

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image

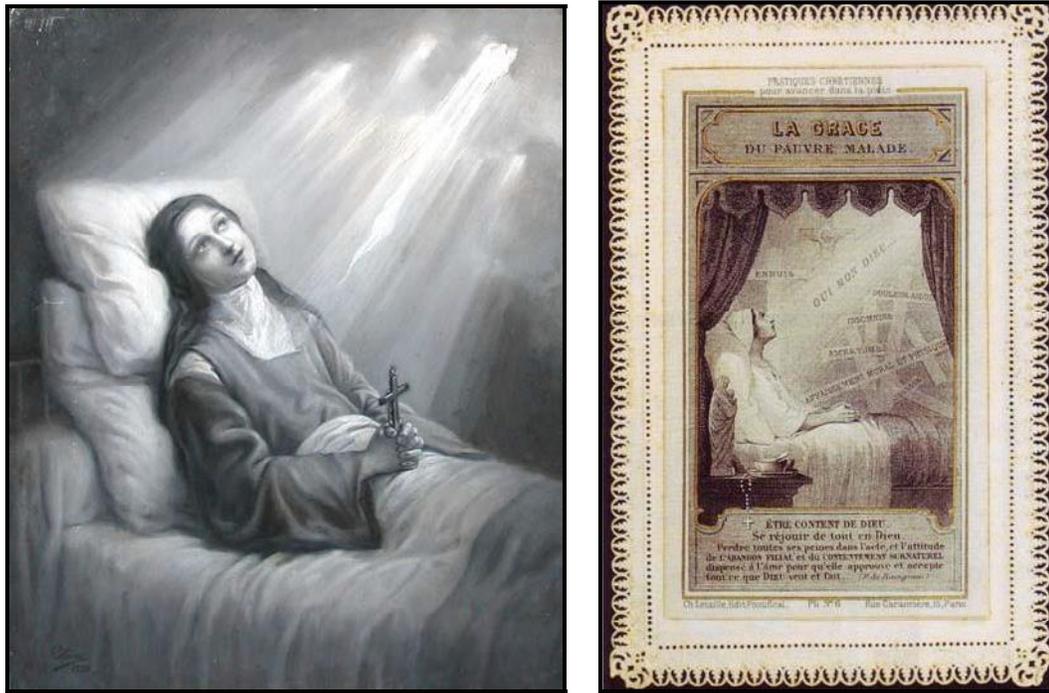


Figure 2.27-2.28. Left: 'Thérèse expirante', 1920. Source: ACL. Right: 'La grace du pauvre malade', 1897. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.29. A display from the wall of Céline's work space, c. 1920. Source: Dessins, modèles, photos de Céline, ACL.

Joan, Christ and the Virgin: Likening to Holy Figures

Céline's representation of Thérèse in the guise of Saint Agnès was not the only time she likened her to holy figures in such a way. The 'buste ovale' was very similar to the iconic, half-length representations of the reformer of the Carmelites, Teresa of Ávila.¹³⁵ Céline's later image echoes the composition of a holy card of the saint that the Vicar General of Bayeux, Abbé Révérony, had given Thérèse on the day of her profession, for example (see figure 2.30).¹³⁶ Here, Céline was not only likening Thérèse to her namesake saint, but was harnessing the pull of the Catholic past and its great figures, suggesting that Thérèse was the latest in the line of descent of a history of Catholic icons, and was the inheritor of a saintly tradition. Céline directly likened Thérèse to a holy figure in her composition 'Thérèse and Joan of Arc' (figure 2.31). Completed in 1909, the year of Joan's beatification when, as Céline herself commented, 'Joan of Arc was at the height of her glory',¹³⁷ Céline no doubt wished to liken her sister to this other saint-in-waiting (Joan would be canonised in 1920, only five years before Thérèse), also Thérèse's great heroine and a towering figure of the Catholic past. In 1913, Céline also depicted Thérèse holding the infant Jesus (see "'Thérèse au Bambino' and Roman Disapproval' below on this) and commissioned the image 'Nazareth', showing her sister entering the home of the Holy Family (figure 2.32). When the Carmel commissioned a biography of Thérèse for children, they added scenes from the early life of Jesus at the head of each chapter, making a clear analogy between the steps of Thérèse's life and those of the life of Christ.¹³⁸ In all of these examples, the Carmel were making a powerful statement about Thérèse's religious importance, only a few years after her death and long before her official recognition by the Church.

¹³⁵ On images of Teresa of Ávila see Salinger, 'Representations of Saint Teresa'.

¹³⁶ Reproduced in Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, p. 184.

¹³⁷ RTAG, p. 44.

¹³⁸ Père J. Carbonel SJ, *La Petite Thérèse. Histoire de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus pour les enfants* (Bar-le-Duc, 1914).

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Figure 2.30. Holy card, featuring Teresa of Ávila, c. 1890. Source: ACL.

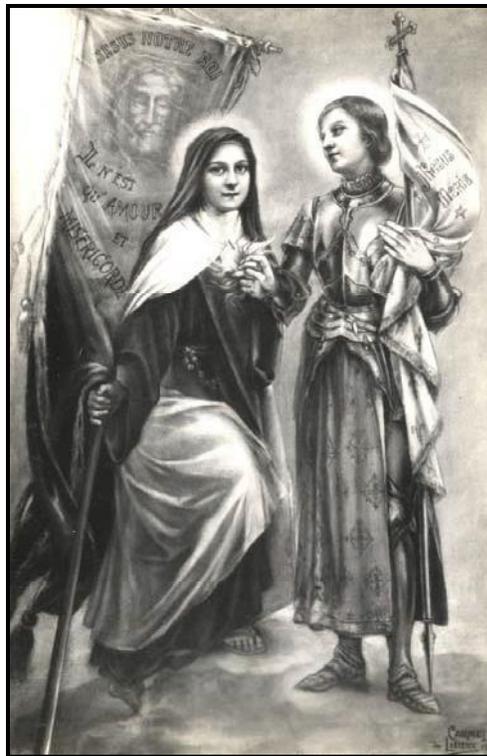


Figure 2.31. 'Thérèse and Joan of Arc', 1909. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.32. 'Nazareth', c. 1925. Source: ACL.

Making Political Images

Céline also gave her sister with the marks of the authentic saint by signaling Thérèse's place in the political landscape, depicting her in scenarios that spoke to the concerns of French Catholics, and giving her a clear purpose in the economy of popular devotion. In a recent article, Steffen Lösel has asserted that 'Catholics responded to the increasingly secularizing Third Republic by retreating into an unreal romantic counterworld – a kitschy imitation of past times'¹³⁹ – Céline provided images that fitted into this 'counterworld'. Raymond Jonas has recently examined the role of the image in the intersection between politics and religion in France in the early twentieth century, exploring the case of Claire Ferchaud, a young woman from a farming family in the strongly Catholic Vendée, who had a series of visions of Jesus during the First World War.¹⁴⁰ In a highly eschatological vein, he warned her of the punishments that France was bringing on itself through its ungodliness, gesturing to his 'Heart covered with wounds', and saying 'this large wound, it's France that caused it.'¹⁴¹ Claire commissioned an image of Jesus as she saw him in her visions – bloodied and sorrowful (figure 2.33). This image was highly symbolic for French

¹³⁹ Lösel, 'Prayer, Pain, and Priestly Privilege', p. 282.

¹⁴⁰ See Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud*.

¹⁴¹ Claude Mouton, *Au plus fort de la tourmente... Claire Ferchaud* (Montsurs, 1978), pp. 96-7.

Catholics living under an anti-Catholic government, and suffering a war that seemed like it hailed the apocalypse. Other images of the period were more literal in their political message. An image in the Archives (possibly by Jouvenot) showed France as a woman in chains, with ruined churches in the background and a building signposted '*Ecole sans dieu*' (figure 2.34). Meanwhile, Joan of Arc appeared in the sky, gesturing towards a crucifix bearing the Holy Face and the phrase '*In hoc signo vinces*' ('In this sign you shall conquer'). This image was very similar to Annould's composition showing Thérèse on a First World War battlefield, which co-opted the tragedy of the war into the desire for the recovery of the embattled Catholic religion, symbolised by a broken calvary and a burning cathedral (figure 2.35). In the book *La petite voie* (1919), an allegorical journey through the soul's journey on Thérèse's 'little way', one of the plates showed God's 'torrent of love' being 'dammed by the hatred in [men's] hearts', with men in jarringly modern dress rushing to put out the fire (figure 2.36).¹⁴² Indeed, Céline's own picture of Thérèse with Joan of Arc was highly politically charged, inspired by a poem Thérèse herself had written which called for Joan to 'Come down to us, come convert France'.¹⁴³ Céline later explained that the picture showed 'Joan's response not only to France but to the whole Church', but that 'her flag does not flap in the wind and it is not enough for all the needs of the Church. Who will come to her aid? Ah! Here... it's Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, her imitator in love'.¹⁴⁴ Here Thérèse was being strongly cast as a heroine of the Catholic right, a saviour of godless France and champion of the Church.

¹⁴² Mère Agnès de Jésus, *La petite voie. Ascension mystique de la montagne de la perfection d'amour et d'enfance spirituelle de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Tableaux allégoriques* (Paris, 1919), section 8.

¹⁴³ Thérèse of Lisieux, *Poetry*, pp. 46-9.

¹⁴⁴ See the loose leaf at the end of RTAG, dated 1956, on the Joan of Arc image.

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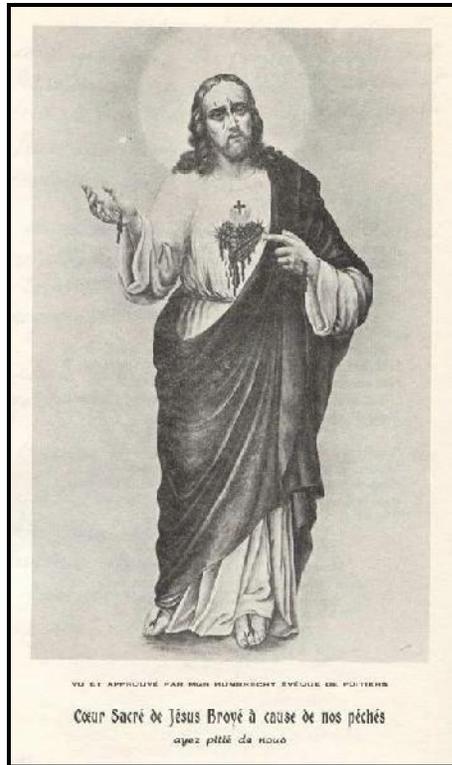


Figure 2.33. Holy card showing Jesus, as seen in the visions of Claire Ferchaud, c. 1918. Source: author's collection.



Figure 2.34. France in chains, c. 1920. Source: Dessins, modèles, photos de Céline, ACL.

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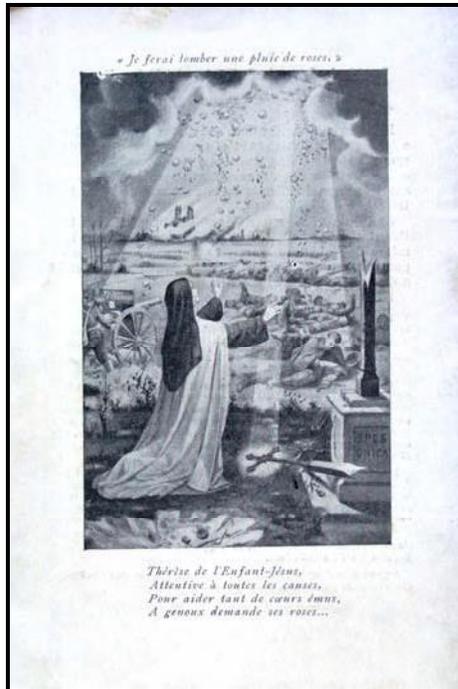


Figure 2.35. Annould's image of Thérèse on the battlefield. Source: Mère Agnès de Jésus, *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie ; depuis sa mort* (Bar-le-Duc, 1916).

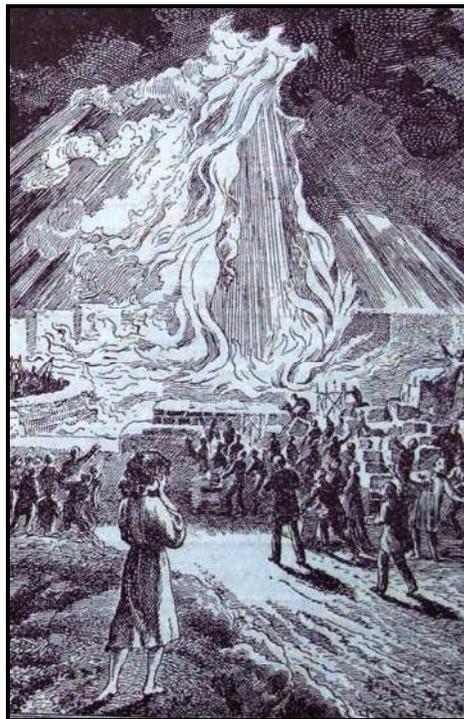


Figure 2.36. God's love, extinguished by men on earth. Source: Mère Agnès de Jésus, *La petite voie* (Paris, 1919).

Challenges to Authenticity

While Céline called on a number of pre-existing traditions to define her artistic practice and drew on existing trends in devotional art in the images she produced to frame Thérèse as an authentic saint, she faced a number of challenges to this process of legitimation. The first of these was that her use of collaborators was, in her conception, detrimental to her self-presentation as a lone artistic genius. Their involvement meant a greater need to centralise creative credit in her hands, and in order to do this Céline carried out extensive retouching on almost all of the works her commissioned artists produced. She had reworked Pascal Blanchard's image 'Thérèse and the stars' extensively,¹⁴⁵ while Thérèse's face in his 'First Communion' was also changed and her dress was altered in the scene showing her taking the habit that Blanchard had also completed.¹⁴⁶ In the *Recueil*, Céline recounted an argument she had with Blanchard over the issue of the authorship of some of his pictures that she had retouched:

He did not want to sign them... truly I do not understand [Blanchard's refusal], for the composition remained his work, and I had always heard my teachers say that 'what really makes a work an artist's is the composition and design.'... the effort, the laborious and praiseworthy part, is set up in the design of a composition: once done, the rest is nothing but play.¹⁴⁷

In making this point, Céline was asserting that the many artworks where she had dictated the compositions, but not carried out the actual work, were in fact of her authorship. Accordingly, although Blanchard had painted the large *grisaille* 'Thérèse expirante' (1920), Céline had sketched out the design, so she claimed complete authorship of it and signed it 'Céline'. She later justified this by emphasising the extent of her own artistic labour to correct the image, saying 'Thérèse's face was so bad that one believed the work was lost, but I vainly tried to keep it. I remember the day when, posed with palette and paintbrush, I allowed myself to sob. Finally, by force of prayer, I arrived at the face that the photograph [in the *Recueil*] shows.'¹⁴⁸

As well as outlining composition as the key to authorship, Céline directed her commissioned artists' work very closely during production, maintaining complete creative control. When Jouvenot was working for Céline she often provided annotated photographs of

¹⁴⁵ C/FTh 27/01/1921, ACL.

¹⁴⁶ RTAG, pp. 49-50.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. v-vi.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

other nuns posing to provide him with exact models for his work (see figure 2.37).¹⁴⁹ In the *Recueil* Céline emphasised that on all three of his major projects for the Carmel (the publications *Vie en images*, *La petite voie* and *Miracles et Interventions* – see chapter 3 on these) the plates were not produced by Jouvenot alone, writing, ‘we retouched them together’.¹⁵⁰ Meanwhile, most of the artists who worked with the Céline on the images remained anonymous. The works of Sœur Marie du Saint-Esprit, Blanchard, de Winter and Grün remained wholly without attribution. The lines between Céline’s work and those of other artists were frequently blurred and it is often difficult to attribute authorship to individual works. In some cases, as many as four people worked on one piece, as in the case of the popular ‘Nazareth’, which was designed by Annould, painted by Blanchard, retouched by Grün and then by Céline.¹⁵¹ In the case of the sculptural works too, she was keen to emphasise that it was she who ‘carr[ie]d out all these works and provided models and instruction.’¹⁵² In Alliot’s case, we find Céline making her position clear in the *Recueil*: ‘Statues of Saint Thérèse by M. Alliot – I directed the execution of all of them.’¹⁵³ Indeed, she had strongly asserted her authority with Alliot, demanding large last-minute changes to his work,¹⁵⁴ and having a protracted and heated exchange of correspondence between June 1933 and January 1934 over one project.¹⁵⁵ In her interactions with her collaborators, as well as her later reflections on this, Céline always figured herself as the source of artistic inspiration and the ultimate author of the artworks in question. In some cases this was highly successful, and the Office Central de Lisieux still sell postcards of Annould’s two images ‘An evening at Alençon’ and ‘An evening at Lisieux’ as ‘a charcoal drawing by Céline’ – the images have been popularly claimed as hers.

¹⁴⁹ See the hundreds of letters between the Carmel and Jouvenot, S-23LL, ACL. See, for example, the photographs provided for Jouvenot’s series of images of Thérèse’s miraculous appearance at the Carmel of Gallipoli, 1910: *Etudes photo pour les lavis de Jouvenot*, ACL. Jouvenot’s finished drawings for this appear in Carmel of Lisieux, *Quelques miracles et interventions*, pp. 61-73.

¹⁵⁰ RTAG, p. vii, 37.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9

¹⁵⁵ See S-23ii, env. 7, ACL.

source of authority – that of the family. She wrote ‘I have asked myself many times why many people have not had confidence in the retouches done on certain portraits of Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus... I don’t understand why anyone who *never knew* Saint Thérèse would suspect the good faith of her sisters’.¹⁵⁸ The sisters were figured as the ultimate authority on Thérèse’s appearance here, possessing a more intimate knowledge of what she looked like than anyone, having spent years with her both inside and outside the cloister. Céline pointed out that ‘I used photographs *and my memories* when working on the portraits of my Thérèse. During her last illness, being close to beginning my work on the subject, I posed her and examined her traits at leisure, engraving in my memory her physical form. Her expression was etched on my heart...’¹⁵⁹ In a further statement, produced for the ecclesiastical authorities of the process, she stated that ‘no retouches were made with the intention of embellishing – they had no need of it – but *only to make them a better resemblance*.’¹⁶⁰ Here the photograph is figured as an ultimately unfaithful medium, which, in the case of the photographs of Thérèse, needed to be corrected by Céline, with her artist’s eye and intimate knowledge of her sister’s soul, in order to restore her true appearance. Accordingly, the retouched images were framed as the genuine, authentic representations of the saint, while the photographs were utterly rejected.

This attitude to photography was not unique to the Carmel, and they were supported by senior men of the Church. Canon Théophile Dubosq, Promoter of the Faith in Thérèse’s cause (commonly known as the Devil’s Advocate), former priest at the church of Saint Sulpice, director of the great seminary at Bayeux and a fellow Norman, backed up the view of photography as a false medium wholeheartedly. In early 1911 he wrote to Céline ‘We are in absolute agreement in our ideas and taste in the question of photography... Very often the photograph is *false* while the artist... can make their subject live.’¹⁶¹ In the *Recueil* Céline asserted, in the only place where she mentions retouching in the manuscript, that it was Dubosq who had suggested undertaking the retouching work in the first place:

I forgot [to mention] all the enlargements that we had made or that I made myself so to retouch the flaws created by photography, that is always brutal. It was M. Dubosq [*sic*] who encouraged

¹⁵⁸ Déclaration de Céline 29/04/1940, ACL.

¹⁵⁹ Emphasis author’s own. RTAG, p. 39.

¹⁶⁰ Témoignage de Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face au sujet des portraits et photographies de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, ED Vrai Visage, env. 1, ACL, p. 1.

¹⁶¹ D/C 25/01/1911, THER-5 DUBOSQ, ACL.

us to use this means of rendering useful certain portraits of our Saint, which would not have seen the light of day without it.¹⁶²

But this idea of the inherent failings of photography was not always enough for either Céline or Dubosq, and other excuses were made for the retouching work. In April 1926 Dubosq said of the retouched 'Thérèse *aux images*' photograph (figure 2.13) that the Carmel should point out that:

This photograph was taken when Sœur Thérèse was already very ill, and overcome with a fever of 40°... As a result, her face has a strained and suffering expression which was not normal... Some retouches done by Sœur Geneviève have reduced this strained look and given the photograph a very faithful resemblance.¹⁶³

Elsewhere he asserted that 'it is not appropriate to multiply and *diversify* the type [of images] – they must hold with the sanctioned type, which remains that of the frontispiece of *Histoire d'une âme* [the '*buste ovale*']'¹⁶⁴ Dubosq was clearly concerned that the original photos would problematise the portraits, creating multiple faces for the saint and potentially confusing the public. Indeed, despite their philosophical approach to the photographs, the business of promoting the cult in the marketplace was a clear consideration for the Carmel and their allies here (see chapter 3).

Disapproval and Family Feuds

Céline's work also faced disapproval from family members, a real threat to the perceived authenticity of her images, but this disapproval was powerfully rebuffed. When Léonie, the only Martin sister not in the Carmel, expressed some concern about a picture of Thérèse as first communicant, Marie wrote to her 'Do not complain that Céline has idealised our little saint – for me none of her portraits show her as beautiful as she was in reality', adding that 'the talent of the artist is to show the *soul* of their subject, that is to say to *interpret* and not to copy slavishly.'¹⁶⁵ The sisters' uncle, Isidore Guérin, also disapproved of the images and when, in February 1909, Monsieur de Teil was to make his first visit to Lisieux and was to stay with the Guérins, the prioress felt it prudent to warn him that 'Monsieur Guérin has all sorts of prejudices against the autobiography, and these have been passed on to his daughter and son-in-law, Doctor La Néele,

¹⁶² RTAG, p. 51.

¹⁶³ D/MA 29/04/1926, THER-5, ACL. See also D/MA 07/11/1923, THER-5, ACL.

¹⁶⁴ D/C 25/01/1911, THER-5, ACL.

¹⁶⁵ MSC/FTh 16/07/1913, ACL. Shortly afterwards Léonie wrote back, clearly chastened, saying Thérèse was 'perfect' in the image. FTh/C 06/08/1913, ACL.

who live with him. He constantly objects to the illustrations in the book'.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, his daughter, Jeanne, and her doctor husband, Francis had begun to circulate an original photograph of Thérèse as a novice they had in their possession as an antidote to Céline's images. Céline said of this photograph, known as the '*cliché* Gombault' (named after the priest who took it when he entered the cloister of the Carmel to undertake some repairs for the community),¹⁶⁷ that 'If the friends of Saint Thérèse want to know her, they should not look for her in this photograph' (see 'The '*Cliché* Gombault', chapter 4, on this image).¹⁶⁸ Céline later reported to Léonie, with great indignation, a meeting she had had with Francis:

We have the joy of suffering for justice... Francis came to the parlour the other day... he reproached us, particularly me, saying that *none* of our portraits of Thérèse looked like her, and also that he had had an image enlarged (the photograph of Thérèse as a novice by M. Gombault) and that he did not wish to see any other but this. He shook while talking to me like this – our Mother was very sad.¹⁶⁹

The rejection of her images by people who had known Thérèse well (Francis had even treated her a month before her death) undermined Céline's standard defence of her images – that she had unique first-hand experience of her appearance. Later, the Carmel would have to deal with the fallout from the illicit circulation of photographs that threatened Céline's portraits, and the '*cliché* Gombault' in particular would cause them many problems (see chapters 4 and 5).

Dubosq, de Teil and Clerical Approval

The authority of the men of the Church was often used by the Carmel as a powerful tool of legitimation of Céline's images. Officially the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux was responsible for approving both the written and visual works produced by the Carmel, and the matter of the representation of holy figures ultimately fell under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. However, their interest was mainly limited to images in liturgical settings, and in practice it was the Churchmen involved in Thérèse's process of beatification and canonisation, Canon Dubosq and Mgr. de Teil, who exercised a controlling hand over Céline's work, and their approval was often used to confer a sense of authenticity on her images. Céline recalled in the

¹⁶⁶ MMA/T 02/02/1909, ACL. See also Céline's warning to Léonie 'Don't talk to my uncle about *any* of the new images, we are avoiding this issue with him'. C/FTh 25/12/1907, ACL.

¹⁶⁷ Photograph 6, Appendix 2.

¹⁶⁸ Témoignage de Sœur Geneviève, ED Vrai Visage, env. 1, ACL. Canon Dubosq also railed against this photograph – see D/C 14/12/1917, THER-5, ACL.

¹⁶⁹ C/FTh Christmas/1913, ACL. See also: C/FTh 11-12/02/1917; C/FTh 15/08/1917; C/FTh 25/12/1919, ACL.

Recueil that 'I had the encouragement of hearing from Monsieur Dubosq, though sparing in his praise, that I *drew* perfectly.'¹⁷⁰ While, of her picture of Thérèse at the feet of Leo XIII, completed in 1903, she stated 'it has earned me praise, even from Rome! Monsignor de Teil admired it very much.'¹⁷¹ Of her colour version of the '*buste ovale*' she wrote 'It had even been *very much appreciated* by the Men of the Tribunal and illustrated Monsignor de Teil's *Articles* [for the cause of beatification]. It was even reproduced in colour.'¹⁷² Céline even co-opted the Pope himself into this method of legitimation of her images, saying that when Cardinal Pacelli (by the time she was writing, Pius XII) was shown some of the 'defective' photographs during his visit to the Carmel in 1937, he declared himself content with her retouching work on them.¹⁷³ But the men of the Church also often acted as critics of her work, with de Teil saying of the colour version of the '*buste ovale*' that 'the lips are too red in the tri-colour picture. One would think that Sœur Thérèse was wearing lipstick.'¹⁷⁴ He even suggested changes to the foundational 'Thérèse *aux roses*',¹⁷⁵ while Dubosq gave Céline extensive advice on a rendering of the Crucifixion she was working on in 1921.¹⁷⁶ But such critiques of her images were very minor in comparison to the Churchmen's reactions to some of her other images, whose religious orthodoxy was called into question.

Taste and Theology

When Céline's images faced censure from within the Church itself, their authenticity was severely threatened, and in a number of cases she struggled to produce images that were theologically acceptable. We have already seen how Céline depicted Thérèse in holy guises well before her recognition by the Church, but in other cases she produced images which bordered on the heretical. In 1909 de Teil wrote to the then prioress of the Carmel, Mère Marie-Ange, about the image on the back cover of their publication *Appel aux petites âmes* (1904), apparently showing Thérèse as an angel (figure 2.38):

I don't like the baby... with angel's wings and bare legs and arms... our judges in Rome... will say that you have placed the Servant of God in a nimbus of light in Heaven, among the stars... she

¹⁷⁰ RTAG, p. vi.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 44. See Roger de Teil, *Articles pour la Cause de Béatification de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face carmélite du Monastère de Lisieux* (Lille, 1910).

¹⁷³ Déclaration de Céline 29/04/1940, ACL.

¹⁷⁴ T/MA 04/06/1911, ACL. See also: T/MA 17/04/1911; T/MA 27/11/1911, ACL.

¹⁷⁵ T/MA 27/08/1912, ACL.

¹⁷⁶ D/C 15/04/1921, THER-5, ACL.

treads branches of roses that unpetal and fall to the earth – you crown her and give her the attributes of angels. You are pre-empting the process of the Church.¹⁷⁷

He went on to say that this could jeopardise the cause of beatification – indeed, the non-cult process would need to establish that the Church's proper judgement had not been compromised by any premature glorification of the subject of the cause. Mère Agnès was the one to reply, confirming that she had sent a telegram to the publisher to stop the sale of the edition immediately, but adding 'this little angel has been going for a long time! Indeed thousands of copies have been sold!!!'¹⁷⁸ The origin of the representation was typical of Céline's reuse and refashioning of images. In 1898 she produced a large oil painting representing the Holy Family with two small angels and putti in the sky (figure 2.39). Inspired by themes from Thérèse's plays 'Les anges à la crèche de Jésus' and 'Le divin petit mendiant de Noël',¹⁷⁹ Céline explained that she 'wanted to represent Thérèse who, in the lineaments of an infant, was *calling* the "little souls" to surround the sleeping child Jesus. But I did not succeed in giving her the resemblance I desired'.¹⁸⁰ This painting appeared as a plate in *Histoire d'une âme* as early as 1902, but by the 1906 edition the picture had been adapted to rectify the lack of resemblance that Céline saw in the image – Thérèse's face from a photograph of her aged eight, posing with Céline (figure 2.40), had been pasted over the painted face. This bizarre composite image was used on holy cards (see figure 2.41) and by 1904 had been adapted into the image de Teil objected to. The use of a photograph in such a way suggested that Céline's attitude to photographic representation was not as simple as her denunciations of it in defence of her retouching work suggested, but it also revealed that the angel was clearly intended to be a representation of Thérèse. The Carmel were not ready to admit this, however.

Mgr. de Teil was forced to write to the Carmel about the 'Thérèse-angel' again, some eight months later. He wrote:

About the guardian angel of Sœur Thérèse on the cover of the new blue edition, I have been struck by the similarity between the angel's head, that indeed represents Sœur Thérèse, on the edition that you deleted, and on the one that has just appeared. As the edition will have run out by the time of the non-cult process and you can make a substitution, leave out the little angel carrying the banner...

¹⁷⁷ T/MMA 05/05/1909, ACL.

¹⁷⁸ MA/T 05/05/1909, ACL.

