

Pope Pius XI called St. Therese of Lisieux "the messenger of the Twentieth century." And St. Therese had a very special message about marriage.

Married Love... Almost Infinite

by JOHN M. HAFFERT

Many young people today experiment in pre-marital relationships. But recent surveys show that 94% of all of them, even now, will marry. And how many of their marriages will survive? How many will be really happy?

A cousin of St. Therese, by the name of Celine Pottier, had been married only a few years when the greatest of all trials came to separate her from the man she loved. He stopped going to church. He ceased to share that deepest of all human relationships, the relationship of each other in God.

"I Believe!"

Suddenly a spiritual "miracle" occurred.

As though a great light flooded into his mind and heart, the young Mr. Pottier, while visiting with his wife Celine in Lourdes, fell to his knees at the Grotto and exclaimed in the words that were to echo at that same spot years later from the lips of Dr. Alexis Carrell: "I believe!"

In joy Celine wrote to her cousin in the Carmel in Lisieux to tell her the good news. St. Therese replied:

"Your letter gave me great joy; I am lost in wonder at the way the Blessed Virgin has pleased to grant all your desires. Even before your marriage, she wanted the soul, to which you were to be united, to be but one soul with yours through identity of feeling. What a grace to

feel yourself so completely understood! and above all to know that your union will be immortal, that after this life you will still be able to love the husband who is so dear to you!...

"So for both of us the blest days of our childhood are over! We are now in the serious stages of life; we are following very different roads, but the end is the same. Each of us must have but one same purpose: to sanctify ourselves in the road God has marked out for us."

Imagine St. Therese saying (herself only about 22 years of age) that she and her young friend were on but different roads to the same end. And then, speaking of marriage, St. Therese describes the relationship of husband to wife perhaps in a way the world has never heard of before. She continues:

"Love... Almost Infinite"

"I feel, darling Friend, that I can speak to you freely, you understand the language of faith better than the language of the world, and the Jesus of your First Communion has remained the Master of your heart; it is in Him that you love the beautiful soul which now is but one soul with yours; it is because of Him, that your love is so tender and strong. Oh! how lovely our religion is, instead of constricting hearts (as the world fancies) it lifts them up and gives them the capacity to love, to love with a love almost infinite,



since it is to continue after this mortal life—which is given to us only that we may win the homeland of heaven, where we shall find once more the dear ones we have loved upon earth."

And now, concerning this great favor Our Lady had obtained for young Celine Pottier did St. Therese have a hand in it? She gladly admits that she did! She continues:

"The Blessed Scapular!"

"I had asked Our Lady of Mount Carmel, dear Celine, for the grace you obtained at Lourdes. I am so happy that you are wearing the Blessed Scapular! It is a sure sign of predestination and, over and above that, it unites you more intimately with your little sisters in Carmel. You ask me, darling Cousin, to pray for your dear husband; do you think I could fail in that? No, I could not possibly separate you in my poor prayers. I ask Our Lord to be as generous towards you as to the bride and bridegroom at Cana. May He always change water into wine—that is, continue to make you happy, and lighten as far as possible the trials to be met with in this life. Trials! How could I put that word in a letter at a moment when I know that for you all is happiness. Forgive me, darling Friend, enjoy the joy God gives you in peace and don't worry about the future. He has, I am certain, new graces and new joys in store for you."