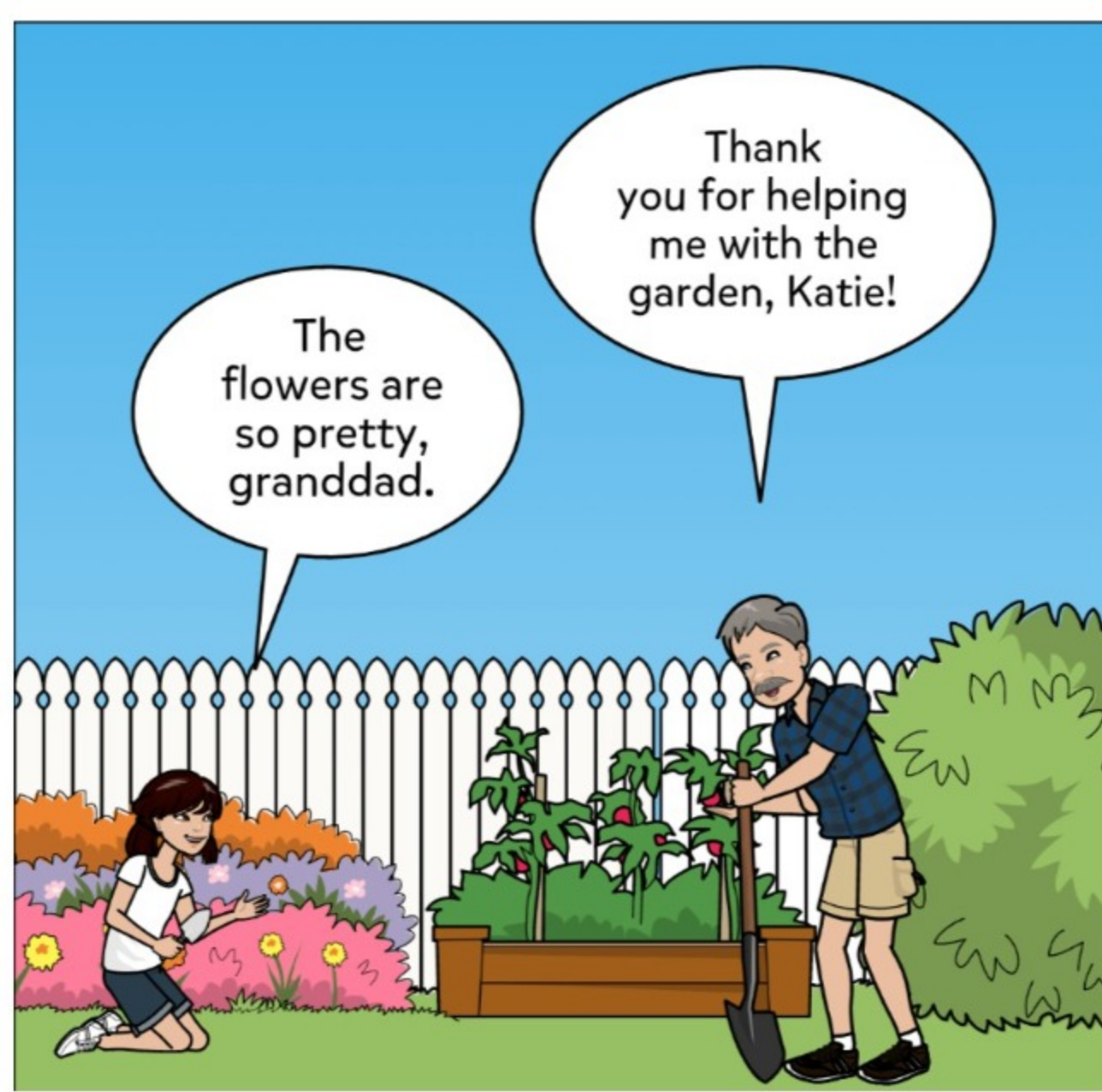


Saint Therese of Lisieux

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Hmm.... yes, to be recognized by the church as a saint requires very high standards and proof of miracles. However, God calls each of us to be saints in our everyday lives. That is really special too!



Let me tell you the story of Saint Therese who showed us how this is possible. She called it her "Little Way".



Therese was born in France in 1873. From a very early age Therese wanted to become a nun. When she was nine, and again at ten, she begged the pope to allow her to enter the convent. But she was too young.



Determined to become a nun, Therese held fast to her wishes. Then finally, when she was fifteen years old, Therese was able to join the convent.

Welcome Therese! But, you still need to prove yourself worthy of taking the holy vows of poverty, chastity and obedience!



Therese suffered much during her life, but she hid it. She believed if she endured all her mental sufferings and physical pains, it would bring her closer to God. So she focused on the happiness she found in prayer, by loving God, and sharing that love in service to others.

We have strict rules here. Follow them and you will do well.



After six years as a Carmelite nun, Therese realized how small her efforts were towards becoming the person she wanted to be. Then in a notebook, she found a bible passage from Proverbs that gave her hope and joy. "Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me".



Therese realized that to become holy, she did not need to accomplish heroic acts. God loves the "little ones"; those who are innocent like children. Therefore we could show great love through secret, "little" deeds. Every little sacrifice, good word or action counts. But we also need to be humble and accept that we are allowing God's grace to work through us. She called this her "little way".

Therese's health grew worse. She became ill with tuberculosis and suffered terribly. But Therese remained faithful to God even while in extreme pain. She died while only twenty-four years old. Therese left behind letters, poems, religious plays, written prayers and conversations with her sister nuns which have inspired many people to this day.

Therese of Lisieux is also known as Therese of the Child Jesus, and Therese of the Little Flower. She was declared a saint only twenty-eight years after her death. Her feast day is October 1, and she is the patron saint of florists, illness and missions.