¹⁷⁹ See Thérèse of Lisieux, *Théâtre au Carmel*, pp. 85-109, 181-200.

¹⁸⁰ RTAG, p. 16. Some pages later she states that this was 'a mistake' and that 'my aim was not to do a portrait of Thérèse but a tableau for the choir'. RTAG, p. 40.

The coat of arms of Carmel will certainly have a better effect without being susceptible to any unfavourable interpretation.¹⁸¹

Clearly the angel had continued to be used, despite de Teil's warnings. Mère Agnès had been re-elected prioress the previous November, and she sent the following reply:

Can we leave this little angel? It doesn't represent Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus at all. *We have never had this thought*, it is a simple little angel who expresses one of her sayings... In any case, Monsignor, we have such confidence in you that I do not hesitate, if some of the edition is still not bound, to start again with this cover which simply has the arms of Carmel.¹⁸²

That the image in question was substantially an actual photograph of Thérèse as a child makes Mère Agnès' assertion that 'it doesn't represent Sœur Thérèse' very surprising. Indeed, on one of the holy cards that the image had appeared on, a note on the back explained 'The child-Thérèse is represented as a little angel who throws flowers (tableau by her sister).'¹⁸³ Two days later de Teil wrote: 'I did not ask for a modification of the blue edition at this stage, but I cannot thank you enough for your attentiveness in preventing the difficulties that are always possible, I *am very touched*.'¹⁸⁴ The 'Thérèse-angel' did not appear in the autobiography after 1906 and the back cover of the 1910 edition of *Appel aux petites âmes* carried the coat of arms of Carmel, as de Teil had asked. The Martin sisters frequently referred to Thérèse as an angel,¹⁸⁵ but it is clear that here, in depicting this idea so literally, they had overstepped the limits of taste and decency as far as the Church was concerned. This was a religiously inauthentic image, which did not gain the approval of the Church, but it was not the only such image that Céline was responsible for.

¹⁸¹ T/MA 21/01/1910, ACL.

¹⁸² MA/T 21/01/1910, ACL.

¹⁸³ Holy card titled 'Noel !', produced by the Imprimerie Saint-Paul, undated (figure 2.41). ACL.

¹⁸⁴ T/MA 23/01/1910, ACL.

¹⁸⁵ See François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, pp. 17-8 and Peter-Thomas Rohrbach OCD, *The Search for Saint Thérèse* (New York, 1961), p. 58.

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Figure 2.38. The 'Thérèse-angel', c. 1904. Source: Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, *Appel aux petites âmes* (Bar-le-Duc, 1904).



Figure 2.39. 'The Holy Family', 1898. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.40. Thérèse aged eight with Céline (left), 1881. Source: OCL.

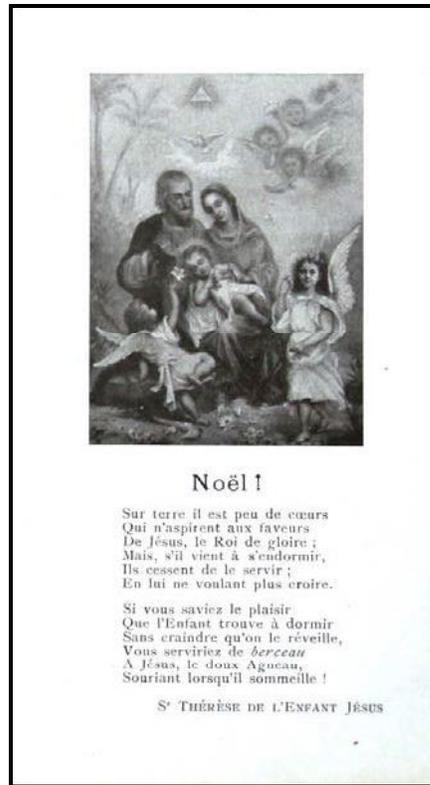


Figure 2.41. Holy card, showing the 'Thérèse-angel', c. 1906. Source: ACL.

'Thérèse au Bambino' and Roman Disapproval

When one of Céline's images again incurred the displeasure of Church authorities, it would be censured by Rome itself. Around 1913 Céline produced an oil painting of Thérèse embracing the baby Jesus (figure 2.42). Known as *'Thérèse au Bambino'*, Céline explains in the *Recueil* 'Here, she had a very good likeness, but Rome did not accept the subject and we had to destroy all the reproductions that had been made.'¹⁸⁶ The maquette for *La petite voie* carried the picture as a frontispiece, although it never appeared in the final publication.¹⁸⁷ It had also been used on holy cards, as Céline suggests, and the sculptor Alliot had even made a small statue inspired by it for inside the cloister of the Carmel – in the *Recueil* Céline refers to this very simply as *"Thérèse au bambino" (prohibited)*.¹⁸⁸ But the image was not completely lost, and Céline wrote in the *Recueil* that later 'I added the most important person to the tableau: the Holy Virgin!'¹⁸⁹ (see figure 2.43). Indeed, the problem with the image seems to have been the representation of Thérèse with the child Jesus alone – usually only the Virgin was shown in this way.¹⁹⁰ In an archival document on the plates contained in *Vie en images*, written in 1970, the subject was still contentious, the note stating 'Portraits by Céline... these subjects can be disseminated *on request*, except the one on p. 56 [*'Thérèse au Bambino'*] (it has been eliminated).'¹⁹¹ Another note in the Archives of the Carmel reproduces a passage from Dom Guéranger's *L'Année Liturgique*, suggesting that this is what Céline was representing:

Saint Bonaventure explains... the sentiments the Christian may have near the cradle of the new-born Jesus: 'And you also', he says... 'Take him in your arms, hold him and contemplate his lovable face; kiss it reverently and delight yourself confidently in this. You can do that; because it is for sinners that he has come for their salvation, and that he has humbly spoken with them.'¹⁹²

In the transcription the mentions of 'the Mother' and 'the holy old man Joseph' from Guéranger's text had been excluded, as had his order 'ask Our Lady to give him to you or to let you take him' – the text had to be adapted to give the meaning Céline's image implied.¹⁹³ This picture did have

¹⁸⁶ RTAG, p. 47.

¹⁸⁷ *La petite voie* maquette, ACL.

¹⁸⁸ RTAG, p. 50.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁹⁰ Even so, the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux holds a large collection of holy cards, produced by outside parties, showing Thérèse alone with the Infant Jesus. *Cartes Thérèse et Jésus seule*, ACL.

¹⁹¹ Archival note 20/02/1975, *Vie en Images de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, ACL.

¹⁹² *Thérèse au bambino*. Note de janvier 1932, ACL, quoting Dom Prosper Guéranger, *L'Année Liturgique, 1: Le temps de Noël* (Tours, 1934), pp. 284-5.

¹⁹³ Guéranger, *L'Année Liturgique*, p. 284.

some life after it was given the necessary addition of the Virgin, appearing in later editions of *Vie en images*, but the controversy demonstrates how much Céline's ideas could deviate from the opinions of the Church and their ideas of orthodox iconography. This was such a religiously unacceptable image that it had to be suppressed and, finally, greatly modified.



Figure 2.42. 'Thérèse au bambino', 1913. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.43. 'Thérèse au bambino' with the figure of the Virgin added, 1935. Source: ACL.

Holy Figures and the Scattering of Roses

If the portrayal of Thérèse as an angel or with the infant Jesus was alarming to the Church authorities, her representation as the Virgin in Céline's rendering of the Annunciation (figure 2.44) may have been seen as even more outrageous. This image was completed in 1900 and in the *Recueil* Céline did not say explicitly that this was representation of her sister, but did confirm that 'Crowned with roses, the head of the Virgin made a picture of Saint Agnès' – the image we have already seen (figure 2.26).¹⁹⁴ Indeed, the face of the Virgin in the original image echoed the face of the young Thérèse that reoccurs again and again in Céline's images (see figure 2.45), and it seems clear that the original painting was intended to represent Thérèse in the guise of the Virgin. Elsewhere Céline showed more caution in her approach, and her travails over the representation of Thérèse scattering roses, symbolic of her favours on earth (she was said to have vowed 'Je ferai tomber une pluie de roses' ('I will let fall a shower of roses') on her deathbed), shows how she struggled for religious authenticity in her images. Charles Jouvenot's original design for a mosaic for the apse of the Basilique Sainte-Thérèse showed roses cascading from Thérèse's chest, directly onto the earth below (figure 2.46).¹⁹⁵ The implication that Thérèse was intervening directly on earth was theologically problematic, the role of saints being only to intercede with God the Father and Son on the behalf of the faithful, and this design was never used. Grün's image 'Apotheosis above St Peter's Basilica' avoided this problem by showing roses in the lap of the Virgin, from which Thérèse gathers them and scatters them in turn (figure 2.47). This was acceptable in its theological implication, showing the saint as a simple intercessor, not a source of divine power. Indeed, in the 'Thérèse-angel' case de Teil had particularly mentioned that the figure appeared to be scattering roses, and this seemed to form a main part of his objection to it. Similarly, a sketch for a planned statue carried the caption, 'Always our Mother's original idea was that Thérèse would receive roses from Jesus' heart' (see figure 2.48).¹⁹⁶ Although this statue was never made, the design did conform to the theological hierarchy the Carmel was trying to stick to in their efforts to provide representations that were acceptable to the Church.

¹⁹⁴ RTAG, p. 17.

¹⁹⁵ S-23LL, env. 4, ACL.

¹⁹⁶ THER-14 F, boîte 3, ACL.

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image



Figure 2.44. 'The Annunciation', 1900. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.45. Céline's Thérèse. Left to right: Detail from 'The Annunciation' (1900), 'Thérèse and Leo XIII' (1903) and 'Thérèse as first communicant' (1909-10). Source: ACL.

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image



Figure 2.46. Charles Jouvenot's design for a mosaic for the apse of the basilica, showing Thérèse showering roses from heaven, 1930. Source: S-23LL TRAVAUX, env. 4, ACL.

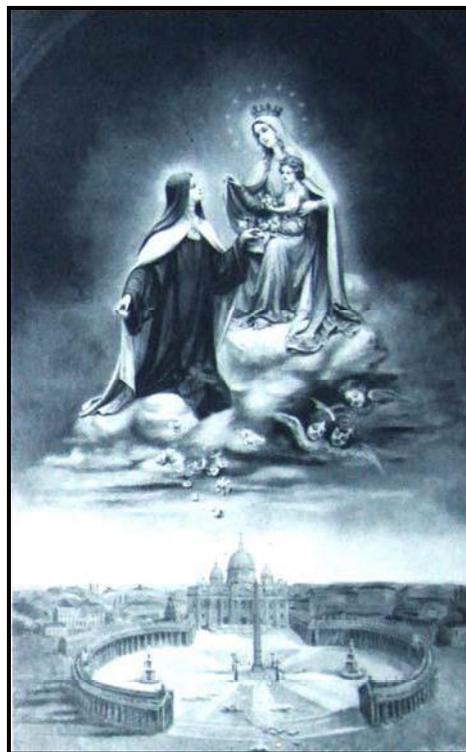


Figure 2.47. Grün's 'Apotheosis above St Peter's Basilica', c. 1920. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.48. A sketch for a sculpture, showing Thérèse receiving roses from the heart of Jesus, 1933.
Source: THER-14 F, boîte 3, ACL.

Conclusion: The Creation of Authenticity and the Claiming of Authority

Writing in the *Recueil* some five decades after Thérèse's death, Céline showed how keenly she still felt her loss. She recalled how she had prepared Thérèse's relics for display, writing 'Finally, I PUT MY THÉRÈSE IN THE RELIQUARY'.¹⁹⁷ The emotion, at a distance of a quarter of a century from this event, is palpable, and Céline's artwork may be seen as an attempt to deal with the loss of her sister. Joanna Woodall has stated that 'The desire which lies at the heart of naturalistic portraiture is to overcome separation: to render a subject distant in time, space, spirit, eternally present'.¹⁹⁸ Céline's representations of Thérèse were greatly influenced by her relationship to the subject – one of profound depth, with Thérèse being not only her younger sibling, but her spiritual soulmate, novice mistress and fellow Carmelite. Thérèse wrote in the autobiography that at around the age of fourteen 'Céline had become the confidante of my thoughts... Jesus, wanting to have us advance together, formed bonds in our hearts stronger than

¹⁹⁷ RTAG, p. 97.

¹⁹⁸ Woodall, 'Introduction: facing the subject', p. 8.

blood. He made us become *spiritual sisters*'.¹⁹⁹ In her autobiographical manuscript Céline wrote of the two loves of her spiritual life – 'my Thérèse and the Holy Face',²⁰⁰ and she depicted herself alongside her holy sister in two of her images (figure 2.49 and 2.50).²⁰¹ But Céline would also speak of the 'virtues of Thérèse and the faults of Céline',²⁰² and her relationship with her younger sister – the favourite daughter who outstripped her in spiritual achievements – was often conflicted.²⁰³ Less than a year after Thérèse left her behind to enter Carmel, Céline wrote to her, making reference to one of Thérèse's many self-effacing names for herself:

I don't want you to call yourself the little grain of sand because this is not true. If you persist in calling yourself this, then give me the name of imperceptible atom, and then things will be right. I always come *after* you; I am another you, but you are the reality while I am only your shadow.²⁰⁴

After Thérèse's death, Céline was able to appropriate her sister and perhaps ameliorate this sense of inferiority to some degree by living through her sister. In her later career, Céline became 'Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face *et de Sainte Thérèse*' – Thérèse, and everything her success meant, had become integral to her personality. As such, the portraits were not just the result of an attempt to make Thérèse 'eternally present', making her a concrete 'reality' through them, but were also part of Céline's quest to find her own identity – to become more than a 'shadow'.

¹⁹⁹ HA, Ms. A, 47v°, p. 103.

²⁰⁰ CAC, p. 6.

²⁰¹ See RTAG, p. 49. See also D/MA 16/11/1911, THER-5, ACL on the former image.

²⁰² CAC, p. 1.

²⁰³ See Laurentin and Six, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 132-4.

²⁰⁴ C/Th 01/03/1889, ACL.

2. Céline Martin's Representations of Thérèse of Lisieux and the Creation of the Authentic Image



Figure 2.49. 'Thérèse and Céline', 1911. Source: ACL.



Figure 2.50. The 'bouquet', 1909, showing all the Martin sisters and their cousin. Clockwise from bottom: Céline, Marie, Pauline, Léonie, Marie Guérin. Source: ACL

In this chapter we have revealed the history of the production of the Celinian image, its insertion into pre-existing devotional trends and the building and challenging of its authenticity. We have seen Céline Martin struggling to establish her authority as an artist and to produce religiously legitimate images. This was an ultimately successful project, the proof being in the association the images gained with the miraculous. The sisters emphasised that 'these portraits have done conversions and miracles',²⁰⁵ and during her testimony for the beatification in 1910, Céline stated that the former prioress of the Carmel, Mère Marie de Gonzague, had been 'converted' by a copy of one of her portraits of Thérèse as a child.²⁰⁶ Indeed, perhaps the ultimate approval of Céline's images was that, even before the canonisation, the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, Mgr. Thomas Lemonnier, asserted in a note on the portraits that appeared in every edition of the autobiography from 1924 until 1950 that the 'Thérèse *aux roses*' image was a fully authentic representation because 'Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus appears to understand herself in this way and uses it to her credit, since, most often... she appears under this form to her favoured people.'²⁰⁷ Indeed, Thérèse was appearing in visions with the crucifix and roses her sister had invented as a symbol for her only after her death.²⁰⁸ Here, the image is not legitimated by its appearance in the vision, but the process goes a step further and the image has gained such power that it legitimates the vision itself. Gilbert Dagron has identified this process, saying 'The image authenticates the vision more than it is authenticated by it, because consensus is based on the image, and it is from the image that a collective imagination springs, which is simply confirmed afterwards by the imagination of the visionary or the dreamer.'²⁰⁹ By at least 1924, if not well before (many of Thérèse's miraculous appearances during the First World War featured the crucifix and roses) Céline's most famous image of her sister had gained such potency that it was the defining mark of an authentic encounter with the saint. 'Thérèse *aux roses*' had become a true icon, 'telling the faithful under what form he will see the saint appear, and the saint what face he must assume and what clothes he must wear in order to be recognized.'²¹⁰ Ultimately, the images were a powerful means of legitimation of the cult itself, being the means by which this miraculous association became possible, for example, and providing a concrete method by which the cult may

²⁰⁵ MSC/FTh 16/07/1913, ACL.

²⁰⁶ Christopher O'Mahony (ed.), *St. Thérèse of Lisieux by Those Who Knew Her* (Dublin, 1975), p. 163.

²⁰⁷ Carmel of Lisieux, *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Histoire d'une âme écrite par elle-même* (Lisieux, 1924), p. 596.

²⁰⁸ See Carmel of Lisieux, *Pluie de Roses*, 7 vols (Bar-le-Duc, 1910-26) for hundreds of miracle accounts where this is the case.

²⁰⁹ Dagron, 'Holy Images and Likeness', p. 31.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

be disseminated. Having been moulded into an archetype, the 'new' Thérèse, the Celinian Thérèse, had become ideal propaganda for her own cult. Indeed, we are reminded of Adorno and Horkheimer's assertion that the cultural commodity 'has been essentially objectified and made viable before the established authorities began to argue about it. Even before Zanuck [the Hollywood producer of the 1943 biopic *The Song of Bernadette*] acquired her, Saint Bernadette was regarded by her latter-day hagiographer as brilliant propaganda for all interested parties. That is what became of the emotions of the character.'²¹¹ As discussed in chapter 2, Adorno's pessimistic view of mass culture is rejected in this thesis as ignoring the significance of mass cultural forms, but the process of objectification before the Church officially appropriated Thérèse is similar, and Adorno points out a valuable parallel here. Through Céline's images, Thérèse was reshaped to fit recognised narratives and the 'emotions of the character' were erased to create a representation that was suitable for mass dissemination. It is that dissemination that is the subject of the next chapter.

²¹¹ Adorno and Horkheimer, 'The Culture Industry', p. 129.

Chapter 3

La Vie en images: The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult

‘Made to order for her century’ – what a fine compliment for a saint!

Gilbert Cesbron, *Briser la Statue* (1952).

This chapter traces the Carmel of Lisieux’s creation of an industry around Saint Thérèse of Lisieux in the first decades of the twentieth century, and the promotion of Céline’s images that we examined in chapter 2 through this industry.¹ It makes use of a previously unexamined source – the collection of monthly commercial catalogues, held by the Archives of the Carmel of Lisieux, produced by the Carmel’s publisher, the Imprimerie Saint-Paul, and later, their business arm, the Office Central de Lisieux. This is an invaluable source on the commerciality of the Theresian cult, showing exactly what publications and devotional products the Carmel were producing and when, making it possible to trace the commercial development of the cult in detail. Taken along with the Carmel’s business correspondence, also little used previously, this chapter reveals a number of previously hidden figures involved in the commercial promotion of Thérèse and gives the first sustained account of the development of the business side of the cult, as well as of the use of Céline’s images in consumer products. The Celinian Thérèse appeared on everything from bracelets to calendars, but the images featured most prominently in the over thirty different popular publications about Thérèse, presenting her life story and spiritual ideology, that the Carmel produced over a sixty year period. Céline’s images played an essential role in the content, message and appeal of these books. Crucial tools for the dissemination of the cult, these publications were key in the construction of Thérèse’s public persona and were the principal means by which Céline’s images reached a wide audience.

The use of Céline’s images in the popular publications produced by the Carmel of Lisieux was not simply a method for their dissemination, however. They also allowed Céline’s images to be presented in a coherent series, one that came to be used again and again in different publications, presenting a homogenous landscape of Theresian iconography to the faithful and a

¹ Some attention is paid to the commercial elements of the cult in Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*. See ch. 5 in particular. Some of the popular publications are mentioned in Descouvemont, *La vie en images*, pp. 452-3, 471-2, 488, 495. See also his *Thérèse et Lisieux*, p. 311, 316. Antoinette Guise has examined the popular publications, with a particular emphasis on the miracle accounts. See ‘Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse’ and ‘Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles’.

visual counterpart to the increasingly standardised textual hagiography. In ordering the presentation of Céline's images, these books shaped their meaning. The constant repetition of a small handful of images gave Thérèse a recognisable public face – a brand – and the images by Céline and her collaborators were figured as the original and only genuine representations of Thérèse through this. Colleen McDannell has written of the Gospel Trumpet religious goods company, founded in the United States in the late nineteenth century and in existence until the 1960s, that 'In order to distinguish Gospel Trumpet goods from other goods, a limited number of Christian symbols were used on products... By using only a limited number of religious images, Gospel Trumpet...established a small set of Protestant representations as a "brand name".'² The Carmel did just the same, offering a large array of images of Thérèse, but concentrating on a core few that were used most frequently. It is argued here that the Carmel's commercial activities in general, and this focus on a few specific images in particular, created a brand around the saint, inserting Thérèse into the living popular religious culture of the time. By making Thérèse a force in the market place, she gained a foothold in the economy of popular devotion, competing successfully for adherents against devotions of much longer pedigree. It is therefore suggested that the creation of a fully-fledged commercial enterprise around the saint acted as an instrument of cultural legitimisation, placing this only recently-dead nun alongside well-established saints and likening her cult to other commercialised devotions. In addition, the gradual presentation of Thérèse in the popular publications as a miracle-worker and saint, rather than historical personality, contributed greatly to the legitimisation of the cult.

While this chapter principally focuses on the popular publications, here we find the Carmel fully embracing modern technology and taking a multimedia approach to their promotion of Céline's images, using print, film and even waxworks as part of their marketing plan. The examination of the Diorama Sainte-Thérèse waxwork museum at the end of this chapter unearths the history of this commercial attraction for the first time, underscoring the diverse ways in which Céline's representations were promoted and highlighting their use of modern media to proclaim an anti-modern message. The history of the commercial activity surrounding the cult of Saint Thérèse has until now been a notable absence in the existing literature on the commercial promotion of modern devotional cults and the tensions that surrounded the burgeoning mass-

² McDannell, *Material Christianity*, p. 240.

consumerism of turn of the century France.³ While work by Suzanne Kaufman and Robert Orsi has examined the building of commercial enterprises around nascent cults (in the case of the Lourdes devotion and the cult of Saint Jude, respectively), this intersection of the commercial and the devotional is still understudied.⁴ This chapter makes a contribution to research on this topic, giving an insight into commercial religion in early twentieth-century France by examining the production of consumer items and development of the commercial profile of a cult from the very beginning of its life.

There is still much work to be done on the monolithic body of devotional literature the Martin sisters produced in the early part of the twentieth century, its massive sales figures demonstrating its significance to popular Catholicism in that period.⁵ This chapter is not exhaustive in its examination of these rich sources on the devotional culture of French Catholics, focussing only on the publications that were most significant for their dissemination of the Celinian image. These books deserve further study and close textual analysis, which is not attempted here. Here, the publications the Carmel produced (almost all text-light and image-heavy) are recognised as pieces of material culture – palpable, tactile, physical objects which, in the home or workplace, carried on one’s person or kept in a handbag, were marks of allegiance to a set of social, religious and cultural identities.⁶ The many heavily-illustrated publications the Carmel produced had more in common with the other devotional items they sold than the few text-heavy books they issued (notably, the deluxe editions of *Histoire d’une âme*), and it should be borne in mind that ‘The religious life of Christian people is reflected less by the writings of theologians or spiritual masters than by the objects handled each day by the masses’.⁷ In examining these devotional publications as products rather than literature, we can fully appreciate their highly multivalent nature. Reproduced in millions of examples, principally through these books, Céline’s representations of Thérèse became the absolute opposite of the fetishised, miraculous, cult image – these were throw-away, mass produced and ephemeral, without any liturgical ‘staging’. Here, at what Richard Marks has called ‘the Woolworths end of the market’,⁸ Céline’s images became desirable

³ On this see Lisa Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market: Envisioning Consumer Society in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Berkeley, 2001).

⁴ See Kaufman, *Consuming Visions* and Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*.

⁵ See chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁶ McDannell’s approach has been influential here. See McDannell, *Material Christianity*.

⁷ Jean Pirotte, ‘Les images de dévotion, témoins de la mentalité d’une époque 1840-1965: méthodologie d’une enquête dans le Namurois’, *Revue d’Histoire de la Spiritualité*, 50 (1974), p. 479.

⁸ Marks, *Image and Devotion*, p. 212.

commercial items. Some commentators have spoken of Thérèse herself as a product,⁹ and the publications were the principal medium through which Thérèse, as a desirable consumer item, could be appropriated. The articulation of faith through the purchase and use of such books and other commercial devotional items had become a prominent part of Catholic religious practice by this period, with the mass production of domestic devotional products allowing the faithful to stamp their Catholic identity on their homes, and the proliferation of portable items, such as medals, rosaries, scapulars, pocket oratories and, perhaps most importantly, small holy images, allowed believers to show their religious allegiances to the outside world. This chapter looks at how the Carmel made Thérèse a part of this landscape of material culture, showing how central consumer items were to the playing out of religious faith, and how entrepreneurial propagators of devotional cults could be.¹⁰

Nuns and Businessmen: The Creators of the Theresian Industry

While all the images of Thérèse had been created by Céline or under her direct guidance, as we saw in chapter 2, the commercial industry around Thérèse that used these images as its main asset required the involvement of many more actors. The successive prioresses and sub-prioresses of the Carmel were important figures here. Mère Marie de Gonzague (Marie Adèle Rosalie Davy De Virville, 1834-1904) (figure 3.1) is a notorious figure in Thérèse's history, a wilful and difficult personality who the Martin sisters denounced as a tyrant at the Tribunal of the Apostolic Process for Thérèse's beatification.¹¹ Nevertheless, Mère Marie had known Thérèse from the age of nine (from the time of Mère Agnès' entry to the Carmel), and had broken the Order's rules on the number of blood relatives allowed in one community, as well as facing down the staunch opposition of the ecclesiastical superior of the Carmel, to allow Thérèse to enter the convent. Mère Marie was in her third term as head of the community at the time of Thérèse's death, and less than a month later she sent the young nun's autobiographical manuscripts to Père Godefroy Madelaine (1842-1931), monk of the Abbey of Mondaye, for his opinion on publishing the work.

⁹ See Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 41.

¹⁰ Raymond Jonas has highlighted the spontaneous production of devotional images by grassroots constituencies in early twentieth century France, including by the Œuvre de l'Insigne du Sacré-Cœur, and Claire Ferchaud and her allies. See Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, pp. 88-91, 141 and *Idem.*, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud*, pp. 88-91.

¹¹ See Dans quel milieu Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus s'est sanctifiée au Carmel de Lisieux, *Procès de béatification et canonisation de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face, 2: Procès apostolique* (Rome, 1976), pp. 357-70. The accusations made in this document would later become the foundation of the work of most of the cult's detractors (see chapter 4).

After his edits and those of Mère Agnès, and once the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux had given the Carmel permission to publish in March 1898, she oversaw the publication of *Histoire d'une âme* – Thérèse's public debut. Mère Marie died of cancer in 1904, having made a large contribution towards securing a legacy for Thérèse.

Another important figure for the development of the Theresian industry was Mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus (Jeanne Mélanie Burban, 1881-1909) (see figure 3.2), elected as prioress of the Carmel in May 1908. Her enthusiasm for Thérèse was of a new kind for the community – that of the convert. She had found her vocation after reading Thérèse's autobiography, and had particularly emphasised the role of Thérèse's 'gracious portrait' in her conversion, entering the Carmel in early 1902.¹² Mère Marie-Ange was determined in pushing for Thérèse's official recognition, writing to Bishop Lemonnier to urge for the opening of the preliminary process for her beatification on the very day of her election as prioress. Another nun who entered the Carmel of Lisieux in this period as a result of the dissemination of the cult that had already taken place was Sœur Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur (Yvonne Daurelle, 1882-1914) (see figure 3.3). After reading the autobiography, she had gone so far as to seek out Isidore Guérin to secure his aid in entering the Carmel, which she did in 1904. Sœur Isabelle became Mère Isabelle as sub-prioress and was, in Ida Friederike Görres' words, 'Thérèse's most faithful disciple and interpreter'¹³ – indeed, she would call herself the 'Herald of the Little Queen'. The author of a number of popular works on the saint, including *Le secret du bonheur pour les petits enfants* (1915), *Appel aux petites âmes* (1904),¹⁴ the poem that was reworked as *La petite voie* (1919) and the prayer to obtain Thérèse's beatification, as well as editing three editions of the *Pluie de Roses* series of miracle accounts (1910, 1912, 1913), Mère Isabelle was a tireless promoter of Thérèse and had an undoubted talent for popular devotional writing.¹⁵ Her death from tuberculosis in the first months of the First World War was a loss for the cult, as much as for the community. Mère Marie-Ange also died of tuberculosis in

¹² See her poem 'A l'Ange de ma Vocation, Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus' in Mère Agnès de Jésus, *Une conquête de Sr Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. La vénérable mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus du Carmel de Lisieux, 1881-1909* (Paris, 1913), pp. 3-6.

¹³ Görres, *The Hidden Face*, p. 272.

¹⁴ This was reworked by Céline for later editions. See RTAG, p. 99.

¹⁵ See Mère Agnès de Jésus, *Mother Isabel of the Sacred Heart, Carmelite Nun of Lisieux, 1882-1914* (London, 1916), p. 12, 60-1, 65. Mère Isabelle's personal papers are testimony to the extent of her work on the cult in the ten years she was in the Carmel. See ED Livres de Sr Isabelle du S.C. – boîte 2, ACL.

