

May 23, 2015

Dear little Thérèse,

Do you remember some 80 years ago when you suddenly got up and began to walk? You had just been blessed by Bishop Sinette, first bishop of Winnipeg. You were then a little over two years old. At birth, Mom had been told that you were never to walk due to a weak back. Given that Mom already had her hands full with two other toddlers, Grandma Labelle offered to take you home with her. Since that miraculous moment you haven't stopped walking, running and dreaming.

When you were barely five years old, you asked Mom why the Aunts and Uncles couldn't build their houses in the field next to us. This would allow us to live happily together and form our own village. Interestingly, you already had a vision of assembling people so they might enjoy the necessities of life and be happy together. I must say your parents were then living off a shoe-string budget!

As an adolescent your dreams became more personal. One evening while sitting on the steps outside with Mom, enjoying the calm of night and the beauty of the Northern Lights, you suddenly declared: "When I'm older I want to play the piano, sing and travel around the world to bring joy to all peoples!"

The years went by, filled with happy memories of farm work, love, faith in God, prayer and daily examples of your kind and devoted parents, and lastly, the harsh reality of leaving home to pursue your high school education. During the next five years as a boarder



your dream of spreading joy took a deeper meaning. Now you wanted to reach out to young people, not only with music and songs, but also with a degree in teaching and a phd in psychology - all the while keeping to yourself - your most secret desire - to become a priest.

When it became clear that priesthood was not for women, you were disappointed, but not distraught. During a high school retreat God called you to be a Grey Nun. So, at age 20, you cheerfully left, but not without a heavy heart, the comfort of home, the parents you loved dearly, your boy friend and above all your siblings.

Strengthened by the ever presence of God you never turned back. Your dreams might not have materialized as initially dreamed - but possibly more according to God's plan for you... Your dream of reaching out to the youth has been realized during your 20 odd years of teaching, often with marginalized and unwanted students to whom you brought meaning and understanding. Your dream of travelling has been partially realized by animating retreats and organizing a National Pro-life Program which led you to spread the Good News in the ten Canadian provinces and part of Nunavut. As for the priesthood, I would like to think that you have experienced the joy and consolation of priesthood during the twelve years you consecrated whole-heartedly in parish-pastoral work.

My dear little Therese, I feel your life has been lived to the fullest, so today I invite you to continue your journey in peace and gratitude for the past, and for the hours, the days and even the years the Lord might still have in store for you.

With love, your aging self,

Therese Becken S.C.M.