

I want to share with you a little of the fire that has set me aflame

From the Letters of St. Teresa of the Andes

I want God to grant you the grace of someday becoming a Carmelite ... *(Letter 101)*

I want you to know how happy I am to belong to God alone, and I will tell you a secret: I see God working marvelously in your soul to draw you to Himself ... and so, my sister, be courageous, because you are preparing yourself for the rest of your life. *(Letter 159)*

What I feel is insatiable hunger and thirst that souls may turn to God and seek Him not out of fear, but with unbounded trust in His Divine Love. *(Letter 104)*

How I would love to show you the lovely, infinite horizon beyond creation that I experience and contemplate ... God reveals and makes himself known to souls that really seek to know and love Him ... *(Letter 107)*

When a soul gives herself over to Him, Jesus does it all ... *(Letter 104)*



Illumined by grace from on high, I understood that the world was too small for my immortal soul; and that only with the infinite could my desires be satisfied, because the world and all that is in it is limited, whereas, by belonging to God, my soul would never tire of loving and contemplating Him, because in Him the horizons are infinite. *(Letter 73)*

... only in God has my heart found its rest. With God, my soul found itself fully satisfied, so that I desire nothing in this world but to belong to Him completely. *(Letter 73)*

*As He loves me,
God is choosing
everything right for me.* *(Letter 45)*

Is there anything greater on earth than the Eternal, Immutable, All-powerful God searching out a soul on earth to make her His bride and seeking a human heart to join to His own divine Heart, and in love achieving the most complete fusion? Think of the greatest love on earth, and what is it in comparison with the love of an infinite God? ...

... I used to believe it was impossible ever to fall in love with a God Who is unseen; but I can affirm that He completely makes up for that sacrifice ... if you knew Him enough, you would love Him. If you were with Him for just one hour, you would know just what heaven on earth is. *(Letter 40)*

Vocation is the greatest favor that God can give to a creature. *(Letter 82)*

I read the lives of Therese and Elizabeth of the Trinity. That is how I got to know that Carmel is a little bit of heaven and that the Lord was calling me to that holy mountain. From that time on, I never doubted that was my vocation. *(Letter 14)*

... in my heart, I feel an attraction for Carmel. I feel a love for solitude, silence, detachment from everything worldly and above all, for prayer. *(Letter 45)*

Carmelite. What word is so filled with beautiful meaning: crucified victim, pure host, lamb who takes away the sins of the world! How great is the mission opening up before me! *(Letter 88)*

I see that my vocation is very great: to save souls, to give workers to Christ's vineyard ... as one betrothed to Him I must thirst for souls and offer my Espoused the Blood He shed for each of them. And how can we win these souls? Prayer, mortification and suffering. *(Letter 8)*

A Carmelite is a sister to priests ... she sacrifices herself for priests; and that is what moved me to become a Carmelite. *(Letters 63, 36)*

The life of prayer and sacrifice I long to embrace contains for me my whole ideal of happiness in this life and will assure me of happiness for all eternity. *(Letter 73)*

What enchants me about the Carmelite life is that a Carmelite sacrifices herself in silence, without seeing the fruits of her prayer and sacrifices ... the family life and the simplicity of Carmelite customs, as well as the joy that ever reigns in a Carmelite's heart, please me very much. *(Letter 45)*

God wants me to be a Carmelite. My life will be one of heaven. I will live only for God, in God and unto God ... my occupation will be to pray for the world and to save souls through prayer. *(Letter 82)*

If He has already given me the courage to sacrifice everything for love of Him, I must not fail to be generous. *(Letter 81)*

I yearn to become a Carmelite and perform penances to show Him my love. *(Letter 66)*

I have chosen the Carmelite life because I see that, in choosing it, I will find the Cross; and I would travel through the whole world with God's grace in search of it and to possess it, because on the Cross is Jesus Christ. *(Letter 58)*

Our Lord reserved nothing for Himself when He loved me from the wood of His Cross. He even left His heaven. His divinity was eclipsed and now should I give myself by halves?