November 1909, seeing Mère Agnès re-elected prioress, an office she would hold for the next forty-two years.¹⁶



Figure 3.1. Mère Marie de Gonzague, 1894. Source: OCL.



Figure 3.2. A portrait of Mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus by Céline. Source : *Une conquête de Sr Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. La révérende mère Marie-Ange de l'Enfant-Jésus du Carmel de Lisieux, 1881-1909* (Paris, 1913).

¹⁶ Mère Agnès died on 28 July 1951, and Mère Françoise Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte Face (Simone Marie Edmée Charnelet, 1903-1979) became the Carmel's prioress, serving until 1959.

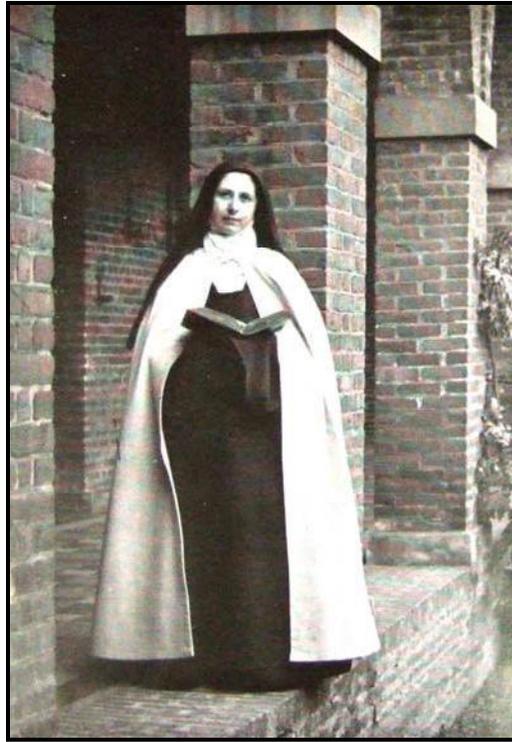


Figure 3.3. Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, 1906. Source: *Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, religieuse carmélite de Lisieux, 1882-1914* (Paris, 1914).

Commercial Enterprises

As cloistered nuns, the Martin sisters and their fellow Carmelite promoters of Thérèse could not achieve all they wanted to alone, and they set up a framework of institutions in the outside world to aid the Theresian project. Their first outside business partner was the Imprimerie Saint-Paul – the publisher of the first edition of *Histoire d'une âme*. Isidore Guérin had taken charge of finding a publisher for the work, and the company was recommended to him by an Assumptionist connected with *La Croix* after he approached the newspaper about publishing the book.¹⁷ Founded in 1873 by Swiss-born clergyman Canon Schorderet, also founder of the Catholic daily *La Liberté*, the Imprimerie Saint-Paul was based in Bar-le-Duc, Meuse, and worked 'for the defence and propagation of Catholic truth through the creation and setting-up of a good value printing business.'¹⁸ It was run by the Sisters of Saint Paul, an order founded for the purpose by Schorderet. On 30 September 1898 the Imprimerie Saint-Paul published two thousand copies of *Histoire d'une âme*, and this was to be the beginning of a long business relationship. They would

¹⁷ See *La Croix*/IG 26/03/1898 and 30/03/1898, Père Marie/IG 12/05/1898, ACL.

¹⁸ Père Marie/IG 12/05/1898, ACL.

publish the majority of the convent's publications, as well as images and other ephemera, until the 1940s, advertising these through their commercial catalogues, until the establishment of the Office Central de Lisieux, who produced their own catalogues (see below). These made all their items available by mail order, providing devotees all over the world with Theresian merchandise and providing a point of contact with Lisieux for people who would never visit the town. The Imprimerie Saint-Paul also ran at least six shops, located in Paris, Bar-le-Duc and Fribourg,¹⁹ and were crucial facilitators of the Carmel's commercial activities in the early days of the cult, producing their print media, publicising it and selling it to the consumer. But the Carmel also worked with at least fifty other publishers in producing their devotional ephemera, including some of the big producers operating from around place Saint Sulpice. Correspondence survives from such major names such as Boumard and Bouasse-Lebel, dating from as early as 1911 to the end of the period of this study.²⁰ The Carmel were harnessing the power of the existing devotional product industry to promote the cult, using some of the biggest companies in the business. But as the cult grew, the Carmel began to develop their own business organs. The first of these was La Procure, the Carmel's own shop, opened in August 1912 at a location directly opposite the convent, at 46 rue de Livarot. This was run by volunteers and sold the books and cards printed by the Imprimerie Saint-Paul and their other publishers. But this was soon insufficient for their needs – the convent needed its own commercial wing which would be entirely devoted to their cause. This would be the role of the Office Central de Lisieux.

The Founding of the Office Central de Lisieux

The Imprimerie Saint-Paul produced their last catalogue of Theresian items in November 1916 and the first Office Central catalogue appeared in July 1917. Here, the OCL introduced themselves as 'Specially authorised by the Carmel of Lisieux and by the rights-holders... for the reproduction of portraits of the Servant of God.'²¹ Even though the OCL very quickly offered a dazzling array of products, building on the already impressive variety of products the Imprimerie Saint-Paul had offered, they made apologies for the limited choice, saying that 'Their diversity is forcibly limited by the restrictions demanded by the laws of the Church, as long as the process of

¹⁹ See S24B Office Central Catalogues, env. 1, ACL.

²⁰ See the voluminous correspondence, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL. See also Flavio Cammarano and Aldo Florian, *Santini e Storia di un Editore parigino. Maison Bouasse-Lebel* (Marene, 2009).

²¹ July 1917 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

beatification and canonisation is not finished.’²² The commerciality of the cult was only artificially restrained at this time then. The OCL was run by Raymond de Bercegol (1869-1946) (see figure 3.4), a former employee of the Union photographique industrielle, établissement Lumière et Jouglà réunis, Paris and a third order Franciscan, who wrote to Mère Agnès in November 1916 asking to defend the business interests of the Carmel, eventually securing permission to do so from Bishop Lemonnier five months later.²³ De Bercegol and his wife had first heard of Thérèse in 1912 (perhaps through his sister – a Carmelite nun), praying to her when their daughter Simone, aged two, fell gravely ill.²⁴ They also wrote to the Carmel to ask for novenas to be prayed for her recovery. She died in September that year, and just two months later the other de Bercegol daughter, Marie-Henriette, also died, aged fourteen. De Bercegol would later speak of his devotion to Thérèse in very personal terms, linking it explicitly to the loss of his children.²⁵ The future saint clearly meant much to the family, and a photograph sent to the Carmel of Marie-Henriette laid out for burial showed an image of Thérèse placed on the girl’s body.²⁶ When his sons Pierre and René also died in 1922 and 1925, respectively, both aged twenty, both their death cards mentioned Thérèse, while the former’s carried Céline’s rendering of the Crucifixion on the back.²⁷ De Bercegol’s devotion to Thérèse made him a tireless worker for the propagation of the cult and he would later say that he offered his services to her like ‘a servant-knight.’²⁸ Céline and de Bercegol developed a strong relationship even before the OCL came into being, with him offering advice on her photographic work.²⁹ Their relationship began on the eve of the First World War and it was in the fevered atmosphere of that war, a period of great activity for the cult, that their friendship was forged.³⁰ Later, de Bercegol would write her long letters containing extended spiritual reflections and family news. On the occasion of the silver anniversary of Céline’s profession, de Bercegol wrote to her ‘Walls, grilles and veils may indeed hide your physical

²² *Ibid.*

²³ See DB/L 30/04/1917, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL. A later legal document reveals that de Bercegol possessed the exclusive right to sell Céline’s works for six years from 1 July 1923, a period that could be renewed. See Cailliau declaration, S24D Office Central Contrefaçons, env. 5.

²⁴ See DB/MA 20/01/1931, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

²⁵ DB/L 30/04/1917, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

²⁶ See Marie-Henriette de Bercegol sur son lit de mort, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

²⁷ See Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

²⁸ Necrologie, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

²⁹ See in particular the letters from 1916, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

³⁰ In early 1915 he wrote to Mère Agnès about the death of a young soldier who had converted after being given an image of Saint Thérèse. DB/MA 14/04/1915, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

features, but not your heart which is *golden* or your soul which is *crystalline*'.³¹ In de Bercegol the Carmel had a loyal friend and enthusiastic advocate of Thérèse's cult.

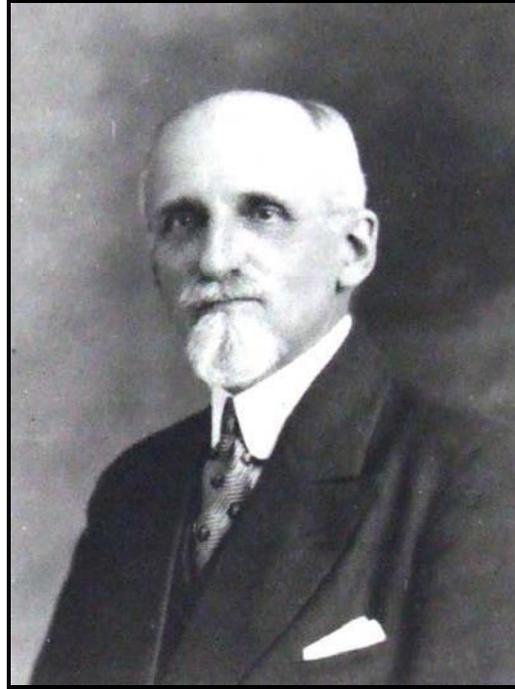


Figure 3.4. Raymond de Bercegol, c. 1930. Source: Death notice, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

The Expansion of the OCL

The personal nature of de Bercegol's commitment to Thérèse and her family did not mean that he approached his work on the cult in an un-businesslike manner, however. With de Bercegol at the helm, the OCL was a large and expanding business in the early twentieth century. At first the business was based in Paris, but sometime in 1918 it moved briefly to a property in Castelfranc, Midi-Pyrénées, before finally moving to Lisieux sometime between late 1919 and early 1920. In April 1920 the OCL opened a workshop on rue Fournet for making medals of Thérèse. On 10 June 1915 Pope Benedict XV had given permission, quite exceptionally, for medals of Thérèse to be struck before her official recognition by the Church, and the OCL took up this opportunity keenly.³² As well as selling by mail order via their regularly updated commercial catalogues, from July 1920 de Bercegol took over La Procure and later opened a larger shop

³¹ DB/C 23/02/1921, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

³² See Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 87.

occupying its original premises and the adjacent buildings at 44-46-48 rue de Livarot, diagonally opposite the Carmel (see figure 3.6). On 29 April 1921 the Office Central de Lisieux was formed as a public company, and it was the beginning of many years of success, which also saw the establishment of the Ateliers Saint-Joseph, a workshop making official statues of Thérèse, based on a site directly next door to the Carmel at 53 rue de Livarot.³³ These statues all carried the OCL's registered trademark – a monogram incorporating a shooting star and a cross (see figure 3.5). By 1928 the OCL had its main depot on rue Bonaparte, Paris, just off place Saint Sulpice, as well as two branches in Lourdes and another in Brussels. Later, the bombing of 1944 destroyed the headquarters of the OCL in Lisieux, although the Carmel's side of the road was spared, and the business moved into the Ateliers Saint-Joseph building. In the same year de Bercegol would retire as director of the OCL, with a Monsieur de Bossoreille taking over (followed by Monsieur Mariette in 1950 and Monsieur Mir in 1958). After the rebuilding of the OCL's offices, they expanded their large mail order operation into the premises of 51 rue de Livarot, next-door to the headquarters.³⁴ A large concern, the OCL oversees Thérèse's commercial success to this day, still being based in premises opposite the Carmel and selling books and devotional items.



Figure 3.5. The Office Central de Lisieux's trademark. Source: 1917 flyer, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

³⁴ On the history of the OCL see *Historique de l'Office Central de Lisieux*. Note établie en 2007, ACL.

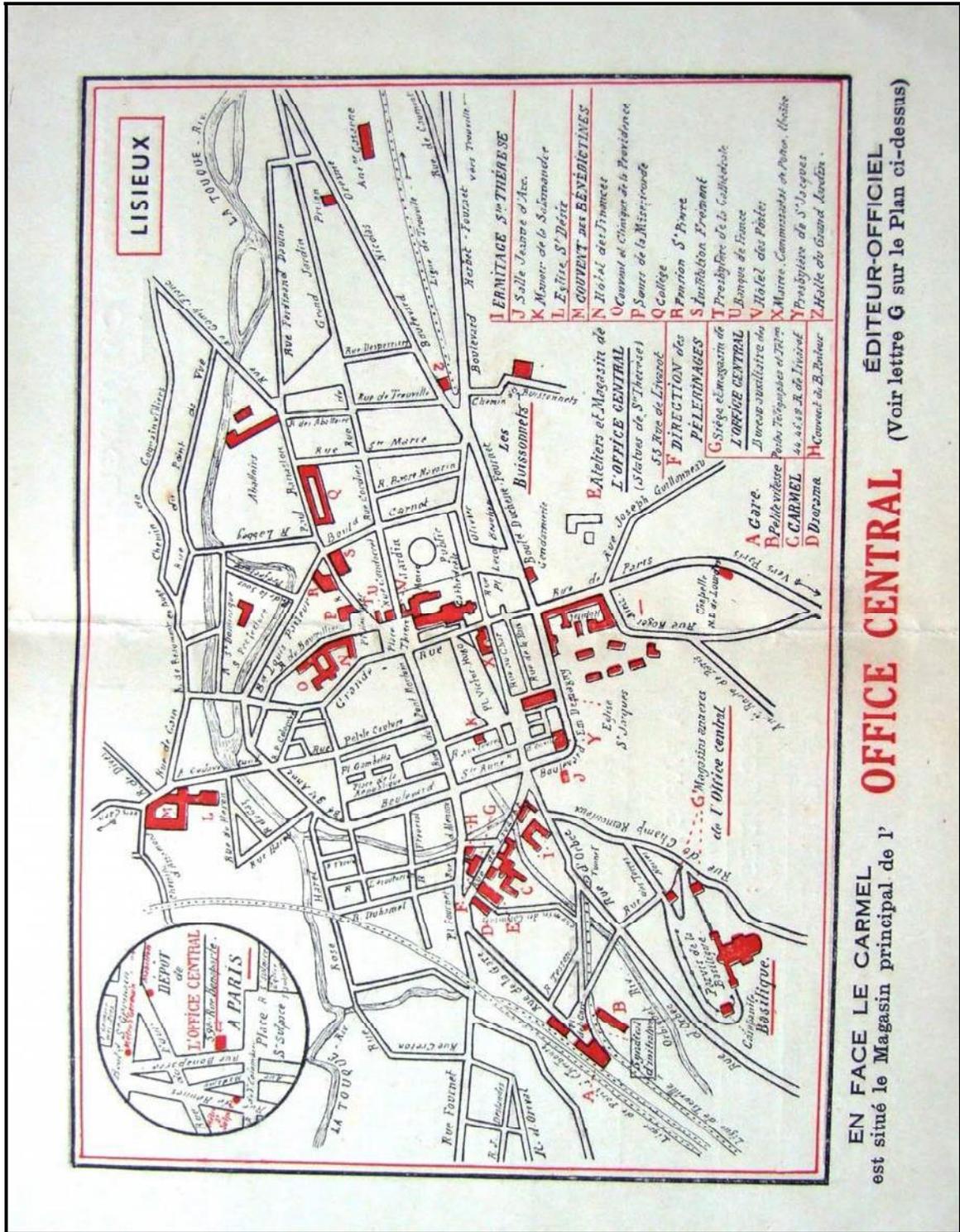


Figure 3.6. 1930s map of Lisieux, showing the OCL's various premises. Source: S24B, Tracts, ACL.

The Role of the OCL

The OCL saw itself as the ‘organisation for the dissemination of the Theresian message’,³⁵ with de Bercegol calling it the ‘indispensable assistant for Theresian publicity.’³⁶ They did the work of commissioning items from the Imprimerie Saint-Paul (still the Carmel’s publisher of choice) and other publishers, as well as advertising and selling them. But the OCL had another role too – that of keeping the commercial elements of the cult at a comfortable distance from the Carmel and the Martin sisters. In delegating the business and legal side of the cult to another organisation, the Carmel had a much broader reach in the outside world, while also avoiding raising questions about the suitability of nuns engaging in commerce. In chapter 5, for example, we will see how the OCL was able to act where it would have been undiplomatic for the Carmel to do so in prosecuting the makers of unauthorised images of Thérèse. But as a commercial enterprise that was involved in the religious world, the OCL was not uncontroversial. As early as 1926, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus wrote in her iconoclastic book about Thérèse that ‘a Jewish company had taken over the business side of the cult’,³⁷ causing disquiet amongst some of the saint’s devotees, and in 1932 Maurice Privat described the Office Central as the ‘public company who exploits the fame of the saint’³⁸ (see chapter 4 on these authors). Canon Dubosq was also wary of the presentation of the OCL as an ‘ordinary retailer’ and in the year of the publication of Privat’s book he advised the Carmel to emphasise that the OCL would ‘never be a true money-making business’ and stated that ‘the Carmel must indeed refuse [to work with] enterprises which embrace the enthusiasm of the salesman.’³⁹ Dubosq was clearly trying to distance the OCL from the many private enterprises, with no connection to the Carmel of Lisieux, that had opened on the convent’s very doorstep, seeking to profit from Thérèse’s fame (see figures 3.7 and 3.8). Despite the presentation of the OCL as the organisation that dealt with all the commercial elements of the cult, the Carmel itself was still intimately involved in the commissioning of commercial items. Direct correspondence between the Carmel and over fifty different publishers survives.⁴⁰ Céline was frequently written to directly, for example in correspondence from l’Imprimerie d’Art G. Boüan in 1927,⁴¹ and as late as October 1957 she was corresponding directly with the publisher SILIC about the images to be

³⁵ Pressant appel, flyer dated 1948-49, S24B, env. 2b, ACL.

³⁶ Necrologie, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance personnelle, ACL.

³⁷ Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 19.

³⁸ Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 7.

³⁹ D/MA 07/02/1932, THER-5, ACL.

⁴⁰ See Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

⁴¹ L’Imprimerie d’Art G. Boüan/C 07/10/1927 and 13/10/1927, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

included in a later edition of the book *Histoire d'une famille* (1945).⁴² The OCL furthered the commercial aims of the Carmel, but the community, and Céline in particular, maintained control of even the finer details of the commercial output of the cult.

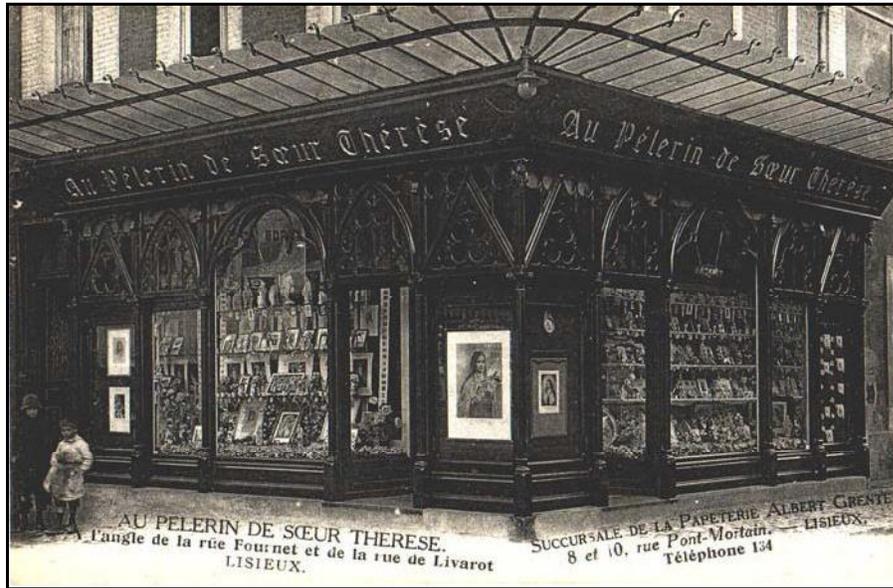


Figure 3.7. A shop owned by Papeterie Albert Grete, on the corner of rue Fournet and rue de Livarot, just yards from the Carmel, c. 1920. Source: author's collection.



Figure 3.8. The scene in front of the Carmel on the day of the translation of Thérèse's relics to the chapel of the convent (27 March 1923), showing privately-run shops and hotels opposite the convent. Source: Album cartes postales diverses, ACL.

⁴² SILIC/C 28/10/1957, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

The Popular Publications and the Carmel's Publishing Empire

The books produced by the Carmel of Lisieux were a key means of marketing the cult of Saint Thérèse. There were three key periods of publishing activity in the convent's history, the first being 1910-17. 1910-14 were the years of the preparatory and ordinary processes of the introduction of the cause for Thérèse's beatification, and these years saw a great deal of publishing activity. Although some notable additions would come later, by 1913 – a year of prolific production – the principal popular works were established and these would be promoted with little change until Céline's death. The Carmel had a substantial body of work in place on the eve of the First World War, a key turning point in the cult, seeing the signing of the Decree for the Introduction of Thérèse's cause in the month of the outbreak of the war and the founding of the Office Central de Lisieux in early 1917, and this left the cult in an ideal position to capitalise fully on the missionary potential of the war. The early to mid-twenties, which for the Carmel were consumed by the run-up to the canonisation, saw a large rise in their production of printed works, and can be seen as the second significant period of publishing activity. 1923, the year of the beatification, and 1926, the year after the canonisation, also showed peaks of productivity, largely owing to the need to produce new editions of old works using Thérèse's new titles of *Bienheureuse* and *Sainte*. The ten year period between 1946 and 1956 is the third period, and is particularly significant for Céline. During this time she was involved in the production of six important works: *Histoire d'une famille* (1945), with Père Stéphane-Joseph Piat; the first substantial publication of Thérèse's letters (1948), with Abbé André Combes; *Conseils et souvenirs* (1952); *Le père de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (1953); *La mère de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (1954); and the first unedited edition of the autobiography, *Manuscrits Autobiographiques* (1956), produced with François de Sainte-Marie.

The Carmel's publishing output was at first dominated by heavily edited versions of Thérèse's own writings, with *Histoire d'une âme*, the very first Theresian publication, being the jewel in the Carmel's publishing crown. This was followed by an abridged version, *Une rose effeuillée*, in 1902, and Thérèse's poems and extracts of her letters appeared in 1908 and 1914 respectively. But other genres of publication quickly appeared, and as early as 1904 second-hand interpretations of Thérèse's spirituality were produced, the first of which was *Appel aux petites âmes* (1904). *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort*, first appearing in 1913 and written by Mère Agnès, followed a very similar approach to *Appel*, and in the early twenties this

'interpretation' approach reached its apogee, with the appearance of the heavily allegorical *La petite voie* in 1920 and Céline's personal interpretation of the 'little way', *L'esprit de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus d'après ses écrits et les témoins oculaires de sa vie* in 1924. The visual hagiography *Vie en images* appeared in 1923 – a crucial publication for the promotion of Céline's images. The first independent volume of miracle accounts, titled *Pluie de Roses*, appeared in 1910. Six further volumes later appeared in this series and the miracle narrative would become central to the Carmel's publishing strategy.⁴³ Books for children quickly appeared, including *Deux mois et neuf jours de préparation à ma Première Communion, d'après la méthode suivie par sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* in 1911, *La Petite Thérèse. Histoire de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus pour les enfants* in 1914⁴⁴ and *Le secret du bonheur pour les petits enfants*, by Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, the following year. The Carmel were providing different types of publication for different audiences, defined by age group, by devotional or literary taste and by socio-economic grouping, and the latter consideration in particular was reflected in the carefully tiered pricing structure. A commercial flyer of 1905 demonstrates neatly how the three publications available at the time offered everything from leather-bound luxury to throw-away booklets, at a range of prices. *Histoire d'une âme*, with 20 plates, sold at 4 francs, *Une rose effeuillée*, described as the 'popular edition' of the autobiography, but still running to 287 pages and with four plates, at 1 franc 50, and *Appel aux petites âmes*, little more than a booklet and also containing four plates, at only 25 centimes.⁴⁵ This suggests a well-planned commercial strategy, offering items suitable for all potential target markets. The convent's use of images in these publications varied according to the end of the market they wished to appeal to, and we will now examine the use of images in some of the most significant of these publications.

The Images and the Autobiography

Histoire d'une âme was the mainstay of the Carmel's publishing activity and it was a key vehicle for the dissemination of Céline's images. By 1955, forty-six editions had been published, all using Céline's images heavily. Between 1898 and 1955 well over 350,000 copies of the autobiography (not including the abridged version, *Une rose effeuillée*) were sold in France,

⁴³ On this see Antoinette Guise, 'Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse' and 'Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles'.

⁴⁴ See C/T 11/09/1911, IIIa Boite 3a de Sr Geneviève – Céline Correspondance, ACL.

⁴⁵ 1905 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

meaning Céline's images enjoyed a huge circulation through the autobiography.⁴⁶ As soon as Céline produced new images, they quickly appeared in the most recent edition of the book. The way Céline's images were used in the successive editions of the autobiography is revealing of the Carmel's quite static approach to their marketing of Thérèse over a sixty-year period. The illustration of the first edition, with the use of an unretouched photograph as the frontispiece (figure 3.9), was very rare in the Carmel's publishing history. An original photograph would not appear in the commercial output again for another sixty years, and even retouched photographs were very rarely used in *Histoire d'une âme* before the early 1930s. The 1899 second edition bore the 'buste ovale', produced for the purpose, as well as Céline's image of Thérèse with her father (figure 3.10). These images signalled the Carmel's approach to illustrating *Histoire d'une âme* for the next fifty years. The photographic was eschewed in favour of romantic representations of the saint, with a strong emphasis on Thérèse as a girl. As Céline's stock of images developed, the number of illustrations used in editions of the autobiography rocketed from just three in 1898 to a peak of forty-one in 1933. As early as 1902 fifteen plates were included: six photographs of places associated with Thérèse; six original images by Céline; one 'découpage' image; and two retouched photographs. By 1906 Céline was using even her images that did not feature Thérèse to provide new plates for the autobiography, including her rendering of the Holy Face, and soon the images by her collaborators also appeared. The July 1914 edition featured the allegorical 'Nazareth' (figure 2.32), and many of the images the collaborators had produced for *Vie en images* became included as illustrations in the autobiography in the key period of 1923 to 1925. Plates carrying a number of images and photographs of places associated with Thérèse also became common (figure 3.11).

Here we can see that the Carmel made use of a number of different types of image to provide as many illustrations as quickly as possible. However, once this collection of images was established, the visual content of the book changed very little until after the Second World War, and even then the approach was the same – no original photographs and Céline's images dominating. A sign of Céline's fixed approach to the illustration of the autobiography, and presentation of the same face for Thérèse throughout the sixty years of her work on the cult, is the illustrative content of the forty-fourth edition of *Histoire d'une âme*, published in 1953. While four significant new photographs of Thérèse appeared here, all were very heavily retouched. The

⁴⁶ See Éditions de *Histoire d'une âme*, ACL. Figures for the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 21st, 35th, 36th and 45th editions are not recorded.

classic Celinian images ‘Thérèse and her mother’, ‘Thérèse and her father’, ‘Thérèse as first communicant’, ‘Thérèse and Céline’, ‘Thérèse *expirante*’ and ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ all appeared, and it was the creative images that remained the dominant force in the book. The nature of the illustrative content of the edition was summed-up by the cover, which bore a very heavily retouched version of the third pose of the ‘Thérèse *aux images*’ series (figure 3.12). This was a telling symbol of Céline’s approach – an essentially nineteenth-century, Saint-Sulpician face was being presented here in the mid-twentieth century, on the eve of the 1960s and the changes in popular Catholicism brought by Vatican II. A photograph taken in 1957 shows Céline holding this book – here, aged eighty-eight, she was still literally holding on to her fixed vision of her sister’s ideal representation (see figure 3.13). Just three years later, the three volume *Manuscrits Autobiographiques de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus*, the first unedited edition of the autobiography, produced in facsimile, stripped back illustration to one plate only – the photograph known as ‘Thérèse *au lys*’,⁴⁷ and the single volume edition of 1957 contained only the photograph of Thérèse standing in the cloister courtyard of July 1896 on the cover.⁴⁸ This was a sudden break with the approach that had remained the same for the preceding fifty years, and the use of these images symbolised the end of the Celinian period of Thérèse’s representation, two years before her death.

⁴⁷ Photograph 38, Appendix 2.

⁴⁸ Photograph 29, Appendix 2.

3. The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult

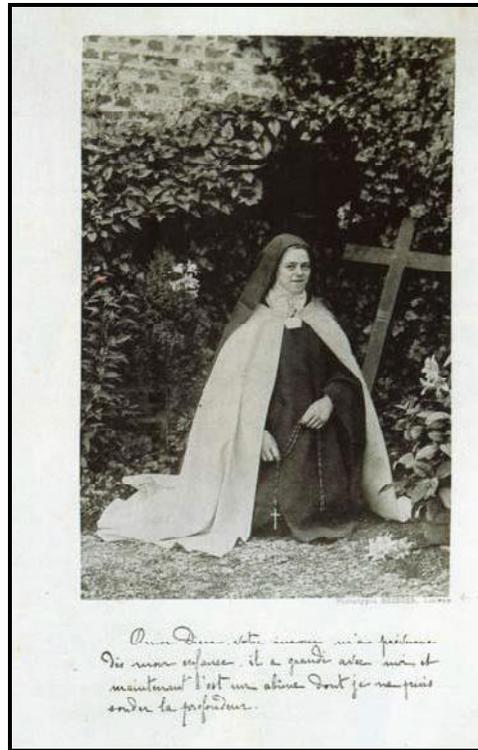


Figure 3.9. Frontispiece of the first edition of *Histoire d'une âme*, 1898. Source: *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face, religieuse carmélite, morte en odeur de sainteté au carmel de Lisieux à l'âge de 24 ans le 30 septembre 1897, Histoire d'une âme écrite par elle-même* (Bar-le-Duc, 1898).

