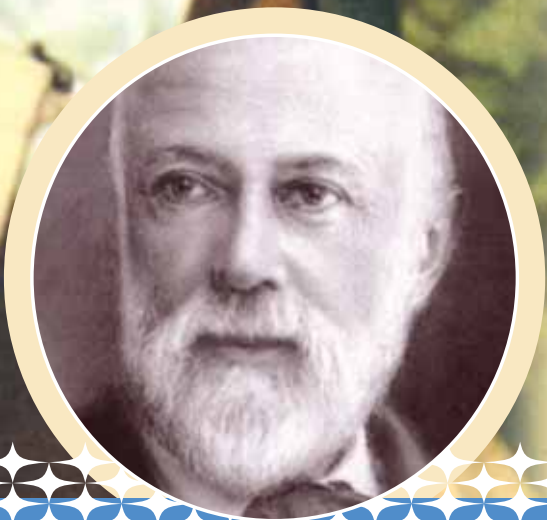




Venerable Zélie Martin
Mother of St. Thérèse

Venerable Louis Martin
Father of St. Thérèse



"God gave me a Father and Mother more worthy of Heaven than of Earth"

St. Thérèse

St. Thérèse and Ireland

CO-PATRONESS OF THE MISSIONS





Miracle baby Pietro romps around the desk of Cardinal Tettamanzi of Milan as the Cardinal signs the diocesan Decree on the cure through the intercession of the parents of St. Thérèse.



Abbe Maurice Bellere



St. Therese



Pire Adolphe Roulland

HISTORY OF A CURE

On June 10th 2003, in his private chapel, the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, Dionigi Tettamanzi, surrounded by judges and secretaries, signed a solemn act: the official closure of the process recognizing the miraculous cure, through the intercession of the Venerable Louis and Zélie Martin, of Pietro Schillero, from Monza, born on the 25th May 2002. His family, five brothers and sisters, were there with about a hundred other people and among them were the doctors, witnesses of the process. I was there to represent the diocese of Lisieux.

Pietro was born with lungs in such a terrible condition that, medically speaking, he could not possibly survive. Put under respiratory assistance, nobody thought that one day he would be able to breathe normally. Father Sangalli, a Carmelite Father, suggested to Pietro's parents that they make a novena to the Martin parents. The parish did likewise. On the 29th June, his Feast Day, Pietro was much better and left the clinic on the 26th July in perfect health.

This cure, humanly inexplicable, was recorded by numerous witnesses, seven of whom were doctors. On the 10th June the miraculous child of thirteen months was parading around the chapel, sometimes crawling under the Cardinal's desk who was pronouncing the decree; a fairly rare show in this kind of court!

With this miracle, the Beatification of Louis and Zélie Martin will not be too long. It is ultimately up to the Pope to decide.

† Guy Gaucher
Auxiliary Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux



Venerable Zélie Martin
Mother of St. Thérèse

St. Thérèse

Venerable Louis Martin
Father of St. Thérèse



THE EVER INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF THE PARENTS OF ST. THÉRÈSE

Fr. J. Linus Ryan, O. Carm.

This issue of St. Thérèse and Ireland is dedicated to the sacred mission of her beloved parents, Venerable Louis and Zélie Martin. We do so in the hope that, God willing, their Beatification may be hastened by our prayers. The infant cure in Milan (see pages 2 & 3) if formally approved by the Holy See as a miracle, will ensure that fact. This issue attempts to highlight the basic facts about this most Christian of families which had modelled itself on the Holy Family of Nazareth. The continuing erosion of the Christian family, as we know it, which began in the early part of the last century, has caused all the recent Popes to express their deepest anxiety about the strongly detrimental effects of it all on modern society. Pope John Paul II took a very personal interest in the day to day progress of this Cause. Looking at present international trends, it becomes ever more urgent and important to seek inspiration in the love of Venerable Louis and Zélie.

On July 13th, 1858, Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin were united in the Sacrament of Marriage. On July 13th, 1927, Pius XI extended to the Universal Church the Office and Mass of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. The coincidence of the dates emphasises, in its own way, the spiritual kinship which, repeating the blood relationship, united the miracle worker and her parents even in glory.

"If I had not had this, you would not have had that," said significantly Signora Sarto, pointing to her wedding ring and to the Episcopal ring of her son, the future Pius X. Without the patriarchal atmosphere of the Rue Saint-Blaise and Les Buissonnets, the ascension of the Carmelite would have been from a less pure lineage. She herself is careful to inform us of this in the opening pages of her autobiography: "The Little Flower that now tells her tale, rejoices in having to publish the wholly undeserved favours bestowed upon her by Our Lord... He allowed her to grow up in holy soil, enriched with the odour of

purity, and preceded by eight lilies of shining whiteness."

"Nature does not make sudden leaps." It is by stages that the level of the ground rises to its culminating point. Though sudden interventions and thunderbolts are not unknown, preferably grace also proceeds by slow stages. In order to cause a peak of sanctity to emerge, God works at and raises up a whole series of generations. Giants of holiness who rise up in isolation and detached, as it were, from the family territory, are rare. Alexis, "the saint under the staircase," who ran away on his wedding night; Francis of Assisi, whom his father cursed and disinherited; Jane de Chantal, who stepped over the



Venerable Louis and Zélie Martin with their five surviving children, including St Thérèse on her mother's knee.



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Abbe Maurice Bellere



St. Thérèse



Pire Adolphe Roulland

body of her own son to reach the convent, remain exceptional cases. Normally, the saint receives his or her early fashioning in the home circle.

Called as she was to teach the world the sovereign art of rendering the ordinary routine of life a divine thing, Thérèse of Lisieux could not escape from the general rule. At the source of her greatness there is a twofold lineage of thoroughbred Christians; bent over her cradle are two saintly faces. Cardinal Mercier rejoiced at this as a providential sign. "Ah," he exclaimed, "how glad I am to know that she is the recompense of an exemplary family. We must never weary of repeating that everywhere."

By praising in their sermons and in the breviary lessons the parents who gave the world "the greatest saint of modern times," the Sovereign Pontiffs have given a certain impetus to the Cause. The home which produced Thérèse to-day enters into her way of glory. The halo surrounds the child's head, but in its radiating light it includes the father and mother bending over her. Are not parents called upon to efface themselves, to forget themselves, to know no triumphs save those of the dear beings to whom, together with life, they have given all that was best in themselves?

All over the world, naturalism has sapped the foundations of the family, and at the same time shaken the foundations of the State. All over the world, a return to the principles set down by the last nine Popes is the necessary condition of public safety. What more effective in helping on this result than the lesson of facts, of an heroic family? I heartily commend the study of the brief biographies of Venerable Louis and Zélie in the following pages.

Living examples have another sort of power. They illustrate the principle by bringing it into the realm of the concrete. They fasten on to the real; they shake off cowardice in that they show what can be done. The provocative thought that haunted St. Augustine on the threshold of his conversion is never out of date: "Cannot I do what these men and women did?"

Fr. J. Linus Ryan, O. Carm., National Co-Ordinator,
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Director, St Thérèse National Office,
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THE SERVANTS OF GOD

**Venerable Louis Martin (1823-94)
and Venerable Zélie Guérin (1831-77)
parents of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus**



**Prayer
for favours through their
intercession and for
their Canonization**

God, our Father, I thank you for having given us Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin. United and faithful in marriage, they have left us an example of Christian living and evangelical virtue. In raising a large family through trials, suffering and bereavement, they put their trust in You and always sought Your will.

Deign, Lord, to make known Your will in their regard and grant the favour I ask, in the hope that the father and mother of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus may one day be held up by the Church as a model for the families of our time. Amen.



Venerable Zélie Martin
Mother of St. Thérèse

St. Thérèse

Venerable Louis Martin
Father of St. Thérèse



A SHORT LIFE OF VENERABLE ZÉLIE MARTIN MOTHER OF ST. THÉRÈSE

Christine Frost

Venerable Zélie Martin – Mother of St. Thérèse

In the opening pages of her childhood memories Thérèse states: 'God granted me the favour of opening my intelligence at an early age and of imprinting childhood recollections deeply on my memory. Jesus in His love willed perhaps, that I know the matchless mother He had given me, but whom His hand hastened to crown in Heaven.'

St. Thérèse was only 4½ when her mother died, yet she remembered her clearly for the rest of her life; she acknowledged the influence she had on her during those early years and she remembered particularly the details of her illness and her last weeks on earth.

Who was this woman able to make such a lasting impression on so young a child? Many children who

lose parents at a much later age are unable to recall them in adult life, yet Céline, less than four years older than Thérèse, also remembered her mother clearly.

