



January 27, 2023

Dear Teresian Family:

Once more we have the joy of remembering and celebrating St. Henry de Ossó's passage to the true Life that he so longed for. We celebrate and thank God for his great gift that, today, extends to so many countries in America, Africa and Europe!

This will be the last time that I will address you all as General Coordinator on this day, January 27, and it will also be the last time that this feast will be celebrated at our General House in Rome. As you know, at the last General Chapter, the decision was made to sell the Generalate, and subsequently to transfer the seat of the General Government to Zaragoza (Spain).

That is why I wanted my words today to remember something of what the *Eternal City* offered the Solitary One during his summer stays, the feelings that awakened in him during his walks through this city or his favorite places, such as the famous Colosseum, where he sought silence, stillness, and inspiration as he himself tells us:

*" The evenings at the Colosseum are very pleasant. **At sunset, the rays and sounds! So quiet! What sunshine...**"¹ ... "I would tell you more about the feasts and sermons, **especially about the visits in the afternoon, at sunset, to the Colosseum, where I am writing, on the days that I can, the Notes on Christian Pedagogy for the Sisters who are teachers, ... I trust that something beautiful will come out of this; I am satisfied, because they will be of some benefit to souls. Just as the earth here boils with the blood of the martyrs that was the seed of many Christians, so these pages, inflamed with the fire of the Christian spirit, will produce a generation of martyrs of commitment, or perhaps of blood, for Jesus Christ. I have already sent some pages. Now I have many more.**"²*

How many times Henry de Ossó would walk its streets, contemplate its buildings, the history imprinted in art, the mark left by the passage of time and civilizations! How many moments would he spend in ecstasy before the work of Bernini, that image of Teresa of Jesus and the angel with his arrow pointing to the heart of the saint, which he would visit in the church of Santa María de la Victoria.

Stillness, beauty, silence, the memory of those first martyrs, ... And of course, contemplation and union with Jesus in a time of great pain and disappointment due to the course of events of the lawsuit, the difficult dialogues or the endless negotiations at the Vatican, the news that perplexed him and made him feel helpless in his struggle to find truth and justice in the very heart of the Church.

With this mixture of feelings and moods, we imagine him, on those August afternoons in Rome, writing, among other works, *A Month in the School of the Heart of Jesus*, where he shares his conviction and his most intimate experience: the centrality of Jesus Christ in the life of a Christian, of a Teresian:

¹ Letter of September 21, 1894 to Sr. Rosario Elíes

² Letter of August 18, 1894 to Sr. Rosario Elíes, Superior General and her council

To help others know Jesus more and more is the purpose of this little booklet, because this is eternal life, and our only happiness in time and eternity. To show us his real, practical life, a life we can imitate, is the purpose of this humble work; to teach us and move us to do everything for Jesus and with Jesus...³

It is also in this booklet that he lets us know his deepest feelings, the most tender affections that his heart feels in love, like Teresa. Henry not only offers teachings, but also introduces us to his way of talking to God in the critical situation that is wounding his soul:

How I rejoice, Jesus of my heart, when I remember that You are for me Pontiff and Advocate, Father and Protector from this beautiful heaven and from the Tabernacle!... How do I know what is good for me, Lord? ... but I know that You love me, my Heart of Jesus, ... For this reason, I will rest in Your providence and love, not wishing to undermine the designs of your plan for me, but seeking to know, love, and follow them completely, with an obedient spirit. I do not want to accelerate the schedule of your loving plan, but only to see and observe it, so as to do each hour what you desire, because this will be the best for me and for your glory; I know that you love me and that you plan everything for my good. May I, therefore, always do Your sovereign will on earth as it is in heaven. Do with me as You will, because all my good is in pleasing You. Amen.⁴

Every place and every corner of Rome, of Catalonia, of Castile and of many other places in Spain have been witnesses of this path of the Solitary One, the writer, the father, the priest, the man, the friend... and in each one we can find the traces and the inheritance that he has left us. They are not stones or properties, they are not great literary works or speeches. His greatest gift, which I celebrate with all of you today, is his life as a disciple who feels deeply loved by God in good times and in bad, in moments of glory and in adversity, in his past and in his present.

This is our origin, and this was the force that gave birth to a Family with a vocation of universality and itinerancy on the pathways of the Spirit. We are led by the Spirit of God to the land where He leads us, to the people He places along the way, and in the circumstances in which we live!

May the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, help us to listen to the heart of each person and of all peoples, to rediscover that we are brothers and sisters to all, and to overcome the hostility that divides us in our world with love, truth, and justice.

From our General House in Rome I extend my embrace to the entire Teresian Family throughout the world and express my appreciation and gratitude to all the sisters, provinces, and benefactors who at one time collaborated in the construction and preparation of this house.

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³ Prologue to A Month in the School of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

⁴ A Month in the School of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, thirty-third day.

