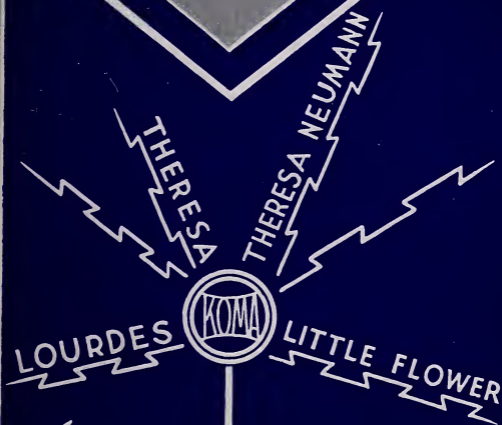


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# Radio Talks



*by*

**REV. JOHN J. WALDE**

*THE QUEEN'S WORK*

3742 West Pine Boulevard

ST. LOUIS, MO.



# Radio Talks

By

Rev. John J. Walde



THE QUEEN'S WORK  
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# The Story of Lourdes

I HAVE a story to tell you, a story so wonderful and so sublime that I almost hesitate to relate it. The story has to do with our own dear Mother, Mary, as she manifested herself to a little peasant girl in the small and insignificant village of Lourdes in lower France.

Let me first tell you a few things about our Blessed Mother in Heaven, lest some who do not know her and, hence, do not love her will not appreciate this story. All of you know, of course, that we as Catholics have a tender love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin. In fact, some of you who listen may think that we love her too much. But that is impossible. We can never love one too much who was loved and honored so highly by God Himself. And of all God's creatures never was any one honored as Mary.

## Her Most Glorious Title

God, who had it in His power to choose His own Mother, choose Mary from among all mankind to be His Mother. From her virginal body He took His flesh so that Jesus who was born of Mary, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, was truly the Son of God, and also the Son of Mary. This is Mary's most glorious title. For this we honor her with all the power of our being.

But we love her, too, with a tenderness that surpasses all human love, for Mary is truly our Mother as well. By baptism we are reborn to a spiritual life and are thereby made a child of God and a partaker in the very nature of God. But if we share the nature of Christ, then His Mother becomes our Mother, and therefore Mary is truly our Mother. Moreover, on the cross Christ bestowed Mary on us when He said to Saint John, who represented all of us, "Son, behold thy Mother."

It is exceedingly difficult for us as Catholics to understand why our loyalty to Christ should be questioned because we love His Mother so much. The question should rather be, "Why do some who call themselves Christians love Mary so little?" Jesus and Mary cannot and must not be separated. They were together from all eternity in God's plan of the redemption of mankind; together we find them in the stable of Bethlehem; together we find them in sorrow at Calvary; together we find them in glory in Heaven; together we find them in the history and the liturgy of the Church and in the hearts of the children of the Church. The Infant Jesus without Mary is a kingdom without a throne and Mary without the Child is a Queen without a crown.

The Church has ever been solicitous to do honor to Mary and so, in the early dawn of the Christian era, she defined the doctrine that Mary is truly the Mother of God.

This was done at the Council of Ephesus which gathered in the year 430 to, condemn the teachings of Nestorius who had made false statements in regard to the nature of Christ, and claimed that the Blessed Virgin was the Mother of the man Jesus, but not truly the Mother of God.

### Honor to Whom Honor Is Due

Down through the ages the Church has shown Mary her love and devotion, outdoing herself, as it were, to give honor to whom honor is due. So it was that at another Council, which is a gathering of the Catholic Bishops of the World, held in the year 1854, Pope Pius IX defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This was a glorious tribute for it proclaimed that Mary, from the first moment of her conception was preserved free and immune from the taint of original sin. Our first parents, by their sin, lost the supernatural life which God had given them and, as a consequence, all their posterity were born deprived of this sharing in the life of God. The sin that caused this is what is known as Original Sin. But Mary was the human race's solitary exception, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, who was to be her Son.

In 1854, Pope Pius IX defined as a revealed dogma the belief (already universal and many centuries old) in the Immaculate Conception of the most holy Virgin, Mother of God. The Catholic world rejoiced in this

added honor shown to Mary and even Heaven seemed touched by the proofs of tenderness and love on the part of the children of earth. Our heavenly Queen who delights in the homage of her subjects, condescended to come down into their midst bringing with her, as it were, a striking confirmation from Heaven of the infallible pronouncement of the Pope. This was in 1858, four years after the pronouncement. Appearing as a young girl, with features typical of simplicity and innocence, she left Heaven to set her Virgin foot upon the rock of Lourdes. There, clothed in the splendors of Mount Tabor, and speaking to an humble and simple peasant child, Bernadette Soubirous, she said, after having raised her eyes to the eternal heights:

"I AM THE IMMACULATE  
CONCEPTION."

Beautiful is this famous place of pilgrimage, nestling among the foothills of the Pyrenees at the junction of two mountain streams and built around the base of a precipitous rock crowned with an ancient fortress. This fortress was famous in days gone by. But what makes Lourdes famous today is the Grotto of Lourdes and the magnificent church which is built over it. Because of its clear white stone, resembling marble, it is visible from a great distance. A stranger who had not heard of Lourdes would marvel indeed to see such a magnificent church in a town so small, but when



the reason is known and one hears of the wonderful manifestations which were made there by the Blessed Virgin to Bernadette Soubirous, it is no longer a mystery.

