

## Book Reviews

Susan Leslie (Susan Elisabeth OSC)

**Great Little Doctor**

***The Teaching of St Thérèse of Lisieux***

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Perhaps, like me, you were surprised when St Thérèse of Lisieux was declared a Doctor of the Church. Sister Susan outlines what was done by the two other women Doctors, St Catherine of Siena and St Teresa of Avila, who both did great things in the Church, so that we can see how amazing it is that a 24 year-old woman, in the sheltered life of a 19th Century Convent could be in the same category. It is admirably revealed to the reader that Thérèse is well able to show people an entirely new, yet simple, way of growing into sanctity. She teaches by constantly seeking God in everything that she did and that happened to her in her life's ordinary circumstances, such as are experienced by everyone. We learn from this little book how to turn them into stepping stones to God. There is nothing of the sentimental aspect of 'The Little Flower'. Sister Susan reveals a tough young woman who learns to use her weakness as a highway to God. At the end of her life the pain of her physical illness was surpassed by the suffering of a terrible Dark Night of faith. Sister Susan shows that there were no heroics about both these sufferings. She seizes on the use Thérèse made of her imagination to try to come to terms with this inner pain by comparing herself to a bird soaked by a storm, but which knows that the sun is behind it all. This is a typical Thérésian image: the apparent sentimentality of a dear little bird caught in the rain, hides the profoundly demanding reality of faith exercised in darkness and abandonment. Both those who love St Thérèse and those coming fresh to her, will be much enriched by this book.

***Sister Clare Agnes OSC, Arundel***