(Letter 81)

I have given myself over to Him ... I promised myself to Him. It is impossible to say how much I love Him. My mind is filled with Him alone. He is my ideal, an infinite ideal. I long for the day when I can go to Carmel to devote myself to Him alone, to abase myself before Him and so live His life alone. To love and suffer that I may save souls. Yes, I thirst for souls because I know that is what my Jesus longs for more than anything else.

(Letter 8)

When I saw my dear little Carmel, what an impact it made on me!

... Its poverty won me over ... I felt such a great happiness, and it grew stronger as I spoke with Mother Prioress. I learned to have an even greater appreciation of what it means to be a Carmelite when I spoke with her. With great simplicity, she explained the Carmelite life to me and in the depths of my heart, I felt that God wanted me there. I knew God's will clearly at last, I had discovered my port, my resting place, my heaven on earth, and a most celestial peace filled my soul.

(Letters 51, 56)

I am so unworthy of this place that I am confused. So, even if it is the lowest place, and even if I am to be everyone's handmaid, I prefer it to living with the comforts of the world, because I believe in Carmel I will find the greatest happiness in this life.

(Letter 37)

*As soon as we enter the doister,
Jesus comes out to meet us,
but He comes with His Cross
and gives it to us
as an offering of love...*

... His bride is always to live in the palace of Calvary ... what makes me love my vocation even more is that I see that a Carmelite's life is like that of the Most Holy Virgin. Besides, our Order belongs to her.

(Letter 138)

What can I say to you about the happiness I feel at having given myself to Him? I have begun the task of love and praise that we shall have for all eternity. Here in Carmel, God alone exists. We live immersed in Him, in His divine atmosphere of peace and love.

(Letter 136)

By following God's voice, I found the greatest sacrifice of my life. As I understand it better, my vocation is dearer to me.

(Letter 122)

I am really touched by the simplicity and love here among my Sisters ... there is no shyness with Reverend Mother. In every way, we feel as trusting with her as with our own Mothers.

(Letter 108)

*What a joy it is
to be a Carmelite ...
When Jesus is loved,
everything is joy!*

(Letters 120, 104)

Behind the grilles of my Carmel, I find infinite horizons, divine horizons that the world cannot understand.

(Letter 86)

Everything in Carmel is silence, except during the hours of recreation.

(Letter 51)

*A Carmelite's vocation is
completely founded on love ...*

(Letter 141)

A Carmelite has her own cell. It is there she enters as if into a temple to sacrifice herself. In the cell is a cross with no corpus on it. That is her cross on which she is to die.

(Letter 51)

I would not trade my cell for the dwelling of the richest people on earth ... when I consider it, I cannot but feel happy that I have renounced everything superfluous in order to possess God.

(Letters 94, 147)

The poverty of a Carmelite is very great. She can possess nothing, which means that her whole capacity for possessing things is filled with God alone.

(Letter 58)

*My time is not my own.
I gave away everything I had.
Even my own will!*

(Letter 107)

When I was at home I had to go against my own will ... do not think it was not hard for me! ... to be enchained to God is to live freely, to live with love. My sister, this brings us unfathomable peace, for in this way we are always fulfilling the will of the One Who is our only love.

(Letter 159)

We need mortification of the flesh in order to live in continuous prayer; otherwise, if we are taken up with our comfort, we will fail to take care of our soul.

(Letter 101)

How happy I am when I can tell Him at the end of the day that I have denied myself in everything ... how small the sacrifice, yet how eternal the joy.

(Letters 122, 78)

A Carmelite's sacrifice is hidden and unknown. Thus it brings great merit.

(Letter 51)

*What a heavenly life ...
a life of the Bride
of the Divine Crucified One!*

(Letter 90)

How beautiful our vocation is, my dear sister! ... ask Him to bring you very soon ...

Come then, and lose yourself in His divine arms. Look at Him ... if there is love in your soul, nothing will keep you back. Jesus awaits, wants to possess us completely, wants to find His rest and consolation in you ...

I am telling you all this to prepare you. It is essential that you fall deeply in love with Him. But do not be filled with fear of the cross a Carmelite must embrace. Jesus is there. He considers the strength of His brides, and since He loves us so, He lightens the burden of our cross so that the weight may fall upon His own shoulders ... He is awaiting you, filled with infinite love, and will make you His Bride.

(Letter 130)