

The Experience of Jesus' Thirst in the Life of Saint Thérèse*

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*The more I feel myself burning with your divine flames,
the more I thirst to give you souls.
With love's thirst I burn night and day...¹
Saint Thérèse*

* The abbreviations used in the body of the text referring to works of Saint Thérèse are as follows: LaC (THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX, *Her Last Conversations*, trans. of John Clarke, ICS Publications, Washington 1977), Ms A, B, C (*Manuscript A, B, C of Autobiography*, in: EAD., *Nouvelle édition du centenaire: édition critique des oeuvres complètes de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face*, Cerf, Paris 1992), LT (EAD., *Letters of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*, 1, trans. of John Clarke, ICS Publications, Washington 1982; EAD., *Letters of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*, 2, trans. of John Clarke, ICS Publications, Washington 1988), GC I, II (EAD., *General Correspondence*, 1, trans. of John Clarke, ICS Publications, Washington 1982; EAD., *General Correspondence*, 2, trans. of John Clarke, ICS Publications, Washington 2002), Pri (EAD., *The Prayers of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*, trans. of Aletheia Kane, ICS Publications, Washington 1997), PN (EAD., *The Poetry of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*, trans. of Donald Kinney, ICS Publications, Washington 1996), S (EAD., *Story of a Soul*, trans. of John Clarke, ICS Publications, Washington 1976), ACJCL (*Archives Community of Jesus Crucified Lafayette*). Unless otherwise noted, citations and references to the original French text of Saint Thérèse are taken from *Nouvelle édition du centenaire: édition critique des oeuvres complètes de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face*, Cerf, Paris 1992.

¹ PN 24, stz. 25 (THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX, *The Poetry of saint Thérèse of Lisieux*, trans. Donald Kinney, ICS Publications, Washington 1996, 129).

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ABSTRACT: Saint Thérèse underwent a deep personal encounter with the thirst of Jesus, an experience which intensified her love for Him and established a certain change of direction in her life. The experience was initiated by God, and the result was a lasting change in her soul. Saint Thérèse encountered Jesus' «I thirst» from the cross as a word of life. She listened to it, she took it to heart, and in her life it yielded fruit a hundredfold (cf. Mk 4,20). Thérèse's encounter with Jesus' thirst and the significance it played in her spiritual life is the subject of the present article.

KEY WORDS: Zeal for Souls; Saint Thérèse; Thirst for Love and Souls; Christmas Grace; Jesus' Thirst; Vocation to be Love.