A woman of contradictions

The qualities that are most striking in the testimonies we have about Zélie are her strong faith and her incredible energy and capacity for work. Hers was a complex and interesting character; in many ways she was a woman of contradictions. She never lost her longing for the cloister yet she loved her husband and children, and totally fulfilled her rôle as both wife and mother. She had a tremendous enthusiasm for life and was a highly skilled lace maker and an astute business woman; yet her sights were firmly set on Heaven. She was a great letter writer, and her many letters give insight into her character. She comes



The three Guérin children, Zélie, Isidore and Marie Louise Guerin who became a visitandine nun.



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Abbe Maurice Bellère



St. Thérèse



Pire Adolphe Roulland



Pont Saint-Léonard on the Sarthe, Alençon where Zélie encountered Louis by chance and had a definitive intuition of her marriage to him.

across as a vivacious and witty woman who is not only deeply perceptive, but also critical of the society in which she lived and, by her own admission, impatient.

Her character was largely formed by suffering but in her life she also knew much love.

Zélie's own childhood

Zélie Guérin was born on December 23, 1831 in the parish of St-Denis-sur-Sarthon near Alençon; she was baptised on Christmas Eve. Her father had retired from the army and was a member of the local police force. Her mother had given birth to her first child, Marie Louise, two years previously and the family was completed with the birth of a son, Isidore, ten years later.

Zélie's mother was a good woman with a strong faith but she was very austere in her treatment of her daughters. Although she cared for them she did not show them affection and they were never allowed to have dolls. Her father was strict too but he showed them more kindness; indeed

he sold his house and land in the country in order to send them to school.

The family moved to Alençon when Zélie was 13 and together with her sister, she attended the school of the Perpetual Adoration as a day pupil. She was both intelligent and religious; she held first place for style and composition in her French essays. She was very close to her sister, but her childhood was not happy. She was later to write that her youth was 'as sad as a winding-sheet' After the move to Alençon her mother ran a café for a short time and her father tried his hand at woodwork. Later Isidore, who was a bright child, was sent to the Lycée. In adult life after studying medicine in Paris he became a pharmacist at Lisieux. Zélie suffered severe headaches in her childhood as well as respiratory problems, and it was probably on account of her poor health that the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul would not accept her as a postulant when she applied to join them.



Venerable Zélie Martin
Mother of St. Thérèse

St. Thérèse

Venerable Louis Martin
Father of St. Thérèse

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Maison Natale, 36 Rue Saint-Blaise, Alençon, Thérèse's birthplace.





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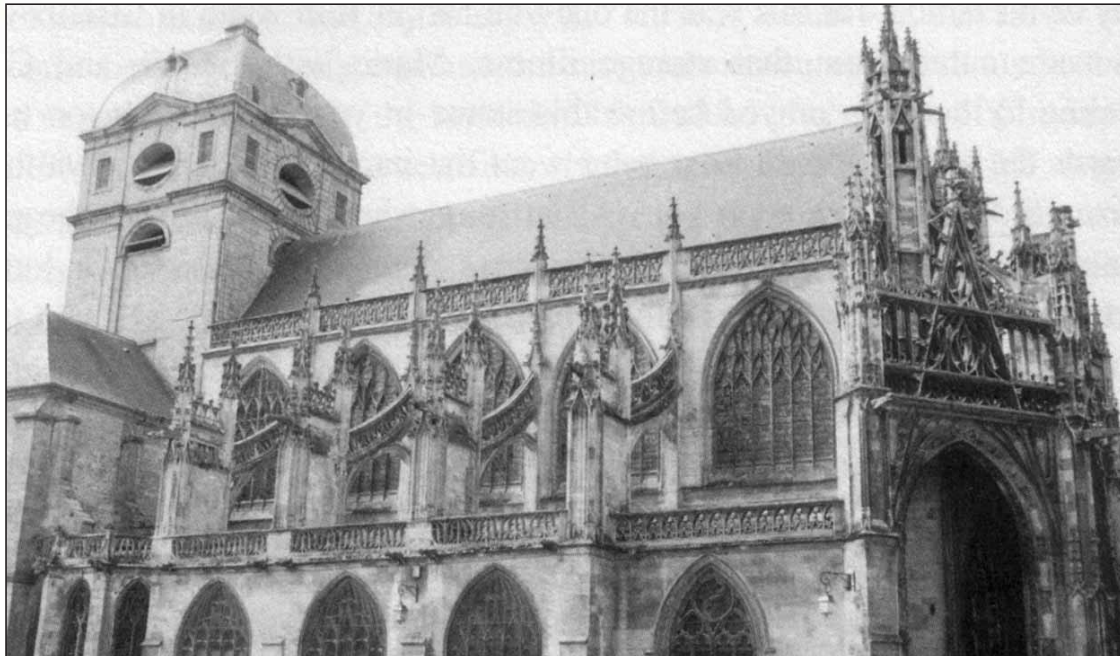
Abbe Maurice Bellère



St. Thérèse



Père Adolphe Roulland



Alençon Notre Dame where Louis and Zélie were married.

Her sister entered the Visitation Convent at Le Mans at the age of 29, and became Sister Marie-Dosithée. On entering she declared, 'I have come here in order to become a saint.'

Zélie's plan unfolds

Zélie had decided that if God did not want her as a religious she would marry and have many children who would all be consecrated to Him. She turned to Our Lady and asked her how she should earn her dowry. On December 8, 1851 she received her answer in the form of an interior voice which said, 'Make Alençon point lace'. Zélie went to a professional school to learn her craft; she quickly excelled and left to start her own business.

One day when she was crossing the Bridge of St. Leonard, Zélie noticed a man passing by and again heard that interior voice. It said, 'This is he whom I have prepared for you.' The man was Louis Martin, whose mother had noticed Zélie at the lace making school. On July 13, 1858 Zélie and Louis were married; she was nearly 27. On the evening of her marriage Zélie visited her sister at the Visitation Convent in Le Mans. She had

been a postulant there for two months, but this was Zélie's first visit to her and she could not stop weeping. She wished with all her heart that she could have entered too. To add to her sorrows she had a bad toothache!

Zélie was always totally content with Louis; they shared their faith and a deep love for one another, yet, having such a strong desire to enter a convent as she did, Zélie's marriage inevitably caused her some distress. Her fears of all she would have to endure in order to have children made her readily agree to Louis' proposal for chastity, even though she still wanted to bring up children for God. During the first year of their marriage they cared for a little boy of five whose father had died and whose mother had eleven children.

They lived a life of chastity for ten months, after which, under the direction of a confessor they agreed that they should have children of their own. Once convinced that this was God's will for them they had nine children in



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Marie Joseph Jean Baptiste, Marie Helene and Marie Joseph Louis.

thirteen years. Meanwhile, Zélie set up her office next to Louis' shop, where she continued with her lace making.

As she waited for the first baby to arrive Zélie was careful to follow Mgr. Gay's advice, that during the months immediately preceding the birth of her child, the expectant mother should keep especially close to God, so that she might be a living sanctuary for the child within her.

The first baby

Zélie's first child was born on February 22, 1860, and given the names Marie Louise. Zélie and Louis had decided to give all their children the name Marie in honour of Our Lady, and their first child was known by this name throughout her life. Zélie was delighted with her new baby. Marie had good health from the start, and proved to be the easiest of all the children to rear.

On December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, that same year, Zélie turned to Our Lady asking for the gift of a second child. Her prayer

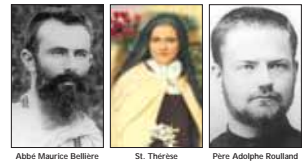
was answered and on September 7, 1861 Marie Pauline was born; she too was a reasonably strong child, though she suffered from a chronic cough during her first years. Zélie's third daughter Marie Léonie was born on June 3, 1863. She was a frail child and caused her mother much anxiety. Like Pauline she suffered with a chronic cough but as she was not as strong as her sister it caused her mother greater concern.

When Marie Hélène was born the following year on October 13, Zélie's own health was already beginning to fail. She was unable to nurse this child herself and had to entrust her to a wet nurse, a cause of great sadness for her; her visits to this youngest child filled her with joy. By this time the two eldest were strong lively children. Zélie was always careful about their dress and behaviour.

Léonie was giving cause for concern; she was small for her age and had suffered very badly with measles, which caused her to have violent convulsions; then running eczema spread all over her body and for sixteen months she hovered between life and death. When she did finally recover Hélène had returned from her wet nurse.



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Abbe Maurice Bellere St. Therese Pere Adolphe Roulland



Baptismal font where Thérèse was baptised in Alençon Notre Dame.

