

## Henry and Teresa, Face to Face *A Word for the 21st Century*

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Before I begin, I want to say that my aim has been to find that word, experience, or message that both Teresa and Henry, looking each other in the eye, could endorse together without a shadow of a doubt. For this reason, and to avoid repetition, at times I will write their names, and at others, I will simply refer to them implicitly.

If I had to summarize in a few words the message of these two great mystics and prophets for this century, I would say that it is a universal invitation.

**We are all invited to the Banquet of the Kingdom<sup>1</sup>**, to the encounter with the mystery of God incarnate in Jesus and in our history, in the specific circumstances of our time and our contexts! The power of the experience of God in their lives becomes for all of us today a living word of hope, trust, and true joy.

The experience of faith led each of them to a wholly unique, mystical knowledge and love of Jesus, of themselves, and of the world, which enabled them to taste, already here on earth, salvation—understood as the experience of what the indestructible dignity of every person, the lordship of God, and the inner freedom to love and serve truly mean: “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and the one whom you have sent, Jesus Christ”<sup>2</sup>.

Teresa and Henry came to know a God who seeks nothing other than to COMMUNICATE, and to deal directly with

his sons and daughters, revealing himself as a PRESENCE that transforms and dwells in all creation, and as an ABSENCE that causes pain, yet expands the human heart’s desire and turns it into a seeker of Truth. Through faith, both bore in their lives the weight of the MYSTERY and, at the same time, discovered their own INTIMACY INHABITED by this very mystery that is God.

Today we give thanks that the experience of Jesus in both of them became so concrete, so essential, so foundational, and so everyday that they desired nothing else but to make known and loved by ALL this “precious pearl,” this “hidden treasure,” which filled their human hearts with meaning, joy, and freedom.

Their word became experience to the point that they could repeat with the apostle: “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched—the Word of life—we proclaim to you.”<sup>3</sup>

Through him, we have been able to understand Christianity as K. Rahner defined it in the last century: “The Christian of the 21st century will either be a mystic or will not be a Christian.” His experience helps us understand that being a mystic is nothing other than BEING A BELIEVER AND BELIEVING IT to the very end, allowing the contemplation of Jesus to awaken in us his passion for God and for the world to which we belong

1 CP 19, 15: “Behold, the Lord invites everyone...”

2 Jn 17:3

3 1 Jn 1:1

sent. As both of them teach us, such a relationship can only be sustained by losing all confidence in ourselves and placing it in God<sup>4</sup>.

In his school, words like faith, trust, prayer, friendship, apostolic zeal, works... become familiar to us, and all of them put each of us back in our proper place, because in this story He takes the initiative and seeks us out tirelessly, while it is up to us to step aside and transcend ourselves—to allow this caterpillar to build the chrysalis where it will die and from which the butterfly's wings will emerge<sup>5</sup>—otherwise, it is impossible for the “conditions” to be met, and for freedoms to unite. Freedom is another “word” we inherit.

Her mysticism always refers to Scripture and draws its nourishment from it. In societies that, like ours, developed mechanisms to reinforce deceptive images of reality, false acknowledgments, that misunderstood “honor” that Teresa of Ávila suffered so much from, the Word read from the depths of their being has revealed to them the deepest truth about themselves, revealed Jesus to them, and the true meaning of the search for one's own lost identity: *“Soul, you have sought yourself in me, and you have sought me in yourself”*<sup>6</sup>.

Their lives and writings show us that their mystical experience is not alien to the ecclesial dimension, which is constitutive of all Christian life. The union with God they experienced brought about in them incorporation into the Paschal mystery of Jesus and made them part of the mystical body. The Church's ills were their ills,

The apostolic poverty and institutional sin of priests and scholars—the Church leaders of their time—filled their hearts with sorrow. They experienced their integration into the ecclesial body; their mystical experience opened them to the care and attention of others and endowed them with an evangelizing dynamism that lies at the root of much of their effort to communicate their own experience, and of many of their innovative and creative decisions in favor of a renewed Church.

For Teresa and Henry, believing in Jesus meant following him. Listening, obedience, and discipleship were united in their contemplation of God and of events. The mystical experience consisted in identifying with Jesus, in uniting their wills, and in expressing their love for God and neighbor as the two faces of the one true love. From the moment God becomes present in the face and life of the Incarnate Word, the faith that recognizes him in that life cannot do without the ethical dimension and the social commitment to all of creation. They allowed love and faith to work beyond what is reasonable and sensible<sup>7</sup>. Their “madness of love” drove them to dream and to realize their dreams, because they understood that *this was the purpose of the spiritual marriage: so that works might be born*<sup>8</sup>. The school of prayer centered on Teresa of Jesus, the reform of the Carmelites, and the Teresian works of the nineteenth century would be the ripe fruit of that zeal for the interests of Jesus that burned in their hearts.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that the mystical experience is clothed in

4 V 8, 12

5 VM 2,2

6 Poems: Find Yourself in Me

7 Let Us Organize, 2, 6: *“Moreover, those who are to be the leaders of this Catholic organization should not be people of great intellect, for such individuals, relying solely—or too much—on human prudence, rarely do anything that serves the divine honor”*

8 VII M 4, 6

forms and content appropriate to each time and circumstance. We cannot fail to experience God in relation to the characteristics and challenges of each era and culture in which we live. Our attitude toward the events that define a historical moment is part of our attitude toward God and his unfathomable mystery. We cannot live our relationship with Him if we do not allow God to reveal himself to us in those circumstances, and in the way He chooses to do so. We recognize this in Teresa of Ávila, in Henry de Ossó, and in so many mystics of all times.

If we wish to hear the WORD they have for us today, we must discover, within that universal invitation to participate in the Banquet of the Kingdom, our vocation as mystics and prophets in the 21st century<sup>9</sup>, even if we must gradually develop a new experience of the mysticism to which this century leads us, with its lights and shadows, challenges, crises, and opportunities. The tragedy of poverty, the thirst for spirituality, the obscuring of God and the lack of ethics, abuses of power, violence in any of its forms, and the absence of dialogue to seek solutions to conflicts, the myriad forms of modern slavery, the globalization of indifference, and the economic crisis faced by many families and entire communities, etc., will lead us to develop a “mysticism of the night” or a “mysticism with open eyes,” a mysticism of the street, of encounter, of the senses, or of solidarity; yet no event will prevent us today from embracing our vocation as mystics and seeking

together the ways to be so that we may continue to be Christians.