### Beheld a Vision

Over seventy-five years ago, Bernadette, then a child of fourteen, went out, as was her custom, to gather wood. As she was passing by the grotto, near the rock of Massabielle, she heard a peculiar voice, and looking into the cavern she beheld there the vision of a lady "more beautiful than she had ever seen." She was clothed in a long white robe and a silvery veil with a light blue sash, and slippers adorned with golden roses. In her hand she held a rosary. Bernadette at first was frightened but the lady looked upon her with such a sweet and gracious smile that fear vanished and she drew nearer to the lady. Day after day Bernadette returned to be greeted anew by this Heavenly Visitor. As might be expected, the people at first thought it was just a case of hallucination, but, nevertheless, many followed the little maid to the rocks of Massabielle. Though the crowds could not see the vision, they could see Bernadette in ecstasy and the heavenly light which illuminated her countenance was such that they could not help but realize that Bernadette was speaking to a Heavenly Visitor. Soon great crowds would follow her. Many who came to scoff, remained to pray with Bernadette. Then the authorities

forbade anyone to visit the grotto but a mysterious power continued to draw Bernadette to the spot. On eighteen different occasions the Blessed Virgin appeared to Bernadette, praying with her, teaching her how to pray and commanding her to carry out certain instructions. She was told on one occasion: "Go tell the priests to build a church for me here." At another time, that processions should be held and pilgrimages made to the grotto. Our Lady assured her that great crowds would come.

While great crowds gathered about Bernadette as she knelt beside the grotto, many could neither hear nor see anything. Yet merely looking at Bernadette, as she knelt in ecstasy, made them realize that they were in the presence of the supernatural. At times, Bernadette knelt with a lighted candle in her hand, and as her prayers lasted a long time, the candle would burn down to her hand. Yet she received not the slightest burn, although when, after her ecstasy, a lighted candle was touched to her hand she would quickly withdraw her hand and say: "You are burning me." These manifestations made it clear to the people that here was something more than natural. And what made it still more clear was the miraculous appearance of a fountain in the grotto. During one of the visions Bernadette was told to scratch the dry ground in the grotto. As she did, a stream of water gushed forth in the presence of a vast crowd who had gathered to

watch the child pray. A little child, at the point of death, was dipped into the waters and was immediately cured. Soon other cures took place at this mysterious fountain and then it was that thorough investigations began.

### **Pilgrimages Are Started**

For several years everything was done by sceptics and enemies to obstruct the commands of the Virgin. The place was barricaded. No one was permitted near it. But after four years it was declared that the faithful were justified in believing the reality of the apparitions and a church was built. In the year 1873 pilgrimages were started to the shrine and three years later a beautiful basilica with a large crypt beneath it was completed. The number of people coming increased from day to day. Soon this immense basilica was found inadequate and another large church known as the Church of the Rosary was built at the foot of the other Church. Now there are, in reality, three large churches all in one at this hallowed spot.

### **A Famous Grotto**

To the side of the Church is the famous grotto of Lourdes. In a niche in the rock stands a life size statue of the Blessed Virgin made according to the description, given by Bernadette, of the lady more beautiful than any she had ever seen. Surmounting the head of the statue are the words spoken

by the Virgin when Bernadette asked her name: "I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION." Near this also, surmounted by a marble coping is the miraculous fountain which gushed forth in obedience to the Virgin's command. In the grotto stands a beautiful altar and on the rock itself are hundreds and thousands of crutches, canes and braces, the thanksgiving offerings of those who have been cured at the Grotto.

### Crowds Increase Each Year

Remarkable in the extreme are the number of pilgrimages and individuals who come to this famed spot. It was promised by the Virgin that great crowds would come and the promise is being fulfilled. Year after year, the crowds increase and the three churches are wholly inadequate to accommodate the throngs of visitors. Far in excess of a million pilgrims and visitors from all quarters of the globe come each year and, somehow nearly all experience a sort of enchantment about the place. Here one finds real faith. Kneeling at the Grotto, entering the processions in the afternoon or evenings, walking among the sick and afflicted and noting the expression of hope and faith in their faces—all these things seem to lift one out of one's natural self and into, for the time being at least, the true life of the soul. Lourdes, more than any other spot in the world, puts one in closer touch with the supernatural, and those who have once experienced the thrill

of it all, want to return again to this thrice hallowed spot where Heaven's Queen deigned to set her foot on earth.

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## Lourdes and Miracles

FOR the past seventy-five years the fountain at Lourdes has belched forth thousands upon thousands of gallons of water each day; and while, to all appearances and also according to chemical analysis, this water is just pure water, yet it has a curative property that cannot be explained in a natural manner. Hundreds and thousands who have come to this famous shrine have either drunk of this water or bathed in it and have been restored to health. Other millions have come and have not been cured. But the fact remains that many thousands have been cured, and from all manner of diseases.

This brings us to the question of miracles. There are those in our day, and their number is legion, who refuse to believe in the possibility of miracles. With a wave of the hand or a shrug of a shoulder they think to dispose of anything that borders on the supernatural. They think themselves so wise and so advanced because they have discarded the supernatural. But miracles are possible, and the fact that they do happen proves, conclusively, that they are possible. Now by miracles we mean facts that can be perceived by man's senses

and yet so extraordinary that they cannot be accomplished by natural forces, but only by the omnipotence of God. Among miracles we would class the instantaneous and complete cure of an organic disease, the raising of a dead person to life, or any other sensible work that cannot be accomplished merely by the combined forces of nature.

### Miracles Happen Right Along

The day of miracles is not past, for God can easily change the laws of nature, which are His laws, as He created them in the beginning. Miracles are happening right along. Most of them we see only with the eyes of faith, but often, too, with our physical eyes. That miracles have happened and are happening in great number at Lourdes cannot be denied. During the first fifty years after the apparition of Our Blessed Lady there were recorded in the annals of Lourdes more than four thousand genuine miracles.

