



Saint Therese the Little Flower Statue

By Dale Schumacher
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Years ago, within the walls of a newly built church, for a fast growing Catholic parish, a one of a kind statue of Saint Therese with an upward gaze found her home. On May 30, 1976 our new parish church was dedicated “*Saint Therese the Little Flower*”, as a result of the profound devotion and promotion of our then parish priest, Father Michael “Leo” O’Doherty. Our beloved St. Therese statue was a generous donation made by the Vince Allard family and has remained at our parish since its dedication.

The intention and purpose of this writing is to share with you, my journey, in search of the origin and meaning of this unique statue design. As you may notice this beautiful statue of Saint Therese the Little Flower, is without the usually seen crucifix and roses attributes however it does include two angels.

Saint Therese the Little Flower Statue: At our Parish in Rapid City, SD



My journey...

I have always felt that St. Therese was one of my favorite Saints, however did not pay much attention to the statue that was placed in my parish, other than to know it was there. Over the past several years, I have read several books about different saints, however two books in regards to Saint Therese, entitled “*Making of a Saint*” and “*Story of a Soul*” were enlightening to me. It was on Christmas Eve 2013, when our parish priest, Fr. William Zandri gave all our parish family’s a Christmas present. I, probably like many others, hurried home and peeled off the wrapper to find a book entitled; “*Story of a Soul*” - *The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux - Third Edition*. Translated from the Original Manuscripts, by John Clarke, O.C.D. I read it and realized that this book was more in depth about the personal writings of Saint Therese than any book I had seen or read previously. So I read it again...This is when I became more aware of the differences in our statue and the image it depicted.

Ordinarily, and most often, you can find images of Saint Therese depicted embracing a crucifix and roses. However, our statue image does not reflect that. In our statue her arms are folded in the form of a cross over her

chest with the right forearm over the left. How odd I thought. I was not use to seeing an image of Saint Therese depicted the way our statue represents. It got me thinking, what does this mean? What is it telling us? Is there a reason? Then I noticed something else I had not paid much attention to; there are two angels, one on each side of the lower part of the statue. These angels are presenting flowers to Saint Therese. I was now even more curious and convinced that I had to learn more about Saint Therese and why this particular statue was different.

From my initial facts, one thing I did know was that I had never seen a statue of Saint Therese like the one in our parish before. For me, I just had to know why this Image was different and if there is another statue like ours somewhere in the world. For me this became a burning question.

In January of this year, I decided to begin my research which took me on an amazing journey. I had no idea what I would discover and learn about our dear “Saint Therese the Little Flower” statue.

I thought I would start by searching for any information about statue images of Saint Therese, and as most of us do, I turned to the internet. I searched on-line for any and all Saint related images, sculptors, statue restoration firms and even statue sales. I also searched for any other Saint Therese Churches and or Parishes, of which I found many. After contacting several, no one had ever seen a statue like ours.

There were many instances that were very discouraging as several of my on-line contacts said, “This statue you refer to is not even an image of Saint Therese”. Many people admitted they thought Saint Therese was only depicted with a crucifix and roses. Even in the most discouraging times, I continued my search, and am now convinced it was due to the intercession of our dear Little Flower. I prayed about it and, asking St. Therese to intercede for my cause and effort, one day it finally happened.

Late one night, and into the wee hours of the morning, as I was typing Saint Therese's name all over the web, I somehow ended up on the encyclopedia page known as Wikipedia. I entered Saint Therese in the search menu as I had done so many times before and up came loads of information. With that information and according to Wikipedia help desk instructions, I could post any question I wanted and even upload a picture if I chose to. All of this of course providing I don't violate any copyright laws. Knowing nothing about copyright laws, I decided to contact the Society of the Little Flower in Darien, Illinois. After some discussion via email with them, I sent them a picture of our statue and asked about statue copyright laws. I wanted to be sure I found out how I would know if there was a copyright on our statue? Incidentally, they are the Society of the Little Flower in America and also have never seen an image of our statue either. They did though steer me in the right direction. They said, “look for a copyright tag or imprint on the lower base or on the bottom, of the statue”. With Fr. Bill's permission and help we looked more closely, and sure enough, there it was on the back side of the base. It read; (COPYRIGHT 1929-DAPRATO STUDIOS, CHICAGO/NEW YORK).

