



The Last Years of Saint Thérèse: Doubt and Darkness, 1895-1897

Thomas R. Nevin

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For over a century, the Carmelite Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face (1873-1897) has been revered as Catholicism's foremost folk saint of modern times. Universally known as "the Little Flower," she has been a source of consolation and uplift, an example of everyday sainthood by "the Little Way." This book puts aside that piety and addresses the torment of doubt within the life and writing of a saint best known for the strength of her conviction.

Nevin examines the dynamics of Christian doubt, and argues that it is integral to the journey toward selfless love which Thérèse was compelled to take. What, Nevin asks, did doubt mean to her? What was its source and nature? What was its object? He gives close attention to her reading and interpretations of the Old and New Testaments as pathways through her inner wilderness. Her Carmel of spiritual sisters becomes a vivid setting for this drama, with other women challenging Thérèse by their own trials of faith. One of Thérèse's indispensable lessons, Nevin concludes, is the acceptance of one's helplessness in the midst of spiritual darkness.

Bringing a new direction to the study of Thérèse, and of the challenges of sainthood itself, this book reveals how Thérèse's response to divine abandonment is a unique and painfully won imitation of Christ.

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