

SAINTS ZELIE & LOUIS MARTIN

Don't forget the 'What to do at home' page, which lets us know how you can use the example of Saints Zelig and Louis Martin to bring your family to a devout faith and a closer relationship with Christ!

FOR FAMILIES

THE STORY OF SAINTS ZELIE & LOUIS MARTIN

Zelig and Louis Martin are the parents of St Therese of Lisieux and were canonised recently by Pope Francis. They are the example we want to bring to mind for all of you in family life, their story of a family brought up centralised on Christ has points we can all learn from. Before you read the story let us just tell you that there is no one thing they do that is massively significant, it is the constant, small and very loving acts that fostered their daughters vocations and love of God.

Louis Martin was a watchmaker/jeweller by trade. He was born into a soldier's family and moved around as a child, eventually settling in Alencon. When he was 22 years old he sought to enter religious life with Augustinian Canons, however, he was unsuccessful and so abandoned ideas of entering religious life. Zelig Guerin was also born into a military family and also tried to enter religious life unsuccessfully. However, she found a talent in lace-making and started her own business in Alencon.

The couple first met in Alencon and were married on the 13th July 1858. The couple bore nine children of which 4 died, the eldest when they were 5 years old. This was hard, as you can imagine, however, the couple continued to have children and brought their five remaining daughters up extremely well. Faith was the families support and God was their strength.

All five of their daughters grew up to join religious orders and the ways in which they entered religious life indicates they joined having willingly and thoroughly discerned. There is no one thing Zelig and Louis did to lead such a holy family, the main thing they got right was love. They loved their children and always prioritised them over their work or needs, they reminded them that their purpose in life was just simply to love God and help those in need. Their last daughter was indeed St Therese of Lisieux, also known as the "little flower", had the couple not preserved through child loss and trusted in God we would never have had such a wonderful saint.

We are all called to be Saints, however, we must choose to answer the call, the call from God. Holiness cannot be reached individually, it must be grown in communion with God. Our growth can be accelerated by feeding off the holiness of others, hence if you want your family to become holy you must strive to make yourself holy. Your children will grow in your image, if your image is close to that of God's they will grow up in His divine image.