Now I found myself searching for the Daprato Studios website and there it was. The company is now known as, Daprato Rigali Studios. After several emails I got the opportunity to communicate with Michael Rigali, the president of Daprato Rigali Studio's in Chicago. It happens that Michael Rigali is the great, great-grandson of John E. Rigali who originally copyrighted our statue in 1929. After sharing my story with him, as well as the reasoning behind why I needed his permission to list my questions and picture of the copyrighted statue on the Wikipedia website, I got his permission. Michael was almost as excited as I was so I sent him a photo of the copyright imprint and a picture of our statue. He was not familiar with this particular image design either even though his great, great-grandfather copyrighted it in 1929, but this was only because they had a loss of records in a fire at their studio in 1970.

I was now ready to post my question and a picture of our statue on Wikipedia. My question was, “Does anyone know of another statue of Saint Therese exactly like this one, and if so, would you please take a picture of it and post it on Wikipedia or share a web link where I might contact someone. About three weeks later I got a response to my question from a man in Germany. He stated that he knew for sure that there is another similar statue at the grave site in Lisieux, France, where Saint Therese is buried. He also shared a web link, which lead me to the gravesite statue image.

I thanked him and felt that Saint Therese had just worked another miracle.

Statue at the Gravesite of Saint Therese in Lisieux, France since 1925 Sculpted by: Lucien Alliot, (1878-1967)

As you can see from the picture, the angels are not present in the image like they are on our statue; however there were no roses or crucifix either, but the arms are in the form of a cross with the right forearm over the left, in the same way as our statue.

With this new information I searched for “St. Therese in Lisieux, France” and found a web link to the Lisieux Saint Therese Archive and Library. From that website I got additional information and other leads as well.

The Archive and Library building in Lisieux, France also has a statue of St. Therese at the entrance.

The religious Brother that I communicated with emailed me a picture of their statue as well. Again there are no angels, roses nor crucifix, but the arms are crossed over the chest, right forearm over the left. It was very similar to our statue and the one at the gravesite in the Lisieux cemetery. The Brother said that he had not seen a statue image with angels like ours, but confirmed that they had several representations of Saint Therese without the crucifix and roses in their large collection in the archives.



Statue at the entrance at the Archives-Library in Lisieux, France Sculpted by: Trappist Brother-Marie Bernard, (1883-1975)



It was good to know that there were at least two other statues very similar to ours in some ways. There were no crucifix and roses, but there were no angels either. With the many contacts and web links I had I was able to enter the library archive to many drawings and portraits that Saint Therese's sister Celine had painted.

A few days later, I contacted a lady who is a freelance writer in Liverpool, England. As a Liverpool University student, she had written a 346 page thesis in 2011 on the *Images, Authenticity and the Cult of Saint Therese of Lisieux 1897-1959*. In all the research she did for her thesis she had never seen a statue exactly as ours, but she had spent many hours at the Lisieux Library Archives and was familiar with some drawings by Celine that were very similar. After a couple of email communications, she shared more information and provided the link to her website. With that information and other web links I was able to access several other websites that covered the entire life of St. Therese from her childhood.

Images of St. Therese



3 ½ yrs. old



8 yrs. old



15 yrs. old

At this time I was thankful for all the information I had gathered. It was overwhelming, but there was still something missing. The information I had thus far did not tell me why this image was designed with two angels and without a crucifix and roses, where did this idea come from and how, when, and where did it originate. I had lots of informational resources but still didn't have the answer to my question.

After several weeks of reading the information I had gathered, I found several pieces to the puzzle but I wasn't sure I knew how to comprehend it all. Perhaps I should ask the intercession of Saint Therese.

Thank you Saint Therese, I know you were listening and without a doubt your presence was real.

I was inspired to continue in this way since no statues were manufactured prior to her death and considering all the information I had, I now had to put everything in the proper order and perspective and that was to start after the death of Saint Therese.



Novice at age 16

Marie Francoise (*Therese*) Martin
Born in Alencon, France on January 2, 1873.
Died on September 30, 1897 (at age 24).

I discovered that her sister, Celine, was a very talented artist and portrait painter. In 1921 Celine, realizing her little sister's holiness, knew her little sister was already a Saint in Heaven. She began preparation for the Beatification of her little sister Therese. She drew and painted a portrait of Saint Therese in her ecstasy with the angels surrounding her presenting flowers.

The painting seems to capture the moment at the time of her death and passing into new life; hence the arms folded across her chest, saying her last five words "[My God I Love You](#)". Saint Therese said; "[My mission to make God loved will begin after my death, "I will spend my heaven doing good on earth. I will let fall a shower of roses"](#)".



Saint Therese's Beatification took place on April 29, 1923 by Pope Pius XI

Little apotheosis of the Beatification-1921 – painting by Céline, 53 x 69 cm.

Céline's own notes: "We asked Rome to give the model of the big apotheosis that would be in the back of St Peter's Basilica the day of the Beatification of our holy little Thérèse. This is when I painted the little color panel...but they didn't follow this model and lifted the arms of the Blessed. We never had this Roman painting; it was reused for other Saints!"

Consequently, Celine's original painting was not used as a banner on the day of Saint Therese's Beatification, nor was it placed in the back of St. Peter's Basilica as she had intended and hoped for. However it became a public portrait and is now in the Archives at the Library in Lisieux, France. This particular Image was approved by Celine and her sisters for view in the public domain.

Saint Therese's Canonization took place on May 17, 1925 by Pope Pius XI

It was immediately after the Canonization of Saint Therese that images were being produced depicting the crucifix and roses. At that time there were many sculptors that would mass produce unauthorized statue images as counterfeits. This resulted in several lawsuits and court cases for several years.



Figure 5.5-5.6. Left: Céline's 'Little apotheosis for the beatification' (1921). Source: ACL. Right: Céline's 'Little apotheosis for the canonisation' (1924). Source: ACL.

Notice, on the left portrait the angels surrounding her are presenting flowers from the earth to Saint Therese. The crucifix and roses are not included. In the portrait on the right, Saint Therese is showering the flowers back to earth and the angels are rejoicing. Notice that the crucifix and roses are now included.

Watercolor of the banner that floated over the loggia of St. Peter's in Rome on April 29th 1923 and May 17th, 1925



It would appear that the crucifix and roses became the accepted attributes just prior to the Beatification and Canonization. Now we can better understand why sculptors produced statues of Saint Therese with the crucifix and roses immediately after the Canonization instead of a statue image with only the arms crossed over the chest. At that time Rome favored an image with Saint Peter's Basilica at the bottom of the banner and raising the right arm of the image of Saint Therese. It was evident that the crucifix and roses was the accepted image. It was the popular design of crucifix and roses that lead many sculptors to start mass producing hundreds of copies of statues

that were not approved by Celine and her sisters. Counterfeiting of statues and financial greed was running rampant at that time and many statues produced by various sculptors did not even closely resemble the facial features of Saint Therese. Several lawsuits were ordered and hundreds of counterfeit statues with the crucifix and roses were destroyed by court order.

Even though the original image was not used for either the beatification or the canonization, Celine's drawings and portraits were approved as authentic images and representations of her sister Saint Therese. These portraits depicted the angels surrounding Saint Therese at the moment upon her death and passing into new life from earth to heaven, as shown in figure 5.5.5.6. So at this time in my research the question as to how the angels became part of the statue image was still a mystery. Nowhere could I find another image with the angels included as part of the statue design as depicted in the image of our statue.

However, I found that by divine inspiration there was one man, John E. Rigali who had a vision. He focused on the original design without the crucifix and roses, with the angels surrounding Saint Therese as shown in the image that Celine had drawn and later painted as a portrait in 1921.



Great, great, grandfather, John E. Rigali: (1865-1926) This man had an inspiration and vision to include two angels into his design for a very unique statue image of Saint Therese during a time period after 1921. Due to a tragic loss of records in 1970 we cannot be certain that John E. Rigali was the actual sculptor of our statue; however after his death in 1926 (at age 61), the Rigali family did continue and finish his work to complete the artistic sculpture design and ultimately Daprato Rigali Studios copyrighted this statue of Saint Therese in the year 1929. The company is still in business today in Chicago IL. The business is run by four of John E. Rigali's great, great grandchildren.

A little bit of history about Daprato Rigali Studio: In the 19th century Daprato Statues set the standard for religious art around the world. By the turn of the 20th century, Daprato Rigali Studios operated locations in Chicago, New York and Pietrasanta, Italy, near the famous Italian Carrara Marble Quarry, which is still a source for many of their marble projects today. In 1881, John E. Rigali, the great, great, grandfather of the firm's current full-time family members immigrated to Chicago after completing his art training with the well-known instructor Maestro Colgnori of Florence Italy. In 1890, John E. Rigali became a partner and ultimately president of Daprato Rigali Studios. The firm was headquartered in Chicago at the corner of Van Buren and Canal Street. Daprato Rigali steadily expanded its dedication to artistic church decoration and statuary over the decades, building a nationwide reputation of excellence and consistency.

