

*Celebrating Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019...*

**Tuesday, 1 October 2019**

**Saint Theresa of Child Jesus (Mathew 18:1-5; Eph 3:14-19)**

Deacon Augustine Mlavarayil CMI

“My whole strength lies in prayer and sacrifice, these are my invincible arms; they can move hearts far better than words, I know it by experience.” St. Therese of Child Jesus

Today, the Catholic Church celebrates the feast of one of the best known and loved saints of the nineteenth century. The religious nun who proved her vocation to love in every single movement of her committed discipleship stands alone as an unrepeatable model of simplicity. Her classic contribution to the literature “The Story of a Soul” depicts and reveals the truth of Gospel message of love in its fullness. Setting our reflection in and around today’s liturgical passages, let us deeply ponder over the virtuous life of Little Flower who portrayed marvellous history of love, trust and simplicity.

The gospel passage displays the ambitious disciples approaching Jesus and posing a purely selfish question, “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?” Understanding the mere temporal mind set of the disciples Jesus reveals another logic and pattern of greatness which is totally opposite to the ambitious views of the disciples. To correct the covetous and contentious orientations of his disciples, Jesus called over and placed a child in their midst and said, “Unless you turn and become like child, you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven.” Jesus puts it bluntly that there is a serious mismatch between His value system and that of the disciples. What was needed was that they should “turn” from their self-seeking ambition, and regain, in this respect, the relative blamelessness of children. The same gospel explicates this great message on and off, “... and whoever wants to be first must be your slave...” (Mt 20:27). The advice of Jesus to Nicodemus to be born again suits very much to this criterion to access an entry to the Kingdom of heaven.

Today, we fondly remember a saint who could comprehend fully Jesus’ criterion to access the Kingdom of Heaven. She counters a rational culture, so often overcome by practical materialism, with the disarming simplicity of the “little way.” Her little way could be summarized as freedom from pride, covetousness, and ambition, which expresses itself fully in humility, sincerity, docility. In a time like ours, so frequently marked by purely materialistic philosophies, St. Theresa of Child Jesus proves to be remarkably effective in enlightening the mind and heart of those who hunger and thirst for truth and love. May St. Theresa of Lisieux intercede for us to communicate the Gospel Message with all boldness and without any hindrance getting inspired from her ‘little way’!

*Published by*

CMI General Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry