

After his death, Celine joined her three sisters in the Discalced Carmelite monastery. All the sisters were alive when Thérèse who died at twenty-four, was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1925.

Both Louis Martin and his wife Zélie were beatified on October 19, 2008 at the Basilica of Lisieux by José Cardinal Saraiva Martins, the legate of Pope Benedict XVI.

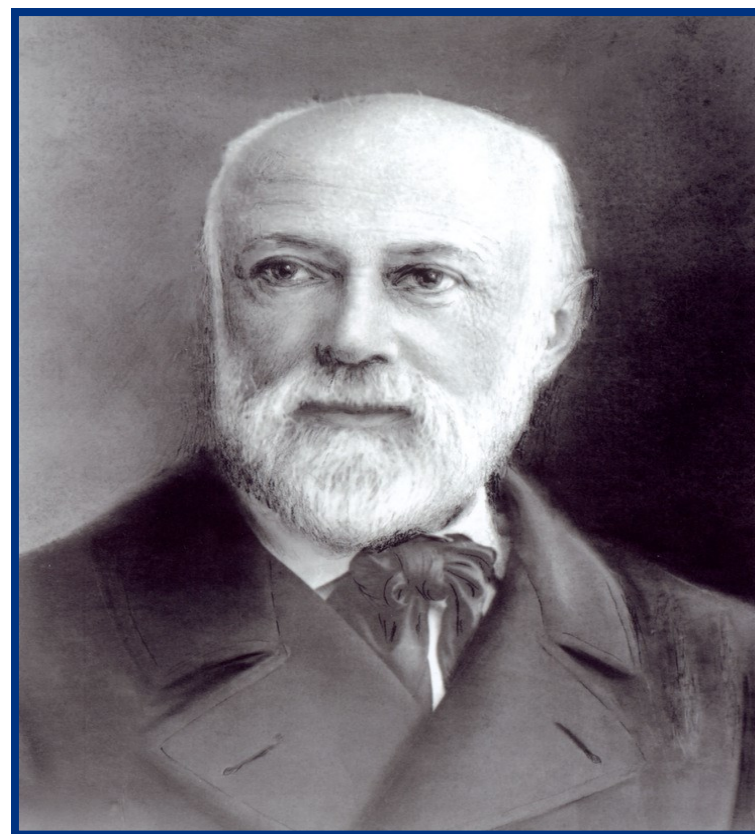


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Heavenly Help for Those Who Suffer
from

Memory Loss

Seek the intercession of
Blessed Louis Martin



(1823—1894)

Blessed Louis Martin (1823-1894)

Louis Martin, the father of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face, was born at Bordeaux, France, one of four children, and was the son of an Army captain. Given the name, Louis Joseph Aloys Stanislaus, he was baptized shortly after his birth. At the age of nineteen, Louis first went to Rennes to learn watchmaking and then was apprenticed in Strasbourg. While there, he visited the Augustinian Monastery of Mount St. Bernard, where he hoped to be admitted. He was turned away, being told to learn Latin and then return. Louis studied the language for a time, and then realized his vocation was in the secular world.

He established himself at Alençon as a master watchmaker and opened a shop that was enlarged to include jewelry. When he was thirty-five years old, he met and married Zélie Guérin in 1858, with whom he lived as brother and sister for ten months, until his spiritual director suggested that he considered the vocation of parenthood. Nine children were eventually born to the couple, but four of them died while very young. Eventually, Louis sold his business to his nephew and devoted his time and energy to Zélie's lace making business, which thrived under his skill as a salesman and manager. After nineteen years of marriage, Zélie Martin died in 1877 of breast cancer at age 45, leaving her grieving husband to raise their five daughters: Marie, Pauline, Leonie, Celine and Thérèse, who ranged in ages from 17 to 4. Louis sold Zélie's lace-making business and moved to Lisieux with his daughters to be near his brother-in-law, Isidore Guérin, and Isidore's wife.

After three daughters entered the Discalced Carmelite Order and one the Visitation Order, it was Celine who stayed home to care for her father, who had suffered a paralytic stroke in 1887, temporarily affecting his left side. He recovered completely, but soon began to suffer from arteriosclerosis and to experience delusions, amnesia and severe lapses of memory. He even began, on a number of occasions,

to wander away from home. Monsieur Martin's Calvary had begun. Because the family feared for his safety, Louis Martin was placed in a mental hospital. There he was admired by the nursing sisters not only because of his daughters in religion, but also because he never complained but accepted every inconvenience as being the Will of God. He once admitted, "I know why God has given me this trial. I have never had a humiliation in my life. I needed one."

A year after the first stroke, he suffered another that paralyzed his legs. Since he was no longer able to wander away, he was permitted to return home. With the help of a married couple who were employed as servants, Celine was able to devote all her attention to her pious father – a loving service she rendered him for the next three years. On days when he was able, he enjoyed visiting his daughters in religion, who were so worried about his condition.

After a stroke that paralyzed his left arm, Louis suffered a series of heart attacks that weakened him and heralded the approach of death. With his body paralyzed, his speech impaired and his faculties reduced to helplessness, he begged the good Lord to take him home. After the last heart attack he received the Last Sacraments of the Church and died quietly on July 27, 1894. He was seventy-one years old. He had been in a pitiful state of illness for seven years.