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The following is the email communication I received from the Brother from the Lisieux Library and Achieve: *Bonjour!*

Thank you for your photos and explanations. What we can say is that it is certain that the old Mr. Rigali received strong inspiration by the statue he saw (at least a photo of) the sculpture of sculptor Lucien Alliot in the Lisieux cemetery. That statue is there since April 1925. Please have a look at the attached file. As you have noted, it is the same position of hands, upper body, the same garment, the way the clothes are enrolled around the neck, the pleat of the veil in the middle of the head, etc. Even the cumulus clouds are similar. We have, in our large collection, several representations of Therese without the crucifix and roses - which are her usual attributes. Here, the roses are handled by the angels so they are present. We have to find out time to make a research through our hundreds of statues and photos of statues to answer you properly... Anyway, you have a beautiful treasure. Protect it - don't make any restoration done by amateurs. The painting covering is very well done. If possible, try to avoid little candles in its environment because smoke does big damage... Can you send us a louder file of your statue? 42 ko is not much when we want to print a good sample to compare with our archival holdings.

*Cordialement,
The Carmelites of Lisieux - located in Lisieux!*

All search results assure us that our Saint Therese statue is the artistic design by John E. Rigali, copyrighted by Daprato Rigali Studios in 1929. The Daprato Rigali Studio has no record of how many statues of this image design were produced. In 1970 a fire at their Studio in Chicago destroyed all of the records, including the casting mold that shaped the image and produced the statue that we have in our church today. The statue we presently have in our Church of Saint Therese Parish is priceless and could not be replaced or reproduced. In our conversation with Michael Rigali in September 2014, we learned that our statue of Saint Therese is very rare, with glass eyes and may possibly be the only statue of this image design still in existence in the world.

Statement: At the present time, as of November 2014, all search results indicate that we at St. Therese the Little Flower Parish in Rapid City, SD have and hold the only “one-of-a-kind” statue of this precious image of Saint Therese. Possibly the only one of this unique design ever produced, however the search continues in that regard.

Marie-Celine Martin: In all fairness, I feel I must share a few words about Celine Martin, because her name is mentioned so many times in this writing, and it was her work and drawings and portrait paintings that lead me in my endeavor that ultimately gave me the answer to my question.

Marie-Celine Martin-Sister Genevieve of the Holy Face



Marie-Celine Martin was born April 28, 1869; she was 4 years older than her sister Saint Therese. After their mother’s death on August 28, 1877, at age 17 Celine took charge of the Martin household at Les Buisonnets and cared for their father during his illness until his death on July 29, 1894. Shortly after their father’s death, Celine also entered the Carmel on September 14, 1894 (at age 25). She became a Carmelite Nun and took the religious name: Sister Genevieve of the Holy Face. Celine died February 25, 1959 (at age 89). Celine was the last survivor of the Martin family.

In conclusion: Considering the information I have discovered, we can now be reasonably certain of the origin of the image design of our beautiful statue of Saint Therese. However, there is still one question that eludes us. Since this statue came to Saint Therese Parish in May 30, 1976, we don’t know where this statue may have spent the years prior to arriving at our church. We can assume that if this statue was sculpted in or approximately the same year as its copyright in 1929; it would be 85 years old in 2014. If anyone has any information regarding the provenance of this statue, please contact Fr. William Zandri or the office personnel at our parish (605-342-1556).

Thank you.

Most recently: Our statue was restored by the great, great, grandchildren of John E. Rigali, at Daprato Rigali Studio in Chicago. Thank you, to Rick & Lenora Volk for their kind and generous donation for the restoration, may God Bless you and Saint Therese watch over you. Let us take good care of this precious image of Saint Therese and she will intercede for all of us.

Saint Therese said, "*I will let fall a shower of roses everywhere in the world*".

The following is added here from the web site of the: Society of the Little Flower

<http://www.littleflower.org>

How did St. Therese become known as the "Little Flower"?

St. Therese loved nature, and often used the imagery of nature to explain how the Divine Presence is everywhere and how everything is connected in God's loving care and arms. Therese saw herself as "the Little Flower of Jesus" because she was just like the simple wild flowers in forests and fields, unnoticed by the greater population, yet growing and giving glory to God. Therese did not see herself as a brilliant rose or an elegant lily, but simply as a small wild flower. This is how she understood herself before the Lord - simple and hidden, but blooming where God had planted her.