Intimations of mortality

In April 1865 Zélie wrote to her brother, 'You know that when I was a girl I received a blow in the breast, through striking the corner of a table. No notice was taken of it then, but I now have a glandular swelling in the breast, which makes me anxious, especially since it has begun to be a little painful... It is not that I would shrink from an operation. I am quite ready to undergo it, but I have not full confidence in the doctors here. I should like to profit by your stay in Paris, for you could help me so much under the circumstances.'

We do not know why the idea of an operation was dismissed, but the

subject of Zélie's illness was not mentioned again for eleven years, by which time it was undeniably fatal.

In June 1865 Louis' father died and his passing made a deep impression on Zélie. She wrote to her brother, 'My father-in-law died yesterday at 1 p.m. He had received the sacraments last Thursday. He had a holy death and died as he had lived. I should never have believed it could have affected me so much. I am overwhelmed.'

Little did Zélie know when she wrote those lines that she would experience the death of a loved one five times more in as many years.

The first son

Zélie had always hoped that one day she would have a son who would become a priest, perhaps a missionary, so it was a cause of special joy when on September 20, 1866 she gave birth to Marie Joseph Louis. It was the easiest birth since her first child and the baby was big and strong. She had to let him go to a wet nurse but this was not a cause for anxiety, as Little Rose was both kind and reliable.

On New Year's Day she brought the baby to Alençon for a few hours and Zélie delighted in dressing him up like a little prince; Joseph laughed and was loved by all the family. Zélie was convinced that he would fulfil her hope of being the mother of a future priest, but her joy was short lived. At 3 a.m. there was a loud knock at the door. The little boy was very ill and they feared he would die. In fact he recovered quite quickly from what proved to be erysipelas, but although the crisis passed he did not ever seem to regain his full strength. On February 14, he died. Zélie was heart broken by the loss of this little one, but with the support of her family resigned herself to the fact that God had taken him to Himself.

She believed she had a saint in Heaven and when five weeks after his death Hélène had an ear infection for which the doctor could do nothing, Zélie suggested to her that she say a prayer to her little brother in Heaven. The next morning the ear was completely healed. Zélie herself renewed her prayers for a son who would become a priest. She turned to St. Joseph making a novena which ended on his feast day. As when she asked Our



Venerable Zélie Martin
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St. Thérèse

Venerable Louis Martin
Father of St. Thérèse

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Bedroom of St. Thérèse's parents where she was born and where Zélie died.



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Abbe Maurice Bellère



St. Therese



Pere Adolphe Roulland



Celine, Leonie, Pauline & Marie.

Lady's prayers for a second child, the baby was born precisely nine months later.

More births and deaths

Marie Joseph John Baptiste arrived on December 19, 1867 but his was the most difficult birth of all. The child nearly died and the doctor baptised him. He was a beautiful baby but again Zélie was unable to nurse him and had to let him be cared for by Little Rose. Everyone could see that this baby was not strong. Rose was concerned, Zélie was resigned, but never ceased to pray that God would leave him on earth. He suffered from bronchitis for three months and when he improved a little, Zélie took him home with her; the improvement was short lived; he suffered enteritis and Zélie knew that already weakened by so much illness he could not live. On August 24, 1868 he died in his mother's arms. To add to her troubles Zélie had been nursing her father for over a year. Unable to live alone, he had been persuaded to move in with his daughter and her family. He died less than two weeks after her second son.

It is impossible to know what effect these bereavements had on Zélie's own health but her condition was almost certainly made worse by them. She received another shock when visiting her sister at the Visitation in Le Mans the following January. Her two eldest daughters were boarding at the school by this time, but Zélie did not realise just how weak her sister had become. She was suffering from tuberculosis and when Zélie saw her she was hardly able to speak.

After the death of her second son Zélie told Céline Guérin, her brother's wife, that she still hoped to have three or four more children.

On April 28, 1869 Marie Céline was born. In spite of Zélie's sadness at having to entrust her to a different wet nurse and her fears that she would quickly follow her little brothers to Heaven, Céline survived.



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Fresco of the death of Zélie Martin (1877).

It was Hélène who fell ill tragically and unexpectedly; within forty-eight hours she had died, aged only five. She seems to have been a particularly attractive child and Zélie wrote to Céline Guérin, 'I feel deeply the loss of my two little boys, but I have suffered still more at losing this child.'

Life had to go on. When Céline was brought home from her wet nurse Zélie found great comfort in her youngest child. Still she hoped for a little son but her eighth child was another daughter, Marie Mélanie Thérèse who lived less than two months; a suitable nurse could not be found and the one to whom she was entrusted virtually starved her.

A united family

In July 1871 the family moved to Zélie's old home. Zélie was pleased that there was a garden for the children, even though it was not very big. They were near to Our Lady's church and Zélie went to the 5.30 Mass there every morning with

her husband; they both received Holy Communion several times each week, which was unusually frequent at that time.

As soon as she returned home Zélie began her work. She found her lace-making compatible with motherhood, as it did not take her out of her home. She had about fifteen women working for her and every Thursday they came to bring their work and collect the cotton and their instructions for the next week. Zélie assembled the pieces which they brought to her. She always had time for her children, writing to the two eldest frequently, recounting all the little details of life at home.

She even dealt with investments and read the stock exchange journal. In the school holidays she arranged outings for the children. She made fritters and cakes, and sometimes roasted chestnuts for them. Zélie's letters to the older girls show a lively interest in all they are doing in their studies and recreation. After a difficult beginning with Léonie, Zélie was able to win her trust and confidence and help her to come to terms with life. The younger



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children were always her delight and she never failed to give to each one as much time as they needed. With her never failing energy she was always the last to go to bed at night. Having lost Hélène and Mélanie Thérèse, Zélie was delighted to find herself expecting her ninth child. She wrote to the Guérins, 'I am in better health than last time, and never have any fever.'

One evening when she was alone on the ground floor of the house about to do some spiritual reading, Zélie received a terrific knock on the shoulder, like the paw of a wild animal. She called Heaven to her aid and everything returned to normal. She wondered if it was an attack of the devil, but if it was her total trust in God was stronger.

A special child

On Thursday 2nd January 1873 Zélie gave birth to her last child, Marie Françoise Thérèse; she tried to nurse her but when the baby became ill she turned again to Little Rose.

Perhaps Zélie knew from the beginning that there was something special about this child for she confided to her sister-in-law, 'When I was carrying her I noticed something which never happened with my other children; when I sang she sang with me.'

When Thérèse returned home aged fifteen months her mother lost no time in teaching her to pray. Zélie would never tolerate bad behaviour in her children; she won their confidence through love and encouraged generosity but she never hesitated to check careless speech, fussy eating or pride of any kind. They were encouraged to make sacrifices for others, to give way to one another's wishes and thus to win pearls for their crowns. The little brothers and sisters who had died were considered very much a part of the family and following Zélie's own conviction the children were taught to look upon Heaven as their true home.

A tumour

In October 1876 the swelling in Zélie's breast increased and she consulted a doctor. 'A fibrous tumour' he said and advised an operation. 'And what chance of success, 1%?' asked Zélie. The doctor shrugged and began to write a prescription. Zélie smiled and said, 'What would be the use of remedies?' 'None,' replied the doctor, 'it is in order to please the sick

people, that is all! Zélie left him without anything. She knew there was no hope from medicine.

At night she was most aware of the pain, a dull pain and numbness all over one side: she could not lie on it and sleep was difficult. She spent Christmas with the Guérins to please her brother who wanted her to see a surgeon who was a friend of his. The surgeon could only confirm that it was too late for an operation. At New Year Zélie wrote: 'I have little reason to rejoice at time moving forward, but I am like the children who do not worry about the morrow; I always hope for happiness!'

Everything seemed to be working against this hope, but Zélie's faith remained unshaken; God could do with her whatever he willed.

Her sister was dying at the Visitation. A customer refused to buy the lace he had ordered. The ganglions on her neck began to swell, but she still remained cheerful. Marie had taken over the house and the care of her two youngest sisters; she was coping very well, but Pauline was at school wanting letters, and much care and gentleness was still needed with Léonie. Grandmother Martin never stopped chattering when she was asked to dinner; Zélie just hadn't time to be ill! On February 24 her sister died at the Visitation. She never knew how ill Zélie was but Zélie herself no doubt realised that her own life could not go on much longer.

She fulfilled her rôle as mother to the last, even though she yearned for the cloister and for solitude at times. When reading the life of Mme Acarie she remarked, 'All her daughters Carmelites... How could one have such an honour!'

Self denial

In spite of her illness Zélie was faithful in her observance of Lent. She would not avail herself of any mitigations of fasting or abstinence even though her illness would have entitled her to do so; her spirit of self denial was as strong in sickness as in health.