These are not idle statements. They have a medical board at Lourdes to which more than nine thousand physicians, in all parts of the world, belong. Several hundred of them come to Lourdes each year. They belong to every kind of religion and to no religion. In Lourdes there is a large hospital to which the sick are brought, and here they are examined. The examination is thorough and complete. If a cure takes place it is recognized as a cure only if the person cured was examined both before and

after the cure and no possible explanation can be given that it came about in a natural manner. Cures of nervous disorders, so often falsely looked upon as miraculous, are hardly considered by the medical board at Lourdes. Deception in such diseases is too easy, and only a very negligible number of the thousands of cures recorded are cures of nervous diseases. Among the cures listed are cures from tuberculosis, tumors, cancers, blindness, deafness, broken and infected bones.

### **Cannot Be Explained by Nature**

As might be expected, every manner of explanation has been given for the cures in an effort to explain them in a natural manner. Hypnotism, suggestion, the curative power in the waters of the spring, all these have long been discarded by eminent physicians and scientists. The fact that the greater number of miracles at Lourdes do not happen either at the grotto or while bathing in the waters has proved conclusively that the curative power is not in the water itself. As a matter of fact, no natural cause, known or unknown, is sufficient to account for the marvelous cures witnessed at the foot of the celebrated rock where the Virgin Immaculate deigned to appear.

The magnificent church built at the command of the Blessed Virgin is eloquent testimony that heavenly favors have been conferred here. In many respects this is the most singular sanctuary in all the world.

As one eyes the ceiling one hundred feet about the kneeling worshipers, one sees nothing but a mass of varicolored silken banners, triumphant proofs of the reality of Bernadette's vision. Moreover, the chapels, and in fact most of the walls of the three churches, are covered with gilded hearts, medallions and votive tablets of white marble, all testifying to miraculous cures effected at this holy spot.

### Processions Every Day

A great many of the cures at Lourdes occurred at the Grotto where our Lady appeared, or while bathing in the waters that sprang forth miraculously from the rock. In late years, however, the greater number take place during the processions that are held each day, particularly the procession held in the afternoon. This is the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. There is something tremendously inspiring about this. While we as Catholics believe at all times that Christ is really and truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, yet here at Lourdes one seems really to feel His presence.

Thousands upon thousands take part in this procession. It starts at the Grotto, winds its way up along one side of the long approach leading from the town to the Grotto, then down the other side, and then masses within the large inclosure before the Church of the Rosary. At the rear of the procession comes the priest or the



bishop, carrying Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. When all have gathered within the inclosure, which holds some fifteen thousand people, a scene of surpassing beauty and tenderness takes place. Here the sick of every description have gathered, on cots, in wheel chairs, on crutches. The priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament pauses before each row and makes the sign of the cross over them with the monstance.

Hundreds and thousands of sick people come to Lourdes each year with the hope that they will be cured of whatever ailment they may be suffering. While all do not receive a direct answer to their prayer, yet each receives a distinct benefit. It is perhaps a greater gift to receive strength and patience to endure one's cross than to be relieved of it, and one feels confident that the sufferers who come to Lourdes receive just that. I took particular pains to walk among the sick at Lourdes and examine the faces of the sufferers. There were some five hundred there at the time, afflicted with every imaginable kind of disease. What struck me particularly was the manifestations of faith and hope and resignation.

### No Place Like Lourdes

The afternoon procession is wholly in honor of Our Blessed Savior, but there is another procession in the evening, which is in honor of our Heavenly Queen. This is known as the Torchlight Procession. Each marcher carries a lighted candle covered

with a sort of wax-paper globe. As they march they repeat over and over the famous hymn of Lourdes, the Ave Maria; and then, when all have congregated in the vast inclosure before the church, the marchers with their thousands of lighted candles present a view that is not easily forgotten. Grouped now, the song continues and the refrain is taken up by the tens of thousands present, and with an eagerness that makes it seem as though they wished to pierce the very heavens with their song. Truly, in all the world, there is not a place where the faith is felt, no place where religion is so openly professed and with such exuberance as here at Lourdes. And yet there is a dignity and decorum about it all, and nothing whatsoever that borders on hysteria or fanaticism.

### Strengthens Our Faith

Living in the midst of a doubting world, it is good indeed to visit Lourdes for the one whose faith is lagging and also for those strong in the faith. For it is in just such a place as Lourdes that our confidence, so incomprehensible to this shifting world, rises up in our Catholic hearts. We go to Lourdes from a world that is filled with every sort of belief, where on the one side goes up the cry "Lo, here is the Christ, or there!" or the proclamation of the yet more recent discovery that there is no Christ at all; from that modern society where one section endlessly pursues pleas-

ure without the industry to earn it, and another industry without the pleasure to sweeten it; where one modern school of thought tells us that there is nothing but matter and that spirit is gas generated from the clay of which we are all made; and another that there is nothing but spirit and that matter is but the bad dream of a mortal mind; where the Puritan tells us that God is the enemy of art and the hedonist that there is no God except art.

From all this whirl and confusion we come to Lourdes and there we find Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever. Here once more lives the eternal story of the Gospel. Here the Maiden dwells as long ago at Nazareth; here the Mother, standing beside her Son, points to the water of affliction, and at His word, from her intercession, it becomes wine. Here Jesus Christ goes about doing good; and the sick are brought at even when the sun sets and laid on couches. Here even the old cries ring out word for word, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief" . . . "Lord, that I may see" . . . "that I may hear." . . . Here the pitiful prayer is again uttered, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick. . ." Here above all, as God goes on His way in glorious disguise, coming back to the tabernacle where He dwells, vaster crowds than even those which welcomed Him as He came to the city of His father David, greet Him with the same cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Bless-

ed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Here once more then as Jesus is passing by, "The blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."