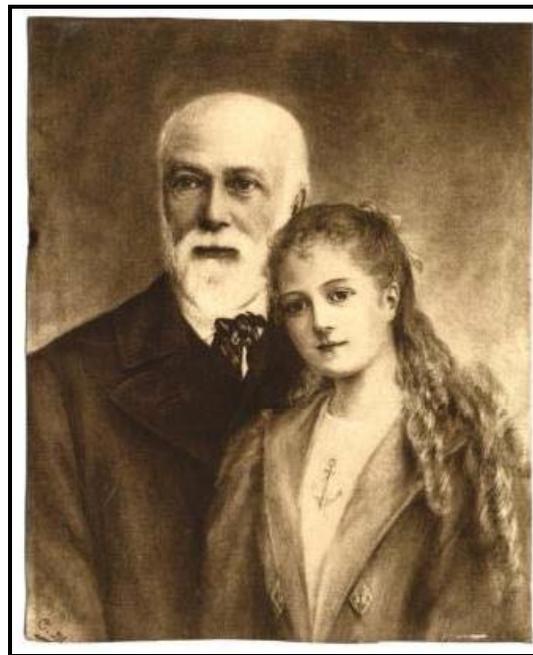


Figure 3.10. 'Thérèse and her father', 1898. Source: ACL.

3. The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult

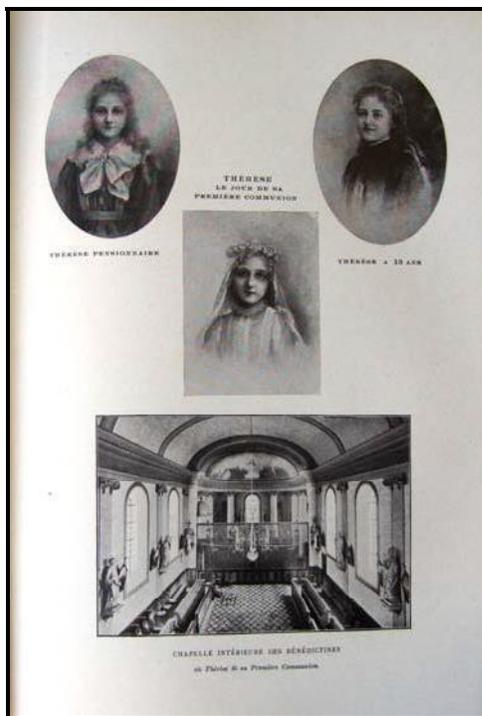


Figure 3.11. Plate from the twenty-third edition of the autobiography, 1920. Source: *Histoire d'une âme* (Bar-le-Duc, 1920).

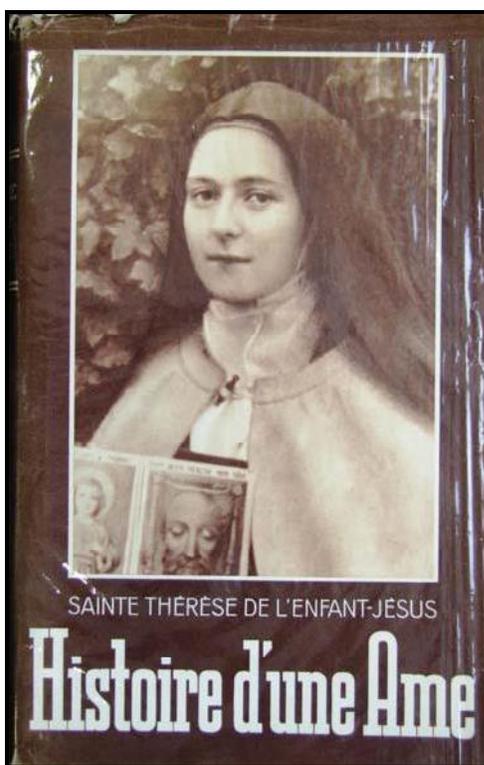


Figure 3.12. Cover of the forty-fourth edition of the autobiography. Source: *Histoire d'une âme* (Lisieux, 1953).

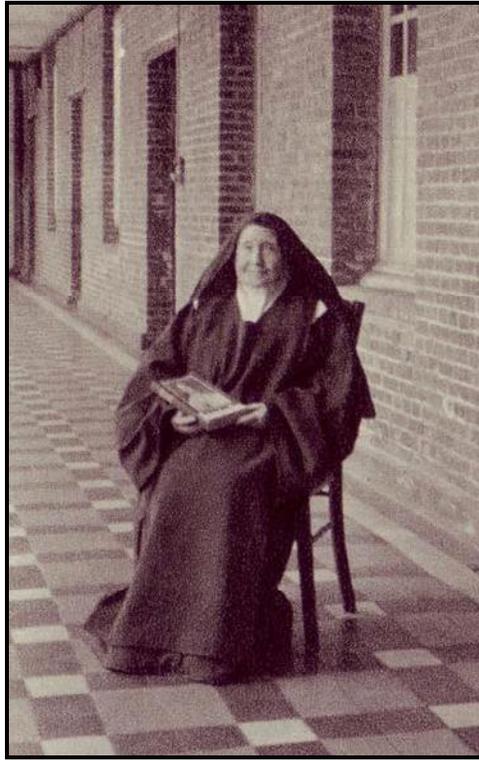


Figure 3.13. Céline pictured in 1957, holding the 1953 edition of *Histoire d'une âme*. Source: ACL.

'Une rose effeuillée': The First Popular Publication

Thérèse's writings formed a substantial part of the Carmel's publishing campaign, but it is in the *éditions de propagande illustrée* (heavily illustrated, cheap paperbacks, aimed at the promotion of the cult) that we find the real reshaping of Thérèse as a product and the most effective use of Céline's images. The popular version of the autobiography, *Une rose effeuillée*, first published in 1902, meant that 'Thérèse was now available in a pocket edition',⁴⁹ and it marked an important move into the production of mass-market, popular publications. The original edition sold 140,800 copies before 1924, while the deluxe edition of 1909 sold 98,300 copies by the same year.⁵⁰ In 1908 the Imprimerie Saint-Paul advertised a special offer – buy three copies of *Histoire d'une âme* and get one copy of *Une rose effeuillée* free – a clear strategy for wide dissemination of the cult.⁵¹ The illustration of the book was not extensive, but the representations of the future saint that did appear in it were representative of the stars of the Carmel's stable of images: the 1909 deluxe

⁴⁹ Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 35.

⁵⁰ See chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁵¹ 1908 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

edition contained the *'buste ovale'* as a frontispiece, 'Thérèse and her father' and 'Thérèse morte', while the deluxe edition of 1913 added 'Thérèse as first communicant' and 'Thérèse and her mother' to the images featured in the book. The popular version of 1909 carried only the *'buste ovale'* as a frontispiece, but interspersed the text with engravings which gave an impression of rich illustration without the need for expensively printed plates (indeed it cost 1 franc 80 centimes to the deluxe edition's 2 francs 50 centimes).⁵² These engravings were an important feature of the Carmel's publications and demonstrate that the Carmel's commercial activities sometimes dictated the images they produced. Chapter heading illuminations (sometimes appearing as illustrations integral to the text) showing scenes from Thérèse's life, from the life of Christ, or of Thérèse in allegorical situations with holy figures, appeared in many of the early publications. These biographical pictures were prototype images for those that later appeared in more fleshed-out form in *Vie en images* in 1923. The 1909 popular edition of *Une rose effeuillée* carried chapter heading images which included the precursors to Sœur Marie du Sainte-Esprit's 'Thérèse fishing', de Winter's 'Thérèse strewing flowers on the Holy Sacrament' (see figures 3.14 and 3.15), Annould's 'The cure by the Holy Virgin', Blanchard's 'First communion' and 'Thérèse taking the habit', Céline's 'Thérèse and Leo XIII' and several images later reworked in watercolours by Jouvenot. It seems likely that all these engravings were suggested by Céline, done by Jouvenot and served as templates to the other artists who later rendered them in watercolours or oils. *La Petite Thérèse. Histoire de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus pour les enfants* (1914) contained many more such biographical engravings than eventually made it in to *La Vie en images*. Even after the appearance of *La Vie en images*, these black and white engraving-style scenes from Thérèse's life still appeared in the cheaper publications, including *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie, sa pluie de roses* (1926), a thirty-two page booklet. The evolution of these images into more fully-fledged representations in *Vie en images* demonstrates both the way the Carmel was producing different types of illustrations to suit different types of publication, here commissioning images that were cheaper to reproduce than Céline's originals, as they did not need to be printed on separate plates, and the way in which they routinely reused and recast images.

⁵² 1909 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

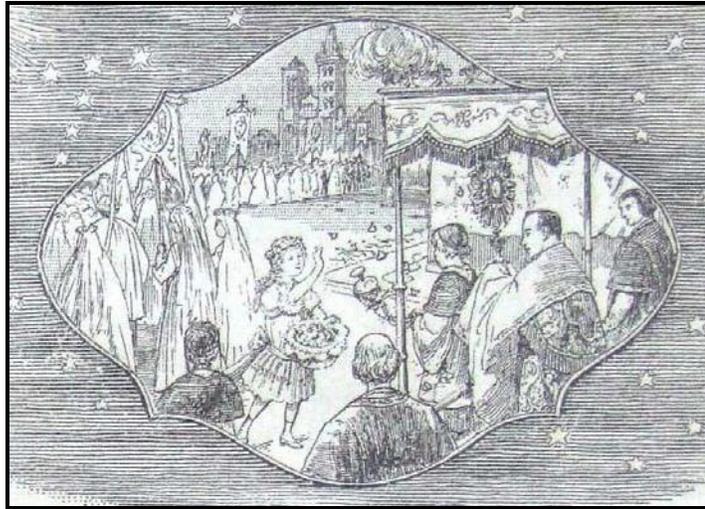


Figure 3.14. Thérèse strewing flowers on the Holy Sacrament chapter heading illumination. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *Une rose effeuillée. Édition populaire de l'Histoire d'une Âme* (Bar-le-Duc, 1909).

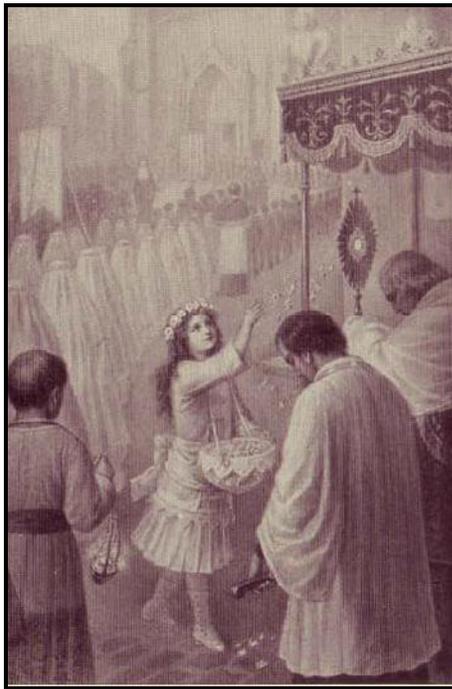


Figure 3.15. De Winter's 'Thérèse strewing flowers on the Holy Sacrament' as it appeared in *Vie en images*. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *La Vie en images de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus en 68 tableaux, avec couplets et musique pour séances de projections* (Bar-le-Duc, 1923).

'Appel aux petites âmes' and Its Derivatives

Appel aux petites âmes is of huge importance for the history of the Theresian publications. Textually light and heavily illustrated, it told Thérèse's story in a concise thirty-three pages for

only 25 centimes. As such, *Appel aux petites âmes* made Thérèse's life story and the Carmel's images of her available to anybody. First published in 1904, it was later reworked into several different versions with different titles. It got an enthusiastic reception from Bishop Amette, Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, who sanctioned this dramatically pared down version of Thérèse's writings as an acceptable proxy for the full version, saying 'I read it with much pleasure – it reminded me of the sweet impression which I adopted of the dear Sœur Thérèse when I read her *Histoire [d'une âme]* for the first time.'⁵³ There were new editions of *Appel* every year between 1908 and 1917, with the exception of the early war years of 1914 and 1915, and another in 1920. The illustrations inside were extremely numerous considering the cost of the book, but this was achieved by cramming several images onto one plate. The 1904, 1912 and 1917 editions all used either Céline's image 'Thérèse with harp', the 'buste ovale' or 'Thérèse aux roses' as a frontispiece, and then included three plates, each with six or seven images on it. A plate from the 1917 edition (figure 3.16) used a retouched photograph, the *découpage* image 'Thérèse in meditation', three of Céline's original portraits, and Annould's 'Nazareth', mirroring the eclectic approach taken to the illustration of *Histoire d'une âme*. However, the most significant element of illustration in the case of *Appel aux petites âmes* and its derivatives (it was adapted into different versions at least three times) was the cover illustrations – highly allegorical images that illustrated aspects of Thérèse's spiritual philosophy. Such illustrated covers made the image particularly immediate and made the publication a desirable product on the shop shelf. The cover of the first edition showed a dove sailing in a boat, symbolising the soul, sailing towards perfection with the help of a lighthouse, representative of God's love (figure 3.17). The cover of the second version of the book, *Vie abrégée de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face religieuse carmélite, 1873-1897. Appel aux petites âmes* (1909) showed Jesus with small children and the inscription 'Whoever is a little one, let him come to me.' Almost certainly by Jouvenot, this image represented Thérèse's philosophy of 'spiritual childhood' – becoming childlike and almost passive in one's approach to God.⁵⁴ The cover of another incarnation of the book, *Appel aux petites âmes. Vie abrégée de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (1913), continued the theme of spiritual childhood, but this time reflected Thérèse's analogy of God's love being like an elevator that lifts 'little souls' to perfection (see figure 3.18). Showing Jesus lifting a child up to view Heaven, while others pulled at his robes to be next, the caption was directly from the autobiographical manuscripts: 'The elevator which

⁵³ A/ISC 14/05/1904, ED Livres de Sr Isabelle, env. 1, ACL.

⁵⁴ See HA, Ms. B.

must raise me to heaven is Your arms, O Jesus!⁵⁵ In 1925 the title became *Appel à l'Amour divin*. *J'ai ma devise écrite sur ma voile: vivre d'amour! Signé: sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* and the cover showed Thérèse herself sailing in a boat called 'abandon' towards paradise (figure 3.19). This was perhaps an even more crude visual rendering of Thérèse's philosophy of abandoning one's will to God as the way to perfection. The illustration of the covers of the *Appel aux petites âmes* series shows the process of turning Thérèse's key teaching into images, which in turn became commodities of the cult. The images made these abstract ideas tangible and, by printing them on the covers of cheap, disposable pamphlet-style books, they could be easily possessed and appropriated into the devotional lives of the faithful.

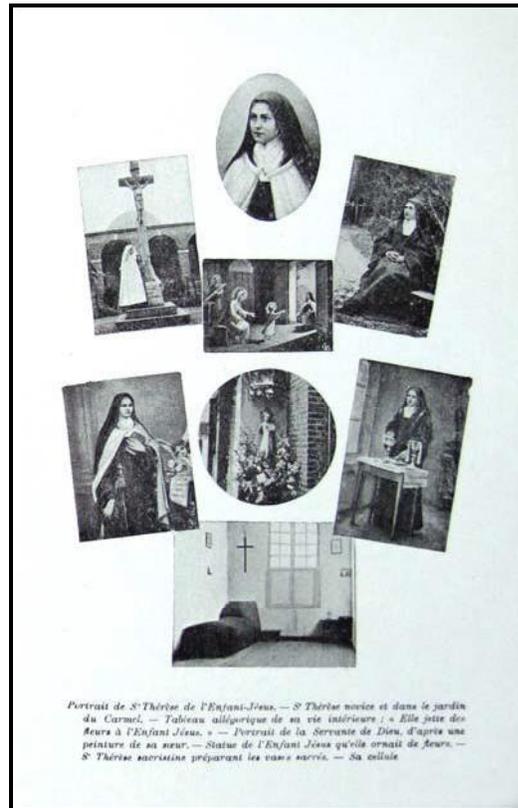


Figure 3.16. Plate from the 1917 edition of *Appel aux petites âmes*. Source: Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Appel aux petites âmes* (Bar-le-Duc, 1917).

⁵⁵ See HA, Ms. C, 2v°-3r°, pp. 207-8.

3. The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult

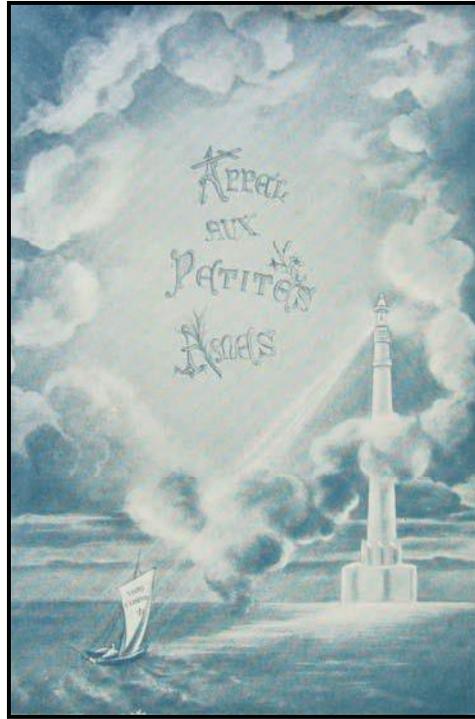


Figure 3.17. Cover of the 1904 first edition of *Appel aux petites âmes*. Source: Mère Isabelle du Sacré-Cœur, *Appel aux petites âmes* (Bar-le-Duc, 1904).

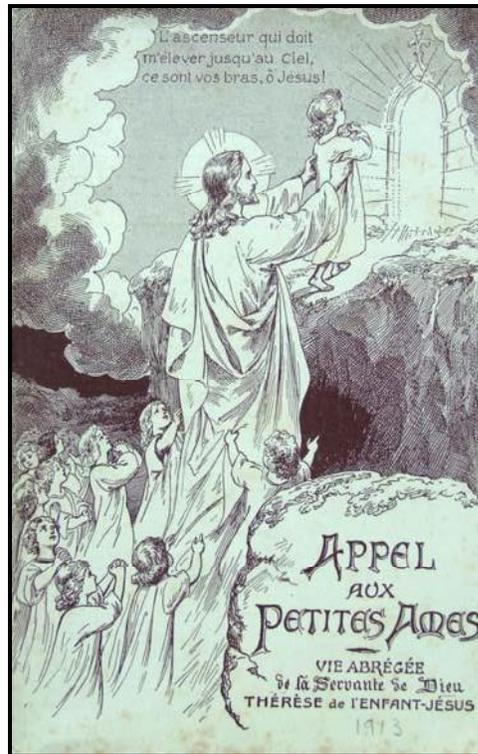


Figure 3.18. Cover of the second version of *Appel aux petites âmes*. Source: Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Appel aux petites âmes. Vie abrégée de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Bar-le-Duc, 1913).

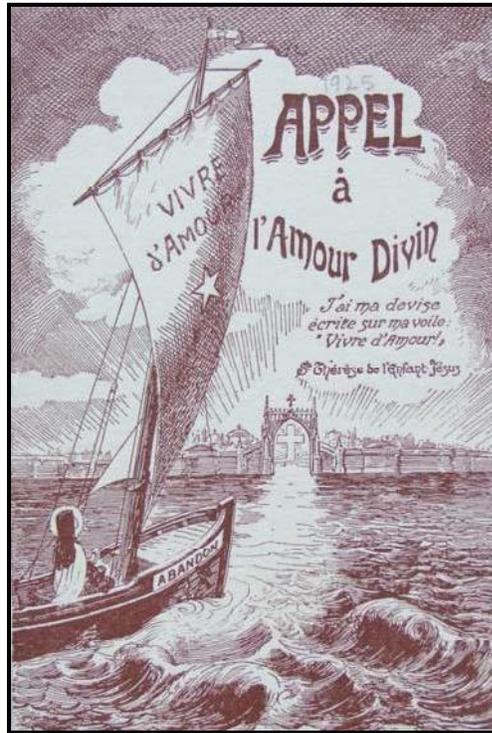


Figure 3.19. Cover of the third version of *Appel aux petites âmes*. Source: Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Appel à l'Amour divin. J'ai ma devise écrite sur ma voile: vivre d'amour! Signé: sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Barle-Duc, 1925).

'Sœur Thérèse... sa vie': Mère Agnès' 'Opuscule'

Appel aux petites âmes and its later incarnations were essentially heavily pared-down biographies, quoting heavily from Thérèse's autobiographical manuscripts and ending abruptly with a dramatic account of her death. Thérèse's writings had been approved by Rome in December 1912 and the advancing cause of her beatification required something more than *Appel aux petites âmes* – the cult needed a popular publication that made clear Thérèse's 'uses' as a saint, highlighting how she was already acting on earth from Heaven and shaping her as a religious personality. Accordingly, in July 1913 *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort* appeared. Written by Mère Agnès, it had very little direct quotation from Thérèse herself, and devoted only twenty-four pages to retelling her life. These were heavily illustrated with the engravings that had first appeared in *Une rose effeuillée*, leaving space only for a very brief and simplistic retelling. The second part, 'Depuis sa mort' contained twenty-five pages of miracle accounts, followed by 'Nouvelles de la Cause', Thérèse's prayer 'Acte d'Offrande à l'Amour Miséricordieux' and a prayer for her beatification. A full, four-page catalogue of commercial items available from the

Imprimerie Saint-Paul followed. The emphasis here was on Thérèse as a present, tangible spiritual personality, whose potency on earth was being proved by regular miracle-working and whose fame was growing steadily. The catalogue at the end of the book made it easy for readers to invest in the cult further through the purchase of devotional items. The booklet used the recently-finished ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ on the cover (figure 3.20), making full use of its iconic power. The use of Thérèse’s most famous sayings on the cover – ‘Je veux passer mon ciel à faire du bien sur la terre’ (‘I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth’), and ‘Après ma mort, je ferai tomber une pluie de roses’ (‘After my death, I will let fall a shower of roses’)⁵⁶ – fast becoming slogans for the Carmel’s marketing project – contributed further to the moulding of Thérèse into a strong, easily-identifiable personality. At only 10 centimes a copy, and with a buy twelve, get one free offer,⁵⁷ this was the most affordable publication the Carmel ever produced and it went into several editions. It sold 460,000 copies by the middle of the First World War, surpassing *Appel aux petites âmes* (379,000 copies of the *Appel* were sold by 1916) as the premier popular Theresian publication.⁵⁸

Sœur Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort was particularly important for the spread of Thérèse’s fame during the First World War, a period when the promotion of the cult accelerated quickly. The 1916 edition showed how aware the Carmel was that the war was a time when the cult might make headway. A picture of soldiers making a military pilgrimage to Thérèse’s grave in Lisieux was added (figure 3.21), complete with Thérèse’s statement ‘J’aime la France, ma Patrie. Je veux lui conserver la Foi’, (‘I love France, my Fatherland. I want to preserve the Faith’). A crudely-drawn image of medals sent to the Carmel as ex-votos was also included. Eleven pages of extracts from letters sent to the Carmel during the war, thanking Thérèse for her intervention in the trenches or for the spiritual strength she had given soldiers, also appeared. Finally, as if to prove the foothold Thérèse was gaining in the Catholic world by reference to an authoritative source, the *La Croix* article ‘Du Carmel aux tranchées’, commenting on the growing devotion to Thérèse at the Front, was included, a clever contribution to the book’s attempt to present Thérèse as the soldier’s saint.⁵⁹ Annoult’s image of Thérèse showering roses on a battlefield (see figure 2.35) was used on the back cover of this 1916 edition, forming a

⁵⁶ On the dubious provenance of these sayings, see Six, *Lumière de la Nuit*, pp. 140-5.

⁵⁷ See August 1913 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

⁵⁸ See chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁵⁹ François Veuillot, ‘Du Carmel aux tranchées’, *La Croix*, 27 September 1916, p. 1.

powerful association between Thérèse and salvation from the myriad perils of war, also the function of his image of Thérèse ministering to a dying soldier, produced in 1915 (figure 3.22). A rather dramatic illustration of the association of Thérèse in general, and this publication in particular, with miraculous happenings during the war is the copy of *Sa vie; depuis sa mort* on display in the new permanent exhibition at the Carmel of Lisieux. This copy of the book has a bullet-hole in it, and was sent to the Carmel by a soldier who said it had saved his life. Thérèse was fully subsumed into the mythology of the First World War even as the battles raged,⁶⁰ and the appropriation of an idea of the salvific image, usually associated with eastern icons, was clear evidence of the iconic charge the portraits of Thérèse had gained, even when mass-produced. The beatification and canonisation of Thérèse saw new editions of the book with her new titles, and in 1926 the title changed to *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie, sa pluie de roses*, the change reflecting the book's even greater emphasis on miracles (Thérèse's promised '*pluie de roses*'), with the inclusion of eight plates showing Jouvenot's rendering of Thérèse's miracles, later to receive their own volume. It is to these miracle accounts that we shall now turn.



Figure 3.20. Cover of the 1914 edition of *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort*. Source: Mère Agnès de Jésus, *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort* (Bar-le-Duc, 1914).

⁶⁰ On Thérèse's appeal during the war see Nevin, 'Je veux lutter'.

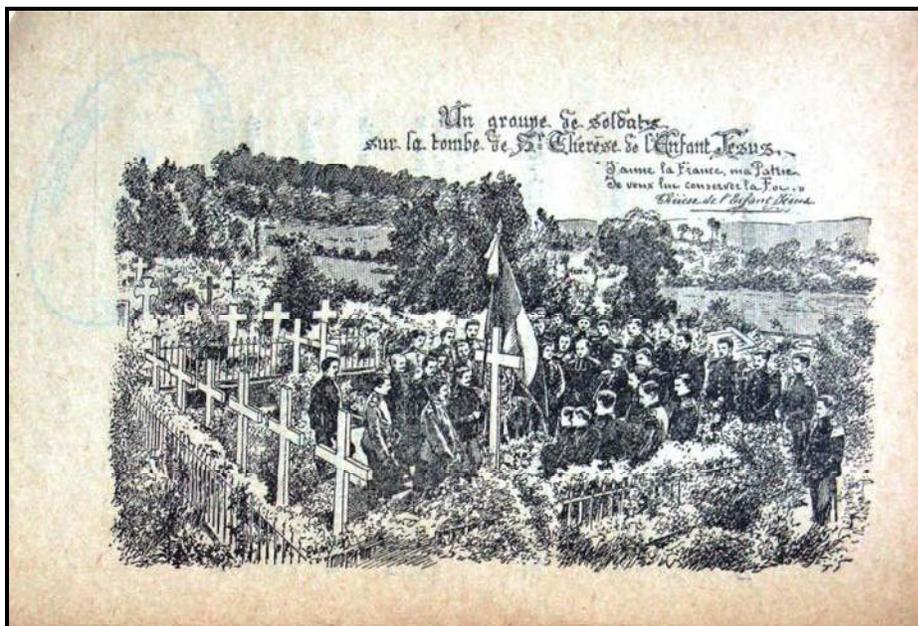


Figure 3.21. Soldiers making a military pilgrimage to Thérèse's grave in Lisieux. Source: Mère Agnès de Jésus, *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort* (Bar-le-Duc, 1916).



Figure 3.22. Annoult's 'Death of a soldier', 1915. Source: ACL.

'Pluie de Roses': The Miracle Accounts

Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, sa vie; depuis sa mort, saw the incorporation of miracle accounts in the *éditions de propagande* as they moved from a purely biographical approach to presenting Thérèse as a potential saint. But the huge number of letters the Carmel began to receive from devotees who claimed they had been the beneficiaries of Thérèse's miraculous intervention were to be used much more extensively.⁶¹ Dedicated volumes of miracle accounts appeared and the presentation of Thérèse as a miracle-worker became central to the cult in the period from the later years of the First World War to the run up to the beatification and canonisation. Already a dedicated volume of miracle accounts had appeared, *Quelques-unes des grâces et guérisons attribuées à l'intercession de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, morte en odeur de sainteté au carmel de Lisieux, 1873-1897* (1910) and this was to be the first of seven volumes of miracle accounts, known as *Pluie de roses*.⁶² Ida Friederike Görres remarked that this series was made up of 'badly printed volumes, cheap in their format, virtual museum-pieces of tasteless book-making',⁶³ but they sold nearly four hundred thousand copies by 1932.⁶⁴ The *Pluie de roses* series was not well-illustrated, but the covers of the books cast Thérèse strongly in the role of thaumaturge, the showering of roses being promoted as a universal symbol of her favours.⁶⁵ The cover of the fourth edition, published in June 1914, the month of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was eerily prophetic, showing a mass of lambs caught in a thicket of brambles, with Thérèse casting down a shower of roses on them (see figure 3.23). No doubt originally intended to show the saving of imperilled souls in general, the relevance of the image to the slaughter in the trenches became clear as the war began. The fifth volume capitalised on the war more fully, carrying the subtitle 'Conversions, Guérisons. Interventions de S^r Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus pendant la Guerre' and showing rows of medals on the front, juxtaposed with roses. The highlights of the wartime miracles had already appeared in *Quelques extraits des nombreuses lettres reçues au carmel de Lisieux pendant la guerre* (1916), which bore the image of Thérèse on the battlefield on the cover, and ran

⁶¹ The Carmel directly solicited such letters from the very beginning of the war. The July 1914 Imprimerie Saint-Paul commercial catalogue called for news of 'all the graces and cures attributed to the intercession of Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus'. See July 1914 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

⁶² Vol. II (1912), III (1913), IV (1914), V (1920), VI (1923), VII (1926). There was also several books of extracts from these volumes, including: Carmel of Lisieux, *Pluie de Roses, extraits des tomes I et II* (Bar-le-Duc, 1912); *Idem., Pluie de Roses, extraits du tome VI* (Bar-le-Duc, 1923).

⁶³ Görres, *The Hidden Face*, pp. 10-1.

⁶⁴ See chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁶⁵ On this see Guise, 'Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse', pp. 36-8, and *Idem.*, 'Thérèse de Lisieux et ses miracles', pp. 98-100.

to only thirty-two pages. Costing only 15 centimes to volume four's 2 francs 50 centimes,⁶⁶ it was a powerful promotional tool, with four pages of Theresian merchandise listed in the back, including medals available in five different metals and four different sizes – the ideal devotional item for the soldier. The inclusion of a very short biography of Thérèse on the back cover allowed the saint to be learned about without even having to open it as the book passed from hand to hand in the trenches. Additionally, *Histoire de l'avion sœur Thérèse, 1917-1918* (1919) focussed on a specific miracle story – that of a priest mobilised as a pilot in the war, and his miraculous survival of a plane crash after he invoked Thérèse's help – while *Interventions de sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus pendant la guerre* (1920), running to 256 pages, was a deluxe collection of the wartime miracles. Again using 'Thérèse on the battlefield' on the cover, the image on the back cover of a *tricolore* bearing the Sacred Heart was particularly significant, as Raymond Jonas has shown, as 'an ensign that blended faith and nationalism' and that represented the feelings of millions of French Catholics who saw the war as a punishment of the godless French republic.⁶⁷ After the war, the miracle accounts found a new cause, coming to focus on Thérèse's status as a friend of the missions, and *Pluie de Roses en faveur des Missions* (1923) bore on the cover a picture of a sick missionary in the Congo having a vision of Thérèse. The book was an important contribution to the association of Thérèse with the Catholic missions, which would culminate in her naming as Patroness of the Missions in 1927.

None of the miracle account publications examined thus far had been heavily illustrated, but the potential for dramatic illustration of these stories was not passed over. In 1922 the Carmel produced a series of slides by Charles Jouvenot and a book of music and verses to go with them, *Miracles et interventions de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Pour séances de projections* (1922). The slides were advertised in an Office Central catalogue of 1923 as two sets: 'Miracles' – a mixture of Thérèse's miraculous appearances from across the world (fifty-eight slides at 45 francs for black and white, 100 francs for colour); 'Interventions' – miracles that occurred during the First World War (forty-four slides at 35 francs and 80 francs). The two sets could be rented for a week for 12 francs and 10 francs for black and white, and 25 francs and 20 francs for colour, respectively.⁶⁸ The book itself came separately at 6 francs 50 centimes and reproduced only

⁶⁶ See July 1916, commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 1, ACL and July 1919 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

⁶⁷ Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud*, p. 87.

⁶⁸ 1923 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

twelve of this total of 102 images.⁶⁹ In 1928, most of these images were made available to those unable to afford to buy or rent the slides or to attend a showing of them, with the publication of *Quelques miracles et interventions de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (1928) which reproduced ninety-six of the images. The task of showing Thérèse's miraculous interventions was often a difficult one for Jouvenot, and her appearance, frequently in a three-quarters view, peering out of a frame of billowing clouds, was often awkward, particularly when she appeared to well-dressed people in modern domestic settings, next to expensive furnishings, for example in the slide showing her with Reverend Grant, a Scottish Presbyterian minister who later ran the *Maison Natale* (the house where Thérèse was born) at Alençon (figure 3.24). The image showing Thérèse's intervention when a priest was in danger of falling over a precipice in his car seems to have been particularly difficult to render, showing a double-scale Thérèse, rendered ghostly by the disappearance of her lower limbs, supporting the front wheels of the car (figure 3.25). But despite their often jarring nature, the images did bring Thérèse closer, showing her intervening for the benefit of ordinary people and being physically close to them.⁷⁰ These images also showed Thérèse in many different environments – in the missionary lands, in the trenches, in seminaries and hospitals, at sea and in the air and in the bedrooms of the ailing across Europe. These pictures took Thérèse out of the biographical and allegorical context in which she had been pictured thus far, underscoring her mobility and potency since her death and providing a series of visual representations of her posthumous life. With re-editions in 1936 and 1938, *Quelques miracles et interventions* sold 33,000 copies.⁷¹

⁶⁹ April 1923 music catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

⁷⁰ During the Middle Ages, portrayal in half-length, bringing the subject 'closer to the edge of the picture-plane and therefore into closer proximity to the beholder [was] a pictorial device introduced in the Netherlands to facilitate a more intimate association with the sacred.' Marks, *Image and Devotion*, p. 33. The same method is used by Jouvenot in the Reverend Grant image.

⁷¹ See chiffres de publications, ACL.

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Figure 3.23. Cover of the fourth edition of *Pluie de roses*. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *Pluie de roses IV* (Bar-le-Duc, 1914).

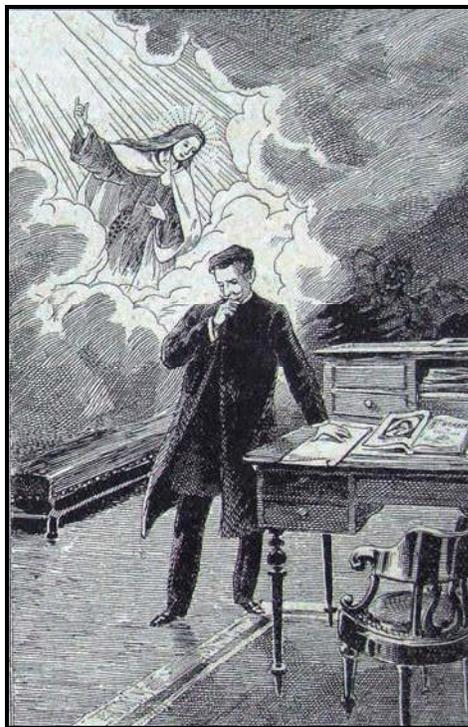


Figure 3.24. The conversion of Reverend Grant. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *Quelques miracles et interventions de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1928).

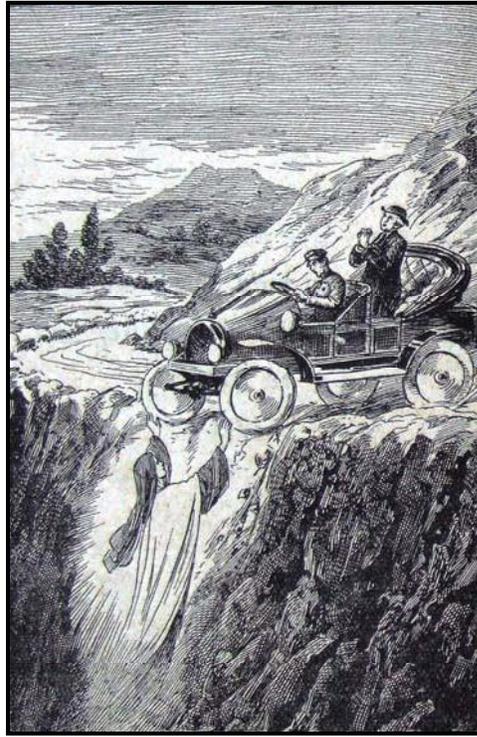


Figure 3.25. The rescue of a motoring priest. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *Quelques miracles et interventions de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 1928).

'La petite voie': An Allegorical Journey to Salvation

In 1919 the Carmel made the move from illustrated texts into picture-book publications, where the image dominated and text was sparse. *La petite voie. Ascension mystique de la montagne de la perfection d'amour et d'enfance spirituelle de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Tableaux allégoriques* was written by Mère Agnès and illustrated by Jouvenot.⁷² Here the aim was to communicate Thérèse's spiritual message to the masses, leaving behind the biographical and miraculous entirely. The book contained thirty-one tableaux with accompanying verses and the introduction explained 'With the help of allegorical pictures, we are going to follow the Servant of God through the various stages of a mystic life suitable to all souls desirous of climbing with her THE MOUNTAIN OF PERFECTION BY THE WAY OF LOVE AND SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD.'⁷³ The book was indeed highly allegorical. Thérèse was shown visiting Bethlehem and cradling Jesus, leading to the insight that she must become like a child if she is to achieve

⁷² Later called *La petite voie d'enfance spirituelle suivie par la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Poème allégorique en 32 tableaux* (Bar-le-Duc, 1923).

⁷³ Mère Agnès de Jésus, *La petite voie*, p. 2.

holiness. She was then shown in the guise of a child struggling towards perfection, and discovering the importance of self-immolation, before finally putting her trust in God and being borne along the path to sanctity by Jesus himself. In the final plate, Thérèse was seen, once again in her familiar form, wearing the Carmelite habit, shepherding souls towards Heaven (figure 3.26) and the text says:

To our land of exile Thérèse returns/ Confiding her secrets to the children of God/ She extends her mantle over the innocent flock /Over the simple and humble of heart/ ‘Children’, she says, ‘ascend! My way is luminous/ It is the shortest route to Heaven above/ This happy experience is my own/ Yes, my way is indeed sure and leads to the God of Love!’⁷⁴

The spiritual philosophy of the ‘little way’ was being sold as a guaranteed route to Heaven here, and through this picture book the image and the spiritual philosophy were intimately linked. While Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, contemporary critic of the Theresian enterprise, said that the images had ‘dramatic tendencies’, with the plate showing the child receiving God’s love from Heaven described as showing her ‘receiving full in the chest a gigantic cushion flung from the stormy clouds’,⁷⁵ the book sold 121,000 copies by 1928⁷⁶ and was fulsomely praised by Canon Dubosq.⁷⁷ Such was its popularity, it was published with full-colour plates (reproducing watercolours done by Sœur Marie du Sainte-Esprit) in 1930.⁷⁸ At 12 francs 50 centimes, it was one of the Carmel’s more lavishly-produced and expensive publications but, five years after the canonisation, a market for such a luxury item was assured.⁷⁹ *La petite voie* indicated the sisters’ desire to promote the ‘little way’ as Thérèse’s central message, but they were to return to a focus on Thérèse as both a historical and saintly personality in the 1920s.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, tableau 31.

⁷⁵ Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 36, 38.

⁷⁶ Chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁷⁷ D/C 28/09/1918, THER-5, ACL.

⁷⁸ Mère Agnès de Jésus, *La voie d’enfance spirituelle suivie par Ste Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus. 31 tableaux en couleurs* (Bar-le-Duc, 1930).

⁷⁹ July 1931 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2b, ACL.



Figure 3.26. The last tableau of *La petite voie*. Source: Mère Agnès de Jésus, *La petite voie. Ascension mystique de la montagne de la perfection d'amour et d'enfance spirituelle de la Servante de Dieu Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Tableaux allégoriques* (Paris, 1919).

'Vie en images': A Visual Hagiography

The production of images for the publication *Vie en images* was mentioned in chapter 2, and we have already seen how the engravings that first appeared in *Une rose effeuillée* were the prototypes for many of these representations. The book was the most important publication in the Carmel's history for the promotion of the Celinian image. Consisting of sixty-eight tableaux with accompanying eight-line verses (see figure 3.27), it was first published as *La Vie en images de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus* in 1923. Transcribing the events from the autobiography into pictures, it cost only 4 francs to *Histoire d'une âme*'s 14,⁸⁰ and told the story of Thérèse's life in a much more accessible manner than her sometimes rambling autobiography. The book brought together almost all the images of Thérèse that Céline had created or commissioned in the twenty-six years since her sister's death, combining retouched photographs, découpage images and original portraits, both by her and her collaborators, and presenting them in a coherent series, forming a visual hagiography. These tableaux became the standard representations of Thérèse's life, just as the various episodes from her autobiography had already become standardised in

⁸⁰ May 1923 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

countless devotional books, as well as editions of the autobiography. The publication of this series of visual counterparts to these well known episodes profoundly shaped how Thérèse's life was presented to the public, and its influence was far reaching, with the book going into several editions and selling 48,500 copies by 1925, and 177,800 by the last edition of 1955.⁸¹ As Thérèse gained new identities, for example Patroness of France and Patroness of the Missions, appropriate images were added to the book to illustrate these roles, and the number of plates expanded from sixty-eight in 1923 to seventy-seven after the canonisation. The book cemented the visual presentation of Thérèse's life into an instantly-identifiable series, and indeed 'Céline was, in her way, a pioneer of *bande dessinée*'⁸² – here, Thérèse's life story was told with the immediacy and simplicity of the comic strip, pared down to the bare bones of the standard tropes of the saint's Life.⁸³ The images from *Vie en images* would later appear in devotional settings: the frescoes at the chapel built adjacent to the *Maison Natale* in Alençon (see figure 3.28) were copies of images from the book, and watercolour copies by Sœur Marie du Saint-Esprit were hung in the rooms at *Les Buissonnets*, shaping the visitor's conception of the events of Thérèse's life at the very sites of their occurrence (see figure 3.29). This echoing and reuse of images was frequently found in the Carmel's approach to the representations of Thérèse, and it could be argued that this fixed the images that were issuing from Carmel as the authoritative representations through their repetition and ubiquity. We will return to *Vie en images* when we examine its echoing in the form of waxworks in the examination of the Diorama Sainte-Thérèse below.

⁸¹ Chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁸² Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 80.

⁸³ There have in fact been several *bande dessinée* treatments of Thérèse's life. Arnaud De Bie's *La Petite Thérèse! 'Vivre d'Amour!'* (Paris, 2006) used many of the images from *Vie en images*, copying their composition and sequence. See also: Guy Lehideux and Charlie Kieffer, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Étampes, 2000); Raymond Maric, Pierre Frisano and Marie-Paule Alluard, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux* (Boston, Mass., 1997); Marie-Thérèse Fischer, *La Petite Thérèse* (Strasbourg, 2004); Agnès Richomme and Robert Rigot, *Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Paris, 2006).

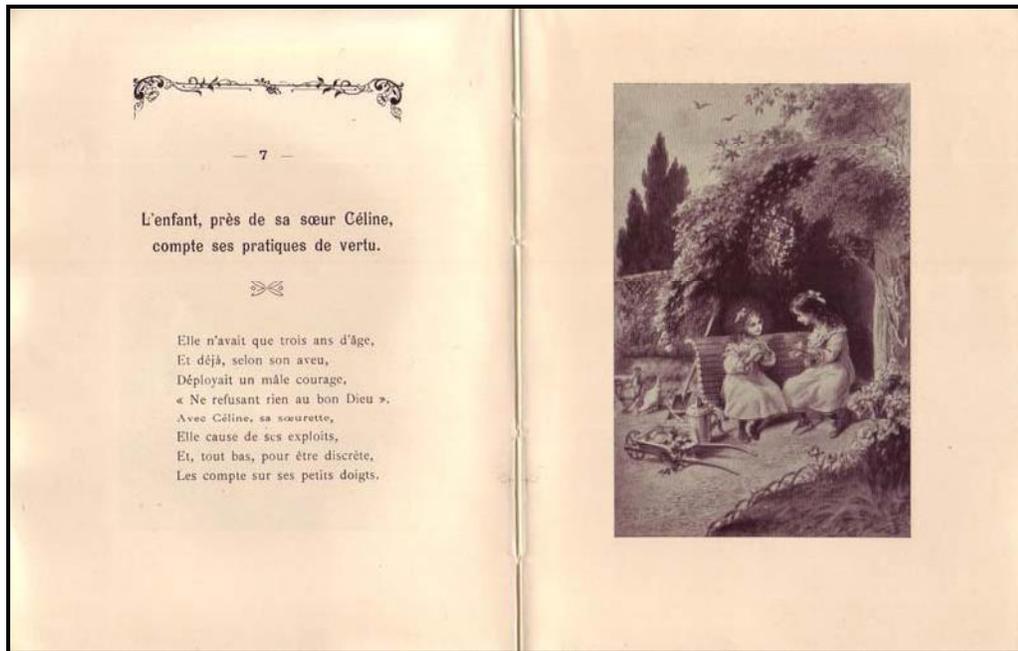


Figure 3.27. Section 7 of *Vie en images*, showing Thérèse and Céline in the garden at their house in Alençon. Source: Carmel of Lisieux, *La Vie en images de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus en 68 tableaux, avec couplets et musique pour séances de projections* (Bar-le-Duc, 1923).



Figure 3.28. Fresco at the chapel attached to the *Maison Natale*, Alençon, copying plate 7 of *Vie en images*, 1925. Source: author's collection.



Figure 3.29. Sœur Marie du Saint-Esprit's watercolour rendering of the Thérèse and Céline scene, c. 1925. Source: author's collection.

'L'Esprit' to 'La Mère de Sainte Thérèse': Céline's Works and the Later Years of the Theresian Publication

We have seen that Céline's images were the principal commodity of the Carmel's publishing empire, but her contribution to the Theresian industry was not confined to her images – she also wrote or collaborated on some significant publications.⁸⁴ The first of these was *L'esprit de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus d'après ses écrits et les témoins oculaires de sa vie*, first published in 1922 and with various re-editions up to 1946. This was Céline's treatment of Thérèse's spiritual philosophy, but it owed much more to the latent Jansenist influences of the Martin sisters' childhood than Thérèse's later theological innovations, and her philosophy that God was to be treated as a loving father rather than a divine judge. This was a text-heavy volume with full annotations directing readers to the original sources of the material and the book carried some carefully selected, appropriately serious images: a frontispiece of 'Thérèse in meditation' (see figure 3.30), representative of her credentials as spiritual thinker; a plate bearing Céline's favourite, 'Thérèse with harp', which 'showed her interior life';⁸⁵ the iconic, standard representation 'Thérèse aux roses'; and 'Thérèse expirante', showing the classic trope of the death of

⁸⁴ See RTAG, p. 99-100.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

the saint. The book sold 54,600 copies before the canonisation, 91,600 by 1937, and over one hundred thousand by 1946,⁸⁶ and was used as a reference work on Thérèse's spirituality for many years.⁸⁷ Céline's next most significant work would not appear for another twenty years and showed the beginning of a shift towards a greater interest in the history of Thérèse and her family, rather than her saintly, posthumous incarnation. *Histoire d'une famille. Une école de sainteté. Le foyer où s'épanouit Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (1945) was written with Stéphane-Joseph Piat and although it was indeed more rooted in Thérèse's historical reality, it was as hagiographical in its presentation of the Martin family as the title suggests. Indeed Thomas Nevin has stated that 'This book was written in the Vichy years; the urge for atonement of Third Republican sins may have been strong within Catholic France, and the model of rectitude provided by the Martin family must have been irresistible.'⁸⁸ The book made an important contribution to the advancement of the introduction of the cause for beatification of the Martin parents, which occurred in 1957.⁸⁹ The illustrations featured many engravings of places associated with the family and many retouched photographs – the Carmel was still reluctant to present original photographs as late as the mid-1940s.

By the time Céline's next publication appeared, she had lost all her remaining sisters. Marie died in January 1940, aged eighty; Léonie in June 1941, aged seventy-eight; and Pauline (Mère Agnès) in July 1951, aged ninety. In the year after Mère Agnès' death *Conseils et souvenirs* was published. This saw Céline's emergence from obscurity. It was the first of her publications explicitly acknowledged as being authored by her, and was described as 'The ultimate testimony of the last surviving sister of Saint Thérèse.'⁹⁰ A promotional leaflet for the book reproduced a statement in Céline's handwriting in facsimile: 'I attest that these pages, in all truth, conform to what I have seen and heard. S^r Geneviève de la Sainte Face et de S^{te} Thérèse OCD, 9 June 1951',⁹¹ testament to both the move towards a more historical approach to Thérèse's cult and the growing cult of personality surrounding Céline as the last survivor of the Martin family. Some unretouched photographs appeared in the book, a further sign of greater moves towards a more 'documentary' style, but some heavily retouched images also featured, including the 'faked' image of Thérèse

⁸⁶ Chiffres de publications, ACL.

⁸⁷ See Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 140.

⁸⁸ Nevin, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, p. 372.

⁸⁹ On this see Stéphane-Joseph Piat OFM, *Histoire d'une famille. Une école de sainteté. Le foyer où s'épanouit Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Lille, 1945), p. 128.

⁹⁰ March 1953 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 4, ACL.

⁹¹ 1952 advertising flyer, S24B, Tracts, ACL.

with novices and hourglass (figure 2.17).⁹² The frontispiece both confirmed the book as Céline's public debut and the Carmel's continued attachment to the retouching of photographs. A very heavily retouched version of a photograph taken on the day of Céline's profession,⁹³ the frontispiece showed her with Thérèse at the foot of the Carmel's courtyard cross (figure 3.31). The faces had been entirely repainted and both the image of the Holy Face held by Céline and the rose petals falling from Thérèse's hands were added to the original image. 'Thérèse *expirante*' and 'Thérèse *morte*' also appeared. Here, in 1952, the illustrative content of the Carmel's output was still dominated by retouched images and Céline's original portraits and, as with the 1953 edition of *Histoire d'une âme*, a Saint-Sulpician style of representation still characterised this publication.

Céline's final works were *Le père de Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, 1823-1894* (1953) and *La mère de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, 1831-1877* (1954). Both these books also contained some unretouched photographs, as *Conseils et souvenirs* had, but again there was a preponderance of retouched and 'découpage' images. The frontispiece was a hastily engineered portrait of Louis Martin, adapted from Céline's original portrait 'Thérèse and her father', which appeared on the following page. This rather undermined the claim, made by the caption to the frontispiece, that it was a 'photograph from 1881', and the biography of Zélie also contained a heavily retouched photograph of her as a frontispiece. In the earlier publication, a photograph of Céline with her father, Léonie and the Guérin family (see figure 2.3) was used to create a new image of her with her father alone outside the Guérin's country retreat at La Musse (figure 3.32) – here, as late as 1954, was an entirely 'faked' image. Céline's biographies of her parents marked the apogee of the creation of a mythology around the Martin family and confirmed Céline's reluctance to use original photographs right into the last years of her life. Céline's final work was to help with the preparations for François de Sainte-Marie's *Manuscrits Autobiographiques*, which was published in 1956 and which changed the landscape of devotion to Thérèse profoundly. But while Céline actively participated in the textual rediscovery of Thérèse, she never abandoned her 'interpretative' attitude to the photographs and it was not until after her death that François de Sainte-Marie could apply the same ethos to Thérèse's photographs. *Visage de Thérèse de Lisieux*

⁹² Mère Agnès remained in the window in the version used in *Conseils et souvenirs*, whereas both she and Mère Marie had been removed in the most commonly-circulated version, showing how Céline adapted images to have different meanings for different purposes.

⁹³ Photograph 26, Appendix 2.

(1961) would mark the end of the Celinian approach to the illustration of the Carmel's books that had persisted for sixty years.

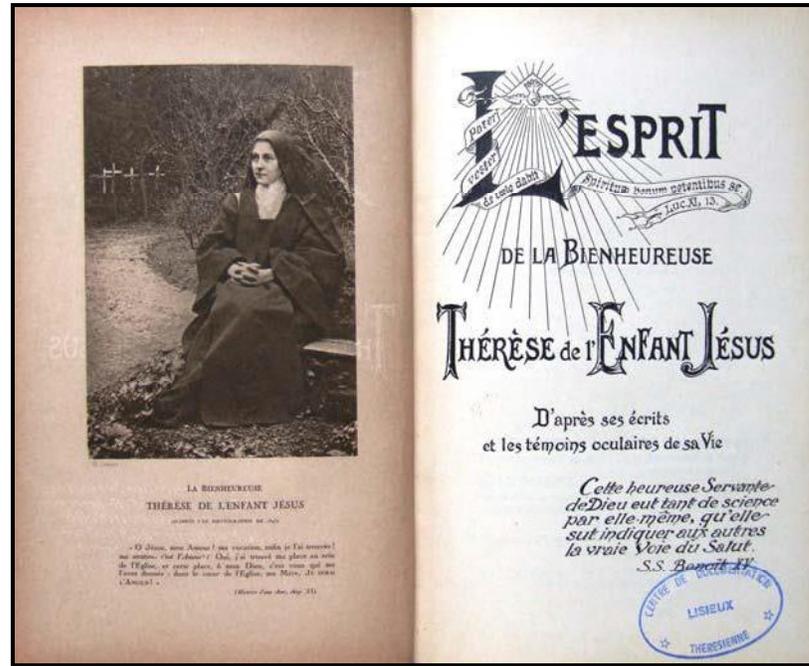


Figure 3.30. Title page of *L'esprit... de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, d'après ses écrits et les témoins oculaires de sa vie* (Bar-le-Duc, 1922).

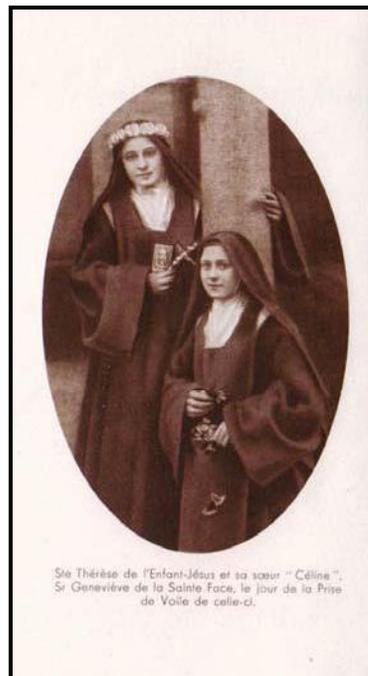


Figure 3.31. The frontispiece to *Conseils et Souvenirs*. Source: Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Conseils et Souvenirs* (Lisieux, 1952).

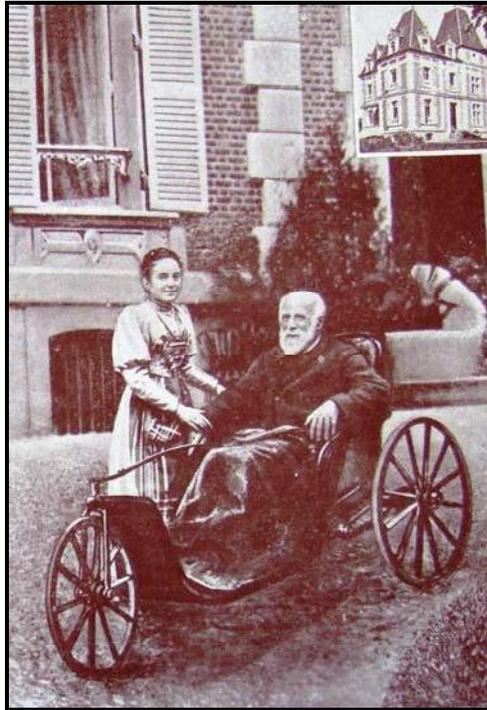


Figure 3.32. The *découpage* image of Céline with her father at La Musse. Source: Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, *Le père de Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, 1823-1894* (Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1953).

Devotional Ephemera and the Cult of Saint Thérèse

The vast range of publications produced by the Carmel in the early twentieth century run the risk of eclipsing the wealth of devotional ephemera the convent were also circulating in this period and the role this played in the dissemination of the convent's images of Thérèse. The sale of Céline's images as holy cards made them commodities in their own right and the diversity of these on offer rapidly increased. In 1908 only three different pictures were listed for sale in the Imprimerie Saint-Paul's commercial catalogues,⁹⁴ but by 1911 eight versions of the '*buste ovale*' were available, of varying size and quality to suit a range of budgets, as well as ten of Céline's other pictures at 3 francs a piece.⁹⁵ A wealth of other images were soon offered, and the May 1927 Office Central catalogue included an insert with forty-eight different images shown in thumbnail, and available in a range of formats, with text in five languages (figure 3.33). While images such as Sœur Marie du Sainte-Esprit's series of watercolour versions of the plates from *Vie en images* (figure 3.34) made for an even more diverse offering, the '*buste ovale*' and 'Thérèse aux

⁹⁴ 1908 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

⁹⁵ August 1911 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

roses' were still sold as the standard representations of Thérèse and were the mainstay of the Carmel's commercial offering. These classic portraits were available in an array of formats, ranging from high-quality prints, costing up to 25 francs,⁹⁶ to simple holy cards, often with a third-class relic attached (see figure 3.35). The production of these representations as stand-alone images meant that they were not relegated to the position of an illustration for a written narrative, being sanctioned and, to some extent, 'interpreted' by a text – they were without any such textual framing and could, therefore, be far more multivalent in their devotional meaning. The sale of the images as prints or holy cards also meant that the faithful could 'buy into' Thérèse's cult for as little as 5 centimes. Other devotional items also served as cheap and easy ways to observe devotion to the saint, and from 1915 medals bearing 'Thérèse *aux roses*' began to be offered, selling for as little as 10 centimes for an aluminium model.⁹⁷ The Carmel felt that the images could act as a 'form of apostolate'⁹⁸ and in 1921 Céline wrote to Léonie that 'I hope that they will serve God as a means to touch souls.'⁹⁹ Even critic of the cult Lucie Delarue-Mardrus commented on the potential of both holy cards and medals of Thérèse to spread knowledge of her cult:

My first contact with the saint was during the war via her image, sent to me by someone in my family who wished to convert me... Later when I was in Normandy at my summer home, one of the girls on my farm showed me a medal that she kept always in her pocket. 'It is the Carmelite of Lisieux', she said. I recalled the face that had already attracted me in the picture, and I asked questions.¹⁰⁰

Images cheap enough to give away and medals that were affordable even for a farmhand were clearly an important means of the dissemination of the cult and the fact that Delarue-Mardrus recognised the second representation as being the same face as the first demonstrates that the crucifix and roses made Thérèse recognisable even on a medal.