Zélie had never liked travelling but she agreed to go to Lourdes on pilgrimage. She would have loved to go with Louis, but she thought it would be better to take her three eldest children. She had so much to ask Our Lady for them,



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Rose's house at Semallé. Thérèse's nurse.

especially for Léonie; but Marie would need special graces to cope with the future and Pauline needed relief from her continual headaches.

They set out on June 18. Zélie had put everything in order, handing over her lace. The journey was difficult; Marie got dust in her eye and groaned for several hours, Léonie's feet were swollen and she cried because they were hurting her, and two of them were travel sick. At Lourdes Marie lost the rosary which had belonged to her aunt and Pauline lost hers on which she had her aunt's medals. Zélie fell and twisted her neck causing pain from which she never recovered.

She was immersed four times in the baths, staying in the icy water for over a quarter of an hour on the last occasion, but her pain remained as severe as ever. The girls were bitterly disappointed that their mother was not cured and the return journey was one of difficulty and distress. Zélie arrived home in good spirits, even though her health was worse. She held on to Our Lady's

promise to Bernadette, 'I will not make you happy in this world but in the next.'

At the end of June the tumour began to discharge; the nights were dreadful; the pain was so severe Zélie could not sleep. She continued to go to the early Mass even though it took her all her time to restrain herself from crying out with pain. By July 8 the pains were worse than ever and caused intestinal trouble and fever. Zélie knew that death was inevitable and resigned herself to making the best of the time left to her.

Sometimes she reproached herself for spending so much time 'heaping up money' but she knew that it was her duty to provide for her children and she knew also that her faith always came first. 'God sees fully that I did all I could'; she thought.

Last days

One of Zélie's last joys was the prize giving for Céline and Thérèse organised by Marie, who had been teaching her two little sisters. She wanted to encourage them and to give pleasure to her parents who were the 'guests of honour'.



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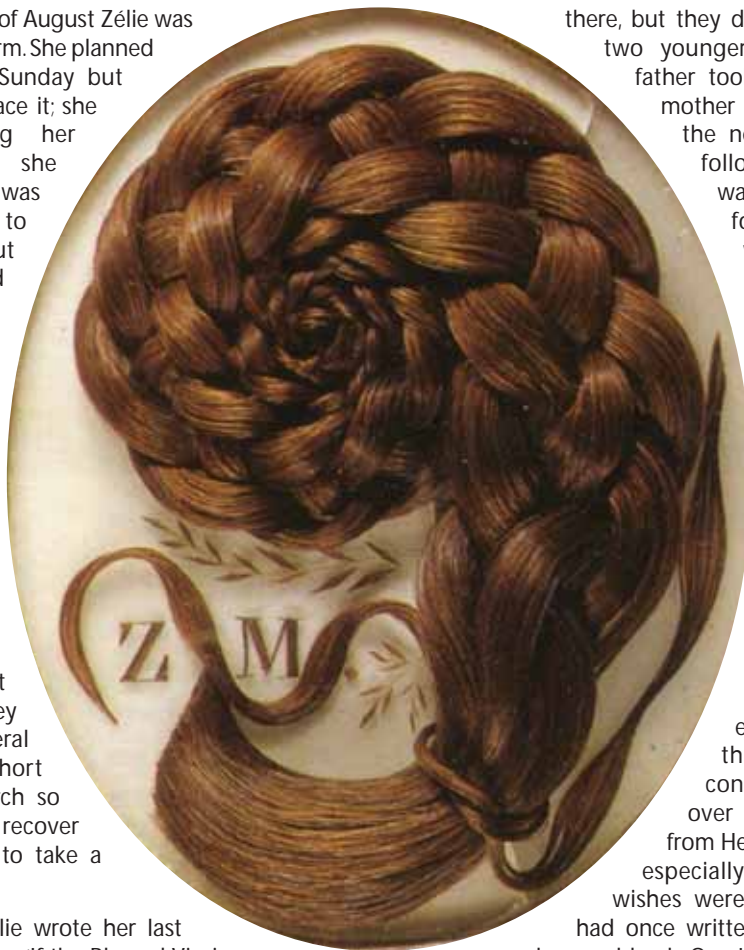
On the first Friday of August Zélie was at Mass on Louis' arm. She planned to go again on Sunday but Marie could not face it; she delayed dressing her mother so that she could not go; Zélie was not well enough to dress herself but she was convinced that with the help of Louis and Marie she would be able to get to Mass. However, it was obvious to Marie that everyone else considered her too ill, and she could not face again the criticism she felt on the last occasion, when they had to stop several times on the short walk to the Church so that Zélie could recover enough strength to take a few more steps.

On August 16 Zélie wrote her last letter to her brother, 'If the Blessed Virgin does not cure me, it is that my time has come and that God wishes me to find my rest elsewhere than on earth.'

Ten days later a haemorrhage took away her voice, her limbs became swollen and she became so weak that the Guérins were summoned.

Louis fetched the priest escorting the Blessed Sacrament from the Church. The family were all gathered round for this final ceremony. The next day the Guérins were there. Céline Guérin never forgot the mother's last look; she resolved to do all she could for the children, but she knew she could not replace such a mother.

On Tuesday August 28 at 12.30 a.m. Zélie died, her husband and her brother beside her. The three older girls were



there, but they did not waken the two younger ones. Thérèse's father took her to see her mother for the last time the next morning. The following day Zélie was buried with the four little ones. It was not until 1894 when Louis died that Isidore Guérin had the family grave moved to Lisieux.

In 1957 the Cause for Zélie's Beatification was introduced together with that of her husband. We have every reason to think that she continued to watch over her daughters from Heaven. In them and especially in Thérèse her wishes were fulfilled, for she had once written to Pauline that she would ask Our Lady to make her daughters saints...

The Cause of Louis and Zélie received a great boost when the Holy See officially recognised their heroic holiness and on 26th March 1994 they were declared Venerable by Pope John Paul II. One miracle is needed for their Beatification and in fact, the alleged miraculous cure of a baby is under investigation by the Holy See. Bishop Guy Gaucher of Lisieux gives us the story at Diocesan level in his own words:

"On June 10th 2003, in his private chapel, the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, Dionigi Tettamanzi, surrounded by judges and secretaries, signed a solemn act: the official closure of the process



Venerable Zélie Martin
Mother of St. Thérèse

St. Thérèse

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recognizing the miraculous cure, through the intercession of the Venerable Louis and Zélie Martin, of Pietro Schillero, from Monza, born on the 25th May 2002. His family, five brothers and sisters, were there with about a hundred other people and among them were the doctors, witnesses of the process. I was there to represent the diocese of Lisieux.

Pietro was born with lungs in such a terrible condition that, medically speaking, he could not possibly survive. Put under respiratory assistance, nobody thought that one day he would be able to breathe normally. Father Sangalli, a Carmelite Father, suggested to Pietro's parents that they make a novena to the Martin parents. The parish did likewise.

On the 29th June, his Feast Day, Pietro was much better and left the clinic on the 26th July in perfect health.

This cure, humanly inexplicable, was recorded by numerous witnesses, seven of whom were doctors. On the 10th June the miraculous child of thirteen months was parading around the chapel, sometimes crawling under the Cardinal's desk who was pronouncing the decree; a fairly rare show in this kind of court!

With this miracle, the Beatification of Louis and Zélie Martin will not be too long. It is ultimately up to the Pope to decide."

***The Venerable Louis & Zélie Martin Hospice
(formerly the Carmelite Convent, Blackrock, Co. Dublin).
It is the first building in the world to be dedicated to the parents of St. Thérèse.***



Servant of God
ARCHBISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN
1895-1979





Venerable Zélie Martin
Mother of St. Thérèse

St. Thérèse

Venerable Louis Martin
Father of St. Thérèse

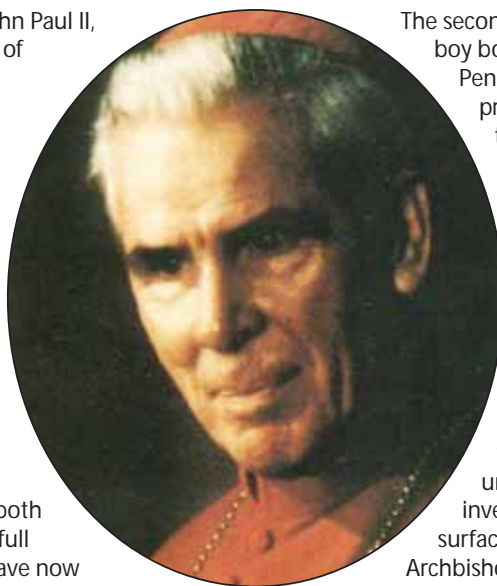


Progress on the cause of Canonisation of *Servant of God, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen*

Fr. J. Linus Ryan, O. Carm.