### A King Forever

At Lourdes as at many another place where Christ or His Blessed Mother have deigned to show Themselves in a visible manner, we Catholics find the confirmation that "God remaineth a King forever," that our old confidence has not been misplaced, that nature is a servant and not a queen, that Jesus Christ is the same always, that we have a more tender Mother than the hard earth from which our bodies came, and that our little sand-castles that we build are not the mightiest things in the universe anymore than is the sea that washes them away at every tide. Here we learn again that the "Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us," and that we saw His glory, that beneath all the efforts of the wise of this world, there is a truth that remains as unaffected by them as the hills about Lourdes are by the groping of the geologists, the truth that the God who made us and them together remains eternally the same and that He rules and is not ruled by the laws which He brought into being.

This, then, my friends, is just a very short account of Lourdes and some of the impressions that I have carried away from the scene. How one learns to love that

hallowed spot and love our Heavenly Mother more because of it! I would like to tell you more of Lourdes, but my time is almost up and I will close with a beautiful tribute paid to Our Heavenly Mother by St. Bernard in the form of a prayer—

Remember, O Most Gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto Thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my Mother. To Thee I come, before Thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate despise not my petition, but in Thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

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**Theresa Neumann**  
**of**  
**Konnersreuth**

**I**N ALL the world there are not many subjects so unusual and of such intense interest to a great number of people as is the case of Theresa Neumann. Newspapers throughout the world have carried the story of her life and the number of unusual and extraordinary events connected with it. Books have been written about her and translated into every known language. For the last fifteen years messages telling of the unusual have come from the little Bavarian town of Konnersreuth. And all of them

center about this simple peasant girl—  
Theresa Neumann.

For the benefit of those who have never heard of Theresa Neumann it will be necessary to sketch briefly the principal events in her early life in order to grasp the significance of the present events. Theresa Neumann, who is only thirty-five years old, was born in the same little village where she now lives. She is one of ten children. Being born of poor parents, work and hard work was her lot from early childhood. From early youth she had always been a healthy and strong child, without any evidence of super-sensitiveness or unusual piety. She received her education in the school of the village. The books she used there, together with several books on the care of plants and flowers and a few books of a spiritual nature are all that she has ever read. Yet what a wealth of knowledge she possesses! Eagerly have the great ones of the world come to her for knowledge from her lips.

### Theresa Suffers Stroke

In 1918, when Theresa Neumann was 20 years old, events began to happen in her life that have been of world-wide interest. At that time she was working for a neighboring farmer, for during the war it had fallen her lot to do a man's work, and we are told that she did it as capably as any man. At this time a fire broke out on the farm where she was working. A bucket

brigade was formed and Theresa was at the head of it, lifting the buckets of water up to the roof of the burning building. As she did so she suddenly felt pain in her back, so intense that she fainted. From that day on she could no longer work well. The pain increased and in April of that year she was taken to the hospital at Waldsassen where it was learned that she suffered from a spinal infection that was rapidly developing into complete paralysis. She was dismissed from the hospital and brought back home as one incurable. Sometime after she became entirely confined to bed and totally blind. Being unable to move in bed, sores appeared on her back and, despite the best of care, these increased and ate away the flesh clear to the bone. For four long years she suffered almost intolerable pain and yet we are told that during all this time she never uttered a word of complaint.

During her sickness Theresa often prayed to a namesake of hers, whose sanctity was being spoken of on every side. This other Theresa had died about the time that Theresa Neumann was born, but even then this other Theresa was rapidly becoming known as a saint and affectionately called the Little Flower of Jesus. A day in April of 1923 was set aside in Rome for the beatification of the Little Flower and Theresa Neumann, who had prayed that the Little Flower might be made a saint, had asked nothing for herself. Yet on the day

of beatification Theresa felt as if a hand were touching her pillow and when she raised her eyes she was suddenly conscious of a very bright light in her room and realized that she had recovered her full sight.

While she regained her sight, her other sufferings were increased rather than diminished. An unfortunate fall from her bed dislocated her left hip so that the left limb came to rest under the right one and thus increased her sufferings. Gangrene set in and for another nine months she suffered an agony that was almost beyond human endurance.

### Suddenly Cured

Then on May 17, 1925, she was suddenly and completely cured of her spinal disease and all associated diseases and pains. Again it was on a day of honor for the Little Flower of Jesus. On the morning of that day the Little Flower was declared as Saint in Rome. On the afternoon of that same day, Theresa Neumann saw an intensely bright light in the corner of her room and heard a voice. Quickly she beat upon the floor to summon her parents. They in turn called for the pastor of the village and some hospital sisters who were in the village at that time. These four tell us the following story: "We saw her sitting in bed in a position she had never been able to assume before. She appeared to be talking to someone in the room. Suddenly she stretched forth her hand and it



appeared as though some power grasped her hand and pulled her forward. Theresa showed signs of great pain and with her hand touched her back. When she was herself again she said to those in the room: 'Bring me a dress. I am cured. I can stand up.' And she did. The deep wounds on her back had entirely disappeared and she was able to walk, slowly at first, but with more and more strength. She was entirely cured, nor has the disease ever returned."