While holy cards and medals were well-established devotional trappings and were well-suited to communicating the iconic nature of the key representations of Thérèse, soon other, more prosaic commercial items were produced bearing images of the future saint. An early success was the *Calendrier de Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, first appearing in 1909. The 1910 re-

⁹⁶ November 1921 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

⁹⁷ July 1916 commercial catalogue medals insert, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

⁹⁸ MMA/T 02/02/1909, ACL.

⁹⁹ C/FTh 21/09/1921, ACL

¹⁰⁰ Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 16.

edition, the *Calendrier artistique pour 1910, avec portrait de Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et pétales de roses à effeuiller chaque jour* was, judging from the title, clearly a more elaborate piece of devotional merchandise, and it was fairly expensive at 2 francs 50 centimes.¹⁰¹ By 1913 five different types of calendar were available and on the eve of the First World War the items available featuring Céline's images included postcards, souvenir albums, exercise books, writing paper and blotters.¹⁰² Just four years later, the founding of the Office Central saw a huge increase in the cult's commercial offering, and the first OCL catalogue listed, in addition to the above items, locket, charms, badges, brooches, scarf pins, necklaces and bracelets, most featuring 'Thérèse aux roses', along with the necessary gift boxes to go with these items.¹⁰³ Prices varied between just 15 centimes for a small badge, to a not inconsiderable 30 francs for a gold brooch 'with a fine art portrait of Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus'.¹⁰⁴ The Carmel's approach to the commercial promotion of Thérèse also embraced new technologies. In 1923 the Office Central began to offer a film on loan at 200 francs a day or 300 francs for an eight-day loan period. Called simply *La Petite Sainte de Lisieux*, it included footage of events at both Lisieux and Rome for the beatification and ran for thirty minutes.¹⁰⁵ Later, the May 1927 catalogue advertised two other films alongside this original one: *Fêtes d'Alençon en 1924* (75 francs for eight days and 40 francs for one) and *Fêtes de la Canonisation à Lisieux en 1925* (175 francs for eight days and 100 francs for one).¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Thérèse's official recognition by the Church saw the commercial activities of the Carmel flourish. From 1923 there was a move towards more expensive, glossy, pictorial catalogues with a greater range of devotional items, and a large range of statuettes of the saint became available at this time (see figure 3.36). By the eve of the canonisation there was a sense of the potential commercialism of the cult straining to be unleashed, evident in a notice that the Carmel sent to other French Carmelite convents, stating that 'The *new articles produced for the canonisation* – images, colour postcards etc..., cannot be requested or delivered before the month of May: a catalogue will give details. We will also have, *after the canonisation*, triple-coloured rose petals, in different forms and shades, carrying different sayings of the new Saint on the back. – Price: 40 francs for a thousand; 5

¹⁰¹ 1909 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

¹⁰² August 1913 commercial flyer, S24B, env. 1, ACL.

¹⁰³ July 1917 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Note, Film 'La Petite Sainte de Lisieux', S24B, env. 2a, ACL. In August 1923 the *Journal des Pèlerins* carried an advertisement for the Cinéma Gallien, located right in the centre of Lisieux, showing this film with a full orchestra at every screening. 'Le Film de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus', *Journal des Pèlerins*, 1st year, no. 8 (5-11 August 1923), p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ May 1927 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2b, ACL.

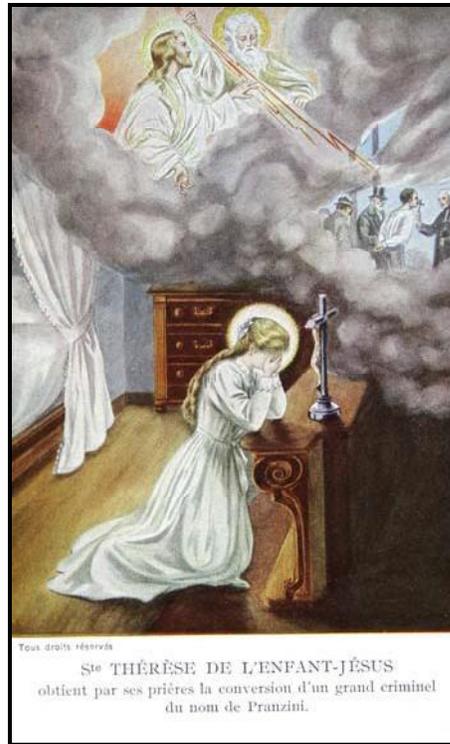
centimes per petal.’¹⁰⁷ The devotional items issuing from the Carmel became even more diverse in the years after the canonisation and ‘Thérèse *aux roses*’ would eventually appear on items as prosaic as napkin rings (see figure 3.37), a sign of just how ubiquitous Céline’s classic portrait of her sister became, becoming a part of the landscape of everyday material goods.



Figure 3.33. Insert to the May 1927 Office Central commercial catalogue, showing the large range of images available. Source: S24B, env. 2b, ACL.

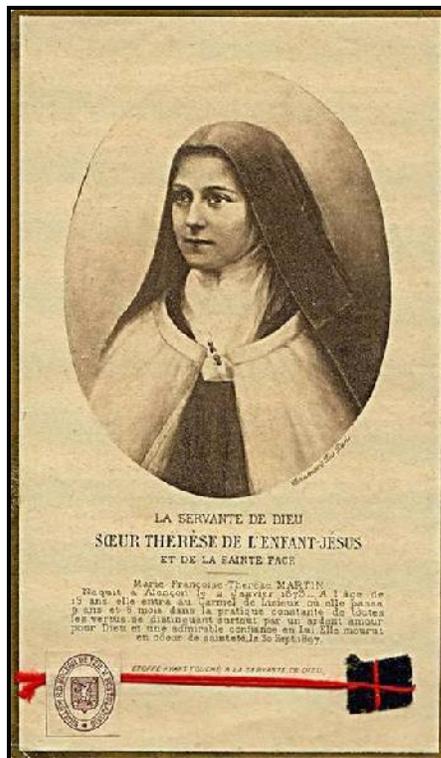
¹⁰⁷ Quelques Renseignements relatifs aux Fêtes de la Canonisation, S24D, env. 8, ACL.

3. The Dissemination of the Celinian Image and the Building of a Commercial Cult



Tous droits réservés
S^{te} THÉRÈSE DE L'ENFANT-JÉSUS
obtient par ses prières la conversion d'un grand criminel
du nom de Pranzini.

Figure 3.34. Sœur Marie du Sainte-Esprit's watercolour version of Jouvenot's picture of Thérèse praying for the murderer Pranzini, reproduced as a postcard, c. 1930. Source: author's collection.



LA SERVANTE DE DIEU
S^{eur} THÉRÈSE DE L'ENFANT-JÉSUS
ET DE LA SAINTE FACE

Marie-Françoise Thérèse MARTIN.
Née le 26 Janvier 1873. À l'âge de
19 ans elle entra au Carmel de Lisieux où elle passa
9 ans et 9 mois dans la pratique constante de toutes
les vertus de la sainte sainte; par un esprit ardent
pour Dieu et une admirable confiance en Lui. Elle mourut
en l'honneur de sainte Marie le 30 Septembre.

ETOFFE A SAINT YVÈS A LA TRONTE DE DIEU.

Figure 3.35. Holy card with third-class ('contact') relic, early 1920s. Source: author's collection.



Figure 3.36. Statues on offer after the beatification. Source: S24B, env. 2a, ACL.

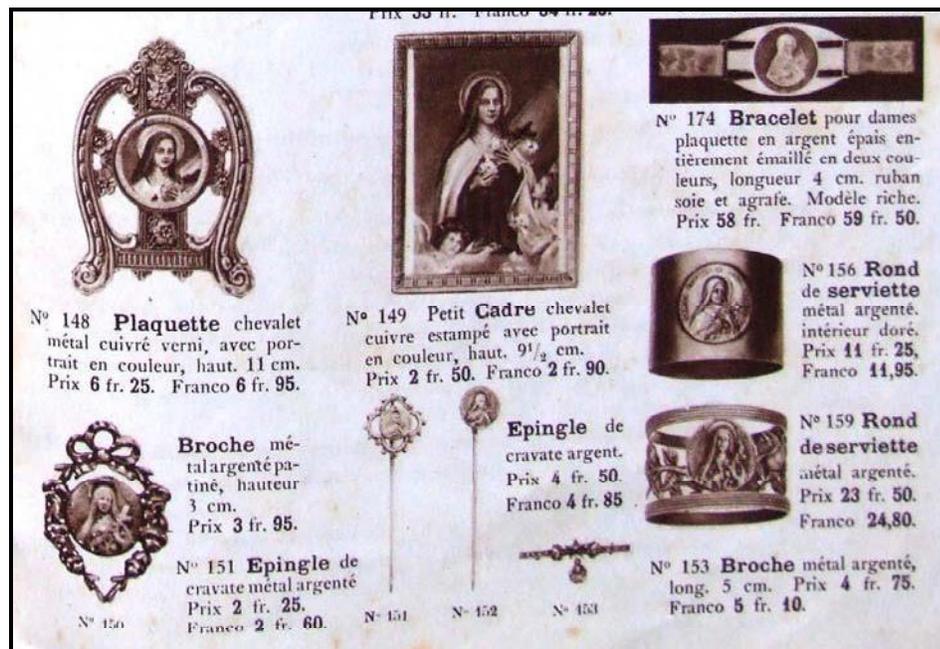


Figure 3.37. Commercial items, including napkin rings, carrying Céline's images. Source: April 1930 commercial catalogue, S24B, env. 2b, ACL.

A Hagiography in Three Dimensions: The Diorama Sainte-Thérèse

In the late twenties, soon after Thérèse's canonisation, the Carmel experimented with a new medium of commercial dissemination of Céline's representations of Thérèse – a waxwork museum.¹⁰⁸ The Diorama Sainte-Thérèse told the story of Thérèse's life in waxwork tableaux and was opened as a private business by an enterprising devotee of the saint, with the full backing of the Carmel, in July 1929. Situated on rue de Livarot, almost next door to the Carmel, the Diorama initially charged an entrance fee of 4 francs¹⁰⁹ and operated for the rest of the period of this study.¹¹⁰ The idea for the Diorama was first raised in April 1928 when Paul Herembrood, a retired air force captain, wrote to Mère Agnès:

Taking Our Lady of Lourdes as an example, I propose to open a religious diorama in Lisieux in honour of Saint Thérèse ... My intention would be to reproduce selected scenes from the brochure *Vie en images de Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus*, approved by Monsignor Thomas [Lemonnier]. So that I may reproduce them, I ask that you give me your permission and intercede in my favour with the diocesan authorities. This little book would then be sold at the entrance as an official guide for the pilgrim during their visit to the diorama.¹¹¹

The Diorama was envisaged as being a copy of a wax museum at Lourdes, the locus of so much innovation in commercial religious attractions at the end of the nineteenth century,¹¹² but it was also directly inspired by Céline's vision of Thérèse, as laid out in *Vie en images*. The Diorama was a striking example of the promotion of Céline's images, and the use of wax, a medium with such a wealth of cultural associations with the fake and the faithful, the frivolous and the edifying, highlights the Carmel's attempt to legitimise Céline's images through their commercial promotion in a range of media.

¹⁰⁸ Wax effigies of holy figures and wax ex-votos have long been used in Christian contexts. See: Pamela Pilbeam, *Madame Tussaud and the History of Waxworks* (London, 2003), p. 1; David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1991) [original publication 1989], ch. 7 and 9; Marina Warner, 'Waxworks and Wonderlands', in Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen (eds), *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances* (Seattle, 1995), pp. 187-8; Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes*, p. 316; Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, p. 10. See also Eco, 'Travels in Hyperreality', p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ See entrance ticket, S35 Diorama, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹⁰ The Office Central de Lisieux bought the Diorama in 1973 and in 1993 it closed down. In 1996 the Orphelins Apprentis d'Auteuil, the Catholic social work foundation with strong links to Thérèse's cult, reopened the attraction in new premises, but using the original figures and props from the twenties. This venture failed, but in 2006 the OAA re-established the Diorama inside the Basilique Sainte-Thérèse itself, the attraction was turned over to the ownership of the pilgrimage office, and it remains open to visitors today. See *Thérèse de Lisieux*, 866 (May, 2006), p. 1, 4-5.

¹¹¹ H/MA 28/04/1928, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹² Suzanne Kaufman has shown how, at Lourdes, visiting the various panorama and diorama in the town was framed as a devotional act. See Kaufman, 'Selling Lourdes', pp. 69-70. There is another such religious waxwork museum at Sainte-Anne d'Auray (founded in 1949), and one about the life of the Curé d'Ars was opened by the Musée Grévin in Ars-sur-Formans in 1994.

The original idea to use the plates from *Vie en images* as models for the scenes at the Diorama Sainte-Thérèse was pursued with enthusiasm by both the Carmel and the outside constituencies working on the project. When Paul Herembrood first wrote to the Carmel, he included a letter of support from a relative, a curate in Paris, backing this project ‘conceived with a distinctly religious purpose’ and asking for authorisation to have some of the plates from *Vie en images* copied and blown up so that their details may be reproduced exactly in the Diorama scenes.¹¹³ Writing to Mère Agnès a year later, Herembrood discussed small details of the *Vie en images* plates and suggested making minor changes to some of the scenes in transposing them into three dimensions.¹¹⁴ The level of detail here suggests that the Carmel had stipulated that the plates be copied as precisely as possible.¹¹⁵ When Monsieur Margot, the Parisian waxwork modeller who produced the figures for the Diorama, wrote to the convent to try to convince the sisters to change a significant detail of the scene showing Thérèse’s vision of the Virgin Mary, his beseeching tone suggested that the Carmel was opposed to all but the most minor changes.¹¹⁶ The Carmel were in any case heavily involved in setting up the attraction, sourcing exactly the correct garments for the figures,¹¹⁷ and engaging Herembrood in extensive discussion about the dimensions of the figure of Thérèse as a novice.¹¹⁸ This was a representation that was very much of the Carmel’s creation.

When the Diorama opened in July 1929, the desired faithful copy of *Vie en images* had indeed been achieved, and no expense was spared, with Céline boasting in a letter to Léonie that ‘the decoration is very sumptuous (Leo XIII’s robe cost 4,000 francs)’.¹¹⁹ The photographs of the scenes of 1929, reproduced in a souvenir album, as well as in a set of postcards published by Éditions Sodiord, show that the settings and positioning of the figures in the plates of *Vie en images* had been imitated right down to the smallest details. For example, in plate 7 of the first edition of

¹¹³ J. Heilmann/MA 30/04/1928, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹⁴ H/MA 03/04/1929, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹⁵ The close use of an ‘artist’s impression’ of an event as the template for a waxwork display was not unique. Vanessa Schwartz has discussed the genesis of the tableau at the Musée Grévin showing the ‘crime du Kremlin-Bicêtre’. Here the scenes were directly modelled on a series of illustrations of the crime that had appeared in *Le Petit Journal*, while Nicole Saez-Guerif has also noted the use of the illustrations from French school books of the 1930s and 1950s as templates for the scenes at the Grévin. See Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*, p. 110 and Nicole Saez-Guerif, ‘Le Musée Grévin 1882-2001: Cire, Histoire et loisir parisien’, unpublished PhD thesis, Université Paris IV, Sorbonne, Paris, 2001, pp. 542-72.

¹¹⁶ M. Margot/MA 02/05/1929, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹⁷ See H/MA 03/04/1929 and 10/04/1929, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹¹⁸ H/MA 23/04/1929 and 19/04/1929, S35, env. 2, ACL. See also BF/MA 27/11/1928, Fournisseurs Imprimeurs, ACL.

¹¹⁹ C/FTh 27/09/1929, ACL.

the book Thérèse and Céline sit on a bench by a wheelbarrow, spade and watering-can (figure 3.27) – scene 3 of the Diorama reproduced the tableau with exactly the same items (figure 3.38). The unselfconscious copying of the scenes and the treatment of Céline's pictures as foundational images, more 'real' than Thérèse's own written account of the events that were being depicted, is intriguing. It is this 'secondary' source which is referred to, instead of the autobiography, showing how her images had become the authoritative representations of Thérèse's life. The use of *Vie en images* for the Diorama enacted a perpetuation of the Celinian Thérèse and, for those who had read the book, the presentation of the same scenes in life-size wax tableaux must have had the powerful effect of reconfirming the book's representations. Not everyone would have been convinced, of course. Writing to the Carmel of Lisieux in August 1929, a month after the Diorama opened, a certain Suzanne Nadia criticised the attraction, saying that after visiting all the Theresian sites of Lisieux she went to 'the Diorama which retraces the scenes of [Thérèse's] life without any taste. Christianity is a religion of beauty – one is astonished by this reproduction... one cannot understand this Diorama.'¹²⁰ Eventually, the Carmel and Paul Herembrood clashed over the use of *Vie en images* as a guide book to the Diorama, Herembrood choosing to produce his own publication, and the Carmel apparently had little to do with the museum after it opened.¹²¹ Even so, at the Diorama, the Carmel's brand, embodied by the images that were its main product, was preserved and extended, promoted in a modern, spectacular way to the market of devotees of Saint Thérèse.

¹²⁰ Suzanne Nadia/MA 22/08/1929, S35, env. 2, ACL.

¹²¹ See the souvenir album: *Lisieux. Diorama de Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1929). An undated note written by de Bercegol explains that Herembrood asserted 'We have made considerable modifications to all of your subjects to obtain the effects of perspective that a diorama demands. The difference is such that legally these compositions belong to us. It follows that we can reproduce these freely.' Undated note, S35, env. 2, ACL.



Figure 3.38. Scene showing Thérèse and Céline in the garden at their house in Alençon, Diorama Sainte-Thérèse, 1929. Source: author's collection.

Conclusion: A 'Made To Order' Saint

Céline's images, repeated in so many media and for so long through the market the Carmel built around the saint, became the canonical representations of Thérèse. The promotion of a series of images depicting Thérèse's Life, not just through *Vie en images*, but in the repetition of Céline's representations in the Carmel's commercial output as a whole, gave Thérèse a visual hagiography like those of the great saints of the past. Like the well-known series of prints showing the Life of Teresa of Ávila, published in Antwerp only shortly after her death,¹²² Céline's images of her sister's Life came to influence following representations profoundly and definitively fixed the standard representation of her story. Indeed, *Vie en images* seems to have been partly based on an illustrated life of Claire of Assisi, published in 1898 and illustrated by Charles Jouvenot,¹²³ showing how Céline sought to give her sister the same sort of presence in the marketplace as saints of much longer pedigree. That the commercial market was used to mark out Céline's representations of Thérèse as authentic religious images suggests that commercial activity, far from reducing the perceived religious authenticity of a cult and its representations, could in fact

¹²² See Salinger, 'Representations of Saint Teresa', p. 102.

¹²³ R. P. Léopold de Chérancé OMC, *Ste. Claire d'Assise* (Abbeville, 1898). Contained in S-23LL, env. 1, ACL.

be instrumental to the establishment of such religious images as a part of mainstream devotional culture. Here, we can see that commercial religion could be a productive force in the cult of Thérèse of Lisieux,¹²⁴ imbuing Céline's images with authenticity.

The commercial activity of the Carmel of Lisieux was a means by which the cult was made popular and was legitimised. By giving Thérèse a place in the devotional market, she was marked out as a potential saint and a religious personality to be taken seriously. The use of new technologies, like film, and fashionable popular entertainments, such as waxworks, suggested that she was a saint of the modern age and presented the cult as one up to date with devotional trends. The progressively greater emphasis on Thérèse's role as a miracle-worker, moving away from concern with her earthly life towards her posthumous life, framed her as a saint more than a historical personality, and the production of a range of devotional ephemera allowed the faithful to incorporate Thérèse's cult into their expression of their Catholicism through material culture. The Carmel's quick reaction to wider events, such as the First World War, meant that they capitalised on the spirit of the nation and, particularly in the case of Thérèse's presentation as a soldier's saint in the Carmel's commercial output, we can see how much Thérèse was 'made to order for her century', as suggested by one of the characters in Gilbert Cesbron's rehabilitative play about the saint of the 1950s.¹²⁵ However, even though the Carmel reacted quickly to changing times in the early part of this period of study, we have seen that their overall attitude to the representation of Thérèse in the public sphere, presenting overwhelmingly Saint-Sulpician images and eschewing the photographs, remained the same in the sixty-year period examined here. Substantially the same images and publications were being offered in the 1950s that had been on sale at the turn of the century and the representation of the saint in this way into the second half of the twentieth century, when fashions were beginning to change, would later be criticised many by biographers of the saint. This is the topic of the next chapter.

¹²⁴ This is Suzanne Kaufman's approach to the commercial activity at Lourdes. See Kaufman, *Consuming Visions*.

¹²⁵ Gilbert Cesbron, *Il est minuit, Docteur Schweitzer/ Briser la statue* (Paris, 1952), p. 165.

Chapter 4

‘My saint was being spoiled for me’: The Challenging of the Celinian Thérèse

And if the Saints came back... No doubt they would admit they often do not recognise themselves.

Thérèse Martin, quoted in Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face, *Conseils et souvenirs*, 1952.

From the 1920s to the 1950s a succession of publications appeared which made concerted attacks on the Theresian cult, criticising both its commerciality and the images of the saint that dominated it.¹ The marketing project examined in chapter 3 had been wildly successful, making Thérèse widely known and contributing to her official recognition by the Church. But with her popularity also came dissent and in the first half of the twentieth century Thérèse’s representation became contested. The publications that criticised the Theresian cult ranged from novelistic-style biographies, combative polemics and sensational, pulp exposés, to the earnest attempts of curious ecclesiastics, unsatisfied with the Thérèse they were being presented with, to put forward a new representation of the saint. What defined many of these studies was a strong desire to rehabilitate Thérèse, ‘reclaim’ her from her sentimental depiction and reveal the ‘true’ face behind the popular image. Indeed, in this chapter we discover a range of new characterisations of Thérèse, all of them defined in opposition to the Celinian Thérèse, revealing what Suzanne Kaufmann has called a ‘discourse of religious debasement’ – ‘modern anxieties over the appropriate relationship between belief and the market’, and over what constitutes authentic religious practice (see ‘New Approaches’, chapter 1).² The wide availability of some of the original photographs of Thérèse – principally the image known as the ‘*cliché Gombault*’, showing Thérèse as a novice, and the third photograph in the ‘*Thérèse aux images*’ series³ – allowed for a comparison of these originals with the Carmel’s offerings that was not possible for Thérèse’s texts, the unedited versions of which were not publicly available. Accordingly, commentators often used the images as tangible proof that the Carmel was promoting a remodelled version of Thérèse, outlining a conception of authenticity that was very different from the convent’s. The images issued by the Carmel, frequently described as ‘deformed’ in such studies, quickly became a metaphor for the perceived inauthenticity of the cult as a whole. These critics showed a modernising impulse in their work,

¹ On the ‘*ouvrages de controverse*’ see: Guise, ‘Les miracles de Sœur Thérèse’, pp. 13-4; Von Balthasar, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, pp. 275-7; Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, ch. 10; Dowling, ‘The Evolution of a Modern Pilgrimage’, pp. 181-201; Taylor, ‘Images of Sanctity’, pp. 284-5.

² Kaufman, *Consuming Visions*, p. 9.

³ Photographs 6 and 43, Appendix 2.

seeking to find a Thérèse that appealed to new ideas of personalism and a freer spirituality. Meanwhile, the Carmel couched its counter-reaction to these ideas, in a succession of statements, in terms of the dogmatic values of familial and religious authority, using the same arguments about the unreliability of photography and the authority of the sisters over and over again.⁴ Here, Céline's ideas of artistic and spiritual authenticity, examined in chapter 2, were played out in public, and the Carmel strived to depict themselves as the original and only Theresian iconographers, engaging in a process of legitimation of the images by apologetic.

This debate between the authors of these '*ouvrages de controverse*' and the Carmel is one that is often referred to, but which has never been examined in detail. Although some scholars have begun to consider the issue of a paradigm shift in Thérèse's representation in the mid-twentieth century, those who have looked at this have tended to see a rehabilitative approach to Thérèse's representation as only emerging in the 1960s. Thérèse Taylor has stated that in that decade Thérèse was 'quite suddenly seen as cloying and even puerile' after she 'attracted a band of modernist admirers who rebutted the traditional image... and generally presented a pristine, radical, original Thérèse Martin.'⁵ Alana Harris has also asserted that a 'revisionist, positivist fashion' only sprung up around Thérèse following the publication of the facsimile edition of the autobiography in 1956.⁶ We will see in this chapter, however, that the rehabilitative impulse was in existence much earlier – in fact it was strongly in evidence over thirty years before. Furthermore, the still-living sisters of Thérèse, in collaboration with their allies, supplied a robust defence of their vision of the saint in an attempt to rebut this attempted rehabilitation, providing the other side of a long and fraught debate. Here we see new social mores, 'scientific' approaches and a new conception of the authentic shaping the nature of Catholic devotional culture, and we find that the views of religious and secular contributors were not as different as may be expected. Indeed, those within the Church and those very much outside it often shared the same view on the authentic representation of Thérèse. There was no strict polarisation between clerics and anti-Catholic writers, with both groups turning to new ideas, from psychoanalysis to proto-feminist thought, to seek a new, more 'authentic' Thérèse. In these works, the authors always returned to

⁴ These statements are examined by François de Sainte-Marie, *Visage*, pp. 47-50.

⁵ Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes*, p. 317.

⁶ Harris, 'Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality', p. 284. See pp. 281-92 on the 'remaking' of Thérèse after the chronological limit of this thesis.

the visual representation of Thérèse as a key issue and a complex series of attacks and counter-attacks were played out in public.

The Religious Art Debate in Twentieth-Century France

The bitter dispute that arose around images of Saint Thérèse was a notable and lengthy episode in the debate in France about the correct form of religious art, but is one that is yet to be explored fully. Saint-Sulpician art was always controversial, as mentioned in chapter 1, and in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries the concerns around commercial kitsch and the threat it posed to ‘France’s aesthetic patrimony’⁷ were twinned with opposition to this particular form of devotional art. In 1872, La Société de Saint-Jean pour l’Encouragement de l’Art Chrétien had been founded to combat Saint-Sulpician art, and almost fifty years of attacks by intellectuals and clergy alike ensued before the founding of the Ateliers d’Art Sacré in 1919 to promote ‘*l’art sacré*’ – a modern, anti-Saint Sulpician form of religious art, later the focus of a journal of the same name.⁸ The full emergence of Modernism had seen a paradigm shift in the visual arts,⁹ but opinion was still divided on Saint-Sulpician art, which still had undoubted popular appeal. While the author François Mauriac wrote with uncomplicated affection of ‘The blue Virgins, the pink Sacré-Cœurs, the brown Saint Josephs [that] for me belonged to the enchanted world of a Catholic childhood, where Heaven commonly visited the Earth’,¹⁰ poet Paul Claudel wrote:

All this infantry of Saint-Sulpice, all these soldiers of Christ who were born of their mothers’ flesh and blood, who were reanimated with the fire of grace, and who are now made out of butter by the manufacturers of the rue Bonaparte; all these coconut Saint Josephs and those standardised Saint Thérèses – how many fervent prayers have they heard, how much piety have they aroused, how much consolation have they given, how much repentance and sacrifice have they caused, how many prayers to God have they carried aloft, and of how many graces have they been the instrument?¹¹

These devotional articles were offensively sentimentalised then, but could accomplish God’s work of grace. This was a tone of debate not only restricted to France, and David Morgan has highlighted critiques of ‘feminised’ representations of Christ in early twentieth-century America,

⁷ Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market*, p. 3.

⁸ On this see McDannell, *Material Christianity*, p. 170, and ch. 6. See also Sarah Wilson, ‘La bataille des “humbles”? Communistes et Catholiques autour de l’art sacré’, in Bruno Foucart (ed.), *Essais et mélanges en l’honneur de Bruno Foucart, 2: Histoires d’art. Mélanges en l’honneur de Bruno Foucart* (Paris, 2008).

⁹ See Sarah Wilson, ‘Art and the Politics of the Left in France, c. 1935-1955’, unpublished PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1992.

¹⁰ Quoted in Madeleine Ochsé, *Un art sacré pour notre temps* (Paris, 1959), p. 14.

