

## Her Prayer to the Trinity (Written 21 Nov 1904)

O my God, Trinity whom I adore; help me to forget myself entirely that I may be established in You as still and as peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity. May nothing trouble my peace or make me leave You, O my Unchanging One, but may each minute carry me further into the depths of Your mystery. Give peace to my soul; make it Your heaven, Your beloved dwelling and Your resting place. May I never leave You there alone but be wholly present, my faith wholly vigilant, wholly adoring, and wholly surrendered to Your creative Action.

O my beloved Christ, crucified by love, I wish to be a bride for Your Heart; I wish to cover You with glory; I wish to love You...even unto death! But I feel my weakness, and I ask You to “clothe me with Yourself,” to identify my soul with all the movements of Your Soul, to overwhelm me, to possess me, to substitute yourself for me that my life may be but a radiance of Your Life. Come into me as Adorer, as Restorer, as Savior.

O Eternal Word, Word of my God, I want to spend my life in listening to You, to become wholly teachable that I may learn all from You. Then, through all nights, all voids, all helplessness, I want to gaze on You always and remain in Your great light. O my beloved Star, so fascinate me that I may not withdraw from Your radiance.

O consuming Fire, Spirit of Love, “come upon me,” and create in my soul a kind of incarnation of the Word: that I may be another humanity for Him in which He can renew His whole Mystery. And You, O Father, bend lovingly over Your poor little creature; “cover her with Your shadow,” seeing in her only the “Beloved in whom You are well pleased.”

O my Three, my All, my Beatitude, infinite Solitude, Immensity in which I lose myself, I surrender myself to You as Your prey. Bury Yourself in me that I may bury myself in You until I depart to contemplate in Your light the abyss of Your greatness. Amen.

### Socials with the Saints

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Sources include: Discalced Carmelites, Fr. Tom Dowd, and Dr. Anthony Lillies



## St. Elizabeth of the Trinity

**Born:** 18 Jul 1880 at Bourges, France

**Died:** 9 Nov 1906 in Dijon, France

**Feast Day:** November 8

**Canonized:** 16 Oct 2016 by Pope Francis

**Patronage:** of sick people, against illness, against death of parents

In a country still feeling the effects of the Franco-Prussian war, a daughter was born in a military camp to former POW & decorated Captain Joseph Catez and his wife Marie. They named her Élisabeth, and she was baptized in the camp. The family moved to Dijon, and welcomed another daughter, Marguerite.

Shortly thereafter, Captain Catez was diagnosed with cardiac issues. Marie wrote to him, “Élisabeth is very conscious of your illness: she not only prays but she is teaching her doll how to pray.” Tragically, in 1887, he passed away suddenly in little Élisabeth’s arms. She was seven.

Marie looked at her new, widowed life with trust in God. She’d experienced a tremendous conversion prior to marrying Catez, and raised their girls with the deep devotion that had influenced her husband’s faith prior to his passing. The family moved to a home a few blocks from the parish church.

Élisabeth demonstrated award-winning talent as a pianist. *Sabeth*, as she’d been nicknamed, was lively, chatty, and prone to stubbornness and angry fits which had grown worse after her father’s death. She was called ‘the little captain’—except by her sister who called her ‘a little devil.’ Out of love for her family, Sabeth came to realize that she needed to grow in self-discipline.

She found help in prayer and the relationship with God that her parents had passed on to their daughters. In a particular way, the Mass and receiving the sacraments became her spiritual nourishment. Speaking about her First Communion, she wrote: “Cherished Mama, if I love God a little, it is you who directed the heart of your little one toward Him. You prepared me so well for that first encounter, that big day on which we gave ourselves to each other completely!” With the help of a priest confessor, Élisabeth unlearned her scruples, which had developed due to the continuing influence of Jansenism at that time. She began to see God as loving and merciful. She

visited the sick, and taught catechism to disadvantaged children. Those children's descendants later built a school which they named after her.

She once wrote to a friend, "I am going to give you my 'secret': think about this God who dwells within you, whose temple you are; St. Paul speaks in this way, and we can believe it."

Across the street from the family home was a Carmelite convent. Élisabeth read an early copy of St. Thérèse of Lisieux's autobiography, *Story of A Soul*, and became determined to enter Carmel. She revealed this desire to her mother. However, for Marie, the thought of losing the close contact she had with her daughter was too much to bear. Élisabeth saw this as a challenge that would prepare her heart for religious life. She trusted God, and was patient; promising her mother that she would wait until she turned twenty-one. To the disappointment of all, she rejected many suitors, including a 'perfect match' for marriage with a young military officer.

In August of 1901, Élisabeth knelt before her father's picture and asked for his final blessing. Then, accompanied by her mother and sister, she walked to the convent across the street, where she would remain until her death. Her superior gave her the religious name Élisabeth of the Trinity.

She spent her days deepening her relationship with the Holy Trinity, and sharing the grace of this relationship with others by correspondence. She famously said, "It seems to me that I have found my heaven on earth since Heaven is God and God is [in] my soul. The day I understood that, everything became clear to me. I would like to whisper this secret to those I love so they too might always cling to God through everything."

In her letters, Sister Élisabeth encouraged others to become familiar with Scripture, by expressing her great love for it. In the Letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes three times about our existing "for the praise of God's glory." This was a revelation for Élisabeth, who believed the phrase was the name God would call her in Heaven. She signed her letters, *Praise of Glory*.

Referring to the Trinity, she reflected, "My only devotional practice is to 'enter within' and lose myself in Those Who are there. I feel God so alive in my soul that I have only to recollect myself in order to find Him within me."

As her mystic connection with God increased, the convent prioress asked Sister Élisabeth to maintain a notebook. There, she developed her theology.

About six months after taking final vows, in 1903, she began to experience signs of chronic illness: exhaustion, stomach cramps, strong migraines, and weight loss. After night prayer, she was so tired that she would crawl up the stairs. She was suffering from Addison's Disease, a rare condition in which the adrenal glands cease to function.

She wrote, "I cannot say that my heart has not suffered, but if my gaze remains always fixed on Him, my luminous Star, oh then all the rest disappears and I lose myself in Him like a drop of water in the Ocean!" She prayed that, through her suffering, her soul would be "distilled, drop by drop" for the good of the Church.

Her final nine months were filled with suffering. Despite this, in her last week of life, she made long and frequent visits with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. On October 31, 1906, she received Last Rites. On All Saints Day, she made her final confession and received Eucharist for the last time.

Even in such condition, she dictated letters. Here is an excerpt from one:

*Before going to Heaven your Elizabeth wants to tell you once more of her deep affection for you and her plan to help you, day by day until you join her in Heaven... I want you to walk... in the valiant faith that keeps the will always faithful. You will have battles to fight, my little brother, you will encounter obstacles on the path of life, but do not be discouraged, call me. Yes, call your little sister; in this way, you will increase her happiness in Heaven; she will be so glad to help you triumph, to remain worthy of God... I no longer have the strength to dictate these last wishes of a very loving sister. When I am close to God, recollect yourself in prayer and we will meet each other in an even deeper way...*

Her last audible words were, "I am going to Light, to Love, to Life."

As she was dying, the French government was attempting to close down and confiscate the monastery. The Church was suffering from scandals, and the political climate was no better. However, her monastery not only survived, but thrived. Further, despite France's modern secularism, Dijon has remained a wellspring of thriving faith. That is surely thanks, at least in part, to the seeds scattered by Élisabeth's over two-hundred letters.

She is quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; one of seven women and the only twentieth century mystic to be quoted in it. Pope John Paul II credited Élisabeth as a great influence on his personal faith and theology.