In regard to her vision and cure, Theresa Neumann tells us: "Out of the wonderful brightness there spoke a most kindly voice: 'Theresa, would you like to become well?' She answered: 'All is well with me. To live or to die, to be well or sick. Whatever God wishes, He knows best.' The voice spoke again: 'Would it bring you joy if you could stand up today and help yourself again?' She answered: 'Everything that comes from God gives me joy.' Then in the brightness Theresa saw the figure of the Little Flower dressed in the simple garb of the Carmelite nun with her face shining resplendently and she said to Theresa, 'You are permitted a little joy today. You may stand up. Try it, I will help you.' This was what the others had seen when, as it were, some power pulled her from her bed. Seemingly, Theresa hesitated in accepting so great a boon for fear she would no longer be able to suffer and so the voice continued: 'You will still be permitted to suffer, severely, and for a long time, and no physician will

be able to help you. Only through suffering can you carry out your vocation as a victim and thereby help priests in their work. Through suffering more things are accomplished than by the most glowing sermons.' ”

### Illness Comes Again

Another cross in the way of natural sufferings came to her not long afterwards. She became critically ill as a result of appendicitis, and when the physician was called for he feared it was already too late. He ordered that she be taken to the hospital as quickly as possible. Instead Theresa pleaded that she be permitted to go over to the church, a request to which they finally consented. There she prayed for the space of about an hour, and then came walking out all by herself, completely cured of this latest malady. She was examined by the same physician that had diagnosed her case just awhile before and he testified that every trace of the disease had disappeared.

Quite naturally events of such a startling nature soon became noised abroad and physicians and scientists came flocking to the home of the Neumann's where these extraordinary things were taking place. Besides, there was something else taking place which had no natural explanation. She was no longer eating. As a matter of fact, at the time when her last illness took place she had not touched any kind of solid food for more than four years.

## Neither Eats Nor Drinks

Since Christmas of 1922, Theresa Neumann has taken no solid food of any kind. In other words, it is more than ten years since she has eaten, and yet she retains her normal weight of about 120 pounds. For her to take food of any kind only brings about nausea and vomiting, even if the food is injected through the veins. However, she does go to Holy Communion each day and formerly she was accustomed to take a spoonful of water after receiving Holy Communion. But for the last six years she does not even take the spoonful of water, and consequently it can be truly said of her that she neither eats nor drinks. This utter lack of food and drink was the consequence of another vision of the Little Flower who appeared to her on September 30, 1927, and told her that she would no longer need any kind of earthly food. Since 1930, also, there is no longer any kind of excretion.

### Seldom Sleeps.

In connection with the absolute lack of food and drink there is another phenomenon, namely, the lack of sleep. Sleep is a body-builder even as food and drink and so, since she does without food and drink it is not surprising that she should also do without much sleep. Her nearest relatives and others who have observed her testify that throughout the whole week she does not sleep more than two or three

hours. Despite this, there is never any evidence of exhaustion, except as a result of her ecstatic sufferings which sap her strength, but not in a natural manner. Those who have had occasion to investigate her testify to the fact that at times she is busy the whole day long, working in the garden, talking to visitors, arranging flowers on the altar, going out to a neighboring stream to fish, doing various things about the house, reading and answering letters (of which there seem to be a great abundance) and yet shows no fatigue. Only when Christ is no longer present within her as a result of Holy Communion does she become weak and exhausted.

#### Observed by Nuns

Under the direction of a physician, Theresa Neumann was closely observed for a period of fifteen days, when four hospital sisters were delegated to watch every minute day and night. Under oath they testified that during this period there was never even the slightest indication that Theresa even attempted to take any kind of food. Yet at the end of that period her weight was the same as at the beginning of the investigation. Every one of the physicians who have investigated her (and there have been more than three hundred physicians and scientists who have done so) all testify that her organs of digestion are in perfect condition and this becomes all the more remarkable when it is known that they have

not been used for so long a time. In reference to this condition, Theresa Neumann says: "I left all desire for food and drink upon Mount Tabor when I saw there the glorified Savior." One is reminded of the words of the Psalm: "I shall be satisfied when I shall see your glory."

### **Bears Wounds of Our Savior**

It is not quite correct to say that Theresa Neumann does entirely without food. As already stated, she does receive Holy Communion each morning. Catholics, or those acquainted with Catholic practices know that this is an exceedingly small amount of food, that the little wafer or host, taken just as a material substance made of flour and water, could almost be accounted as nothing when considered as material food. However, when the Catholic doctrine is understood, then we have the explanation. Holy Communion for the Catholic is not just a piece of bread that represents or signifies the Body and Blood of Christ, but we believe it to be in reality the Body and Blood of Christ. Theresa Neumann, therefore, does not live on nothing, but she lives wholly and entirely on the Body and Blood of Christ. Those who question her in this regard receive the smiling answer: "The Savior can do all things. Or don't you think that He is Almighty? I do not live on nothing. I live on the Savior. Did He not say: 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' Why then can it not be so in this instance?"

Those of you who have heard of Theresa Neumann know, of course, that she bears in her hands and feet and side the wounds of the Crucified Savior. You have probably heard also that each Friday she both witnesses and suffers in her own body the Passion of Christ. During this time she bleeds excessively from her eyes, from the wounds of the crown of thorns in her head and from the wounds in her hands and feet and side. This is not just hearsay, for this I know myself. I stood at her bedside myself and observed her as she went through the Passion ecstasy.

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## Theresa Neumann and the Passion

**S**INCE April of 1926 Theresa Neumann bears in her hands and feet and side the wounds of the Crucified Savior. From time to time these wounds bleed, profusely at times, only slightly at others. But these wounds remain always and although physicians of the highest repute have tried to heal them their efforts have all been in vain. As a matter of fact, the medicines and ointments have had the opposite effect from that intended and instead of soothing the pain and healing the wounds have only increased the pain.