Based on these preliminary points, I believe we can affirm that the words we receive today from our teachers will undoubtedly be words of HOPE because they uphold a way of seeing and being in the world that generates life. Words that strengthen TRUST because they point to a Presence that empowers us and gives us strength. Words that REJOICE our hearts because they give us wings to fly and create bonds that awaken committed love. Let us pursue them and allow them to enter into dialogue with the reality we live today in the various Teresian contexts.

***Faith, prayer, and zeal for the interests of Jesus: A spirituality that makes us “truly spiritual” in direct contact with the realities of this time, which is OUR TIME***

*“Nothing can compare to the simple, living, effective, and, let us say, chivalrous faith of Teresa of Jesus, which she instills in all her followers...”<sup>10</sup>... “We have seen how Saint Teresa of Jesus organized the armies of the strong and equipped them with spiritual weapons so that they might fight for the house and law of the God of hosts. One of these weapons is faith, and the other, prayer. The faith that conquers the world, the prayer that conquers the world and even God Himself...The two invincible, impregnable castles from which the soul defends itself, wages war, and always emerges victorious against all enemies are love and fear of God; and the soul fears and loves God our*

9 H. Bergson: “When the mystic speaks, there is something deep within most men that imperceptibly echoes him; he reveals a marvelous perspective to us, just as when a brilliant artist produces a work that surpasses us, whose spirit we cannot fully grasp, but which makes us feel the vulgarity of our previous admirations; and if the words of a great mystic find an echo in us, is it not because there is a latent mystic within us who is merely waiting for an opportunity to awaken?”

10 Teresian Magazine. No. 177 June 1887

*“Lord, as one grows in faith and perseveres and advances in prayer”<sup>11</sup>*

We are part of a society facing the consequences of profound social, economic, and religious changes. We all experience, in one way or another, feelings of insecurity and uncertainty—whether in our careers or in our personal lives. We also feel that our best life plans are clouded by serious questions about the future. We are experiencing a vulnerability that leads us to seriously question upon what firm Rock we are building our lives today—and those of our children, students, sisters, and others—and in whom we place our trust, which is the greatest gift we possess and the most fragile.

The fragmentation, the crises of faith—or, better yet, the “crisis of God”—in many of our societies, and the presence throughout the 20th century of massive forms of evil, which find their ultimate manifestation in the terrible injustice reigning in the globalized world—condemning thousands of people to hunger, to unrelenting poverty or to so many forms of modern slavery, as well as the search for an experience that quenches our thirst, transcends, and gives meaning to the everyday and limited nature of our lives, are realities that are crying out to us today, to this Teresian Family of Henry de Ossó.

The word we receive is related to assuming historical responsibility for this precious legacy of the believer’s experience, of the treatment of friendship, of the faith that overcomes the world, and of the prayer that sets hearts ablaze. We must recreate that secret that made Henry and Teresa partners in their great endeavors: absolute trust in God

in difficult times and from the vulnerability we have experienced in our own stories.

The mystical experience we mentioned at the beginning is not a path separate from faith or an alternative to it; it is, in fact, the very deepening of faith itself. It is not an attempt to escape inwardly; it is Christianity itself, and it is defined by the threefold and unique relationship with the Mystery that is realized through faith, hope, and love.

We are not speaking of faith as the mere affirmation of certain truths; we are speaking of welcoming its mysterious presence in the very depths of reality and trusting that we walk the path in Society. Our faith overcomes the world when it recognizes in Jesus the living face of God, and grants him authority so that his Word and his actions may shape our desires, thoughts, and actions, and our entire life may acquire a new dignity.

And we must not forget that Jesus does not come to bring peace of mind, but to set in motion a painful and conflict-ridden process of radical conversion: a “conversion of the gaze” that purifies the pupil of the soul—“the most divine part of man,” as St. Augustine tells us—and a “conversion of the heart,” which St. Bernard identifies as the essence of faith. This conversion of the heart involves the transition from a “double and divided” heart to a unified and simplified heart<sup>12</sup>, which allows us to reorient all our relationships and live not only as children of God but as brothers and sisters responsible for one another.

We said that TO BE A MYSTIC IS TO BE A BELIEVER AND TO BELIEVE IT, but how can we live out our faith today, what

11 RT No. 178, July 1887

12 Mt 5:8: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Mt 5:8), where “heart” designates “the center of the soul [...] the whole person” and purity signifies “the simplicity or uprightness of the whole being”

are the most effective ways to live out our faith as believers, how can we help ourselves believe that we truly are believers?

a) PRAYER

Prayer, together with faith, is the other pillar that overcomes the world and sets hearts ablaze. And it remains a word for all of us today. Because it is the concrete and explicit expression of our attitude of faith in life: “We stand” before Him and with Him because we believe.

*Prayer is the door to enter this castle that each of us is, Teresa teaches us; it is the privileged path to experiencing the divine presence, though not the only one. the free act by which we acknowledge, in the present, God and each one of us... “I do not call it prayer, even if I move my lips a great deal, if one does not realize with whom one is speaking, what one is asking, who is asking, and of whom.”<sup>13</sup> ... We can speak to Him as a father, as a friend, as a lord, as a brother, as a husband... He makes himself accessible to us and speaks to us in words we can understand.<sup>14</sup>*

Teresa asks us to desire and devote ourselves to prayer, not only for our own joy, but to gain the strength to serve. The greatest fruit of this path will be a life like that lived by her Son, because “if one spends much time with Him, as is only right, one must think little of oneself; one’s entire mind is focused on how best to please Him and in what way or through what means one will show the love one has for Him”<sup>(15)</sup>.

Henry speaks of prayer as the food of faith, the foundation of existence, that which makes us powerful before God through intercession. Souls and teachers of prayer, he loved us. Vigilant against “temptations,” let us not

are nothing other than desires and love, and intentions confirmed by deeds.

This relationship of love, this bond of friendship, requires certain conditions. The first? To get in touch with our desires, to experience the thirst for a friendship like this. And that thirst—like desire—can grow or fade. It can be encouraged or stifled... Teresa, as a woman who takes risks in the quest she undertakes, teaches us to make this our own path, one not previously traveled by anyone else. And to do so, we will have to decide how we cultivate desire, what means we employ, what time we dedicate, what methods we seek, and what companions help us better share the joys and labors of this path of prayer.

We need to reclaim meaningful spaces—free from haste, with dedicated moments of solitude and silence—where we can find ourselves alone yet in the company of God’s compassionate yet mysterious Love. In the world we live in, it has become essential to set aside time to encounter ourselves and to listen deeply to what is happening around us. Spaces where our desires are transformed into humble and serving love, as Francis tells us in his letter to the Bishop of Avila at the opening of the Centennial Year: “Today Teresa tells us: Pray more to understand well what is happening around you and thus act better. Prayer overcomes pessimism and generates good initiatives. This is Teresian realism, which demands deeds rather than emotions, and love rather than daydreams—the realism of humble love in the face of restless asceticism! ... When the world is ablaze, we cannot waste time on matters of little importance—

13 1M.1,7

14 Cf. CP 28, 3

15 VII M 4, 6

*May this holy eagerness to set out and walk the paths of our own time—with the Gospel in hand and the Spirit in our hearts—spread to everyone!*

*“It is time to set out!”<sup>16</sup>*

b) “FAITH IS MADE REAL THROUGH LOVE”  
(Gal 5:6)

Mystics have always insisted on the one true orientation of the believer’s experience: *“For the Lord does not want theories, sisters, but deeds... The soul’s benefit does not lie in thinking much, but in loving much... these are the only two things the Lord asks of us: love for His Majesty and for our neighbor—this is what we must work on.”<sup>17</sup>* In other words, faith calls for a shift from a mysticism of closed eyes to a mysticism of open eyes. Authentic spirituality is that which enables us to know love through experience and impels us to share it.

We are living in a civilization born of the market and ruthless competition. We are witnessing phenomenal and explosive material progress, where it is difficult to speak of solidarity and brotherhood without being labeled naive or crazy. However, figures of the 20th century, such as Mother Teresa of Calcutta, for example, seem to have intuited that, since injustice and the suffering of the innocent are what most obscure God’s presence, only genuine love for the victims of this injustice can manifest His presence in the current circumstances of the world.

A more vital relationship with Jesus is not possible without taking steps toward greater levels of truth and commitment to reality. The closer we

to Him, the more clearly we will see our inconsistencies and deviations, what is true or false in our Christianity; what is sinful in our hearts and structures, in our lives and theologies.

The challenge before us is immense: let us go out into the world, let us reach out in solidarity to the poor, and in communion with them, let us enjoy the Banquet and the celebration because we are together and are finally bringing about the miracle of social inclusion so longed for by so many!

And to realize this dream, we need, more than ever, to recover our faith in the power of love and in gestures of fraternal solidarity that restore meaning to human existence and to spirituality itself.

“Progress” does not mean speeding up, competing, deceiving, invading, harming the planet, or consuming simply because we must sell—even if it destroys true human happiness. The development of peoples cannot go against human life, but must be in favor of love, of relationships of peace and cooperation, of family, friends, and possessing the essentials for happiness. It is therefore necessary to restore faith in the commitment to authentic human development wherever we Teresians are, and that means being aware of which values help create a better world and which do not, and to put our responses into practice. And we must do this with **boldness**, another “word” from the Teresian heritage<sup>18</sup>, transmitted by Henry in an almost provocative<sup>19</sup> and wise manner.

<sup>16</sup> Letter to the Bishop of Ávila at the opening of the Centennial Year (October 15, 2014)

<sup>17</sup> VII M 4 and F 5

<sup>18</sup> Letter to Lorenzo 1561, 2: *“for many reasons and causes from which I have been unable to flee, since they are inspirations from God... I will only say that holy and learned people seem to me to oblige me not to be a coward, but to put whatever I can into the work...”*

<sup>19</sup> Teresian Magazine. No. 177 June 1887: *“Faint-hearted or timid hearts, small or constricted hearts, which only want to show themselves hunting lizards, or walking at a toad’s or a stumbling chicken’s pace, along the path to heaven,*

In contrast to many other forms of spirituality, we must champion a spiritual path that links the process of inner reflection with social commitment to the most impoverished and excluded members of our society; a process in which faith and love<sup>20</sup> take center stage over what is “reasonable and sensible”<sup>21</sup>.

c) THE MYSTICISM OF DAILY LIFE,  
another way of experiencing faith

Every person is a being whose heart is inhabited by a Mystery greater than themselves<sup>22</sup>. In the school of Enrique and Teresa, we have learned that any human space—from the private and intimate to the public and social realm of the town square—can become a symbolic place of God’s presence-absence and a paradigm of the encounter with Him. Any moment or historical event is a possibility and a means of experiencing God. Each person experiences God according to their historical and individual situation, K. Ranher reminds us. They need only acknowledge it and unearth it from the rubble of their daily tasks, simply

that “*the Lord is also found in the kitchen*”<sup>23</sup>. We must not flee from this unexpected experience, wherever it chooses to make itself present, silently and without warning, but humbly welcome the traces of God’s absolute and radical self-communication in our own history.

In short, we experience Him when we live out our daily lives with faith: laughing, crying, working, eating, having children, forgiving, accepting illness and death, and so on. And our life can become a continuous, wordless “Thy will be done,” an unceasing “Thy kingdom come”—not spoken or even thought, but lived. This is how we understand the mysticism of everyday life, as a search for God in all things. Therein lies the sober intoxication of the Spirit of which the Church Fathers and our mystics speak.

The experience of God, the center of Christian and Teresian spirituality, can and must therefore be lived in daily life<sup>24</sup>. It does not occur apart from these realities. Its authenticity is at stake in them and keeps us attentive

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*“Go home, and live amid the dust and cobwebs of oblivion, withdrawn to the barracks of ignominy for cowards. My comrades-in-arms must all be true souls, spirited and valiant, like noble knights who defend the highest honor of our King, Christ Jesus, throughout the world.”*

20 MeditCant 3:3: “So here—as I have said—love and faith are at work, and the soul does not wish to take advantage of what reason teaches it, because this union between the Bridegroom and the Bride has taught it other things that reason cannot grasp and has brought them under its feet.”

21 Organic. 2:14: “Let those who are to be the leaders of this Catholic organization, therefore, not be people of great intellect, for such individuals, relying solely—or too much—on human prudence, rarely do anything that serves the divine honor.”

22 H. van Balthasar

23 F 5, 8

24 F. Javier Vitoria, There Is No “Comanche Territory” for God, HOAC Publishing: “Four universal dimensions of human beings—aesthetics, ethics, interiority, and interrelationality—constitute the non-denominational spaces where anyone can enter into the experience of God. This access to the mystery of God can occur when we perceive in the world and in ourselves a ‘plus’ of reality. Sometimes this experience is guided by the admiration and wonder provoked by (or the allure of) the excess of beauty, goodness, truth, and joy in things, which, through analogy or resemblance, reveals to us the ultimate identity of that ‘presence’ as that of God drawing near. At other times, it is through the indignation and suffering provoked by the excess of horror, evil, lies, and suffering produced by the oppressive powers of injustice; these are the “experiences of contrast,” as E. Schillebeeckx called them, which dialectically reveal to us the presence of the God who always seems to hide or be absent in the negativity of reality. But always, whenever this occurs, it happens “in, with, and beneath” everyday human experiences of and in this world. Only in this way can human beings perceive something deeper that shines through reality and reveals the Mystery that resides within it: a God who tirelessly seeks to encounter men and women to make them participants in his Life. What human beings perceive in the experience of God is not God himself, but our world and ourselves in the light of that experience.”

to the signs of the loving presence manifested in so many brothers and sisters, and, in a special way, in the victims of our present history, in the suffering of the poor, and in the obscuring of God that this vision entails.<sup>25</sup>

1. ***The great dignity and beauty of the soul: A faith-filled vision of the human person and the world, and a passion for truth and discernment***

*“The world, my sisters in Jesus Christ, is growing old,... but God our Lord, who does not will the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live; God, who has made the nations healable, has left within them seeds of life and restoration”*<sup>26</sup>

*“...there is no need for us to tire ourselves trying to comprehend the beauty of this castle; for since the difference between it and God is the same as that between the Creator and the creature—since it is a creature—it suffices to say that His Majesty is made in His image so that we may barely grasp the great dignity and beauty of the soul”*<sup>27</sup>

Teresa and Henry’s gaze was not superficial. Teresa is pained by the division of her Church<sup>28</sup>, the wars fought in the name of faith, the wastefulness, and the social pretense of placing people’s honor and dignity where they do not belong...

It is in contemplating his people and his Church—which is *his world*—that God calls his priest to be a *prophet*. Henry, like a new—

Like Jeremiah, he turns his life into a hopeful and active cry: *“What has happened to Spain? What will become of it if it does not convert?”*... Linked to his prophetic vocation is Henry’s priestly prayer, which is a prayer of intercession. He writes, putting into the mouth of Teresa of Jesus, the most fervent supplications on behalf of her homeland, for the needs of Spain are *the concerns of Jesus*: *“O Lord Jesus! My Spouse and my Beloved! Remember that you promised me one day that you would grant me everything I asked of you. To you, then, I come on this day, asking you to keep your word and grant peace to my Spain. My eyes are consumed by unceasing tears... The many tears I have shed for the misfortunes of all my Spanish children have drained all the life-giving spirit from me... as I witness the ruin and tribulation of the children of my people”*<sup>29</sup>. And this way of looking at reality compels her to offer effective and radical responses that address the root causes directly.

From both of them we receive an invitation to live in the present, attuned to the world and aware of all that is happening around us. From them we inherit a way of looking at the individual, society, and the world that is profound, compassionate, prophetic, and contemplative. Through them we come to know a God who is moved by his sons and daughters and placed entirely at their service.

The gaze upon any reality can be transformative when it remains in contact with the Jesus of the Gospel<sup>30</sup> and is capable of

25 G. Gutiérrez, *Beber en su propio pozo*, Sígueme, Salamanca, 1984: *“Starting with Mt 25, it was understood that the encounter with the poor is a necessary step toward the encounter with Christ himself. But, at the same time, this encounter makes our solidarity with the poor deeper and more authentic.”* Consequently, both languages—the prophetic and the contemplative—are required; but they are so to the extent that they intertwine and become one.”

26 *Teresian Magazine* 14, November 1873

27 *IM* 1, 1

28 *CP* 1:3; 3:1...

29 *Teresian Review*, August 1876, 303–304

30 *V* 40, 1-3. The encounter with the Supreme Truth through Scripture reorients the entire way of seeing and understanding life in Teresa of Jesus: *“a new reverence for God... a desire to speak only of very true things... tenderness and joy and*

discovering *the burning embers* beneath the layer of misery and sin that hides them... A way of seeing like this dignifies, affirms, and restores confidence in the face of the uncertainty, insecurity, and vulnerability suffered by individuals and society in our time.

To ensure that this perspective is neither naive nor manipulated, we are called upon to recognize, analyze, and interpret the various current situations<sup>31</sup>. Living in truth and remaining faithful to the reality of what is happening requires accurate information and systematic study in order to discern the signs of the Kingdom, but also the signs of the anti-Kingdom<sup>32</sup> that cry out and outrage many people of good will. Let us refine our perspective through study and dialogue, through solitude and prayerful silence, to DISCERN what we can and must promote, or what must be rejected and fought against.

It is not only necessary to look closely, but also to allow a war to break out within us<sup>33</sup> that does not leave us indifferent inside or surrendered to a sense of powerlessness and overwhelm in the face of the dimensions of evil.

In the face of the centrality and almost exclusive importance of the external, immediate, visible, fast, superficial, and provisional, we embrace the commitment to discern what it means for the Teresian world to recognize the great dignity and beauty of the soul in the face of the realities of slavery and the subjugation of man by man, in all

times, as Pope Francis reminds us: workers, people forced into prostitution, children and adults who are victims of trafficking and exploitation for organ harvesting, or recruited for war and begging, drug production and sale, or covert forms of international adoption; those kidnapped or held captive by terrorist groups...<sup>34</sup>

The Teresian proposal offers a word that restores dignity to every human being, beginning with ourselves. In our Teresian Family, it is quite possible that some will feel drawn to this mission and dedicate their efforts to building bridges with the world of culture that generates thought and scientific and technological advances, with creators and those who disseminate opinions, information, analysis,... to present a vision of the human person illuminated by this experience of God.

Faced with the distorted images—shaped by economic interests—of many groups of people: migrants and foreigners, the excluded and marginalized, women—whether trafficked, abused, or simply homemakers or workers—youth at risk, and abandoned, confused, or exploited adolescents and children, as well as families... we are committed to offering in our educational settings—schools of prayer, MTA groups, religious communities, etc.—the other side that our society, blinded by a desire to hide

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humility..."

31 Letter to Gracián, February 1581: "We must look to the times to come..."

32 Message from Pope Francis, January 1, 2015

33 MC 2:12: "Never let a word pass without stirring up a battle within yourselves, which is easily done if you are in the habit of it"

34 Message from Pope Francis, January 1, 2015

personal or partisan needs, refuses to acknowledge.

Beautiful speeches about the great dignity of the human being, created in the image and likeness of God, are not enough. I humbly believe that the “believer’s vision,” sustained by a relationship with the Jesus of the Gospel, should lead us to desire and seek a real encounter and concrete commitment with each of these individuals who, certainly, will not be able to repay us<sup>35</sup>, as the Gospel of St. Luke emphasizes, but to whom, through small or great actions in favor of their dignity, we will be saying that they are a theological reality for us, that they matter, and that without them our experience of God becomes empty and loses meaning and depth.

We cannot sleep because there is no peace on earth. It is time to awaken and re-evaluate all of reality through our senses. This vision must set our hearts ablaze, and with all our senses placed at the service of the Gospel, it must move our feet and our hands, just as it did for these two mystics who lived in fidelity to reality.<sup>36</sup>

2. **Strong friends of God and of our brothers and sisters: hope in a fraternal world, not one of slaves**<sup>37</sup>

*“Seek out the friendship and company of others who are pursuing the same goal. This is of the utmost importance, even if it means nothing more than helping one another through prayer—how much more so when there is*

*many more benefits! And I do not know why (...) one who truly begins to love God and serve Him should not be allowed to stop associating with certain people in their joys and trials, for those who have prayer have it all.”<sup>38</sup>*

*“No one is born perfect in this world, and it is necessary that those who look upon us with love and care, seeking our good, set us straight and tell us what we must correct in ourselves, what we must strive for in order to be as the Lord desires.”<sup>39</sup> ... The Teresian Brotherhood will be the **bond** uniting so many hearts that seek a common ground from which to draw strength and work with zeal. It will be the **center** of all the noble aspirations of those souls who long to do something for the good of their brothers and sisters...<sup>40</sup>*

Our societies are suffering a severe crisis in the social fabric and in their commitment to regenerate it. The concept of community and family is being undermined or eroded by shadowy political and economic interests. Solutions are offered that do not convince us either, because they propose a way of life that closes itself off and defends itself against others by erecting walls, closing borders, justifying wars and expulsions, or self-serving annexations... An isolated consciousness develops, along with a sense of self-referentiality that generates an economy of exclusion and inequality, with serious social imbalances... And alongside this

35 Lk 14:10

36 Fidelity to Reality, Formative Project, p. 42; PET pp. 92–94: We educate by educating ourselves (opening our eyes,...)

37 Message of Pope Francis for the celebration of the 48th World Day of Peace, January 1, 2015, “Not Slaves, but Brothers”

38 V 7:22

39 Let Us Organize Ourselves 2, 11

40 Teresian Magazine No. 64, January 1878

Solidarity movements are emerging among those who support one another and stand shoulder to shoulder to build “another better and possible world,” proposing fraternal, transformative, and alternative lifestyles.

In the midst of these circumstances, the word FRIENDSHIP that we have inherited from our teachers resonates with authority and takes on new meaning, embodying brotherhood in the face of people’s indifference and subjugation. It is rooted in the firm rock of God’s strong love and friendship. With this word, we emphasize the communal dimension of faith. Having spent many moments alone with the Friend, we have internalized a way of living our faith in society, at a shared table, in friendship.

If this word is a legacy for our entire Teresian Family, we must give it depth and substance, as well as creativity and breadth. I will highlight three aspects that define it:

- ✓ Friendship warms the heart and transforms it into a heart of flesh, which rejoices and suffers, endures and grieves, laughs and expands as it learns to love.
- ✓ Friendship allows us to share intimacy—that which constitutes the essential core of our person, what is important, what goes on inside, what guides and gives meaning to life.
- ✓ Friendship is committed to the bonds it creates; it cares for and accompanies

lives of friends, and is expansive and contagious.

Today I feel that these words are addressed to the Christian communities of the MTA, to the Society of Saint Teresa, to the families and educational communities and sisters of the Society throughout the world, to the associations founded in the spirit of Saint Teresa... This is the approach that should guide us in our efforts to spread the Kingdom. We do not present ourselves as judges, nor as teachers, but as friends among ourselves and of the true Friend<sup>41</sup>.

Brother Henry believes so strongly in the powerful force of this union of hearts that he will do everything possible, in all he undertakes, to bring together hearts that beat with the same impulse<sup>42</sup>.

In this 21st century, many of us need to learn to live in the spirit of FRIENDSHIP to sustain shared dreams, to generate transformative conversations, to strengthen hearts. Let us not hinder one another when it comes to doing good, for we are all necessary. Let us live our relationships with that Teresian tone of friendship, which rescues us from living in deception, which illuminates us in our darkness, and which sustains us in the desire to humanize life. Explicit adherence to this “friendly” way of living the faith will be what gives birth to the true Teresian Family.

But the word FRIENDSHIP must take us beyond our own borders. Its universal scope calls us to

41 CP 4, 7

42 Teresian Magazine, No. 60, September 1877: “*They have an immense advantage (referring to the pilgrimage organized to celebrate the third centenary of Teresa’s death), which is that of bringing together hearts that beat to the same rhythm, that love, feel, and desire the same thing, which is to make Jesus known, to seek his greater glory and divine interests through Teresa of Jesus. And through this contact of generous hearts—for one cannot truly be a devotee of the great Teresa unless one feels the spark of zeal for the greatest honor of Jesus burning in one’s breast—zeal is kindled, the flame of charity takes on immense proportions, and only God can calculate the immense good that may spring forth from it.*”

will lead us to discover that our greatest mission is to BE BROTHERS AND FRIENDS to all. From there, we hear an invitation to move from competition to cooperation, to strengthen the structures of community solidarity, to invent and explore new forms and structures of life in NETWORKS, including the family. Friends also of the earth that welcomes us and committed to caring for it, to ensuring life for future generations, and to defending gender equity as a way to restore human relationships in favor of the future and generativity.

Friendship and encounter are two powerful words that make us co-responsible for building societies founded on ethical, supportive, inclusive, democratic, and pluralistic principles<sup>43</sup>.

We must also delve deeper into the meaning of FRIENDSHIP from an ecclesial perspective. I believe that for a Teresian, this experience entails following Jesus in community, with other brothers and friends in the Lord within the local church, gathered together by the same faith. It means living an active commitment to participate in the Church in its real circumstances, and to seek and create with it new structures that enable life, equality in the diversity of ministries, and the transmission of the faith within the believing community and beyond its boundaries. It is time to walk forward, building a new ecclesiality, in fraternity, truth, and freedom. We wish to die as faithful children after having risked living in fidelity to God, to humanity, and to ourselves.

The presence of other religious traditions in our cities and towns commits us to establishing interreligious dialogue in multi-religious societies to shape a common citizenship and to promote initiatives for justice and peace.

In the light of our teachers, we learn that the secret to making this kind of “friendship” possible is found in the Teresian key of MAKING OURSELVES AVAILABLE to let the Lord act, in this case, so that He may bring about with us the human family, the local church, and Christian communities, just as He dreams them to be. It is up to each of us to identify the barriers—boundaries—that separate us from others—mental, ideological, cultural, social...—beginning with those closest to us, the people with whom I live, work, or study. And then, to let LOVE act.

### 3. **The Teresian Journey: A Path of Freedom**

If there is one word that attracts and enchants human beings, it is the word freedom. It is fitting that our Teresian Family embrace this word as one of the greatest gifts of the Teresian heritage.

Both Henry and Teresa encourage us to live by choosing life, to stand up and for each of us to assume our historical responsibility<sup>44</sup>. The word “freedom” today speaks to us of an immense gift that God bestows upon the person through his divine communication, and of an inescapable mission: to use our power to change the course of history, of the Church, of peoples subjected to the rule of the powerful, and even of ourselves.

43      PET, pp. 63–65  
44      F 4, 6

Only from this precious gift of freedom can the birth of the apostle and the prophet for these times take place. To raise those voices throughout the world with the flavor of the Gospel, which Teresa of Jesus longed for, it is necessary to attune oneself to the voice that resounds within and to the voices that cry out from without, but even more essential is that the evangelizer be freed from himself, from his fears and indecisions, from his laziness or feelings of uselessness or poverty, from false pretensions and ambitions. The apostle is invited to walk a path of gratuitousness that can only be walked hand in hand with freedom.<sup>45</sup>

In each of his appeals, Saint Henry encourages us to decide, to put our freedom on the line, to desire with determination, and to take on with responsibility the mission of fulfilling the desires that the experience of God stirs up in our hearts: *"It is you who must decide and rule without appeal whether the family and the individual, and consequently whether society as a whole, are to belong to Jesus Christ or to Lucifer; to God or to the devil: whether they will worship virtue or abandon themselves to vice..."*<sup>46</sup> *"Only one condition is required to know how to skillfully wield these weapons that we all have at hand, and that is: to will. Yes, by wanting one conquers; by wanting, even the weakest becomes a hero; and in battle, only those who want are defeated, and only those who want also conquer."*<sup>47</sup>

When Teresa writes about what it has meant for her to walk this path of the Spirit, she sums it up as

a path of freedom: *"Blessed be God forever, for in a single moment He gave me the freedom that I, despite all the efforts I had made over many years, could not attain on my own."*<sup>48</sup>

And this is great news for all of us today. Because God's communication is an experience of love, but also of the Truth that puts everything into perspective, heals us of our blindness, and frees us from fear. Teresa speaks to us of a liberating experience that allows her to manage her own inner world of feelings, passions, and entanglements... freedom to deal with friends and enemies, pleasant or unpleasant people... freedom in the face of persecution or contradictions, and freedom from the fear of suffering that we all feel as human beings.

After a long journey through the labyrinths of desire, Teresa admirably describes in the Third Account of Conscience, while in Ávila in the year 1563<sup>49</sup>, the process of freedom she experiences within herself as the fruit of the journey she has lived:

*..."It seems to me that I have received anew  
- as I understand it - much greater freedom. Until now, it seemed to me that I needed others and placed more trust in worldly support; now I clearly understand that they are all like dry rosemary twigs, and that clinging to them offers no security, for when faced with the weight of contradictions or gossip, they break. And so I have experienced*

45 Life 30:21: *"Let the soul that has reached this point praise the Lord most highly, for He gives it the physical strength to do penance, or has given it learning and talents and the freedom to preach and hear confessions and bring souls to God; for it neither knows nor understands the good it possesses, unless it has experienced what it is like to be unable to do anything in the service of the Lord and yet always receive so much. May he be blessed for everything, and may the angels give him glory."*

46 Teresian Magazine 14, November 1873

47 Revista Teresiana. No. 177, June 1887

48 Life 24:8

49 Catas. Conc. 3rd

*that the true remedy for not falling is to cling to the cross and trust in Him who took His place upon it. I find in Him a true friend, and in this I find a strength that seems to me capable of withstanding the whole world if it were against me, provided God does not forsake me... I used to be very fond of being well-liked, and now it means nothing to me; rather, it seems to me, in part, to weary me... In the very great trials, persecutions, and contradictions I have faced these past months, God has given me great courage; and the greater they were, the greater my courage, without my growing weary of suffering. And with the people who spoke ill of me, not only was I not at odds with them, but it seems to me I felt love for them anew...*

In No. 4 of the same account, we hear how she has been freeing herself from the power of desire that also made her a slave on more than a few occasions. And feeling free no longer has to do with her desires being fulfilled but with God's. Her hope and trust lie elsewhere: *"By my very nature, when I desire something, I am impetuous in desiring it. Now my desires are so calm that when I see them fulfilled, I still don't know if I'm glad—that sorrow and pleasure, if not in matters of prayer, everything is tempered, so that I seem foolish; and as such I go about for a few days."*

In No. 7, she describes a freedom to step outside of herself and to suffer and intercede for what are the true needs of the world: *"I feel within me a most ardent desire, more than usual, that God may have people who serve Him with complete detachment and who are not held back by anything of this world, especially scholars; for as I see the great needs of the Church, these afflict me so much*

*that it seems to me a mockery to grieve over anything else..."*

Freedom to know herself in her most radical truth without it paralyzing her, freedom to live from her being as a woman, just as she was at every stage of her life, and freedom to know to Whom she belongs and Who is the center of her desires, her struggles, her decisions, and her entire life: *"There are days when I remember countless times what St. Paul says—though I am sure it is not so in me—that I do not even seem alive to myself, nor do I speak, nor do I have any will of my own, but rather there is One within me who governs me and gives me strength, and I walk as if almost outside of myself; and thus life is a great sorrow to me. And the greatest thing I offer to God as a great service is that, even though it is so painful for me to be separated from Him, for His love I want to live..."*<sup>50</sup>

We Teresians of Henry de Ossó have always been familiar with the power of desires, dreams, and utopia—all that which enables us to transcend the limits of our creaturely nature and sets us in motion toward outreach, dignity, and communion with others. But at the same time, we have received from our teachers the task of training ourselves to enjoy this freedom and to desire in the manner of Jesus, to attune ourselves to his dreams, to be infected by his passion, and to unite our will to his. In this process, we have become familiar with words such as "firm determination," "perseverance," "choice," "surrender," "consent"... And so, from birth to birth, we walk the path of freedom: freed from our own self, we move from the world of needs and of living according to our own "desires and interests" to the union of our will with God's. We move from "being friends" to living in a "covenant of love" with God and with his

people, looking after His affairs, and trusting that He looks well after ours.

