

The Pray More Lenten Retreat Study Guide

Choose Joy

by Mary Lenaburg

Reflective Questions

“Prayer is an aspiration of the heart. It is a simple glance directed to heaven. It is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy.”
-- St. Therese of Lisieux

- Pray like St. Therese of Lisieux and her, “Little Way”. So, the first thing Therese did was pray, and through her daily prayers she would offer these little trials and tribulations up to the Lord. She would glance toward heaven and speak with her heart, and share her life with the Lord as a small child, like a small child. Try to do the same. Any trial, big or small, can be offered to the Lord.
- Seek little ways within your vocation to choose joy. Do the lowly of the lowest tasks and do them joyfully. What is one task that you detest doing? Laundry, cleaning, cooking etc.? By choosing to joyfully do this task that you do not enjoy doing with a smile on your face which, is sometimes difficult, you honor God. You lift that up to the Lord and love Him through the task that you do not enjoy doing. Choose joy in that moment!
- When people gossip or say negative things about you, choose joy. Take a deep breath and to smile and say “Lord, I offer this to You as a small child.” Try to do what St. Therese did and choose joy. Don’t go and say anything, don’t defend yourself, just smile and pray for that person and choose joy. Can you think of a time when someone spoke negatively about you and tried to tear you down? Did you act on it and defend yourself? It’s not easy to offer such a thing up, but it does bring an incredible peace to life when you do.
- We encourage you this Lent to choose joy in all those little moments throughout your day, wherever it is in your world, to smile and to choose joy in those moments as St. Therese of the little flower did. Therese chose

to give her life as a gift of joy to God, and so by choosing these little ways, these little mortifications throughout her day back as a gift. It was her path to holiness to come before the Lord as a small child, and it is a path to holiness that all of us can reach. She just loved, and she chose joy. How can you love and choose joy today?

- What are the little things that seem to be weighing heavily on you today? Spend a minute or two meditating on how much Jesus had to relinquish when he let himself be buried for our sins and know that you can offer all things to God. What little mortifications can you offer to the Lord?