Every Friday for the last seven years, except during the joyful season of the

church year, which is from Easter Sunday to Trinity Sunday, Theresa Neumann witnesses and also suffers in her own body the Passion of Jesus Christ. In a series of forty visions she follows the Savior from the time when He ate with His disciples at the Last Supper until His dead body is taken down from the Cross. In the state of ecstasy she beholds the Savior as though she were an actual witness of the scenes that took place nineteen hundred years ago.

As Theresa Neumann watches Christ in the garden of Olives during His prayer, tears come into her eyes, although there is no sensation of weeping. At the second prayer of Christ these tears turn to blood, fill up the lower lids of her eyes and then gradually, drop by drop, trickle down her cheeks. At the third prayer the wound in her side begins to bleed and, at times, so profusely that as many as twenty-eight layers of cloth which have been placed over the wound, have been completely saturated with the blood. In succeeding visions she beholds Christ taken prisoner, taken before Annas and Caiphas, then before Herod and Pilate, and after that the scourging and crowning with thorns. During the Fridays of Lent and particularly on Good Friday, the sufferings of Theresa Neumann are ever so much more intense than at any other time. Not only does she witness the scourging on Good Friday, but her whole body is bruised and bleeding so that it becomes

a mass of wounds and blood. At all times, however, she suffers from the wounds of the crown of thorns. On her head there are eight distinct wounds which bleed profusely each Friday and cause her excessive pain. To see her touch her head as if to pluck out the thorns is a sight so pathetic that it remains indelibly impressed upon the memory.

### Altar and Shrine in Room

On the tenth of July during the past year it was my rare privilege to stand at the bedside of Theresa Neumann during her Friday ecstasy and vision of the Passion. On two different occasions I was permitted to see with my own eyes what seems so incredible to those who merely read of Theresa Neumann or hear about her. The first time was about 9:30 in the morning. As I entered I took a glance about the room, and it may be of interest to know something of her surroundings. Her room is a rather large one on the second floor of her father's home. Against the wall to her left is an improvised altar or rather a shrine with a large statue of the Sacred Heart. On the wall beside her bed is a beautiful image of the Crucified Savior. Along the wall at the foot of her bed is another shrine in honor of the Little Flower of Jesus. Boxes of flowers decorate the window sills and there are various bouquets of flowers on the two little altars or shrines



in the room. The furniture is simple and to the right as one enters there are several cages with canary birds. Theresa loves flowers and birds. These objects are noted at a glance for one hardly enters the room when one's eyes become riveted upon the sufferer in her bed. As I entered she was seated in her bed. She had on a white garment and a white cloth covering her head. Her hands were raised and extended as if in suppliant prayer. Her eyes were closed but the lids were of a deep scarlet color and from the lower lids came two large streams of blood, perhaps an inch in width at their source and then gradually becoming narrower as they met in one stream beneath her chin. The covering of her head was saturated with blood, bright red and fresh. Her hands, which were extended, appeared delicate and very white, the fingers tapering. The wounds in her hands were distinctly visible. As I stood there beside her bed, I took particular note of these wounds. I saw the upper wound of her left hand and the lower wound of the right. The upper wound was slightly rectangular in shape and had the appearance of a scab covering the wound. The lower one seemed like a wound that had just stopped bleeding at the time. I asked the pastor, Father Naber, who was also in the room, the reason for this, and I was told that these wounds bleed only during the Fridays of Lent, and very profusely on Good Friday.

## Body Sways in Vision

Have you ever seen the picture of the thorn-crowned head of Christ, the one where the eyes are apparently closed, yet seem to open when you look at the picture intently? Looking at Theresa Neumann I had much the same impression. Though her eyes were closed yet she seemed to be looking directly at you. There was no question but that she was looking at something happening right before her eyes, for the whole attitude of her body made that plain. From time to time she moved her body, to and fro, stretched out her hands and looked intently from side to side in order to take in every detail of the vision spread out before her. Father Naber, who has witnessed these Passion ecstasies every Friday for these many years, kindly explained what was happening. At the time she was watching the Savior as He carried his heavy cross through the streets of Jerusalem. Seemingly, she wished to help Him with His heavy load. As he fell beneath the weight of the cross, she also fell back on her pillows, but after a moment she would rise up again and follow the spectacle unfolded before her vision. Something along the way must have displeased the Savior, and as she fell back on her pillows she moaned and said, "Something does not please the Savior." Just what it was she did not explain. Perhaps it was some special insult or the reluctance with which Simon of Cyrene assisted in carrying the cross.

### Seemingly Suffers Thirst

Shortly before noon I was permitted to see her a second time. Now she was beholding Christ as He hung suspended upon the cross. As I entered I noticed that the wound in her heart must have bled excessively in the meantime, for the blood had not only saturated the various cloths placed over the wound, but had seeped through her garment so that there was a stain of blood about six inches in diameter about the region of her heart. She still had much the same appearance as earlier in the morning except that now she was continually looking upward. After a time she indicated by her facial expressions and by slightly extending her tongue and trying to moisten her lips, that she was suffering from extreme thirst. She was imitating the expression of Christ upon the cross when He suffered His burning thirst, which must have been so great that it brought forth the only word of complaint during all His sufferings—"I thirst." As she extended her hands her fingers twitched with pain and bent inward because so intently does she observe the Savior that she unconsciously imitates whatever she sees Him do or suffer. Alternately joy and sorrow would play upon her features as she bowed her head with Christ as He listened to the words of the thief first on the right and then on the left.

As the end approached and Christ was about to die, there appeared an added pallor

in her face and breath started to come in gasps. Finally she gave one long last sigh and fell back wholly exhausted on her pillow. To all appearances she was also dead. There was not the slightest evidence of life, no motion, no breathing, and apparently even Father Naber and her parents and sisters, who were in the room, did not know whether she was living or dead. But after about five minutes (which seemed much longer) she gradually began to move her head and hands and then show signs of great pain. The Pastor explained that now she was her normal self again and feeling in her own body the ordeal through she had passed.