His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, an ardent admirer of Archbishop Fulton Sheen, introduced his Cause of Canonisation on the Feast of *The Triumph of the Cross* 14th September 2002. Thereafter he is titled *Servant of God*. In the ensuing four years his Cause would appear to have made rapid progress. Two alleged miracles in the United States, one in his native diocese of Peoria Illinois, and the other in the diocese of Pittsburgh, have been rigorously examined medically and canonically by both dioceses in each case there is full diocesan approval and they have now been sent to the Holy See, which alone decides if, in fact, the cures are miraculous. The examination into his life and virtues and his writings continues apace. Two Irish people, including myself, have been called as witnesses, by the Special Tribunal and have given approximately five hours each of sworn testimony on his life and virtues. While every decision is ultimately the sole responsibility of the Holy See the rapid progress in just four years is encouraging.

The first alleged miracle involved a lady from Champaign, Illinois who was undergoing lung surgery when doctors discovered a tear in her main pulmonary artery. As surgeons worked to halt the bleeding, her husband said he prayed for two hours, continually invoking Archbishop Sheen's name. Later, a doctor told the family that tears are usually fatal *"but somehow she pulled through,"* a 500 page report on this extraordinary cure is now being examined by the Holy See.



The second alleged miracle involved a boy born about five years ago in Pennsylvania who doctors predicted wouldn't live long due to complications of childbirth. Middle-named Fulton Sheen because of his father's devotion to the Archbishop, the boy *"came out of it suddenly"* as his parents prayed, seeking Archbishop Sheen's intercession. A report on the alleged miracle is being prepared by the Pittsburgh diocese. Officials say two claims of miracles are unusual so early in a sainthood investigation and that more could surface. If canonised today, Archbishop Sheen would be the first male saint to be born in the United States.

The Archbishop, who died in 1979, is perhaps best known for his weekly Christian programme called *'Life is Worth Living,'* He also wrote 66 books and countless articles and newspaper columns. But officials leading Archbishop Sheen's sainthood bid say he should be remembered more for his lifelong effort to bring people to Christ, spreading a message of how to love God and love your neighbour. *"I am delighted to think that an American son born in our American heartland is a possibility for sainthood,"* Peoria Bishop Daniel Jenky said in a statement. *"To have a son of the heartland witness for Jesus in such a spectacular way, I'd be as proud as I can be."*

Archbishop Sheen, who was a professed member of the Carmelite Third Order, preached on four major occasions at the Carmelite Church, Whitefriar Street, Dublin, Ireland in 1969, 1971, 1973 and 1975.



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Abbe Maurice Bellere



St. Therese



Pire Adolphe Roulland

Prayer to obtain a Favour
Through the Intercession of the *Servant of God*
Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen



Eternal Father, You alone grant us every blessing in Heaven and on earth, through the redemptive mission of Your Divine Son, Jesus Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit. In every age, You raise up men and women outstanding in holiness, whose faithful service has contributed significantly to the mission of the Church. In this very way, You used the life and work of Your servant, Archbishop Fulton John Sheen. He inspired great numbers of Catholics and other people of good will to grow in virtue and lead lives pleasing to You and of service to their brothers and sisters in need. He encouraged them to embrace the “Gospel of Life” by recognizing that in all its circumstances, “Life is worth living”.

If it be according to Your Will, Eternal Father, glorify Your servant, Archbishop Fulton John Sheen, by granting the favour I now request through his prayerful intercession (*mention your request here*). I make this prayer confidently in Jesus’ Name, through the merits of His Passion, Death and Resurrection. Amen.



*For information on membership in the Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen Foundation,
or to share any personal knowledge of the Archbishop (letters, photos, life experiences),
or to report any spiritual or physical favours granted in his name, please write to:*

The Archbishop Sheen Foundation
PO Box 728, Peoria, IL 61652-0728, USA *or*
A. F. J. Sheen Cause Official Promotor in Ireland,
Fr. J. Linus Ryan, O. Carm.,

St. Thérèse National Office, Carmelite Community, Terenure College, Dublin 6W.
Tel: (01) 492 7697 Mobile: (087) 2430920 Fax: (01) 4900190 E-mail: sttherese@indigo.ie Website: www.sttherese.com

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+ Most Rev. Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C., Bishop of Peoria.



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A SHORT LIFE OF VENERABLE LOUIS MARTIN FATHER OF ST. THÉRÈSE

Christine Frost

Venerable Louis Martin – Father of Thérèse

Above the graves of St. Thérèse's parents behind the Basilica in Lisieux are the words, 'God gave me a father and mother more worthy of Heaven than of earth,' words written by Thérèse to Abbé Bellière just two months before she died.

Time has shown that Thérèse was not alone in believing this as their *Cause* for Beatification was introduced in 1957. Their heroic holiness was officially recognised by the Holy See when Pope John Paul II declared them Venerable on 26th March 1994. and since the completion of the Diocesan Processes we are encouraged to ask their joint intercession. If the necessary miracle is forthcoming

they will be Beatified as a married couple. In fact, an alleged miraculous cure of a baby is being investigated by the Holy See. The Holy See alone decides if a cure is a miracle. This is the story at Diocesan level in the words of Bishop Guy Gaucher of Lisieux:

"On June 10th 2003, in his private chapel, the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, Dionigi Tettamanzi, surrounded by judges and secretaries, signed a solemn act: the official closure of the process recognizing the miraculous cure, through the intercession of the Venerable Louis and Zélie Martin, of Pietro Schillero, from Monza, born on the 25th May 2002. His family, five brothers and sisters, were there

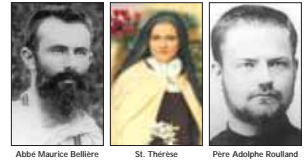
Louis Martin returned to Lisieux.

In May 1892 he lived in a rented house at 7 Rue Labbey where the photo was taken. Left to Right: Marie Guérin, Leonie, Celine, the Servant Désiré and his wife at the window, Uncle Idisore Guerin, Aunt Céline Guerin and her friend. Below is Thérèse's dog Tom.





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Abbe Maurice Bellere

St. Therese

Pere Adolphe Roulland

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With this miracle, the Beatification of Louis and Zélie Martin will not be too long. It is ultimately up to the Pope to decide."

Predestined

Although Louis' family were from Normandy he was born in the south of France at Bordeaux. His father was a captain in the army garrisoned there, though he was actually away in Spain when Louis was born on August 22, 1823. Louis' only brother, Pierre, was four years older. He died at sea while still young; his sister, Marie, who was three years older, died when she was only twenty-six. Louis was baptised privately straight after birth but the full ceremonies at the Church of St. Eulalie were not completed until October after his father returned from the Spanish campaign. He was given the names Louis Joseph Aloys Stanislaus. The Archbishop of Bordeaux who happened to be in the Church at the time of the baptism went over to bless the baby and said to the parents, 'Congratulations! That child is a predestined one.'

After his return from Spain Captain Martin was transferred to Avignon, where in 1826 another child, Anne Fannie, was born. She was the only one of the family besides Louis to have any children of her own; she married Adolphe Leriche and in 1844 gave birth

Louis Martin's jewellery and watchmaker's shop at 15 Rue Pont Neuf, Alençon.





Venerable Zélie Martin
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to a son of the same name, but died nine years later. The youngest of Louis' sisters, Sophie, was his favourite; he was her godfather and it distressed him greatly when she died aged only nine.

In 1828 the family moved again, this time to Strasburg; it was Captain Martin's last posting. When he retired in December 1830 he moved back to his native Normandy and chose to live in Alençon where he knew he could educate his children. Louis seems to have had a particularly good grounding in French literature; he could quote with ease from the classics, and copied a collection of his own favourite quotations. He was also good at drawing. However, he does not seem to have had much secondary education; the only other language he knew was German, which he learned when living in Strasburg.

Apprentice

In 1842 Louis began to learn watchmaking. He went to live in Rennes with his father's cousin, Louis Bohard, who set out to teach him the trade. While living in Brittany Louis became fascinated with its culture and folklore. He liked to wear the Breton national costume and to sing Breton songs.

In September 1843 Louis left Rennes to continue his apprenticeship in Strasburg, but before making his way there he made his first visit to the Monastery of the Great St. Bernard, high on the Swiss Alps. He brought back with him as a souvenir a little white flower, which he treasured all his life. Perhaps he had this souvenir in mind as he picked the little white flower for Thérèse when he gave his consent for her to enter Carmel.

