

Aloysius Rego OCD,
Holiness for All:
Themes from St. Thérèse of Lisieux
Teresian Press, Boars Hill, Oxford, 2009, 155 pp, £7.00

In September and October, 2009, the relics of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux made a tour of England and Wales. Crowds flocked to the various venues, some three thousand people making their way to the Roman Catholic cathedral of Plymouth for the first day of the visit. Media coverage, both before and during the tour, was surprisingly extensive. So what was it all about? How was it that people of various denominations and none, felt drawn into the influence of this young French nun who died in 1897 in a small Norman convent at the age of 24? Because it is not a matter of bones. No, it is a matter of a saint who encouragingly declared that sanctity was open to all: we do not need to be spiritual athletes; ordinary people can have a close relationship with God, which is one definition of holiness.

This short book gives us a chance to encounter Thérèse through her writings. It is like having a prolonged conversation with her, interspersed with the wise and perceptive comments of the author. The many extracts from her writings cover the significant relationships and events of her life, her use of the Scriptures, her Little Way of love and dedication, her stress on the merciful love of God.

Those new to Thérèse would probably benefit from reading one of the many biographies. Those who already know her, will be enriched by this welcome addition to the canon.

Susan Elisabeth OSC