

The Divine Prisoner's Little Flower

St. Thérèse of Lisieux's Favorite Childhood Poem

Between two cold prison bars, there grew a humble plant
That charmed away the weariness of a poor prisoner;
It was the only happiness of his suffering soul,
The only pastime of his sorrowful home!...
Beneath the gloomy walls of his dismal dwelling place,
His hand had planted it ... he watered it with tears!...
And as a reward for his care, he saw the poor little thing
Give him unceasingly its perfumes and its flowers....

Oh! My divine Master, in the depths of the tabernacle,
For 1800 years a prisoner out of love,
Despite our coldness, through a constant miracle,
Near us You have fixed Your dwelling place;
And there, more abandoned, even more alone
Than the poor prisoner whose neglected state I pity,
Your tenderness implores, yea, begs for the hearts
Of Your perverse children, those ingrates who refuse You this gift....

Alas! Since they never cease to flee obstinately from You,
Since they leave You all alone, O God of my heart!
Out of pity, lower Your eyes to look on my lowliness—
I will be, my JESUS, Your little flower....
Hear the unceasing prayer of my soul:
It is You who are inspiring it, Lord; grant my request.
Oh! Tell me how, humble flower that I am, in order to please You,
My soul, placed in Your hands, will forget itself, expecting nothing in return.

Jesus:

So! It is into FAITH ... it is into UNDISGUISED FAITH ...
That My hand would plant that little flower,
Who, living for ME ALONE ... unknown and unrecognized by mortals,
Would have no other Sun than a glance from My heart.

For this tender flower, I would like as Root,
That hope in Me that never weakens;
Infinite hope in My divine Goodness ...
Abandonment of a child who knows that it is cherished....

For its Stem, it would need, without desire and without fear,
A tranquil, a joyful, a prompt acquiescence
To the slightest call of My holy will ...
Without hesitation, without any reasoning.

It would delight me if, taking for its Leaves
Complete disregard for the esteem and consideration of others,
It knew how to veil, to the eye that beholds it,
The gifts that it has received from My divine hands.

I would want it to have as its Flower a constant joy,
That could be troubled neither by setbacks ... nor sorrow ...
That even racked by suffering and bitterness,

Would still know how to delight in my joy.

Finally, its Fruit would be that virtue that is so pure
That it sees GOD ALONE ... here below, as in heaven ...
That no longer has regard for any created thing,
That seeks in ME alone the end and goal of its desires....

In this way, achieving the expectation of my plans,
It will have been made worthy of the sweetest favor;
And into My sacred heart, grafting my humble plant
By uniting it to MYSELF, I will make its true joy.

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