In Strasburg Louis lived with the Mathey family; they were friends of his father and the watchmaker was glad to have him as an apprentice. Louis studied the famous Cathedral Clock, which he had always admired so much when he lived there as a boy. He became friends with the Mathey's son and they enjoyed many happy times together; on one occasion Louis saved the other boy from drowning. His only sadness was that his friends did not practise their religion.

After two years in Strasburg Louis again climbed the Swiss Alps to the Augustinian Monastery of Mount St. Bernard but this time it was

to seek admission to the community. The Prior told him that without any knowledge of Latin he could not be accepted, but he encouraged him to return when he had completed his Latin studies. Louis, convinced of his vocation, was not discouraged. He returned to his family in Alençon and began to study Latin straight away. He persevered for over a year, but when illness made it necessary for him to give up for a while he never returned to it. He no doubt understood that God had other plans for him and he resumed his apprenticeship, this time in Paris.

Master Watchmaker

Louis returned to Alençon a master watchmaker and in November 1850 established his shop in the Parish of St. Pierre de Monsort. The house was large so Louis had his parents to live with him. He worked hard at his watchmaking and later added a jeweller's shop. He insisted on closing his shop on Sundays even when a priest suggested that he might leave the side door open. In fact he would never trade at all on Sundays and he was always careful to charge a fair price, never taking advantage of the wealthy customers who patronised his shop. His business thrived. In 1857 he bought the Pavillon, a small property on the outskirts of the town. It became his retreat; he loved to go there to spend time in reading and prayer; he also liked fishing and he often took his catch to the Poor Clare Convent. In the garden of the Pavillon Louis placed a statue of Our Lady which had been given to him.

He was generous to the poor and never hesitated to give practical help when he saw the need. His great loves were his faith, his work and the countryside.

For nearly eight years Louis lived a quietly ordered bachelor life. He had no desire for marriage, much to the distress of his mother. Then quite unexpectedly, when he was thirty-five, only three months after their first meeting, Louis married Zélie Guérin, on July 13, 1858. They lived behind his shop, and as the house was so large his parents were able to remain there, living quite separately on the floor above. Since Louis and Zélie both desired to live the religious life they chose to continue their dedication to God through chastity after their marriage. It was only ten months later, when a confessor suggested that they should consider the vocation of parenthood that their ideas changed.



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Abbe Maurice Bellere St. Therese Pire Adolphe Roulland

Louis was delighted when his first daughter was born on February 22, 1860. When he took her to St. Pierre de Monsort to be baptised he remarked to the priest, 'This is the first time you have seen me here for a baptism, but it won't be the last!'

Louis' first born, Marie, always remained his favourite.

'Our Lady of the Smile'

After their marriage Zélie asked Louis to bring the statue of Our Lady from the Pavilion garden into the home and it became the centre of family devotions. It was this statue that years later smiled on Thérèse when she was ill, and has since become known as 'Our Lady of the Smile.'

In the following thirteen years eight more children followed Marie; Louis rejoiced at each birth and sorrowed when three of them died as small babies, but his greatest sadness in those years was the death of five year old Hélène on February 22, 1870. He was heart-broken and even years later often lamented her early death.

That same year, in April, Louis sold his business to his nephew, Adolphe Leriche, and in July 1871 the family moved to Zélie's old home. Louis' mother continued to live above the shop, happy that her grandson now occupied the other apartment.

The lacemaking business

Louis had always done all he could to help Zélie with her lacemaking business but after he gave up his watchmaking he was able to devote even more of his time to this. He had already taken over the book-keeping and he frequently travelled to meet

salesmen and secure orders. Often he went to the large department stores in Paris to obtain the best prices. He supervised the deliveries of particularly valuable pieces of work and even chose patterns and drew out designs himself.

With the birth of Thérèse in January 1873 Louis' family was complete. He loved to spend time with his five daughters and he delighted them with the toys he made. He was firm with them too, expecting obedience, and they respected his wishes out of love. He amused them by imitating bugles and drums, dialects and bird calls. He had pet names for each of them; Marie was his diamond, Pauline his pearl, Léonie his good hearted one, Céline his dauntless one and Thérèse his Little Queen.

Pilgrim

When Marie had typhoid fever at the age of thirteen Louis spent many hours at her bedside. He made a pilgrimage to obtain her cure. Leaving Alençon early one morning he walked the 15 kilometres to Séz fasting. At the Basilica of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Louis made his petition. He returned to Alençon late the next day. Our Lady answered his prayers and Marie recovered completely.

Louis liked to go on pilgrimage to Our Lady's shrines. He often went to Séz and while he was living in Paris he was a frequent visitor to Our Lady of Victories. He also went to Lourdes, Chartres, and Pontmain; and he went to the nearby Trappist Monastery at Mortagne on retreat.

Zélie's death

At the end of 1876 when Louis realised that his wife was fatally ill he became inconsolable. He gave up his fishing for a time and would not leave her. The following June he persuaded her to go to Lourdes with the three older children. He stayed behind with the two little ones and prayed for her cure, but she returned in a worse state, much to his distress. On the first Friday of August he went with her to Mass for the last time. After that he hardly ever left her, though on the evening of 26th he went to Our Lady's Church to ask the priest to bring her the Last Rites and he accompanied the Blessed Sacrament from the Church with great reverence.



Zélie's Alençon Lace.

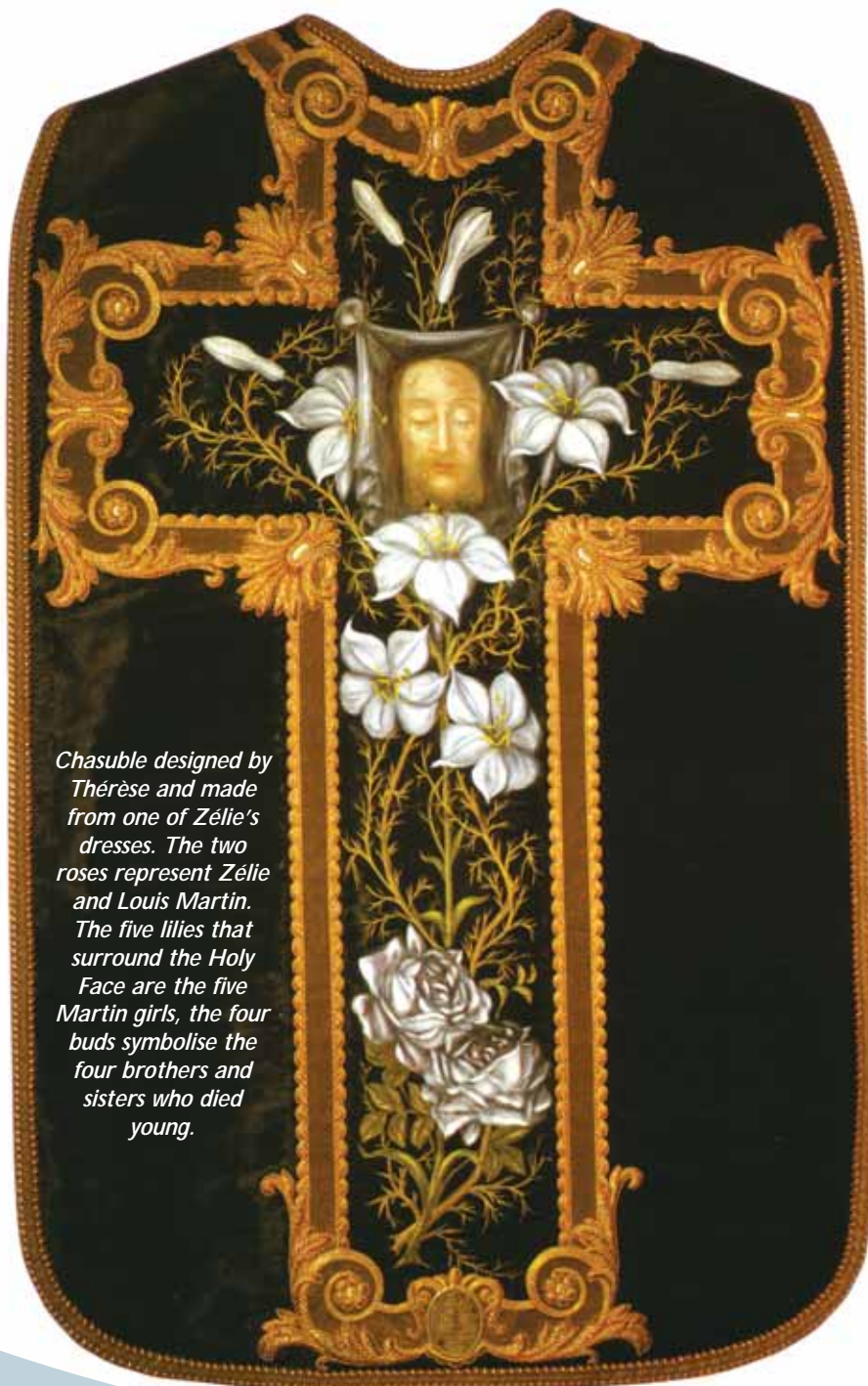


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Chasuble designed by Thérèse and made from one of Zélie's dresses. The two roses represent Zélie and Louis Martin. The five lilies that surround the Holy Face are the five Martin girls, the four buds symbolise the four brothers and sisters who died young.