### **Becomes Easily Exhausted**

After the Passion ecstasy Theresa is completely exhausted and they must leave her completely at rest until the following morning. She is too weak even to be washed and it is only after she receives Holy Communion again on the following morning that she revives. Then, however, she revives quickly and by about noon she is well again and is able to get up. The blood which she has lost (sometimes it is as much as two quarts) is somehow regained, and she is able to be up and around as any other healthy person, except for the wounds in her hands and feet, which make hard work and walking difficult, and the wound in her heart which causes her to become easily exhausted.

I suppose like everyone else who hears

the story you are asking: "Why, why should anyone suffer as Theresa Neumann?" It is not for me to tell the reason why, and as I told you, I am only telling what I have seen and heard, but this much I do know, that none of us fully realizes the meaning of suffering, and certainly we do not appreciate the sufferings of Christ nor do we realize as we should that Christ suffered for you and me.

Could it not be a probable explanation that Christ is permitting this woman to suffer in order to make the rest of the world realize what it meant for Christ to suffer? And again, the fact that Theresa Neumann lives wholly and entirely upon Holy Communion, lives therefore upon the Flesh and Blood of Christ—is this not an incentive for the world to study the real doctrine of Holy Communion, and realize that Christ meant just what He said when at the last supper He said: "Take and eat, this is My Body?" Christ, who is God, did not merely give us bread and wine as a reminder of Him, but He gave us Himself as the Bread which came down from Heaven. On Holy Thursday we commemorate the day when Christ gave us His Body and Blood as food for our souls, and I would urge all of you to read the Scriptures carefully and see how plainly Christ spoke, when on that ever-memorable evening, He gave Himself as a gift to all of us and for all time to come.

This, in short, is the story of Theresa

Neumann. I only hope those of you who have listened will have a little added love for Christ in union with whom she suffers, filling up as St. Paul tells us he did by his own sufferings, "those things which were wanting in the sufferings of Christ."

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## The Little Flower of Jesus

I WANT to tell you a little love story, or rather, a story of love. The story concerns itself with Sister Therese Martin, who is now Saint Therese, but who is known the world over as the Little Flower of Jesus. I have mentioned her name several times in connection with the account I have given of Theresa Neumann, for it was through the intercession of the Little Flower that the marvelous cures took place in the life of Theresa Neumann. Quite naturally, some of you may have wondered—just who is the Little Flower? What special powers have been granted her by Heaven? Why is it that one so frequently hears her name and sees her picture honored and venerated by so many Catholics?

### Died 36 Years Ago

The Little Flower is a saint of our own day. She lived in the lifetime of many who are living today. She died just thirty-six years ago, and it was only in 1925 that she was proclaimed a Saint of God. The story of her life has been told and retold,

and seemingly it becomes more beautiful the more frequently we hear it. Wherever the story has been told there has been a rekindling of love, a new zest to make of our lives something really beautiful. The manner in which her life story has spread throughout the world and gripped the imagination of people has been compared to a prairie fire that sweeps all things before it. What makes this all the more remarkable is the fact that from a worldly viewpoint there was nothing extraordinary about her life at all. People out in the world are hardly expected to be greatly concerned about what goes on within the convent walls. But all the world is interested in a great love, no matter where it is found.

What makes the life of the Little Flower so intensely interesting is the fact that it is the story of a great love, a true love between a frail and tender maid and her God. Those who have experienced love know that even human love can bring intense and almost delirious joy and happiness. The Little Flower, however, has shown us that there can be a love between the creature and his God, so great and so intense, that all other loves pale into insignificance. Because of her, millions have sought happiness where happiness can truly be found—in the love of God.

Flowers of God, of which little Therese Martin was one, do not bloom in just any kind of garden. She came from soil where saints are grown. Her family was the ideal

kind of Christian family where the meaning of life was known and where the virtues of the little children were carefully guarded and matured. In his youth her father had presented himself as a postulant at the Great Monastery of St. Bernard in the Alps and wished to become a monk. He was advised to go back until he had finished his course of studies. In the meantime he realized that his life was to be dedicated in other ways to God. About the same time the girl who later became the mother of the Little Flower presented herself at the Convent of the Sisters of Charity with the hope of becoming a nun. As if by inspiration the superioress of the convent advised her not to enter, and said that God had work for her to do in the world.

Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin, the parents of the Little Flower, were married in the Church of Notre Dame at Alençon in France and like Tobias and his spouse they were joined in holy matrimony "solely for the love of children in whom God's name might be blessed forever and ever." The mother had prayed: "O my God! Since I am unworthy to be Thy spouse, I will enter the married state to fulfill Thy will. I beseech Thee to make me the mother of many children, and to grant that all of them may be consecrated to God." God heard her prayer. Nine flowers bloomed in this garden. Four were transplanted to Paradise before their buds had quite unfolded. Five were gathered into God's gardens upon earth. One



of them entered the Visitation Convent at Caen, the other four the Carmelite Convent at Lisieux. Therese, though the youngest of the five, was the first to die and is already proclaimed a Saint of God. The other four are still living at the present writing.

### Seeks Help of Pope

When little Therese was just a child of four she lost her mother and was thus left to the care of her saintly father and her eldest sister. From earliest childhood she conceived the desire to follow her other sisters to the convent and when yet a child, long before the accustomed time, she sought admission to the Carmelite Convent, one of the strictest order of Sisters in the world. Because of her age she was denied permission. But she was not to be gain-said. With her father she made a pilgrimage to Rome where, with many others, an audience was granted to her with the Holy Father. When her turn came to be presented to the Pope, she clasped his hands and asked, "Holy Father, permit me to enter the Carmel when I am fifteen." The Holy Father replied that this was to be left to the superiors of the Convent. But she insisted and received the encouraging answer that he would see what he could do.

