

The Way of Thérèse and the Spirit of Mother Teresa*

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...it's the way of confidence and total abandon¹ (St. Thérèse).

*The spirit of the Society is one of loving trust, total surrender and cheerfulness as lived by Jesus and Mary in the Gospel*² (Mother Teresa).

The vocations of the two Teresas, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and Saint Teresa of Calcutta, are lived out in a similar manner or spirit. While Saint Thérèse refers to her way, Mother speaks of the MC Spirit, each intending to convey the manner in which they do what they do. This *modus operandi* is essentially constituted by the virtues and dispositions which characterize how they live their lives. A thorough study of the

* The abbreviations used in the body of the text referring to works of Saint Thérèse are as follows: LaC (*Last Conversations*), Ms A, B, C (*Manuscript A, B, C of Autobiography*), LT (*Letter of Thérèse*), GC I, II (*General Correspondence vol. I, II*), Pri (*Prayers*), PN (*Poetry*), S (*Story of a Soul*). The abbreviations in reference to Mother Teresa are as follows: ACJCL (*Archives of Community of Jesus Crucified Lafayette*), MI (*Mother's Instruction*), MIC (*Mother's Instruction to Contemplatives*), ML (*Letter of Mother Teresa*), MLCW (*Letter of Mother to her Co-workers*), MLVE (*Letter of Mother to Father Van Exem*), MLVDP (*Letter of Mother to Father Michael van der Peet*), MLPE (*Letter of Mother to Archbishop Perier*), MLACW (*Letter of Mother to an Anonymous Co-worker*), MLPI (*Letter of Mother to Father Picachy*), MLNE (*Letter of Mother to Father Josef Neuner*). CCC (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*).

¹ LaC, 257 (July, Additional Conversations with Mother Agnes of Jesus).

² *Constitutions of the Missionaries of Charity*, no. 2.

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ABSTRACT: Mother Teresa of Calcutta was deeply devoted to Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and chose to be named in religion Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus. God traced lines in the heart of Mother Teresa which were very similar to what he had done in the heart of Saint Thérèse. Both Teresas are characterized by their trust, surrender, and cheerfulness. The present contribution undertakes to study the virtues of confidence, abandon and joy in the life of Saint Thérèse and compare them to the similar virtues of loving trust, total surrender and cheerfulness of Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity.

KEY WORDS: Mother Teresa; Saint Thérèse; Trust; Surrender; Cheerfulness; Missionaries of Charity; MC Spirit.