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Abbe Maurice Bellere



St. Thérèse



Pire Adolphe Roulland



Les Buissonnets – Lisieux home of St. Thérèse.

On August 28 Zélie died and the following day Louis took his little Thérèse to kiss her mother for the last time.

A new life in Lisieux

Left as he was with five daughters ranging in age from 4 to 17, Louis fulfilled his wife's wishes and less than three months after her death the family went to live at Les Buissonnets in Lisieux, to be near her brother, Isidore Guérin, and his wife Céline. Louis stayed on in Alençon for two more weeks until the house and lace business were sold, but he decided to keep his Pavilion so that he would have somewhere to stay when he returned to Alençon to visit his own mother and the family graves.

In Lisieux an ordered family life was soon established. Louis always insisted on punctuality and good manners, facts respected by his daughters. Marie ran the house helped by a maid. Soon Louis returned to his fishing and sometimes he took Thérèse with him. He often gave his catch to the Carmelite nuns.

Every afternoon when the weather was fine he took a walk and called in at one of the Churches of the town to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

Often he took Thérèse with him on these walks. When they visited the Carmelite Chapel he explained to her that there were nuns praying behind the grille.

Louis turned the attic at Les Buissonnets into his study and it was known as the Belvedere. He still enjoyed reading and also passed much time there in meditation and prayer.

He spent each evening with his daughters. He often played draughts with them. Usually one of them read aloud from 'The Liturgical Year' or some other carefully chosen book. Céline and Thérèse often sat on his knee and he told them stories and sang to them. This was where Thérèse first heard many of the melodies that she later used as settings for her poems. The evening always ended with family prayer and Thérèse said that she only had to watch her father to know how the saints pray. He often spoke of Heaven and every day he assisted at the early Mass as he had done in Alençon. He established the Nocturnal Adoration Society in Lisieux with the help of his brother-in-law. He was active in the St. Vincent de Paul Society and each Monday he gave alms to the poor.



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Carmel takes Pauline

When Thérèse began school at the Benedictine Convent it was often Louis who took and collected her together with Céline who was also a pupil there. When Pauline expressed her desire to enter Carmel he gave his permission willingly even though he was not at all sure that her health would stand up to the austerities of the life. Later that same day he said to her, 'Pauline, I have given you permission to enter Carmel for your happiness, but do not think that there is no sacrifice on my part, for I love you so much.'

He was sorry to lose a daughter from the family circle which meant so much to him, but he was happy that the prayers he had made with Zélie that each child would be consecrated to God were being fulfilled. He knew that of all the girls Pauline had been closest to her mother and Zélie had been convinced that she would enter a convent. Now her wishes had come true.

The following March Louis set off for Paris with Marie and Léonie to celebrate the Holy Week and Easter ceremonies there. Céline and Thérèse were left in the care of their aunt and uncle and during that time Thérèse became very ill. Her aunt did not waste any time in contacting Louis and as soon as he received her letter he returned home in great distress. Thérèse did not always recognise him. The illness was mysterious and never definitely diagnosed.

Louis, desperate to save the life of his youngest child, had Marie send to Our Lady of Victories in Paris to ask for a Novena of Masses to be said for her recovery. It was during that Novena, on Pentecost Sunday, that Our Lady smiled on Thérèse and she was cured.

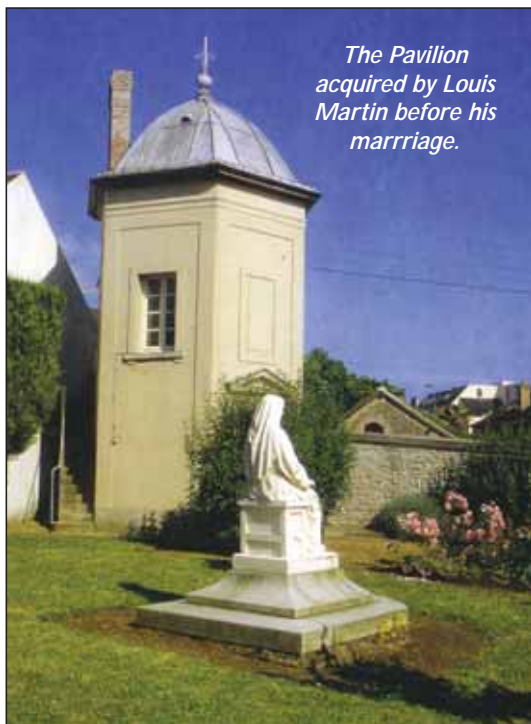
Louis was overjoyed and wrote to a friend to tell him of Thérèse's recovery: 'I must tell you that Thérèse, my little Queen – I call her that, for I assure you she is a fine, tall girl – is completely cured! The numerous prayers have at last taken Heaven by assault; and God in His goodness has willed to yield.'

With Thérèse's recovery normal family life resumed. Louis who had always loved travelling did not usually go far in those days, but when he was invited by the curate at his Parish Church to accompany him on a tour of central Europe he agreed to go. Louis

surprisingly felt home-sick before he had even left Paris, but he continued with his tour though he wrote to Marie: 'I would dearly love to have you all with me; without you the greatest part of my happiness is wanting. Meanwhile, continue to pray for us.'

He wrote again after he had received their feast day wishes. 'I seem to see you all around me in the Belvedere ... I wish I were at Lisieux to kiss you all whom I love so ... However Marie, my firstborn, go on leading your battalion as well as you can and be better than your old father, who has already had enough of the beauty all around him and is dreaming of Heaven and the Infinite.'

Throughout his travels Louis wrote frequently to Marie, often giving detailed descriptions of the places he visited, which included Bavaria, Constantinople, Greece and Italy; he made frequent visits to St. Peter's while he was in Rome. Louis wrote very few letters in his life so those which he wrote to Marie while on his pilgrimage are particularly interesting; they show his enthusiasm for travel and history but also his attachment to his family and his special love for Marie herself.



*The Pavilion
acquired by Louis
Martin before his
marriage.*



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Abbe Maurice Bellere

St. Therese

Pire Adolphe Roulland

Marie goes to Carmel

It was especially hard for him when his eldest daughter, who had never shown any inclination towards the religious life, asked him for permission to follow her sister in to Carmel. Louis was shocked: he could not imagine life without Marie at home and in charge of the household, even when she assured him that Céline was well able to run the house. He looked at her with tears in his eyes and said, 'God could not have asked a greater sacrifice from me. I thought you would never leave me!'

In order that Marie could visit her mother's grave once more before she entered Carmel, the whole family went for a holiday to Alencon. It was while they were there that Léonie decided suddenly to enter the Poor Clares. In spite of his surprise Louis did all he could to smooth over the incident, for Marie was very indignant that her sister should have entered in such haste. In less than two months Léonie was home again. She was not strong enough to follow the austere rule of the Poor Clares; but by this time Marie was already in Carmel.

And Thérèse

When Thérèse asked her father's permission to enter Carmel, Louis was not so surprised, even though she was only fourteen. He picked a little white flower growing on a low stone wall, pulling it up by its roots, and gave it to her explaining how God had showered His loving care on it enabling it to grow. Thérèse felt that she was listening to her own story and from that time she always thought of herself as 'the little white flower'. Recalling that day she said that her father spoke to her as saints speak. He knew that in spite of her youth she had a true vocation and he would not stand in her way.

Even at the risk of being thought imprudent he did all he could to help her obtain permission from the Church authorities to enter Carmel at fifteen. He went with her to see the Bishop and he took her, together with Céline, on a pilgrimage to Rome where she asked the Holy Father for the necessary permission. Léonie, this time with her father's full permission, had gone to try her vocation at the Visitation Convent in Caen, but even though the Visitation was much less austere than the Poor Clares, Léonie's health was not good enough and she returned home in time to see Thérèse enter Carmel.