*“The Lord has rewarded him well, for, without knowing how, he found himself possessing that precious and longed-for freedom of spirit that the perfect possess, in which lies all the happiness one could desire in this life; for, desiring nothing, they possess everything. They fear or desire nothing from the earth; neither do labors trouble them, nor do pleasures move them; in short, no one can take away their peace, for it depends solely on God. And since no one can take Him away, only the fear of losing Him can cause sorrow, for everything else in this world is, in her view, as if it did not exist, because it neither adds to nor detracts from her contentment.”*

51

We do not hesitate to affirm that this remains Good News for the Teresian Family and for all those who walk the paths of evangelization, of the search for self, of truth, and of freedom. Let us celebrate!

- 4. The Teresian Works of the 21st Century: Putting the Faith and Experience of Teresa of Jesus into Practice Today**  
**... “In the midst of the world...”, “with her life, she wanted to be of some service to the One to whom she owes so much...”**

Teresa’s apostolic zeal has a root called LOVE and GRATITUDE: *“On the other hand, she would like to throw herself into the midst of the world, to see if she could play a part in helping a soul praise God more; and, if she is a woman, she grieves over the attachment that her nature imposes on her, because she cannot do this, and she feels great envy toward those who have the freedom to speak out*

*proclaiming who this great God of the Knights is.”*<sup>52</sup>

Henry’s apostolic zeal is nourished by the same love and gratitude, but he also has an incomparable ally, TERESA OF JESUS, THE NEW DEBORAH:

*“We have seen that the mission of Saint Teresa of Jesus in this world was one of combat, of conquest... shedding her own blood for the good of her brothers... And seeing herself as a woman and lowly, as she writes, with a thousand bonds that prevented her from flying where her zeal impelled her—which was to convert the world and save all souls for her Spouse—she called to her side as many true souls as she could, instructed them in the use of the spiritual weapons of prayer and penance, and placing herself at the head of this handful of brave souls, she did more for the Church than many other famous orators, scholars, and religious figures; for she knew how to love, pray, and suffer more than they did.*

*The saints never die... Their works and their spirit live on in their family, and from the glory of heaven they watch over the children they left behind with paternal care. Three centuries have passed since Teresa of Jesus entered into glory... Three centuries have passed since this new Deborah founded an army of the strong, and despite her absence, her glorious and triumphant march continues through this desert of life, animated by the same spirit and strength with which her Mother and invincible Captain endowed her.*

May we, following in the footsteps of such an illustrious heroine, always fight under her invincible and glorious

51 Foundations 5:7  
52 VI M 6, 3

banner, to accompany her in her eternal triumph in glory! How can we attain such a great reward? *By believing, hoping, loving, praying, and acting like Teresa, for no one will be crowned except those who fight manfully to the end.*<sup>53</sup>

In the STRATEGIES of the 19th century, she offers us an essential key: to keep the spirit alive and ardent in every ORGANIZATION...:

*“... When it comes to organizing, arranging, and building, we must not neglect what will most effectively contribute to maintaining unity within this body; what will bind the stones together to raise the building... The life of these works must be the life of God; the spirit that animates them must be that of Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life, and who came into this world so that we might all have it more abundantly... Moreover, to persevere in the practice of these works of zeal, a great spirit of sacrifice is constantly required: sacrifice of comforts, of time, of material interests at times, and what is more, of one’s own judgment and one’s own will. And this cannot be achieved without asking for it every day in prayer; without serious and continuous meditation on the great truths of the faith, it cannot be possessed... And as our most wise Doctor Teresa of Jesus observes, the devil will not fail to wage war against great works...”*<sup>54</sup>

The diversity of situations, cries, and demands in different contexts makes it difficult to detail and specify the new

There are no specific apostolic strategies or organized responses that Henry de Ossó’s Teresian charism could offer today. But it is possible to highlight certain aspects that kept the spirit of those “Teresian works of the nineteenth century” alive and vibrant, and that can serve as a revitalizing message for the “Teresian works of the twenty-first century.”

- In light of the admiration Teresa inspired in Henry for her great consistency in proposing an alternative to the evils of her time<sup>55</sup>, I am renewed in the certainty that for a Teresian, it is essential to begin experiencing the change proposed in the apostolic strategies they initiate. Creativity, leadership, and proposals arise from a personal experience that has the power to transform and humanize us first and foremost.
- Making the faith and our relationship with Jesus accessible to all: In dialogue with today’s world, I renew my commitment to bringing the experience of God closer and making it accessible to EVERYONE. To draw upon people’s search for security and meaning, their thirst for justice and true peace, and the need of ordinary people to believe and trust. To make use of the media and information resources at our disposal, as well as new technologies, to share experiences, ways of praying, and interpretations of reality that open eyes and hearts. Give depth and richness to the message of salvation, uniting the affective relationship with God and the ethical dimension of faith. We are not an “elite spiritual group”; we do not speak to the perfect, nor to the privileged. Everything

53 Teresian Review. No. 179 August 1887

54 Let Us Organize Ourselves 3:8–10

55 Teresian Review No. 174 March 1887

we have said so far is the heritage of humanity, just as Teresa of Jesus is, and it is entrusted to us so that the simple and the humble may enjoy it and rejoice.

- May everyone come to know and become familiar with the life and writings of Teresa of Ávila, discovering her not only as a woman of prayer but also as a traveler and founder, as a writer and as a real woman, with an immense thirst for truth, for true love, for justice, and for freedom. May they come to know her not so much to admire her as to follow in her footsteps and learn from her how to live this life, to feel her as a companion on little-traveled paths, to enter into the adventure of the Spirit with the authenticity that characterized her.<sup>56</sup>
- I renew my confidence in a TERESIAN EDUCATION that seeks social transformation in all its forms. The urgency of fighting for a cultural change—and not just structural change—that frees us from blind submission to the economy and the market, and commits us as critical, active, and transformative citizens; the crisis of the human project and of ethical values; the great need to build, together with others, a universal ethical proposal that allows us to advance

in the process of humanization and helps us reach consensus on social, economic, and moral measures... in our societies, leads us today to consider education—whether systematic or alternative, vocational, or understood as a process of accompaniment that helps individuals orient their lives, abilities, and choices toward the common good—as one of the most important agents of change within our grasp.