¹¹ Claudel, *Positions et propositions*, pp. 199-200.

particularly Bruce Barton's books *A Young Man's Jesus* (1914) and *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925), where a 'realist', masculine Christ was put forward as an alternative to dominant commercial representations.¹²

This was not purely a popular debate, however, and the Church hierarchy came to participate in it too. The 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei* saw the Vatican comment on the issue of artistic taste for the first time, stating that 'Modern art should be given free scope in the due and reverent service of the Church and the sacred rites', adding 'We cannot help deploring and condemning those works of art, recently introduced by some, which seem to be a distortion and perversion of true art and which at times openly shock Christian taste, modesty and devotion'.¹³ Later, the 1952 'Instruction to Ordinaries on Sacred Art', issued by the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, would make a plainer statement against mass-produced, Saint-Sulpician art, stating that Ordinaries (an officer of the Church who has the power to execute the Church's laws) should 'severely forbid second rate and stereotyped statues and effigies to be multiplied'.¹⁴ The relationship that both the hierarchy and the ordinary faithful had with their religious images was changing. David Morgan has conceptualised the 'covenant with images', by which they may become culturally accepted and come to 'act' on the viewer, and this sheds some light on shifts in aesthetic fashions of this kind. He asserts that 'If for some reason the image fails to live up to the covenant, the viewer reacts by denying its claim to truth and so falls out of trust with the image. This could lead to violence toward the image but most often results in a renegotiation of the contract under which one views it.'¹⁵ In the case of Thérèse, it could be argued that changing fashions, specifically a desire for a more Modernist sacred art, saw the Celinian image fail 'to live up to the covenant'. This chapter looks at both the attempted renegotiation of that covenant and the iconoclastic attacks on the Celinian image by figures outside the Carmel, both groups calling for a new visual representation of the saint for a new age.

¹² See Morgan, *Visual Piety*, ch. 3. Bruce Barton, *A Young Man's Jesus* (Boston, 1914), *Idem.*, *The Man Nobody Knows* (Indianapolis, 1925).

¹³ Pope Pius XII, 'Mediator Dei', *Vatican, The Holy See*
< http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20111947_mediator-dei_en.html > [accessed 9 August 2010], section 195.

¹⁴ See Supreme Sacred Congregation, 'Instruction to Ordinaries on Sacred Art', p. 476.

¹⁵ Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze*, p. 81.

Lemonnier, Dubosq and the Early Defences of the Theresian Image

Before any significant published criticism of the Carmel's images of Thérèse appeared, the Carmel and its allies moved to counter any negativity about them, indicative of a general atmosphere of disquiet on the issue of the images. On 12 September 1915, Bishop Lemonnier published a piece in the *Semaine Religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux* titled 'Les portraits de Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus'. This was a plainly-stated defence of the images, which began by saying:

Certain criticisms have been put forth against the truthful nature of the portraits which appear in *Histoire d'une âme*. In the opinion of many, these drawings are productions of the imagination, offering an idealised composition. As these opinions have been spreading, it appeared opportune to make a careful enquiry into the origins and the merit of the accused portraits.¹⁶

Lemonnier explained that he had carried out an investigation at the Carmel and had examined twelve to fifteen photographs dating from 1895-97 showing groups of nuns of the community, including Thérèse. Examination of these documentary sources led to two conclusions:

1 The Servant of God sometimes lost, at the moment of the pose, the natural calm of her features, thus, one of the documents examined, an unretouched photograph like the rest, certainly does not give the expected resemblance.

2 The half portrait, used as the frontispiece of the deluxe edition of *Histoire d'une âme*, presents a very conscientious synthesis, prepared with the very greatest care, of the best elements of expression given by the aforementioned photographs.¹⁷

Here, the idea of the inadequacy of photography, examined in chapter 2, was again evoked and Céline's 'buste ovale', referred to in point 2, was held up as the ultimate representation of the saint. The piece finished by asserting that 'we do not hesitate to recognise [the *buste ovale*] as a true and authentic portrait of the Servant of God around the age of twenty-three.'¹⁸ This official approval of the Carmel's images was used extensively – it was published in the *Journal des Pèlerins de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (the pilgrimage site's newspaper) in June 1923,¹⁹ appeared in editions of *L'esprit de la bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* between 1923 and 1946, in *La Vie en images* in 1936, 1937 and 1948, and in every edition of the autobiography from 1924 until 1950. Later, a further addition was made to this note, warning of the necessity to 'guard against the

¹⁶ Bishop Thomas Lemonnier, 'Les portraits de Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus', *Semaine Religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux*, 12 September 1915.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Bishop Thomas Lemonnier, 'Les Portraits de la Servante de Dieu Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus', *Journal des Pèlerins*, 1st year, no. 2 (23-30 June 1923), p. 2.

multiplicity of other portraits, nevertheless presented as authentic, which are not the productions of the Carmel of Lisieux',²⁰ and a physical description of Thérèse was also later added to the note. This described her as the ideal of Céline's portraits: she was tall, blonde, with dark blue-green eyes, with straight, thin eyebrows, a small mouth and delicate, even features. Her face was 'lily-white... [and] always marked with an admirable serenity and heavenly peace.' This version of the statement, with both additions, was also produced as a handbill to ensure the widest possible circulation.²¹

Seven years later, Lemonnier's statement had apparently done little to remedy the situation. Canon Dubosq wrote to the Carmel in March 1923 about the ongoing debate about Thérèse's representation. He asserted:

Believe me, it would be infinite work and trouble without end for you and me, and would be *completely useless*, if we tried to get in the way of all the opinions expressed on this question. You cannot stop people from gossiping, rambling on, opining, judging, pronouncing, suspecting, no more than you could stop a river from flowing down a mountain. For some time now, *on many sides*, the assertion has been cast to the public that the very pretty portraits of Sœur Thérèse, with the large eyes and face in a *perfect oval* are nothing more than compositions which have been corrected, retouched, and idealised by the enthusiastic love of 'her artist sister'. This has been said by relatives, by old 'acquaintances', by this one, and by that one, from Lisieux, from Caen, from Alençon, etc., etc. We cannot stop a question *which is in the air* and we should not be surprised that those who are interested in Sœur Thérèse want to 'be informed' and try to find out the answer. For my part... I try to persuade those who interrogate me, but have had dealings with 'hardliners', who remain 'stuck' in this 'lapidary' concept... I certainly want to continue my plea every time I have the opportunity; but as for preventing people from gossiping... it's like trying to stop washerwomen from bad-mouthing their neighbour.²²

Shortly after this letter was written, a defence of the images was issued from other quarters. The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* published an article in September 1923, titled 'Le vrai Portrait de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus', which quoted Lemonnier's statement of 1915 in full and stated emphatically that Thérèse had a 'delicate oval face, with soft and regular lines which appeared to be made of the same substance and purity as a lily'.²³ It was explained that while some

²⁰ See Carmel of Lisieux, *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Histoire d'une âme écrite par elle-même*, p. 596.

²¹ Handbill, *Les Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus (Extrait de la 'Semaine Religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux' du 12 Septembre 1915)*, ACL.

²² D/C 22/03/1923, THER-5, ACL.

²³ 'Le vrai Portrait de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus', *L'Osservatore Romano*, 29 September 1923.

of the photographs were ‘beautiful photographic reproductions... the ingenious instrument [of the camera] cannot capture the reflection of an angelic face – the soul, of which it is the mirror, escapes the work of the lens’²⁴ – this reflects both Céline and Dubosq’s view of photography, examined in chapter 2, precisely. The ‘*buste ovale*’ was referred to here simply as the ‘*true effigy*’ of the saint.’²⁵ Rome, through the mouthpiece of *L’Osservatore Romano*, was backing up the account the Carmel and its allies were giving of the images exactly.²⁶ But the sanctioning of the Carmel’s apologetic by Rome did not prevent the thirty years of heated debate that followed.

Giloteaux and the Dissemination of the ‘False’ Image

Abbé Paulin Giloteaux, a Parisian priest, was the first person to publish a significant critique of the Carmel’s Theresian iconography, in a book that appeared even before the canonisation. Best known for his study *Les âmes hosties, les âmes victimes* (1923),²⁷ which was heavily influenced by Thérèse’s writings, Giloteaux was a passionate advocate of Thérèse’s approach to God, and this was outlined in his other book of 1923, *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus. Physionomie surnaturelle*, where the critique in question appeared. This study of the saint’s spirituality was, Giloteaux stated, ‘neither a severely critical study nor a doctrinal exposition... but a work of edification and piety for devotees of Sister Thérèse’ that, in taking a ‘less vague, less sentimental approach’, would allow ‘souls to strive to resemble [Thérèse] in her virtues.’²⁸ Several pages at the beginning of the book were dedicated to a critique of the conventional visual representation of Thérèse, which failed to conform to Giloteaux’s conception of her personality. While he stated that ‘Thérèse had the luck, in fact, to count among her sisters a true artist who has liked to present her to us in paint, in different aspects and at almost every age’²⁹ and while he praised several of the images that had appeared in *l’Histoire d’une âme*, he went on to assert:

And yet, it must be said, these different tableaux do not give us anything of the Blessed [Thérèse] but a vague and uncertain image, without a very precise individual character. Without doubt, they have something sweet, which pleases sentimental souls but without showing them the little saint

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ 1923 also saw the issuing of another defence of the images of Thérèse, also from a source outside the Carmel. See the pamphlet by Abbé J. Creton, the parish priest of Oignies, Pas-de-Calais: J. Creton, *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus. Son âme et son image. Quelques réflexions opportunes* (Arras, 1923).

²⁷ On Giloteaux’s work and the ‘victim soul’, see Paula M. Kane, “‘She Offered Herself up’: The Victim Soul and Victim Spirituality in Catholicism”, *Church History*, 71, 1 (March, 2002), pp. 80-119.

²⁸ Abbé Paulin Giloteaux, *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus. Physionomie surnaturelle* (Paris, 1923), p. xii.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

as she was and how she would have been should we have been fortunate enough to meet her during her exile on earth. Besides, these portraits perhaps have the fault of putting the Blessed in a setting that is too ethereal, where perfection appears to require an attitude incompatible with action. Why would one want to overly idealise the saints thus, not allowing them to be known in their true appearance? Are they not themselves works of God? The authentic portrait, that is reproduced here, presents another character. It allows us to discover, through her physiognomy, the great soul of the little Thérèse.³⁰

Indeed, the frontispiece of the book reproduced the third photograph in the ‘Thérèse *aux images*’ series (figure 4.1), labelling it as a ‘portrait authentique’. This photograph was the embodiment of all the qualities of ‘truth’ that Giloteaux prized, and he stated that here there was ‘nothing conventional or artificial’, just the physical traits of a ‘candid soul’, showing ‘perspicacity and sincerity...a resolute character... a tenacious will... perfect command of the self.’³¹ Giloteaux was so enthusiastic about this photograph as a means to make spiritual contact with the saint that he claimed it as his own, marking it ‘Déposé P. Giloteaux, 1923’ on the frontispiece plate. He also included an advertisement in the back of book stating that the image was available for purchase from him in three different formats, costing from 15 centimes to 1 franc, and that monies could be sent directly to his home address. Giloteaux had put forward both an alternative textual and visual Thérèse, and this would soon incur the displeasure of the Carmel.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-3.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.



Figure 4.1. Frontispiece to Giloteaux's book. Source: Abbé Paulin Giloteaux, *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus. Physionomie surnaturelle* (Paris, 1923).

The Statements Against Giloteaux

Shortly after the publication of Giloteaux's book another article by Bishop Lemonnier appeared in the *Semaine Religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux* strongly countering his claims that the frontispiece image was an authentic one. Lemonnier asserted:

He has used for this some copy, poor and without an original, of a photograph taken at the Carmel of Lisieux in 1897 by Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face... The comparison of this figure with the many photographs of Sœur Thérèse taken in Carmel, around ten between 1895 and 1897, do not allow this very defective representation to be called 'AUTHENTIC', neither, in consequence, does it challenge the image produced by the Carmel whose quality we recognised in 1915.³²

³² Bishop Lemonnier, 'Portrait Authentique de la Bse Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus', *Semaine Religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux*, 28 October 1923.

This was a resounding dismissal of Giloteaux's claims, predicated not only on the authority of the Bishop's office and his previous pronouncement on the images, but on the idea that this was an atypical image when compared with the other photographs. Lemonnier's statement was reproduced in the early November 1923 issue of the *Journal des Pèlerins* and was backed up by an article written by Abbé V. Hardy, former priest of the cathedral of Saint-Pierre, Lisieux.³³ Reactions to the photograph from two unnamed people who had known Thérèse personally were the centrepiece of this article, making use of the device of witness testimony to further discredit the photograph. The first witness stated 'This is not her look. It is not her at all. She has a very severe manner, a sombre expression. She had, on the contrary, a graceful and gentle manner. She has an excessively large mouth – it is a caricature, an enlargement that is not at all successful. It is horrible.'³⁴ The second witness was not named, but was clearly identifiable from the description as Léonie Martin. She was reported as stating:

I don't like the photograph published by M. Giloteaux at all – it is not Thérèse. Oh no, it is not her.

It pains me to look at it. Is it possible to represent her in such a grotesque way? She is corpse-like.

This photograph is also ugly whereas my dear little sister was graceful and pretty.³⁵

The statement 'It is not Thérèse' could not have been a more definitive dismissal of the photograph's credibility, and Hardy concluded that the public should be on their guard against 'certain authentications by the over-fanciful'.³⁶ The efforts of the Carmel and its allies to counter Giloteaux's actions did not stop there, and an undated note from Raymond de Bercegol to the Carmel reveals that they considered legal action against him.³⁷ Canon Dubosq mentioned the Giloteaux controversy in several letters to Mère Agnès,³⁸ while Bishop Lemonnier eventually made representations to Rome itself. The Vatican did in fact eventually intervene and the book was subsequently published without the photograph.³⁹ However, Giloteaux's book would be only the first of a succession of publications that criticised the Celinian image and published such alternative representations.

³³ See his works: V. Hardy, *La cathédrale Saint Pierre de Lisieux* (Paris, 1918); *Idem.*, *Lisieux et ses foules* (Paris, 1926).

³⁴ V. Hardy, 'A propos de ce Portrait', *Journal des Pèlerins*, 1st year, no. 19 (4-17 November 1923), p. 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ 24 billets non-datés, Raymond de Bercegol, correspondance d'affaires, ACL.

³⁸ D/MA 23/08/1923, 07/11/1923 and 29/04/1926, THER-5, ACL.

³⁹ See Père Conrad de Meester, 'Le dominicain Hyacinthe Petitot et sainte Thérèse de Lisieux', in Baudry, *Thérèse et ses théologiens*, p. 70, n. 6.

The ‘Cliché Gombault’ and the Circulation of Illicit Images

In December 1923, not long after the Giloteaux controversy was mentioned on its pages, a further statement was made on the Carmel’s images of Thérèse in the *Journal des Pèlerins*. The article published a letter from a devotee of Thérèse, who stated that ‘My great devotion for the Blessed Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus is alarmed by the publicity surrounding a portrait that has been circulating in Belgium for some weeks.’⁴⁰ This was the ‘cliché Gombault’, which had been illicitly circulated by the Guérin family (see chapter 2), and the letter-writer wished to know if the image was ‘unretouched’, as people were describing it. Abbé V. Hardy was again the one to reply to this enquiry. Here, he quoted Mère Agnès directly as saying:

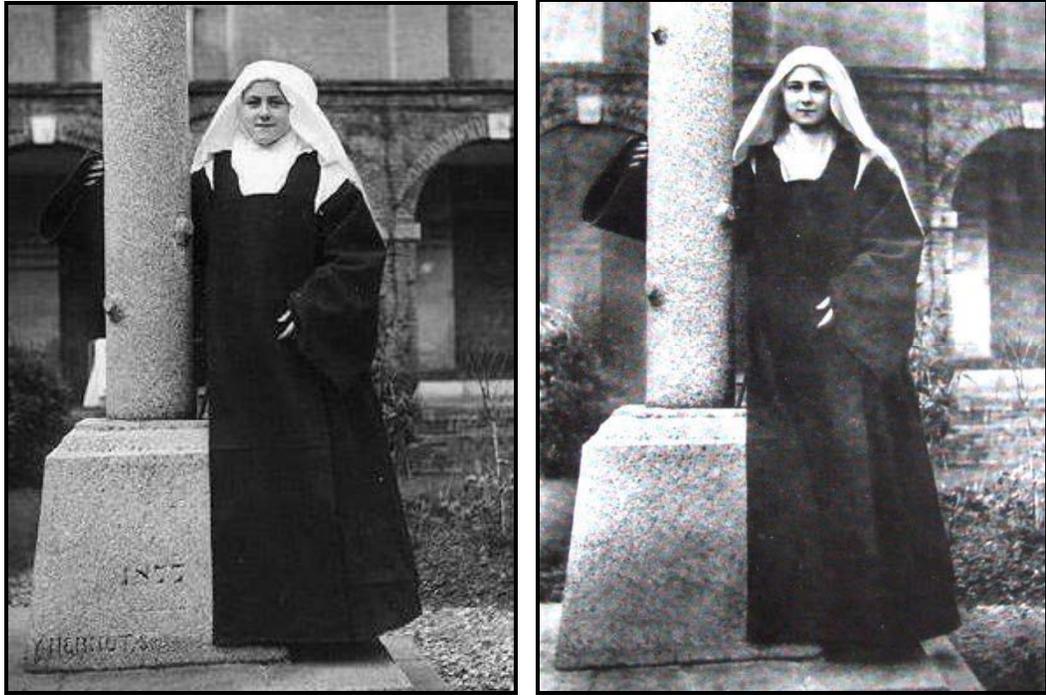
The too brutal daylight of this position bothered the novice as she was posing and, as a result, distorted her features. The Community... rejected the [photograph] as lacking. We believed it had been destroyed when, after the death of the Blessed [Thérèse], the unfaithful photograph was proliferating on all sides. On the advice of the Bishop, Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte-Face, with the medium of an enlargement, established the truth, to the point that one believes one is really seeing the Servant of God at sixteen years old. These were the words of all the nuns who had known her, above all of her Mistress of Novices who could not stop looking at it.⁴¹

The use of a direct quote from Mère Agnès made full use of her authoritative position to discredit the photograph, and Céline’s modified version was strongly marked out as a superior representation – indeed, ‘the truth’. Further, there was a call to the authority of the nuns who had lived alongside Thérèse, a source of legitimation that the Carmel would come to call on regularly. When this article was printed on handbills to increase its circulation, the retouched version of the image was reproduced on one side, showing a radically different, much slimmer face to the original (see figures 4.2-4.3). The statement was not particularly successful, as in 1928 Canon Dubosq wrote to the Carmel to say he had received a number of illicitly-circulated examples of the image.⁴² Later, several authors used the ‘cliché Gombault’ in their iconoclastic examinations of the saint and the authority of Céline’s retouched version of the image would be severely threatened.

⁴⁰ Reproduced in *A propos d’un portrait de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus (Extrait du “JOURNAL DES PÈLERINS”, numéro du 2 décembre 1923)*, ACL.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² D/MA 17/03/1928, THER-5, ACL. See also D/C 14/12/1917, THER-5, ACL.



Figures 4.2-4.3. Left: The original ‘cliché Gombault’, 1889. Source: OCL. Right: The retouched version circulated by the Carmel. Source: *A propos d’un portrait de la Bienheureuse Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus* (Extrait du “JOURNAL DES PÈLERINS”, numéro du 2 décembre 1923), ACL.

Père Ubald: The Original Theresian Iconoclast

In January 1926 an even more controversial critique of the Carmel’s Thérèse appeared than Abbé Giloteaux’s, and this also came from a priest. Père Ubald d’Alençon’s article ‘Sainte Tèreèse [sic] de l’Enfant Jésus comme je la connais’ (‘Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus as I knew her’) appeared in the journal *Estudis Franciscans* exactly a year after Thérèse’s canonisation.⁴³ Père Ubald (Léon-Louis Berson) (1872-1927), a Capuchin friar, was born in Alençon, and although he never met Thérèse, he remembered her father well and had acquaintances who had gone to Rome on the same diocesan pilgrimage as the Martins in 1887.⁴⁴ In this article Ubald gave the first history of the Martin family which had not come from the Martin sisters themselves. It was a highly critical assessment, and he made a number of allegations that would be used by other authors for decades to come. Ubald described Thérèse as a proud and badly brought-up child, who improved little in adolescence, reporting that the fourteen year old Thérèse had behaved like a ‘*petit cheval échappé*’ (a wild youth) during her time in Italy. His revelation of Louis Martin’s dementia was the first

⁴³ Père Ubald d’Alençon, ‘Sainte Tèreèse de l’Enfant Jésus comme je la connais’, *Estudis Franciscans*, 37, 220 (January, 1926), pp. 14-28.

⁴⁴ See P. Gratién, ‘Le Père Ubald d’Alençon’, *Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France*, 13, 61, (1927), pp. 545-7.

time this had been discussed in print,⁴⁵ and Ubald also made a number of sensational accusations about Mère Marie de Gonzague, calling her a jealous egoist who was prone to strange behaviour. He said that Mère Marie hated the Martin sisters and had persecuted Thérèse particularly, even denying her proper care in her final illness.⁴⁶ Although the chief import of Ubald's article is its status as the root of the twin controversies of Louis Martin's mental health problems and Mère Marie's actions, later to be expanded upon by critics such as Pierre Mabile, Maxence Van der Meersch and Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, it was also the first sustained piece of iconoclasm of the Carmel's Thérèse. Ubald was overtly critical of the popular representation of Thérèse, stating that in her story:

There are not just roses, flowers and goodness. There are thorns, brambles and struggle. There is the fact that the life of Saint Thérèse is full of heroism. There is the impetuosity of her character and her sufferings in the cloister. This has not been explored. One can assert that the text of *Histoire d'une âme* is quite modified, that it does not always conform to the original, that it was subjected to too many retouches, all just like the portrait that is given of her today, which hardly matches the photographs that we have of her.⁴⁷

Indeed, this was not a piece intended to discredit Thérèse, rather the critical description of her younger self was in the service of showing how Thérèse overcame her innate failings to achieve holiness. But as with Giloteaux's book, Ubald's efforts to uncover the Thérèse of the thorns, rather than of the roses, would not go unnoticed by the Carmel.

Dubosq and the Response to Ubald

The response to Père Ubald's article was a lengthy one. In the May after the piece appeared Dubosq published his own article in *Estudis Franciscans*, which the Martin sisters had played a large role in drafting,⁴⁸ entirely rejecting Ubald's assertions.⁴⁹ Its title, 'Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus comme elle était' ('Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus as she was'), indicated the forceful, authoritative approach of the piece. Dubosq painstakingly deconstructed Ubald's assertions about Thérèse's family background, behaviour and time in the cloister point by point

⁴⁵ Père Ubald d'Alençon, 'Sainte Térése', p. 15.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19-21.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-6.

⁴⁸ In two letters Dubosq discusses changes to the drafted text extensively and also mentions an edit suggested by Marie. D/MA 01/06/1926 and 03/06/1926, THER-5, ACL.

⁴⁹ Canon P. Th. Dubosq, 'Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus comme elle était', *Estudis Franciscans*, 38, 226 (July, 1926), pp. 9-20. He had already written the Carmel a reassuring letter about the Ubald article. See D/MA 12/05/1926, THER-5, ACL.

and the tone of the article was one of great indignation. Dubosq asserted of Ubald's presentation of the saint 'The contrast is violent with the ideal apparition of a being all of light and angelic purity' that Thérèse in fact had been.⁵⁰ As in the attack on Giloteaux in the *Journal des Pèlerins*, the testimony of several people who had known Thérèse was used to reinforce this point, including the Martins' maid Victoire Pasquier, who had featured significantly in *Histoire d'une âme* as a foil to several of Thérèse's childhood mishaps,⁵¹ and Félicité Saffrey, another domestic to the family.⁵² This was just a preamble to the testimony of the sisters themselves however, and Céline personally explained the episode, used by Ubald as an example of Thérèse's undignified behaviour during their trip to Rome, when a male student lifted her from the train on their arrival in Bologna, saying this was an event of 'a matter of an instant', which was never remarked on again.⁵³ Not content with this call to the authority of Thérèse's family and acquaintances, Dubosq contacted one of Ubald's sources who had been on the Rome pilgrimage, a certain Abbé Lebrech, and Dubosq asserted that he had denied ever describing Thérèse's actions during the trip to Italy as Ubald had reported them.⁵⁴ In conclusion, Dubosq asserted that Ubald 'should have called his article: "Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus as I imagine her".'⁵⁵

Dubosq's refutation of the Ubald article was produced as a pamphlet by the Imprimerie Saint-Paul to ensure it got a larger readership than this specialist Franciscan journal could offer,⁵⁶ and the Carmel also acknowledged Ubald's attack in a notice sent to other Carmels in the month Dubosq's article appeared.⁵⁷ Clearly, they were willing to put considerable resources into countering the Ubald piece. Some two decades later, in a volume edited by the Carmel's great ally André Combes, Ubald was marked out as the root of all subsequent controversy about Thérèse's biography and representation, and the fact that later writers made such extensive use of the assertions of this 'mystificateur' ('hoaxer') was lamented.⁵⁸ One of these writers, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, reproduced Ubald's article in its entirety in her 1937 work *La petite Thérèse de*

⁵⁰ Dubosq, 'Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus comme elle était', p. 9.

⁵¹ See, for example, HA, Ms. A, 15v^o-16v^o, pp. 39-40.

⁵² Dubosq, 'Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus comme elle était', pp. 12-3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵⁶ Canon P. Th. Dubosq, *Ste Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus comme elle était. Réponse à l'article du R. P. Ubald d'Alençon dans les 'Estudis Franciscans' de Barcelone* (Bar-le-Duc, 1926).

⁵⁷ Renseignements et réponses, 2 July 1926, THER-5, Dossier Ubald d'Alençon, ACL.

⁵⁸ André Noché S. J., 'La réponse des textes et des archives', in Combes et al, *La Petite Sainte Thérèse de Maxence Van der Meersch*, pp. 281-3.

Lisieux, appending a defence of it in the face of Dubosq's article.⁵⁹ Ubald died the year after the article appeared, but he retracted it before his death and suffered censure from the Pope himself, being forced to go on a penitential retreat.⁶⁰ But the genie was out of the bottle and Ubald had set a precedent for a raft of studies that sought to unearth the 'real' Thérèse from the limited sources issuing from the Carmel, beginning a process of scrutiny and criticism of the Carmel of Lisieux's representation of Saint Thérèse that would last into the twenty-first century.

Lucie Delarue-Mardrus: The Novelist and the Nun

When Lucie Delarue-Mardrus reprinted Père Ubald d'Alençon's article in her 1937 book on Thérèse she had already produced a book-length study of the saint, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, published in the year after the canonisation. Born in Honfleur, only twenty miles from Lisieux, Delarue-Mardrus (1880-1945) was well-known in her time as a prolific poet and novelist, producing over seventy full-length novels during her career,⁶¹ and her work has recently become the focus of serious academic study.⁶² In her first book on Thérèse, Delarue-Mardrus was clear about her affection for the saint from the outset, stating 'This book is a... passionate tribute of an unbeliever to the Carmelite-phantom who has miraculously appeared, with roses in her hands, in the middle of an age which causes despair and terror to poets.'⁶³ However, Delarue-Mardrus believed, like Ubald, that the cult and its images misrepresented the saint and distorted her true nature, and that it was also far too commercialised. She offers a compelling critical portrait of the pilgrimage site of Lisieux in the mid-twenties:

Facing the Carmel, a large poster encourages us to drink *Thérèsette*, a table liqueur. Moreover, at Caen, they sell Saint Thérèse paté and Saint Thérèse *boudin* in the delicatessens... No one at Lisieux seems disturbed over anything. A general cheerfulness hovers about Carmel, and in the shops, where Saint-Sulpician statuettes, medals, pictures (sorry! postcards) are sold in their thousands. An expression of satisfied vanity is on all faces, an atmosphere of commerce in full swing is in every street, replacing the reverence that one searches for in vain in what is already called a 'holy town'.

⁵⁹ Delarue-Mardrus, *La Petite Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 16-54.

⁶⁰ Gouley et al, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 256.

⁶¹ See Hélène Plat, *Lucie Delarue-Mardrus. Une femme de lettres des années folles* (Paris, 1994) and Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, *Mes mémoires* (Paris, 1938).

⁶² See Tama Lea Engelking, 'L'Ange Et Les Pervers: Lucie Delarue-Mardrus's Ambivalent Poetic Identity', *Romance Quarterly*, 39, 4, (1992), pp. 451-66 and Rachel L. Mesch, 'The Sex of Science: Medicine, Naturalism, and Feminism in Lucie Delarue-Mardrus's *Marie, fille-mère*', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 31, 3 & 4 (Spring-Summer 2003), pp. 324-40. See also Sophia Deboick, 'Lucie Delarue-Mardrus', *The Literary Encyclopedia* <<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=12780>> [accessed 11 November 2010].

⁶³ Delarue-Mardrus, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 5.