By this time Louis' health had deteriorated. Through most of his life he had been well and strong but one day when he was fishing near Alencon he was stung behind his ear by a poisonous fly. At first there was only a small black spot which did not trouble him very much, but over the years the infection spread and he received a variety of treatments. The year before Thérèse entered Carmel he experienced a paralytic stroke which affected his left side, but he recovered enough to make the pilgrimage to Rome with his two youngest daughters.

His Piety

In May 1888 Louis was at Mass one day in the Cathedral and heard the priest appeal for donations towards the cost of a new altar; he donated the entire amount of 10,000 francs.

The same month he made a visit to Alencon. While he was there he went into Our Lady's Church, where he and Zélie were married; kneeling before the altar there he offered himself as a victim.

The next month when Louis was sitting quietly in the Belvedere Céline brought him a painting of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Mary Magdalene, which she had just finished.

Louis was so impressed with it that he offered to take her to Paris where she could perfect her talent with a professional artist. Céline explained that she did not wish to study in Paris since she hoped eventually to follow her sisters into Carmel; she had not told him this before because she was resolved to stay with him to care for him in his last days. Louis knew that Léonie had not given up her desire to enter the Visitation as soon as her health would allow it, so it looked as if Zélie's wish that all her daughters would be nuns was about to be realised. Louis was by this time suffering quite severe lapses of memory. He went to Le Havre without telling anyone and it was only four days later that Céline and her uncle found him there in a confused state. He had an idea that he would like to retire to a place of solitude where he could live as a hermit. In spite of his confusion he decided that he must put his business affairs in order to secure the future needs of his daughters. This involved a number of visits to Paris and although he carried out his business



Venerable Zélie Martin
Mother of St. Thérèse

St. Thérèse

Venerable Louis Martin
Father of St. Thérèse

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE MISSIONS 1 October 2006 to 14 December 2007



Louis did not return on the expected day and his daughters became very concerned for him, especially as he was sometimes carrying large amounts of money.

The date for Thérèse's Clothing in the Carmelite Habit was delayed because of Louis's illness but it was finally fixed for 10th January 1889. The family feared that he would not be well enough to assist at the ceremony, but on that day he was able to take his part. He led Thérèse down the aisle; she was dressed as a bride, in the robe of white velvet trimmed with swansdown and Alençon lace which he had given her. Thérèse called it his 'day of triumph, his last feast here below.' After she entered Carmel he seemed to become very old and tired, and shortly after her Clothing he suffered a further stroke.

A humiliation

His obsession for running away increased to such an extent that his brother-in-law, Isidore Guérin, insisted that he be taken into care, since although his memory was badly affected he was still completely mobile. Léonie and Céline realised that they could not watch him all the time so this seemed to be the only solution. On February 12, 1889 Louis was admitted to the Bon Sauveur at Caen. In the hospital he had a considerable amount of freedom and he received loving care from the sisters who appreciated his co-operation and gentle manner. He spent much of his time in the Chapel and was able to receive Holy Communion daily when he was well enough. He shared everything which was given to him with the other patients and he never complained although he suffered at being separated from his family.

He once remarked to a doctor, 'I was always accustomed to command, and here I must obey. It is hard! But I know why God has sent me this trial. I never had any humiliation in my life; I needed one.'

On another occasion he remarked to Céline, 'I am very well here, and I am here because it is the will of God. I needed this trial. Besides I can do good around here. How many need conversion!'

Only a week after Louis was admitted to hospital Léonie and Céline arranged to take rooms with the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul in Caen. They were lodged very close to

the hospital and by special permission they were able to see their father frequently. These visits and the letters he received from his Carmelite daughters were a source of great joy to him. However, by June Léonie and Céline were asked to conform to the general ruling of only one visit each week, so they returned to Lisieux to live with their uncle, as the lease on Les Buissonnets had expired.

The last years

They continued to travel to Caen each week to visit their father until he was able to return to Lisieux again on May 10, 1892. By this time Louis had suffered further strokes which had paralysed his legs, so there was no longer any fear that he would wander away. Léonie and Céline pleaded with their uncle to let him return and he agreed.

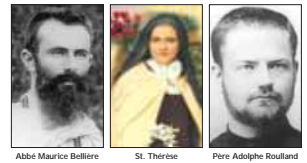
On May 12 Louis was taken to visit his Carmelite daughters. It was the last time he saw them. He was no longer able to walk at all. After staying for a short time with the Guérin family, Louis, Léonie and Céline moved into a small rented house nearby, so close in fact that it faced the garden gate of the Guérin house. Louis spent much of his time in this garden in his wheel chair. A Married couple were employed as servants: the man, Desiré, could move Louis easily and his happy disposition added to the contentment of the household. Louis by this time did not speak very much but he showed appreciation and was usually able to follow a conversation. When he was told that Pauline had been elected Prioress of Carmel he answered 'They could not have chosen better.'

Léonie entered the Visitation Convent at Caen again in June 1893. Céline alone remained with her father until his death, but she was greatly supported by the Guérin family. In 1888 they had inherited, together with the Maudelonde family, La Musse, a large property near Evreux; the Guérins had use of it from May until August each year.

Léonie and Céline had both stayed there, but during the first summer Louis was home from hospital they felt it would be too difficult to transport him there as he would need his wheel chair, his invalid bed and other luggage. The train journey from Lisieux to Evreux was quite straight forward but the property was five miles from the railway station and the drive from the gate-lodge to the house was 2 miles, so the last part of the journey would have to be made by carriage.



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Abbe Maurice Bellere St. Therese Pire Adolphe Roulland

However, by the following Summer the whole family had become more accustomed to coping with Louis' needs and they decided to try to take him to La Musse. Their efforts were rewarded when he showed his obvious delight at the beautiful views which could be seen from this high setting. Céline and her cousin Marie wheeled him through the extensive woodland, where at twilight he was enchanted by the song of the nightingale. Louis never lost his feeling for music; he was still able to sing a little himself, even though his voice had become weak, and he loved to listen to his niece Marie singing and playing the piano. He said that he was even happier at La Musse than at Lisieux.

On August 18 they returned to Lisieux. Throughout the following winter, Louis' health remained stable. In May Céline went to Caen but while she was there on May 27 Louis suffered a serious stroke which paralysed his left arm. Her uncle sent a telegram and she returned at once. Louis received the Last Sacraments. He seemed to be recovering again until June 5 when he had a serious heart attack while Céline was at the 7 a.m. Mass in the Cathedral; her uncle sent for her and she ran all the way home fearful that she would not arrive in time. Louis had turned purple and his heart had stopped beating; he seemed to be completely exhausted and to have great difficulty with breathing, but by July 5 he had recovered enough to make the journey to La Musse. He suffered another, more prolonged heart attack on July 28 and again he received the Last Sacraments.

At 5 o'clock the following morning, which was a Sunday, Desiré called Céline as he was convinced that Louis' death was very near. Céline recalled that her father's eyes were closed and his breathing had become strong and regular. Most of the household left by carriage to assist at the early Mass in Evreux; Céline and her aunt stayed behind with Louis; her uncle was still asleep as he had returned late the previous night from Lisieux.

Just before 8 o'clock they noticed that Louis was icy cold. Céline Guérin went to fetch some hot water bottles and to wake her husband, while Céline remained alone with her father praying the invocations to Jesus, Mary and Joseph for a happy death. As she finished praying aloud Louis looked at her with love and gratitude, then he closed his eyes for the last time. Isidore and Céline Guérin had come into the room and Isidore

pressed the crucifix to Louis' lips several times. By this time his breathing had become very weak, and at a quarter past eight on Sunday 29th July 1894 he died. Isidore said that he had never seen a more peaceful death.

Louis' body was taken back to Lisieux where he was buried on August 2 after a Requiem Mass in the Cathedral.

Céline had written to her sisters in Carmel 'Papa is in Heaven':

Prayer for the Beatification of Louis and Zélie Martin and to obtain favours through their intercession:

God Our Father, we praise You for Louis and Zélie Martin, a truly faithful husband and wife, who lived their Christian life in an exemplary way through their duties in life and practice of Gospel teaching. In bringing up a large family, in spite of trials, bereavements and suffering, they showed immense trust in You and obedience to Your will.

Lord deign to manifest Your will in their regard and grant me the favours I implore while praying that the father and mother of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus be presented as models of family life today.

Amen.

The *Causes* of Louis and Zélie Martin were drawn up between 1957 and 1960 in two separate processes whose findings were sent to Rome.

These two *Causes* will now be examined according to the method of the historical process and form one single *Cause* so that this husband and wife may be Beatified together, should the Church so decide.

The faithful are, therefore, invited to invoke Mr. & Mrs. Martin together for favours and miracles confided to their intercession.

All who receive requests through the intercession of Louis & Zélie Martin are asked to notify the Lisieux Carmel.

