

WHO ARE

SAINTS

Louis & Zélie

Louis was beatified with his wife, Zélie, by Pope Saint John Paul II on 19 October 2008. When Pope Francis canonised them on 18 October 2015 in Rome, they became the first spouses to ever be canonised together.

MARRIAGE TIPS FROM THE LIVES OF

SAINTS

Louis & Zélie

LOUIS AND ZÉLIE were married in Alençon France on 13 July 1858. Both had previously tested a vocation to the religious life but had discerned that it was to marriage that the Lord had called them.

Both spouses ran successful businesses - Louis as a clockmaker and jeweller and Zélie as a fine lacemaker. In time, Louis sold his business in order to support and build up Zélie's lacemaking venture.

Over the course of 15 years, the Martins brought into the world nine children four of whom died as young children. They named their five surviving daughters Marie, Pauline, Léonie, and Céline, with the youngest being Thérèse, known universally as 'The Little Flower'.

Zélie was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 49. She prayed fervently for a cure and even travelled to Lourdes to ask Our Lady for her intercession. In time, Zélie came to accept her condition and subsequently offered up her sufferings for her children and particularly for her troubled daughter Léonie.

Zélie passed away in 1877 and left Louis to bring up their daughters, then aged between 3 and 18 years, as a young widower. It was at this time that the family moved to Lisieux so as to be close to Zélie's brother, Isidore, and his wife and children.

Louis was most diligent in ensuring his daughters' proper educative and spiritual formation and was especially lavish in the love and attentiveness he showered on them individually. He loved taking his daughters on expeditions and pilgrimages on Sunday afternoons and shared with them his great love for nature and the whole gamut of God's creation. At home, the family would gather together and Louis would lead them in evening prayer and song. Much a happy occasion was also spent celebrating name and feast days pertinent to members of the Martin household.

Louis lived to see three of his daughters enter Religious life in the Carmel of Lisieux and it is of note that the remaining two, Céline and Léonie, followed in their sisters footsteps in the years following their father's death.

At the age of 64, Louis suffered a stroke, which, because of ongoing seizures and related hallucinations, necessitated a stay of three years in a mental institution. He was only allowed back home when the medical staff determined that he was no longer a danger to

himself because of his lack of physical mobility.

Louis died at the age of 71 in Lisieux after having been cared for by his daughters Céline and Léonie for the final two years of his life.

Louis and Zélie's Daughters



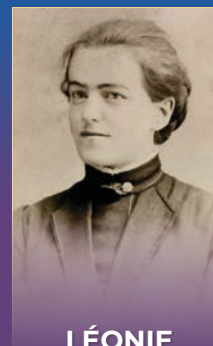
MARIE

Feb 22, 1860
-Jan 19, 1940



PAULINE

Sep 7, 1861
-Jul 28, 1951



LÉONIE

Jun 3, 1863
-Jun 16, 1941



HÉLÈNE

Oct 13, 1864
-Feb 22, 1870



CÉLINE

Apr 28, 1869
-Feb 25, 1959



THÉRÈSE

Jan 2, 1873
-Sep 30, 1897

Unity of Heart, Mind and Soul:

Louis and Zélie were united in their love for Jesus Christ, their family, and the Church. Decisions were always made after intentional discernment of God's will and in light of their eternal good.

Gift of Self:

Throughout their lives, Louis and Zélie were personally attentive to the needs of their spouse and were willing to sacrifice their own happiness in order to make life more pleasant for the other. They always acted towards each other with 'intentional' tenderness.

Openness to Life:

Louis and Zélie were gifted with nine children during their married life together. Although four of their children sadly passed away, they were always open to having more children recognising that every child is always a special gift from God.

Praying Together:

The Martin's neighbours knew that they could set their clocks by the punctuality of Louis and Zélie as they set out for the early morning Mass each day! This practice ensured daily prayer time together and brought about in abundance, a share in the graces of both the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Marriage.

Intentional Romance:

We are blessed to have ready access to the letters of both Louis and Zélie. In them, we find ample evidence of the great love that existed between them and which was especially expressed in words and not only in practice.



I'm longing to be near you, my dear Louis. I love you with all my heart, and I feel my affection so much more when you're not here with me. It would be impossible for me to live apart from you. Zélie's letter to Louis

PARENTING TIPS FROM THE LIVES OF

SAINTS *Louis & Zélie*

Making God the centre of our daily life:

Louis and Zélie shared their deep love for God through the concrete practice of their faith. Their daughters did not have to guess that their parents loved God... it was integrated into all they did! The practice of attending daily Mass and Eucharistic Adoration, praying together as a family, celebrating feast days with joy, and not working on Sundays, all assisted in keeping the presence of God within the natural character of family life.

Honey not Vinegar:

Louis and Zélie had high expectations for their daughters and sought to intervene earlier rather than later in correcting tendencies that were amiss. Here, it is their *modus operandi* that must be especially noted. They sought to form their children with love and then, within this atmosphere of 'knowing that they are loved', encourage them to choose and act for the good with confidence and freedom.

