



Feast of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus



Date: Wednesday, October 1, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Nehemiah 2:1–8

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 137:1–6 | **Response:** Psalm 137:6ab

Gospel Acclamation: Philippians 3:8–9

Gospel Reading: Luke 9:57–62

Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

Good morning, dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

Today we honour Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, a young woman who became one of the greatest teachers of our faith—not by doing great things, but by doing small things with great love. Her “little way,” as she called it, teaches us that holiness is possible for all of us, in the ordinary tasks of daily life.

In the first reading we heard of a man who cared deeply for his people. Jerusalem had been destroyed. Its walls were broken. Nehemiah—though far away and serving a foreign king—carried the pain of his people in his heart. He prayed, he planned, and when the moment came, he asked the king for help. And God blessed his courage.

Nehemiah reminds us that love for God always moves us to rebuild what has been broken. In our own country, many things feel broken—trust in leadership, hope among our youth, fairness in economic life. Like Nehemiah, we are called to begin small: by praying, by speaking truth, by building with what we have. Saint Thérèse once said, “I want to love Jesus and make him loved”—that’s what Nehemiah was doing too, in his own way.

Our psalm this morning is a song of deep longing. “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept.” The people were in exile. Their hearts ached for home. We know something of that feeling when life doesn’t turn out as we hoped, or when God seems far away. But even in exile, the people remembered. Even in sorrow, they kept faith. So must we.

In the Gospel of Luke Jesus meets three people who say they want to follow him. Each has a reason to delay. But Jesus says, “No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom.” It’s a hard saying. But it’s a loving one. He wants our whole hearts. Not tomorrow. Not someday. But today.

Saint Thérèse gave her whole heart early. She joined the Carmelite convent at just 15. She lived a hidden life. She never travelled. She died at 24. But her trust in God’s love, and her daily yes to Him, has led millions to holiness. Pope John Paul II called her “a teacher of spiritual things.” Pope Francis said her “little way” is a “sweet path of love,” one that shows how God works through grace, not greatness.

In Zimbabwe today, we don’t need heroes. We need everyday saints. In our homes, in our schools, in our churches—people who choose to love quietly and faithfully. Saint Thérèse teaches us that every small act—done with love—is important to God.

And when we come to the Eucharist, we receive the strength to live this “little way.” Jesus gives himself to us—not in power, but in the form of simple bread. It is from this gift that we learn how to live.

Let us pray today for the grace to say yes to Jesus—not later, but now. Not when it’s easy, but especially when it’s hard.

To carry this into our prayer, I leave you with three questions:

- What small act of love is God asking of me today?
- What fear or excuse holds me back from saying yes to Him?
- When I receive the Eucharist, how can I ask Jesus to help me follow His path more closely?

Saint Thérèse, teach us your little way. Pray for us.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-10oct-01-yc-ot-26/>

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.