One can easily imagine that after the chapels and basilicas are finished, all who will come will do so to build hotels and start new industries.⁶⁴

But Delarue-Mardrus was not just concerned with these commercial ventures outside of the power of the Church, and criticised the Carmel directly:

Other things were reported. I was astonished to find that it was often the devout who related this gossip. The portraits of Thérèse were forged. Thousand franc bank-notes were thrown at the foot of her reliquary in the chapel. A nun goes to collect them one by one, like a croupier at a gaming table... Then one day someone told me that in the chapel of the Carmel of Lisieux, one can see this little Thérèse in wax, like in the Musée Grévin, life-size, lying on blue pillows in a Sarah Bernhardt pose, and clothed in a Carmelite robe made of velvet and gold lace and a mantle embroidered with precious stones. Ah! Decidedly, my saint was being spoiled for me.⁶⁵

The cult is outlined as being entirely debased by its commerciality, and here the ‘forging’ of the portraits is twinned with the description of the shrine (see figure 4.4) to suggest that the result of this commerciality is a distorted representation of the saint. It was not just the commerciality of the cult that concerned Delarue-Mardrus, but also its modernity. Discovering that electric lights had been substituted for candles at the chapel of the Carmel of Lisieux, she writes ‘Candles, for a thousand years the beautiful symbol of the soul in prayer, forbidden at the feet of the poetic little saint? Impossible. Even the heresy of electricity could not kill the candle’, also reporting that an attendant told her ‘If you wish you can give one franc fifty centimes and we will light another bulb’, to which her response was ‘And if there is a power failure? A short circuit?.. A bulb? (O holy Bulb!) A bulb like in a shop window?’⁶⁶ The light bulb is used as a metaphor for both the commerciality and the modernity of the cult, and earlier she used the symbol of the car in the same way, writing of the canonisation in Rome: ‘People who were there told me that the relics were carried in a car! I was glad not have gone to the celebration. I have never liked motor cars. I like them even less for a saint...’⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-9

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

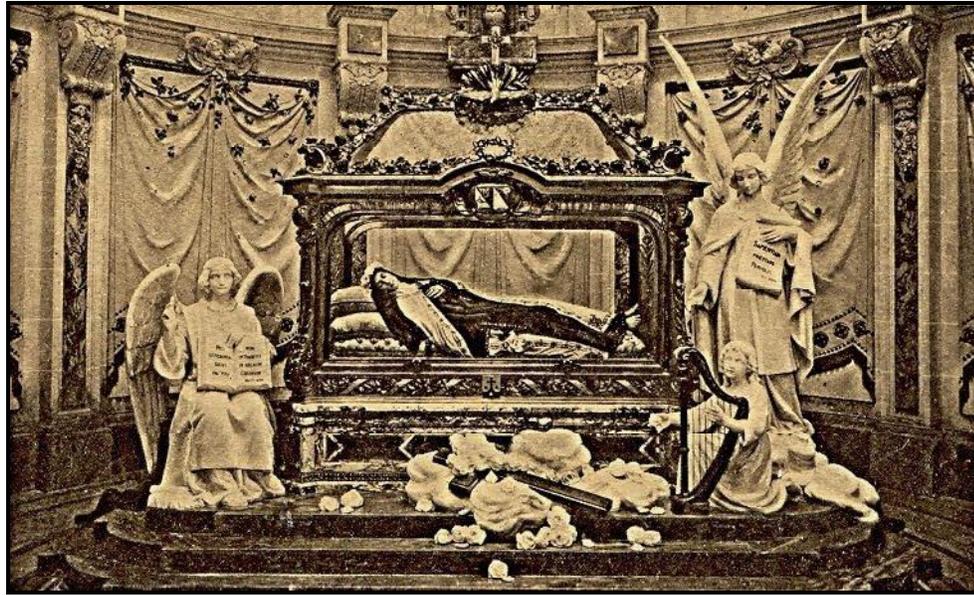


Figure 4.4. The *chapelle de la Chasse*, Carmel of Lisieux, c. 1925, as described by Lucie Delarue-Mardrus.
Source: author's collection.

Delarue-Mardrus outlines a strong view of the commerciality and modernity of the cult making it in some sense inauthentic then, but she was equally concerned with the inauthenticity of the Carmel's images of Thérèse. The cover of her first book reproduced a substantially original version of the 'Thérèse *aux images*' photograph, which had also been used by Giloteaux, and she said of this image:

A portrait opens these pages. This portrait is not an insulting 'correction'. It is the one from our Saint Thérèse to us. An authentic photograph, it was given to me by a nun among my friends who was herself given it by a personal friend of the little Martin girl. It is infinitely more beautiful, in its starkness, than the beautiful *houri* officially charged with representing this pure nun of Normandy to the masses. The new Saint Thérèse does not need to be 'arranged' like this.⁶⁸

The common representation of Thérèse, then, was asserted to be a fundamentally false one – a confection that shared nothing of the documentary quality of the photograph, whose authenticity was proven by the fact that it had come from one of Thérèse's own friends. Delarue-Mardrus was the first commentator to speak of the activities of the Martin sisters publicly, stating plainly that 'When all is said and done, it was her sisters who brought about her canonisation'.⁶⁹ But while her attitude to the sisters' work on the cult is sympathetic in the first book, where she says 'It is quite

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-9.

natural that the glory of the ‘little last one’ should occupy the spirit of older sisters’,⁷⁰ when her second book on Thérèse was published eleven years later, she saw the Martin sisters as fully responsible for the distortion of Thérèse’s representation that she so loathed:

The loving sisters of the little Thérèse, who idealised her face, desired also that her life as a Carmelite would resemble, stroke for stroke, the smiling images produced by the Office Central de Lisieux. They can’t understand that the truth, cruel as it may be, has more appeal for contemporary spirits than the sweetness of the hymns amongst which their baby would have lived in the cloister.⁷¹

Here the Carmel was figured as out of touch with the intellectual spirit of the times. Delarue-Mardrus then went on to give a powerful alternative physical description of the saint, describing her as having a ‘long and solid chin which is the mark of Normandy... the nobility of the forehead and nose... this equilibrium which reveals a spirit of order and measure, [the Norman’s] particular privilege. So much character, in a word, that cannot be sensed in the image given to posterity.’⁷² This honest earthiness was mirrored the ‘*cliché* Gombault’, used on the cover of the book (figure 4.5). Across Delarue-Mardrus’ two studies of Thérèse we find a strong assertion of the value of traditional religion over the commercialised, airbrushed piety of the modern age and the positing, both in image and text, of an alternative vision of Thérèse.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁷¹ Delarue-Mardrus, *La Petite Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 59.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 89.



Figure. 4.5. The cover of Lucie Delarue-Mardrus' second book, using the 'cliché Gombault'. Source: Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, *La Petite Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1937).

The Carmel and the Response to Delarue-Mardrus

The Carmel and their allies did not make the same sort of public pronouncements on Delarue-Mardrus' writings as they had on Giloteaux's and Ubald's, but they were still extremely displeased about the criticisms she had made. Dubosq wrote of the two books in a private document that Delarue-Mardrus had 'distorted [Thérèse's] moral physiognomy' and had 'indulged in veritable diatribes against the Carmel's productions: the chapel, publications etc, and indeed about their mercantilism, with an insulting flippancy', emphasising the 'upset that she has caused to the sisters of the saint.'⁷³ The Carmel did consider taking things further and the Office Central was asked to consult a solicitor about the possibility of launching a legal case against Delarue-Mardrus, but the outcome of the consultation was apparently negative.⁷⁴ However, other parties did speak publicly about Delarue-Mardrus' first book, and journalist R. P. Roupain wrote an article in *La Croix* titled 'Blasphemy and Histrionics', stating that that *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* was 'a

⁷³ Diverses Réponses, THER-5, Dossier Ubald d'Alençon, ACL.

⁷⁴ See undated note on the Korda affair, S24D, env. 9, ACL.

slap to the lovable face of a saint delivered by a woman' and the 'enterprise of a novelist known for her dirty novels, who dares in 160 pages (9 francs) to insolently exploit all the resentment and all the deafening rage stored up through conscious and militant unbelief against a religious glory without precedent.'⁷⁵ Delarue-Mardrus was being marked out as a typical anti-clerical polemicist. In response, she wrote a long letter to the editor, published in the paper a few weeks later, where she explained her rehabilitative approach to Thérèse and said that far from the book being a slap in Thérèse's face, she had sought to reveal that face in its true aspect. She stated that:

In the artistic and literary world that I frequent... the 'Little Thérèse' is completely unknown because of everything that surrounds her to distort her true physiognomy... for a long time I took her to be a little sugar-saint, a smiling first communicant who, apart from her miracle-working, had nothing going for her but her youth and beauty... I have discovered finally that my radiant fellow Norman was not the pink bon bon that we have been led to believe, but a tough and tragic soul, a true hero of renouncement and courage, a formidable warrior, [engaged in] an incessant struggle with the 'little everyday dragons', more difficult to fight than the wild monster that Saint George defeated only once.⁷⁶

Such alimentary metaphors were a device that would later be used by several other Theresian commentators in reference to the Celinian Thérèse. Delarue-Mardrus put forth a strongly rehabilitative dialogue here, evoking a 'realist' saint over the dominant sentimentalist one. It was this Thérèse that Delarue-Mardrus portrayed when she produced her own alternative artistic representation of the saint to complement her written one – a statue produced in 1927 in collaboration with the great French monumental sculptor Carlo Sarrabezolles (figure 4.6).⁷⁷ Showing the saint with toys lying discarded at her feet, this statue, Delarue-Mardrus later explained, 'represented the saint leaving childhood behind to turn towards God'⁷⁸ – a clear rebuttal of the Celinian Thérèse, so often seen as infantile. *La Croix* maintained that Delarue-Mardrus was guilty of 'the poisoning of ideas and morals',⁷⁹ and Delarue-Mardrus' work would remain controversial throughout the early to mid-twentieth century, with Theresian theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar describing her books as 'bilious' as late as the early fifties.⁸⁰ In her

⁷⁵ R. P. Roupain, 'Blasphème et cabotinage', *La Croix*, 17 January 1926, p. 4.

⁷⁶ R. P. Roupain, 'A propos de la "Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux" de Mme Delarue-Mardrus', *La Croix*, 28 February -1 March 1926, p. 4.

⁷⁷ In 1928 Sarrabezolles was commissioned by the Carmel of Lisieux to complete a sculpture of Thérèse for the baptistery at the Cathedral de Notre-Dame, Alençon. See Appendix 2.

⁷⁸ Delarue-Mardrus, *Mes mémoires*, p. 276.

⁷⁹ Roupain, 'A propos de la "Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux" de Mme Delarue-Mardrus', p. 4.

⁸⁰ Von Balthasar, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, p. 275.

sustained and thoughtful interest in Thérèse, writing two books and even producing this statue, which she later donated to a church in Le Havre, Delarue-Mardrus presented a powerful alternative vision of her fellow Norman.



Figure 4.6. Lucie Delarue-Mardrus' statue of Saint Thérèse. Source: S24D, env. 6a, D, ACL.

A propos des Portraits: A Sustained Apologetic

Following the critiques of Giloteaux, Ubald and Delarue-Mardrus, the Carmel and its allies launched a concerted attempt to lay the controversy about the images to rest. 'Note sur les Portraits divers de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus' appeared in the *Annales de Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (the publication that took over from the *Journal des Pèlerins* after the canonisation) in May 1926, and was subsequently produced as a booklet, *A propos des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*, which ran to at least four editions.⁸¹ The publication, supposedly written by Canon

⁸¹ Canon P. Th. Dubosq, *A propos des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1926).

Dubosq but in fact written by the Carmel,⁸² gave the impression of a move towards transparency on the issue of the images, but was in fact more complex in its approach. The ‘*buste ovale*’ opened the piece, captioned as the ‘authentic portrait’, and it was explained that while Lemonnier’s statement of 1915 had ‘exonerated the Carmel of the accusation of having substituted fanciful compositions and faked photographs for the true portrait of Saint Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus... This malicious criticism has not been laid to rest by this attestation by the authorities’, with the continued publication of ‘two or three photographs, surreptitiously and illegally reproduced, that the Carmel had judged to be defective’.⁸³ The works where these had appeared were mocked for exclaiming ‘*Voilà* – the true portrait! And how different from the “sweetened” models that have been made fashionable by the nuns of Lisieux!’⁸⁴ The time had come, it stated, for devotees of the saint to be offered the chance to judge for themselves, and *A propos des Portraits* published six portraits of Saint Thérèse, some of which were ‘without a hint of retouching!’, while others were ‘lightly retouched by [Céline] in order to produce a more accurate expression’.⁸⁵ There was a concerted effort to assert the historical authenticity of the images reproduced here, giving dates and the circumstances in which the images were taken, and the inclusion of a plate showing the detail of seven group photographs in which Thérèse appeared, which were unretouched and previously unreleased, was a major concession to curiosity about the images (figure 4.9). However, in fact several heavily retouched photographs appeared here, including the photograph of Thérèse aged three and half, which was not so much retouched as almost entirely painted over (see figures 4.7-4.8). Etienne Robo would later comment on the fact that the reader was invited to compare these images with ‘the uncorrected and unauthorized prints’, to see which ‘give us the better average resemblance to the saint’, exclaiming ‘What a question!...What is an *average* resemblance to an original we have never seen?’⁸⁶ Here the Carmel revealed again that, in their view, Céline’s retouched photographs were more authoritative than the originals. In the same month that this piece appeared, Mère Agnès commented on the pressure from many quarters to release as much of Thérèse’s original writings as possible and said ‘We must excuse this need to say *everything*. It’s a sickness, a mania... we must protect ourselves from people who have this

⁸² See D/MA 26/05/1926 and 31/05/1926, THER-5, ACL.

⁸³ Canon P. Th Dubosq, ‘Note sur les Portraits divers de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus’, *Annales de Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, 15 May 1926, p. 1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Etienne Robo, *Two Portraits of St Teresa of Lisieux* (London, 1957) 2nd edition [original publication 1955], p. 37.

sickness as we would from a fire.’⁸⁷ *A propos des Portraits* showed that the Carmel took the same approach to the images of Thérèse, which they would only produce under pressure and even then in a slow trickle of compromised images.

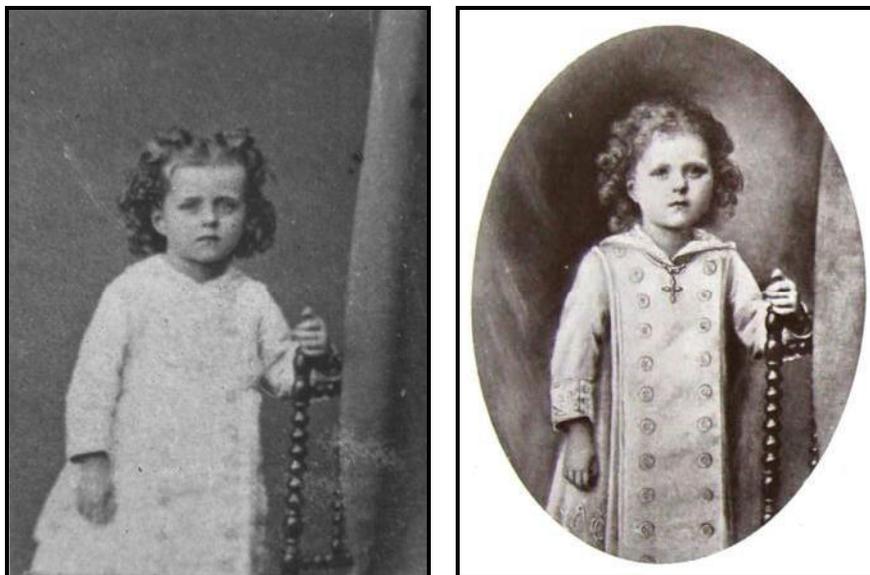


Figure 4.7-4.8. Left: Original photograph of Thérèse aged three and a half, 1876. Source: OCL. Right: The retouched photograph that appeared in *A propos des Portraits*. Source: Canon P. Th. Dubosq, *A propos des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1926), p. 4.



Figure 4.9. Plate showing unretouched photographs of Thérèse which appeared in *A propos des Portraits*. Source: Canon P. Th. Dubosq, *A propos des Portraits de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Lisieux, 1926), p. 14.

⁸⁷ MA/FTh 16/05/1926, ACL.

Maurice Privat and Anti-Clerical Polemic

While the critics of the cult and its images had thus far been essentially pro-Thérèse, seeking to reveal an ultimately more heroic figure, in 1932 a book appeared in which the tone was rather different. In *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (see figure 4.10), Maurice Privat (1889-1949) put forward the most overt criticism the Martins sisters had faced so far, blaming the alleged immoderation of the cult squarely on them and depicting Thérèse herself as stupid and egotistical. Privat was a journalist and writer specialising in books on popular scandals, and his book on Saint Thérèse was part of a series of sensational exposés. *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* was undoubtedly opportunistic, but it has some value for containing the first substantial examination of the history of the growth of the cult, in a sixty-page section entitled ‘The Glory of Sœur Thérèse’.⁸⁸ Privat began his book by stating plainly the central problem with the standard presentation of Thérèse’s meteoric rise to fame: ‘One can’t create a cult out of nothing.’⁸⁹ His task was clear – to illuminate how it was that this hidden figure had become so well known in such a short time. Privat believed that Norman society was fertile ground for the rise of such a cult, seeing it as riddled with superstitious belief in ‘charms, talismans and spells’,⁹⁰ but he also saw the rapid rise of the cult of Thérèse as something of a conspiracy, arguing that the Vatican felt they could make money from the cult, and that the Jesuits gave it their special approbation for mysterious, but undoubtedly selfish reasons.⁹¹ He also saw the Carmel as being particularly keen on the financial benefits of the cult, saying that they ‘wanted to possess, in their chapel, the remains [of Thérèse] which brought the benedictions of Heaven and human offerings, not to mention other profits.’⁹² Indeed, a sign of the Carmel’s commercial exploitation of devotion to Thérèse was the fact that at the convent chapel ‘The *troncs* are not forgotten.’⁹³ While anti-clerical polemic dominated the book, Privat was also concerned with the commerciality in Lisieux, outside of the Church’s control, giving chapter nine the title ‘The Merchants in the Temple’, and mentioning the patés, sausages and liqueurs that Delarue-Mardrus had also bemoaned, commenting on the ‘practical sense of the Lexovians’ in renaming their products so.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 122-87.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-2.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

Privat was also unhappy with the representations of Thérèse offered by the Carmel. He said of the *gisant* in the *chapelle de la Châsse* that had also so upset Delarue-Mardrus, '[Thérèse] poses like an actress of the Comédie-Française'.⁹⁵ Privat was in little doubt who was responsible for all this, and outlined the allegedly Machiavellian operations of the Martin sisters, seeing Mère Agnès as the ringleader – the one who 'directed the propaganda in honour of Thérèse... Entrepreneurial, audacious, she believed in her darling sister and wanted to impose her faith on the world. She also proliferated the images and the medals that would win her souls. They were distributed in their millions.'⁹⁶ However, Privat was aware that Céline had a role here too, explaining how she brought her camera into the convent with her when she entered in 1894 and asserting that '[Céline's] tiny laboratory of the old days has become as big as the *atelier* of a Parisian portrait artist.'⁹⁷ Privat stated:

Céline, the amiable Sœur Geneviève de la Sainte Face, retouched the photographs, printed them, fussed over them, tidied and drew the portrait of her father, or her mother, of Thérèse as a child or as a first communicant. She prefers perfect prettiness. The result is that these products, contrived, fiddled with, are idealised so that they should not displease believers. It is not the truth that they seek, but the image of Thérèse, which fits her incredible work.⁹⁸

Céline's images did not reflect the 'truth' then, but were a confection that suited the flights of fancy contained in the autobiography. Here he also mentioned the official approbation of the '*buste ovale*' by Bishop Lemonnier, stating that 'the faithful... were amazed by the authorisation accorded it'.⁹⁹ Privat said of this image that 'The cinematic taste has corrupted even the cloisters – in this picture Thérèse gives the idea of a star more than a saint'.¹⁰⁰ The use of the idea of the cinema idol is a powerful one – Privat suggests that Thérèse was represented by the Carmel in a mode that was defined by artifice. Privat emphasised that 'Céline recommended always like her prioress: *Make her pretty...* A saint, to whom one attaches the powers of a goddess, cannot be too magnificent',¹⁰¹ and demonstrated that even the images commissioned by the Carmel from other artists followed the same pattern, asserting that 'A tableaux by Roybet represents her – beautiful,

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-1.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

idealised.’¹⁰² Privat had made a sustained condemnation of the sisters’ promotional work, and on the last page of the book he asked, writing of the new Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux who had just taken office ‘But is the new Bishop... not obliged to tell Pauline and Céline Martin... that they are in the cloister to pray and to honour God, not to mix themselves up in business? This warning comes too late; Rome has already intervened in favour of its *zelatrices*.’¹⁰³ The Carmel did not respond to this book in any official way whatsoever, and neither are there any references in private papers held in the Archives. Perhaps, in its focus on the Martin sisters and uncomplimentary account of Thérèse herself, its contents were beyond the pale and could not be dignified with recognition by the convent or the wider Church.

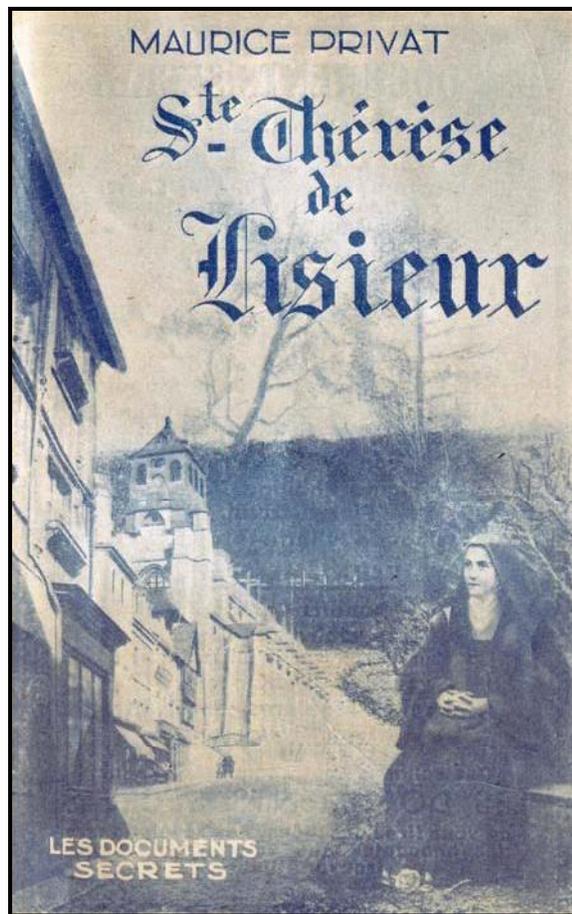


Figure 4.10. The cover of Maurice Privat’s book, showing a view of the church of Saint-Jacques, Lisieux and Céline’s ‘Thérèse in meditation’ composite image. Source: Maurice Privat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux* (Paris, 1932).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

Henri Ghéon: A Convert Counters the Images

Two years after the appearance of Privat's book, Henri Ghéon (1875-1944), a medical doctor, playwright and poet, would produce a new biography that was more expansive in its criticism of the images of Saint Thérèse. A close friend (and possibly lover) of André Gide, he was one of the founders of the literary journal the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. When serving as a doctor on the battlefields of the First World War he regained the Catholic faith of his upbringing, severed his ties with Gide and became part of the ultra-Catholic circle around fellow converts, philosophers Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, as well as a supporter of Action Française.¹⁰⁴ He was the most serious writer that had examined the Theresian phenomenon thus far, and his book on the saint was in the rehabilitative mould that had begun with Ubald – he was a believer who felt that Thérèse was being done a disservice by her popular image and the commercial cult around her. His assessment of the Martin family was not completely sympathetic and, like Ubald, Ghéon saw Thérèse as having been a spoilt child.¹⁰⁵ But he stated that he wanted to reveal the real psychology of the Thérèse behind the mask and wrote at the beginning of the book 'I am writing this book above all for all those, Catholics or not, who put up some resistance to devotion to her, as I once did',¹⁰⁶ explaining:

I first knew Sœur Thérèse by the statues of her. The sight of tasteless and vacuously coloured plaster was indeed incapable... of bewitching a new convert... I demanded not only truth, but also beauty from the Church then. I had yet to learn that the truth is essential but that, on the earth, beauty is not, however helpful it is to prayer... Then I read *Histoire d'une âme*.¹⁰⁷

Here the image is strongly contrasted with the text as binary opposites representing falsehood and truth. He explained further 'The tinselled and sugary appearance of the devotion to the "little saint" (the abuse of this diminutive drove me mad) had earlier concealed from me the definite greatness in this case and perhaps her originality. Too many roses! Too many flowers! I could see nothing but flowers and roses.'¹⁰⁸ Here was a powerfully-put rehabilitationist argument then, and like earlier commentators, Ghéon quickly turned to the *chapelle de la Châsse* as the centre of all he disliked about Thérèse's representation. He criticised the 'brocade and velvet' in which the *gisant* was dressed, suggesting it should be dressed in 'wool and a habit', and he took great exception to

¹⁰⁴ See Catherine Boschian-Campaner, *Henri Ghéon, camarade de Gide: biographie d'un homme de désirs* (Paris, 2008).

¹⁰⁵ Ghéon, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, pp. 61-3

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-6.

the angels that surrounded the effigy ‘carved so sloppily in marble so white, so soft, that they seem to melt under your gaze like sugar’¹⁰⁹ (see figure 4.4), concluding ‘One feels the spirit of the iconoclast.’¹¹⁰ He finally exclaimed ‘By what revenge of the Devil, with the permission of God, has this sacred place come to be at the forefront of the monstrosities of the Catholic art of the twentieth century?’¹¹¹

Despite his hatred for Thérèse’s popular representation, Ghéon made a connection between Thérèse’s popular representation and the benefits of a pilgrimage to Lisieux, making a similar point as Paul Claudel had about the possibility of Saint-Sulpician art doing God’s work. Ghéon wrote ‘We are given saints whose outward appearances are the most capable of attracting us’, saying that, having been drawn to Lisieux by Thérèse’s glitzy image, pilgrims will find:

Under the sugar roses and the lard clouds, behind the florets and pet names which make the most heroic story in the world bland, they discover the real Sœur Thérèse... To make this bitter, tragic potion drinkable for the masses, it is indeed necessary that some syrup be added to the cup... The convent of Lisieux has added too much perhaps.¹¹²

Ghéon saw himself as part of an elite who didn’t need such analgesics to take the pain of the real Theresian story: ‘I speak for the others, for those nauseated by the syrup, turned away by the bogus art, scared off by the shower of roses. For them I reject... the retouches done piously or involuntarily to the photographs “in order to give a more correct expression.”’¹¹³ Ghéon, in much the same spirit as previous commentators, saw the ‘real’ Thérèse as represented by the photographs of her, while the productions of the Carmel were inherently false:

Carefully consider a photograph [of Saint Thérèse] that has not been retouched, toned down, chosen amongst the most soft or the most ‘ecstatic’... One of these snapshots, for example, where her image has been captured unexpectedly, seized in the cloister among her sisters. Or even better, the most suffering and most characteristic of the three shots of 1897 in which she is holding images of the Holy Face and the Child Jesus to her chest. The reserved smile, the gentleness, the serenity cast only a thin veil over a face that is strong and powerful, tough and stubborn, imperious and triumphant, which knows what it wants, what it will want until death, who will not yield from having her own way. *Fiat!*¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

By the mid-1930s, with its reproduction and discussion in so many of the above volumes, the ‘Thérèse *aux images*’ photograph that Ghéon refers to here had gained as many culturally specific meanings as the Celinian images – it had come to stand for the ‘realist’ Thérèse that the intellectual critics were putting forward. Ghéon also referred to the photograph of Thérèse aged fifteen (figure 4) in a similar vein,¹¹⁵ relating her to less sentimental, more serious female saints, writing that it ‘revealed a clear face, well-framed and with a determined expression, with a frankness that is even brutal, and of a disconcerting purity: this is how Joan of Arc and the great Teresa [of Ávila] are represented.’¹¹⁶ In Ghéon’s work we find a Thérèse who was an ‘ascetic of continuous sacrifice, with a wasted body and a broken heart and an inflexible will’.¹¹⁷ This figure is asserted to be represented accurately only by the photographs, and is depicted as being the very antithesis of the face that dominated Thérèse’s popular representation in the mid-1930s.

Ghéon’s Book and the Carmel’s Reaction

Even before his book was published, Ghéon was censured by the Carmel. He had tried to gain permission to include some of the Carmel’s images of Thérèse in the book, enclosing examples of some passages when he wrote to the OCL. This resulted in Mère Agnès writing to Ghéon’s publisher, Flammarion, to protest about the book’s contents. In February 1934, Ghéon responded to Mère Agnès personally and was robust in his defence of his work. He asked for further details on the ‘historical errors’ she stated he had made, explaining that he had drawn his information from the official biography by Mgr. Laveille.¹¹⁸ He said he would change any factual errors, but stated strongly that ‘*As for the interpretation of material, aesthetic and psychological matters, you perhaps understand that I have full and complete freedom*’.¹¹⁹ The changes (if any) in the final book did not satisfy the Carmel and a rebuttal of its assertions was published in *Semaine religieuse de Bayeux et Lisieux*, which Dubosq later said ‘burnt the bridges between Carmel and its friends and Ghéon.’¹²⁰ He added that the book was extensively critiqued in the Catholic media – indeed, in her 1937 book on the saint, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus commented on the reaction to Ghéon’s book, stating ‘Without any of the ferocity of my first book, Henri Ghéon, for having tried with all his

¹¹⁵ Photograph 4, Appendix 2.

¹¹⁶ Ghéon, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, p. 101.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹⁸ Henri Ghéon/MA 17/02/1934, Diverses Réponses, THER-5, Dossier Ubald d’Alençon, ACL. Laveille, *Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus*.

¹¹⁹ Henri Ghéon/MA 17/02/1934, Diverses Réponses, THER-5, Dossier Ubald d’Alençon, ACL.

¹²⁰ Diverses Réponses, THER-5, Dossier Ubald d’Alençon, ACL.