Therese believed passionately that Jesus was delighted in his "little flower", and just as a child can be fascinated by the grandeur of a simple flower, she believed that Jesus was fascinated by her as his "little flower". Therese understood that she was just like the tiny flower in the forest, surviving and flourishing through all the seasons of the year. Because of God's grace, she knew that she was stronger than she looked. Following the Carmelite tradition, Therese saw the world as God's garden, and each person being a different kind of flower, enhancing the variety and beauty which Jesus delighted in. When various people tried to explain her powerful inspiration and her place within the Church, it always seemed to come back to one title "The Little Flower".

In her autobiography, she beautifully explains this spirituality:

Jesus set before me the book of nature. I understand how all the flowers God has created are beautiful, how the splendor of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not take away the perfume of the violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy. I understand that if all flowers wanted to be roses, nature would lose her springtime beauty, and the fields would no longer be decked out with little wild flowers. So it is in the world of souls, Jesus' garden. He has created smaller ones and those must be content to be daisies or violets destined to give joy to God's glances when He looks down at His feet. Perfection consists in doing His will, in being what He wills us to be.



Thank you, Fr. (Bill) William Zandri.
God Bless you for being part of this most rewarding experience.



Thank you and may God Bless Saint Therese the Little Flower Parish and all our parishioners.

*Saint Therese listens and intercedes for us in Heaven and on earth.
We only have to ask.*



*Therefore we pray often;
Saint Therese the Little Flower, please pick me a Rose from the Heavenly Garden and send it
to me with a message of love. Ask God to grant me the favors I ask, I thee implore, and tell
him I will love Him each day more and more. Amen*



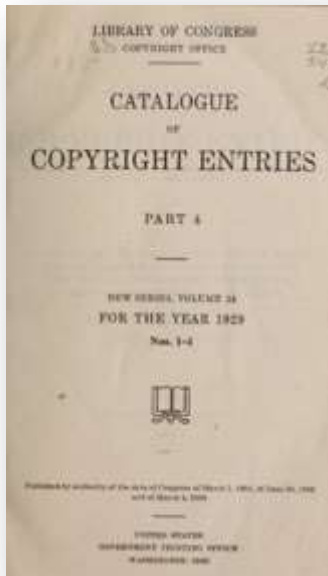
Addendum: March 2015



In November 2014, when the story of my journey related to the research on our statue of Saint Therese was first told, I was overwhelmed with the amount of information I had discovered. Since that time, I noticed that the angel on her left side seems to have the left hand cupped in a position as if to be holding something. So, during the last few months I decided to do further research in that regard and found that the angel was indeed holding and presenting Saint Therese with a crucifix.

Photo at the left: Since 1976, when it first arrived at our church, the statue of Saint Therese did not have a crucifix held and presented by the angel, along with the lilies, as in the photo below. The crucifix may have been lost or omitted when the statue was first sculpted and released in the public domain by the sculptor.

Information update: March 2015, additional information has been discovered through research at the Library of Congress, (CCE) "Catalogue of Copyright Entries" PART 4- FOR THE YEAR 1929, New Series Volume 24 -No 1, on the right side of page 257.



Crucifix placed in March 2015



A crucifix has been added to our statue of Saint Therese and placed with the angel on the left of the statue. Image now matches the description in the copyright entry below.

This information is entered in (CCE) for the name Daprato.

Statue of the Little Flower in glory, 4633, shows the saint standing on clouds with roses all around. An angel is on either side of her, one with roses, the other with lilies and a crucifix. © 1 c. Oct. 5, 1929; G 1920.

no. 4, 1929
DaPrato

The entry shows that the original application submitted for copyright was entered on October 5, 1929, **(1 c. Oct. 5, 1929; - G 1920)**. The title of the entry is; “Statue of the Little Flower in glory”, ref. # 4633. The G indicates class G (works of art), 1920 is the registration number. 1929 is the date of receipt in the Copyright Office of the photograph or other identifying reproduction. (1c) stands for one copyright registration of an unpublished work.

Imprinted Copyright I.D. tag on statue base.



As documented by the copyright entry, the sculptor’s original design did indeed include a crucifix with the left-side angel presenting the lilies and crucifix as described in the patent entry.

The crucifix and flowers became the accepted attributes for the Saint Therese statue image at the time of her beatification in 1923 and continued after her canonization in 1925.

After 1923-1925, all statues were produced depicting the image with Flowers and Crucifix and remain as such to this day.



We hope that everyone who comes here to this website enjoys the history of this beautiful Statue of our dear “Saint Therese the Little Flower”. I truly enjoy sharing it with you.

God Bless You.

Research on this precious Image of Saint Therese is an ongoing process. If, and when, more information becomes available, this document may again be updated.

Most recent update-April, 2015



