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Reflection

Saint Therese of Lisieux is a strong and powerful saint, and she also has a deep connection with her family. I was blessed to be able to visit The Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak with my family. I was invited to attend Mass through my sister's scout troop, American Heritage Girls. When I arrived at the Shrine, my family and I were prompted to stand in line to get into the main church. I was astonished by the sheer amount of people walking into the church. I had little prior knowledge of Saint Therese, but by looking around the shrine I was able to learn about her life. Once we entered the main church, I was awestruck by the detailed simplicity of the interior. I felt a connection to Saint Therese because her Shrine showed how she lived during her earthly life. During the crowded Mass when I heard believers of St. Therese singing hymns written in her honor, I felt inspired by the community of Catholics. After Mass, I was able to venerate the relics of Saint Therese with my family. I was in line behind my sister, and we talked about St. Therese's life. My sister is only nine years old, but her knowledge of this saint was so profound, and it inspired me to learn more about her. After being at this Mass and experiencing the power of family and St. Therese, I feel a deeper connection to her gentle nature and strong faith.

An act of penance that I completed for the Jubilee was to attend the Michigan March for Life in Lansing. My pro-life journey started after I learned more about this issue and continues to grow as I watch my aunt adopt a baby girl. Growing up, I watched my family sell pro-life chocolate bars and Christmas cards. My great-grandmother was involved in the Right to Life movement in the 70s, and I am glad to see that her work still has an impact today. I went with a group of about forty students from Saint Catherine of Siena Academy. A few girls from my school were tasked with carrying the banner at the front of the march, which meant my school was at the beginning of the march. I did not expect many people to be there, but as I looked behind me at different points during the march, I was inspired by the amount of people. We marched through the streets near the capitol building, and the amount of people never seemed to end. I saw both young and old people, showing me that I was not alone in my pro-life beliefs. On the ride home, I reflected on what I saw during the march. I realized that even though the pro-life movement is controversial, it is also stronger than ever and the pro-life generation is making a huge effort to abolish abortion.

Pilgrimage Site:

I would visit the Sagrada Família in Barcelona, Spain. I would visit this site because I feel a deep connection to the Holy Family, and the architecture inspires me. It reminds me of the true humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ. I also adore how this basilica is still being built,

because it reminds me that the journey of faith is not linear, and that it will take time to find a strong relationship with God. The Sagrada Familia is a reminder for me that the Holy Family is always with me to support me in my journey of faith.

