

Chapter 8
The Sacrament of Matrimony
[St. Louis and St. Zélie by Carol Cole]

In this assignment, students will engage with the lives of important saints who serve as examples of married life in the Church and intercessors for married couples. They will learn more about these saints as well as the virtues and graces that the Church sees in the lives of holy married couples. Ideally, they will also take inspiration for their future lives and vocations. Share the following background information on St. Louis and St. Zélie in your own words.

Before they met, Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin both wanted to enter religious life. Louis was not accepted to a monastery because he lacked an education in Latin, and Zélie was turned away from a convent because of her health issues. After Zélie was denied entry to the convent, she began to ask God for lots of children who she could give back to him in gratitude. The couple met when he was thirty-five and she was twenty-seven, and were married three months later in Alençon, France. Louis and Zélie had nine children, five of whom survived to adulthood, and all five of whom became nuns – four of whom were nuns in the same convent, the Carmel in Lisieux. In 2015, Zélie and Louis Martin were canonized saints by Pope Francis.

Pass out the worksheet to each student and tell them they should choose one of the three options to prepare for a presentation in class. (You may also offer the option of the students videotaping their presentation and turning it into you in a platform you can access).

Presentation Options

Choose and prepare a three- to five-minute spoken presentation from one these three options.

1. Holiness in the Everyday

Focus a short presentation on how *St. Louis and St. Zélie* couple became saints not through martyrdom, but through ordinary family life and share how a person today might do the same.

2. Letters of Love and Faith

Research and read some of the extensive collection of surviving letters written between Louis, Zélie, and their children and share three takeaways about marriage you learned from the reading.

3. Raising a Doctor of the Church

Explore the roles of *St. Louis and St. Zélie* as parents, specifically focusing on how they raised St. Thérèse of Lisieux.