At the tender age of fifteen, therefore, little Therese entered the strict order of the Carmelites and thus cut off every tie that would bind her to the world. Parting with her elderly father was not an easy matter,

but the inner voice was calling her and her saintly father did not refuse her request.

Once within the Convent walls she determined to keep not only the letter but also the spirit of the rule with the greatest exactitude. Her life was to be a complete oblation made to God and she determined that no matter what the cost, no matter how great the suffering would be, she would never deny God anything He would ask of her.

It was this complete immolation of herself, this effort to lose herself in the immensity of God's love and mercy, that made of her the great saint that she is today. This in turn brought about a union with God so great and so intimate that she shared in this life the bliss that was to be hers later in Heaven. She wished to live the life of the Convent with all the perfection that it required and so when she was not busy with other things her mind was quite naturally absorbed in the thought of God. One day a novice entering her cell was struck by the heavenly expression on her countenance. "What are you thinking of?" the young sister asked. "I am meditating on the Our Father," Therese replied, "It is so sweet to call God our Father," and tears glistened in her eyes. Another time she was heard to say, "I cannot understand what more I shall have in Heaven than I have now; I shall see God it is true, but, but as to being with Him, our union is already complete."

## Childlike Love for God

The hearts of millions have been drawn to the Little Flower and through her to God because she seemingly made the way to perfection something so pleasing and beautiful. Her secret was to have a childlike love for God, to love Him and to trust Him in all things, no matter what the cost or her personal feelings in the matter. But while joy abounded in her soul at all times, let it not be forgotten that this was obtained at the cost of much suffering and pain. She realized, as all the saints have done, that to follow Christ and become like Him one must follow Him along the way of the Cross, and though her sufferings were not so much of the physical kind, yet her mental crosses, and physical, too, were of such a nature that they might truly be called a martyrdom. Being of a very delicate constitution, the rigor of the rules at times became almost unendurable. Yet no matter what her feelings were she never complained. So well had she schooled herself that she found a sweetness in every new cross that she was asked to bear. When at times her companions felt sorry for her because she suffered so, she would reply: "Do not grieve, it has come to this that I can no longer suffer because all suffering is sweet. If I did not simply suffer from one moment to the other, it would be impossible for me to be patient; but I look only at the present; I forget the past and I take good care not to forestall the

future." "Our Lord's will," she confessed, "fills my heart to the brim and if anything else be added it cannot penetrate to any depth, but like oil on the surface of limpid waters, glides easily across." Hence, whether joy or sadness came her way it found her ever the same, unruffled and undisturbed.

### Nine Years a Sister

Just nine short years did Therese spend in the Convent. Disease of the lungs, which she had been at such pains to hide, started to take its toll. But death held absolutely no terrors for her. Rather, it was the crowning favor from the hands of her beloved. When one night a hemorrhage from the lungs came to her as a warning that the end was near, it brought to her the greatest joy. Having learned through life to deny herself every joy and make an offering of it to God, she remained calmly in her bed until the following morning.

When it became evident that she had not long to live, she wished none the less to continue the work for souls and so she promised before her death, "I will spend my heaven doing good on earth." On another occasion she promised "I will let fall a shower of roses on all those who shall ask my intercession in Heaven." Her work was to go on even when she rejoined the Bridegroom, Christ; and her eternity would be spent in scattering the roses of her sympathy upon this scentless and barren world.

She wished to have everyone love God as He has never been loved before and to teach simple souls the simple way of love which she had found so easy.

### Has Inspired Many Vocations

The story of the unfolding of this Little Flower had hardly become known when people all over the world began to ask her intercession. Nuns like herself love her and it is not surprising that many have entered the Convent after reading her life. My own little sister attributes her sisterhood to the inspiration she caught from reading the life of the Little Flower. Missionaries in all lands turn to her who had thirsted so much for souls and she repays their confidence with the sweetest roses. Children love her, and busy mothers and fathers turn to her with a confidence that is truly marvelous. It is well known that the soldiers had a most remarkable devotion to her and many a one on the battlefield invoked her help and intercession.

Usually the Church waits a long time to canonize one of her children, but in the case of the Little Flower it was quite different. From all over the world came petitions directed to the Holy Father the Pope. So many miracles that occurred through her intercession that the day of her canonization was hastened. On May 17, 1925, just 28 years after her death, Pope Pius XI solemnly declared her a Saint of God. It was a gala day in Rome. The wondrous Basilica

of St. Peter's was lighted up for the first time in fifty years and for one hour the bells of the several hundred churches in Rome pealed out the glad tidings that Therese was declared a Saint. The words had hardly been spoken declaring her a saint when the Rose Queen made known her gladness. In some unknown way a cluster of roses in the very apse of the Church somehow became loosened and, describing a large semi-circle, fell at the feet of the Holy Father. Call it accidental if you will, but the mighty concourse gathered in St. Peter's took it rather as a sign of Heaven's approval of what had been done on earth that day.

As I knelt not long ago at the tomb of the Little Flower in the beautiful shrine which is erected to her honor in Lisieux, in France, I felt something of the joy and happiness that the Little Flower must have experienced when she still walked here on earth. I wish that I still experienced it and could impart it to you who have listened to me this evening. But at any rate make it a habit to say a little prayer each day to this wondrous saint, the Little Flower, and I feel certain that she will let fall on you also a rose of heavenly sweetness, which will help you to bear your cross, and make you love God more and more.

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