Open Communication to encourage Confidence:

The parents were intentional in their desire to form strong bonds of love with each of their daughters. They hoped that this overriding atmosphere of love would encourage them to be open about their daily comings and goings, their hopes and fears, and even their shortcomings.

The outcome of this effort was an environment in which parents and children trusted each other, were confident in the response elicited when sharing at the level of the heart, and knew without a doubt that they were loved no matter the circumstance.

Seeking to know our children as individuals:

Louis gave all his daughters endearing nicknames such as 'My Queen', 'My Diamond', 'My Pearl'. He knew them all to the core and was ever seeking to encourage them and provide opportunities for them to grow in their natural giftedness. Zélie's letters give evidence of her vigilance in this regard and her intentional strategies to help her daughters in their individual quest for holiness and perfection of character.

The Way of Beauty:

Zélie walked this path in an explicit manner through her production of the exquisitely beautiful Point d'Alençon lace that was so much a part of her life and that of the family. Louis intentionally sought to immerse himself in the beauty of artisanship, nature, literature, and music. He shared this love with his children by taking them fishing, allotting them a vegetable patch to care for, and introducing them to the historical songs and stories of their beloved homeland. Louis also encouraged his daughters in their engagement with the fine arts especially poetry and painting.

Céline reflecting on Louis' love for
The Way of Beauty...

"I shall remember his beautiful face when in the evening as night was falling, deep in the woods, we stopped to listen to a nightingale. He was listening... with such an expression in his eyes! It was like an ecstasy, an indescribable something of the homeland was reflected on his features. Then, after a long moment of silence, we were still listening, and I saw tears rolling down his dear cheeks. Oh! what a beautiful day!"

PRAYER FOR *Families*

Almighty God,
You called the Martin family to holiness through the grace of Holy Matrimony and family life. Through the intercession of saints Louis, Zélie and Thérèse, we ask you now to bless all families, especially our own.

May we follow their example of daily prayer and love for each other so that our family, too, may live a life imbued with holiness and virtue.

Lord, we ask today that You pour out Your grace on all grandparents, parents and children.

Grant that we may always bear witness to the beauty of family life according to Your plan.



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
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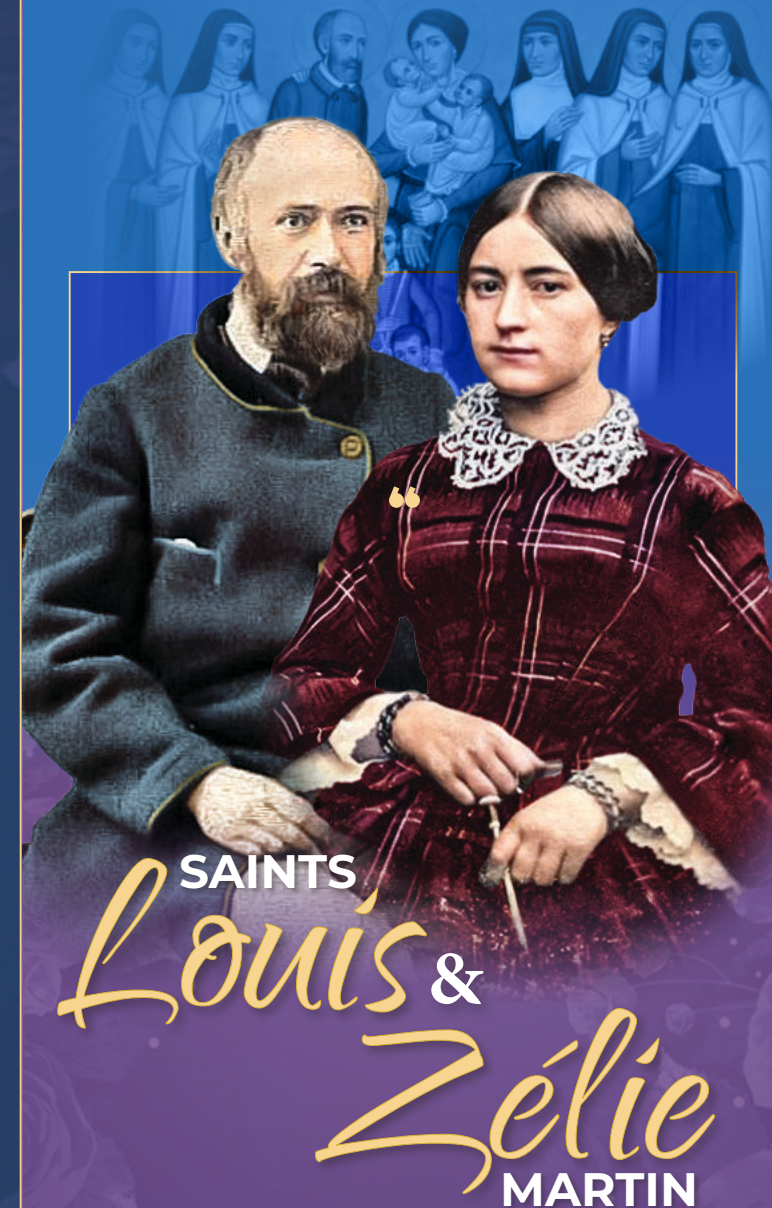
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