Give us, O God, purity of heart and vision so that we might see you in the small and ordinary—and thus be strengthened.

Action

Today I will try to focus on the little things that God calls me to do, and I will try to do them well.

A SIMPLE SMILE

“Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing.”

Scripture

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **JOHN 15:12**

Prayer

Dear Christ, giver of all gifts, you give us as well the simple gift of a smile. How small it is and yet how beautiful when it is given with genuine love. When I smile at others today, I am living out your new commandment to love others as you loved them. Help me to remember that a smile is truly an action of love, a beautiful and simple gift.

Action

Today I will remember to smile at my spouse and children, at my neighbors, and especially at my coworkers, remembering that I can make their lives more beautiful.

TOO MUCH TRUST

*"I know God will not give me anything I can't handle.
I just wish that God didn't trust me so much!"*

Scripture

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:28

Prayer

Give me, loving God, a deep faith like Saint Teresa's. She believed that you were always by her side, even in the midst of difficulties. When she was weary and carrying heavy burdens, she found her rest in you. May I, too, find comfort and sustenance in your loving embrace, and in so doing, may my faith grow stronger.

Action

Today when I am tired and overburdened, I will try to believe that God walks with me always and trusts in me to do my best.

GENUINE LOVE

“Do not think that love, in order to be genuine, has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting tired.”

Scripture

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **1 JOHN 4:7**

Prayer

God of love, I do want to offer others genuine love, love that comes from my heart and whole being. Help me to remember that love begins with small steps and does not have to be extraordinary. May each small and ordinary step I take this day lead me closer to you. May I never tire of sharing the gift of your love with others.

Action

I will consciously open my heart and mind today to the gift of love God continually offers me.

A LITTLE PENCIL

*"I am a little pencil in the hand
of a writing God who is sending a love letter
to the world."*

Scripture

In the beginning was the Word...and the Word was God...John himself was not the light but he came to testify to the light. **JOHN 1:1-8**

Prayer

Dear Writer God, please give me the humility to recognize that I am only a pencil, not an expensive pen, and yet you can use me to express your love to the world. Just as John testified to your light, and Jesus brought your light to the world, may I, small pencil that I am, testify to your great love. May all that I do this day be an expression of that love.

Action

I will try to imitate Saint Teresa's humility today, keeping in mind that God can write great things with a simple pencil.