To this end, we need to develop a capacity for institutional self-criticism—not just personal self-criticism—so as not to fall into an ideological approach to transformative education. I invite Teresians around the world to cultivate that passion for truth and the commitment to “set one another straight by speaking the truth,” which compels our institutions to engage in serious and profound self-examination of their proposals, methods, and implementations, so that they may become agents of genuine change.

The SCHOOL will have to establish itself as one of the vital spaces for formation for life. “Knowing how to live with others”<sup>57</sup> appeals to ethics

56 Conversation with Juan Mayorga, director of the play “La lengua en pedazos”: *“Teresa is an extraordinary person... I sometimes say that Teresa is a thoroughbred; she is a character who lives and dies in every word, every act, every gesture. She is a woman full of life, full of love, full of concern for others. And, probably also a woman plagued by doubt, isn't she? In this sense, she is of interest to anyone. It is not surprising to me that someone who is not a believer would be interested in TERESA”*

57 Learning to live together, the focus of the UNESCO-WISE debate “Educating in a Changing World” in Doha—Director-General addressing the WISE-UNESCO Panel on Education in a Changing World, October 31.

In her call for a paradigm shift in development, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova stated in Doha (Qatar) that “we must rethink the foundations of education for the new era, strengthen human rights, and deepen mutual respect and understanding, in order to respond to a changing world.” Bokova participated in the opening session of the roundtable co-organized by UNESCO on October 31 at the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE).

The panel members took the four pillars of learning established in the Delors Report, published in 1996 by UNESCO (learning to be, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to live together), as the starting point for a debate on what vision should guide education in the future. The principle of “learning to live together” was chosen as the fundamental principle that should underpin education in a society that has never before been as integrated and yet as vulnerable as it is today. “The four pillars must become values integrated into education: social justice, human rights, solidarity, and gender equality. We must protect one another and together protect the environment; these are the values that must guide change,” said Angie Motshekga, South Africa’s Minister of Basic Education.

as an indispensable means of learning how to engage in the public sphere and to dialogue, negotiate, and build relationships with those who likely do not think or believe as we do.

The global village calls for the formation of a global citizen for the 21st century—a global citizen who can identify the human voids of our time, who can uncover the social challenges facing our planet, and who can propose a new social order by leveraging globalization to build a world that is less unequal, more peaceful, and more sustainable.

It is good that we continue to ask ourselves: What kind of people and global citizens is Teresian education forming today around the world?

What kind of global citizens should it form? Are we ready to educate for what the 21st century is and will be? The global village needs global citizens who can harness new technologies to build an international community, to strengthen global civil society, to weave networks rooted in multiculturalism, to defend the human rights of migrants, children, and women, to build global peace, and to distribute wealth more equitably among nations.

Educating global citizens means fostering people capable of navigating the world and, from there, building a better humanity together with others.

- The power of the call or the summons and the grace of shared leadership today.

We have no doubt about the power of convening and leadership possessed by these two figures who call us together

to us as well, today and throughout the year 2015. Henry puts it plainly: “Under the banners of these two courageous heroines (Mary and Teresa), He who loves you in Jesus Christ invites you to take up the cause, aspiring to save the homeland and the world by saving you.”

Teresa, the “thief of hearts,” exercised her power of seduction through the substance of her lived proposal, through her truthful words directed to the heart of each person, and through her actions consistent with what she believed. The testimony of María de San José, one of her followers, is very eloquent: “The Lord called me to the religious life by seeing and interacting with our Mother and her companions, who moved even stones with their admirable life and conversation, and what made me follow them was the gentleness and great discretion of our good Mother. And I truly believe that if those whose task it is to bring souls to God were to use the same approach and skill that that Saint used, many more would come than do now” (*Book of the Recreations*, 2)

Her confidence in inviting others can certainly challenge our own timidity when it comes to inviting, proposing, and gathering people together for the sake of the Kingdom. Living Teresian leadership today commits us to embodying a way of exercising power that humanizes because the center is Jesus and his Gospel, which mobilizes from within and counts on EVERYONE because we are all necessary; each person is unique and deserves personal attention.

I believe it is important to broaden this sense of “calling” so that

Let us also invite others to participate—or feel called to participate—in other platforms or spaces that advocate for human rights, consumer education, the creation of networks to achieve equality, social justice, the protection of the Earth, and so on. All of these would be forms of non-denominational association that are deeply humanizing.

- We must discern clearly the agents of social transformation and the recipients of our evangelizing action. We cannot fail to give preferential attention in each of our contexts to children, young people, and women, updating their historical role and their relationships within the Church and in society. But I would like to draw attention to the most vulnerable sectors of these groups today: children subjected to living and working conditions unfit for childhood; young people at risk or facing social exclusion; women who are marginalized, abused, or suffering the consequences of gender inequality; and families with a special need to be welcomed, accompanied, and protected because they must face situations that are atypical in their life plans, according to an ecclesial or social mindset.
- Believing in the power of humility and resilience to live through these times with the boldness of the poor and the simple, of the pure in heart, of the lovers and friends of the Lord of the Kingdom. Resilience is described as the space and time between disappointment and commitment, between

sadness and healing, between offense and forgiveness.<sup>58</sup> Henry would speak to us of the virtue of fortitude, which has two parts: suffering and undertaking<sup>59</sup>. The truth is that we do not embrace this Teresian heritage with the feeling that we can do it, or that we feel strong, but from the truth that is given to us every day, in every work and task: “Without You we can do nothing, but with You we can do everything.” We will suffer contradiction and weariness; we know that *“the devil will not fail to wage war against great works,”*<sup>60</sup> but we will once again have enough energy to be fruitful and capable of acting with the courage and depth of imagination and faith.

The experience of God, faith, prayer, and apostolic zeal; a believer’s perspective; friendship; the path to freedom; and the hallmarks of 21st-century Teresian works—these are the words I humbly draw from the experience and teachings of our two mentors. I hope that one or two of them have taken root within you, stirring something deep inside.

I conclude by leaving this unfinished sentence in your hearts: If they were to return today... what word would you hear in your heart as a woman, a man, a sister of the Society, a priest, a member of the MTA, an associate, a FundEO volunteer, or a layperson committed to Henry de Ossó’s Teresian proposal... Whenever you wish and are able, please share it with us. Thank you.

58 Robert J. Wicks, *Bounce: Living a Life of Resilience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Jill Geisler, *Happy at Work: What Good Bosses Know* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2012): “Recognize and affirm the power of resilience in your own lives!”

59 Teresian Magazine No. 172 January 1887: “The virtue of fortitude has two parts, which are: to endure and to undertake. Rarely is one found to accept suffering without the condition of a courageous heart”

60 Let’s Get Organized 3, 10