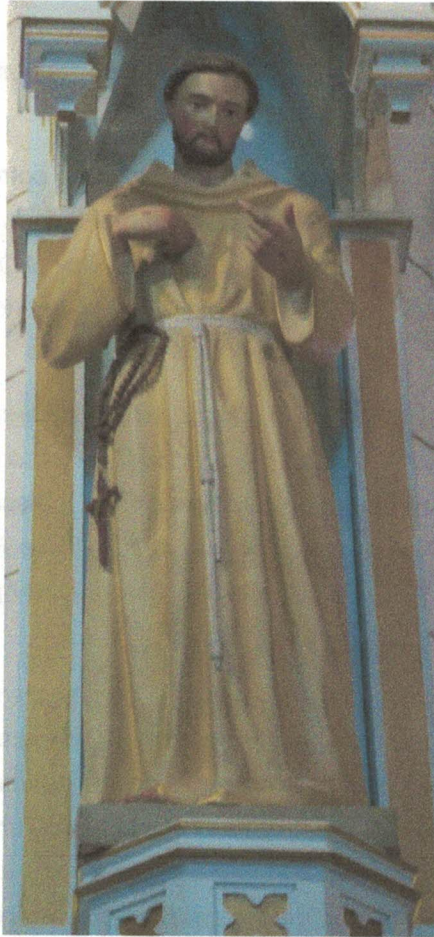


SOME STATUES IN ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

St. Francis of Assisi



Saint Thérèse of Lisieux



Saint Francis of Assisi (Italian: *San Francesco d'Assisi*; 1181/1182 – October 3, 1226) born **Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone**, but nicknamed **Francesco** (a tribute to **France**) by his father; was an Italian **Catholic friar** and preacher. He founded the men's **Order of Friars Minor**, the women's **Order of St. Clare**, and the **Third Order of Saint Francis** for men and women, followed by the early members of the Order of Friars Minor, or the monastic lives of the **Poor Clares**. Francis is one of the most venerated religious figures in history.

Francis' father was Pietro di Bernardone, a prosperous silk merchant. Francis lived the high-spirited life typical of a wealthy young man, even fighting as a soldier for **Assisi**. While going off to war in 1204, Francis had a vision that directed him back to Assisi, where he lost his taste for his worldly life. On a pilgrimage to Rome, he joined the poor in begging at **St. Peter's Basilica**. The experience moved him to live in poverty. Francis returned home, began preaching on the streets, and soon gathered followers. His Order was authorized by **Pope Innocent III** in 1210. He then founded the Order of Poor Clares, which became an **enclosed religious order** for women, as well as the Order of Brothers and Sisters of Penance (commonly called the Third Order).

In 1219, he went to Egypt in an attempt to convert the Sultan to put an end to the conflict of the Crusades. (It is said that Saladin gave him a gift and sent him on his way.)

The Franciscan Order grew immensely and once his community was authorized by the Pope, he withdrew increasingly from external affairs. In 1223, Francis arranged for the first Christmas nativity scene. In 1224, he received the stigmata, making him the first recorded person to bear the wounds of Passion. He died during the evening hours of October 3, 1226.

On July 16, 1228, he was proclaimed a saint by Pope Gregory IX. He is known as the patron saint of animals and the environment, and is one of the two patron saints of Italy (with Catherine of Siena). It is customary for Catholic and Anglican churches to hold ceremonies blessing animals on his feast day of October 4. He is also known for his love of the Eucharist, his sorrow during the Stations of the Cross, and for the creation of the Christmas crèche or Nativity Scene.



Saint Thérèse of Lisieux – (January 2, 1873 – September 30, 1897. Born Marie-Françoise-Thérèse Martin) **Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, O.C.D.**, was a French Discalced Carmelite nun. She is popularly known as "**The Little Flower of Jesus**" or simply, "**The Little Flower**". She was beatified 29 April 1923 and canonized 17 May 1925 by Pope Pius XI.

Thérèse lived a hidden life and "wanted to be unknown", yet became popular after her death through her spiritual autobiography. She also left letters, poems, religious plays, prayers, and her last conversations were recorded by her sisters. Paintings and photographs further led to her being recognized by millions of men and women. Thérèse said on her death-bed, "I only love simplicity. I have a horror of pretence", and she spoke out against some of the claims made concerning the Lives of saints written in her day, "We should not say improbable things, or things we do not know. We must see their real, and not their imagined lives.

Thérèse has been a highly influential model of sanctity because of the "simplicity and practicality of her approach to the spiritual life". Together with St. Francis of Assisi, she is one of the most popular saints in the history of the church. Pope Pius X called her "the greatest saint of modern times".

On October 19, 1997 Pope John Paul II declared her the thirty-third Doctor of the Church, the youngest person, and at that time only the third woman, to be so honored. Devotion to Thérèse has developed around the world.

The impact of *The Story of a Soul*, a collection of her autobiographical manuscripts, printed and distributed a year after her death to an initially very limited audience was great, and she rapidly became one of the most popular saints of the twentieth century.

There are innumerable books and writings about these two saints. Most of above info is from Wikipedia.