

*A brief history of  
St. Theresa of Lisieux  
Catholic Church  
Stansted Mountfitchet*



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## *St. Theresa of Lisieux - The little Flower*

Saint Theresa of Lisieux was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1873. She felt an early call to religious life, and overcoming various obstacles, in 1888 at the early age of 15, she became a nun and joined two of her elder sisters in the cloistered Carmelite community of Lisieux, Normandy. For nine years she lived the ordinary life of a Carmelite Sister combining prayer, work and recreation.

The simplicity and profundity of Theresa's approach to God and the things of the spirit, which she called her *little way*, has influenced millions of people all over the world.

She loved flowers and saw herself as the "little flower of Jesus," who gave glory to God by just being her beautiful little self among all the other flowers in God's garden. Because of this beautiful analogy, the title "little flower" remained with St. Theresa.

Theresa Martin died of tuberculosis on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1897 at just 24 years of age. Her last words, to the assembled sisters, before she died were an expression of her Faith and Love of God; she looked at her crucifix and said "I am not dying, I am entering eternal life".

Her feast day is celebrated on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

*"What matters in life is not great deeds,  
but great love."*

**St. Theresa of Lisieux**

## *Introduction*

The first Catholic Church to be built in this area in recent times was St. Anthony's in Henham erected in 1933 on land donated by the De Steene family. In 1958 an additional site was purchased at Millside, Stansted. The same year the Mill House at Millside was bought and turned into a House-Church. Eventually these buildings became inadequate for a growing parish community and changing needs.

The existing parish complex at high Lane consisting of the Church, the Parish Centre and the Presbytery was made possible because of the generosity of the Braekman family who donated the land for the development.

The church is in the style of an Essex barn and the architect is a local man, Jim Boutwood. The interior of the church is modern and the liturgical layout and artwork was created by the artist Stephen Foster.

## *Central Themes*



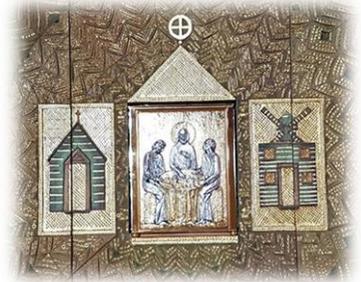
The central mystery of the Christian faith, the Resurrection, is depicted in the Risen Christ woodcarving in the Sanctuary behind the altar. On either side of the Sanctuary the focus is on the two central sacraments of the Church, namely Baptism and the Eucharist.



On the left, behind the baptismal font, is the scene of Christ's being baptised by his cousin John the Baptist in the river Jordan.  
**Matthew 3: 13-17**

On the right of the altar is the Tabernacle in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. The door of the Tabernacle shows Christ breaking bread with two of his disciples near Emmaus.

**Luke 24:13-35**



The artist, Stephen Foster, depicted the replica of St. Anthony's Church in Henham on the left of the Tabernacle and the House-Church at Millside, Stansted on the right, showing Stansted windmill in the background.



The wooden statue of Jesus with arms outstretched in the window to the right of the altar was given to Fr. John Garrett many years ago whilst in the parish of Shoesburyness by an elderly parishioner. The story goes that her fiancé who was to die later in the First World War found the statue in the mud of the Somme area. Since she never married nor had children, she entrusted Fr. John to care for the statue.



The Stations of the Cross are along the rear wall of the church.

Near the Sacristy door is a statue of St. Anthony and on the opposite side of the church is a statue of Mary, the Mother of Christ.

