

spread
love

WORDS OF COMPASSION,
PEACE, *and* JOY

MOTHER TERESA

Edited and with commentary by

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Spread Love

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FOREWORD

“LIFE IS NOTHING BUT A JOURNEY,” MOTHER Teresa tells us. On this journey, some days are daunting; some days are brighter. We all long for a more fulfilling, more meaningful journey. Mother Teresa would not only tell her Sisters but show by her example how to daily quench this longing, this thirst, by clinging to Jesus.

For some time now, it has been on my heart to compile Mother Teresa’s encouraging quotes, stories, prayers, and teachings into a short book. The intention was to allow those who are hungry for inspirational thought and spiritual nourishment to take a small pause each day, even amidst a busy schedule, and incorporate a short meditation or a simple prayer into one’s daily routine. Mother Teresa’s words will give a spiritual flavor to our whole day, and her words of wisdom will help us live a fuller and happier life, closer to the Lord and to those around us.

Throughout this book we are invited to allow Mother Teresa to “walk with us” in the ordinariness of daily life, transforming it into something meaningful, indeed

making of it “something beautiful for God,” as she loved to say. There are 365 entries, one for each day of the year, offering the opportunity to begin any time of the year to find ample nourishment, consolation, and courage.

Most of the selections here were originally addressed to the members of her religious family, such as Mother Teresa’s instructions to her Sisters or to the Contemplative Brothers (originally called the Brothers of the Word); however, these words are applicable to everyone who wishes to deepen their relationship with God, or perhaps just to make a positive difference in their surroundings. Mother Teresa’s simple yet profound teachings are rooted in the Word of God. As we read them, meditate on them, and pray with them, they invite us to “put our love into living action,” to give concrete form to the Word that has been sown in our hearts.

Mother Teresa’s words are easy to understand, as they shed light on the path that leads to greater love, joy, peace, and happiness in our lives. Yet they are also challenging to put into practice, as they urge us to go out of ourselves toward others, especially toward our suffering brothers and sisters, beginning with those who need love at this moment more than we do, those in our own homes and neighborhoods.

During her life Mother Teresa acted as God's messenger, "a carrier of God's love." By her presence, words, and deeds, she pointed out that "God still loves the world through you and through me." Throughout the pages of this book, may she serve as a "spiritual guide" who points us toward the path that the Lord traces for each of us. May her words now be an encouragement to us to bring God's love and compassion to all those we encounter on our way, and so make this world (our own "tiny worlds" especially), a better, nobler, more loving and peaceful place to live, a civilization of love.

Brian Kolodziejchuk, MC





DAY 1

WE SHALL MAKE THIS YEAR A YEAR OF PEACE IN a particular way. To be able to do this we shall try to talk more to God and with God and less with men and to men. Let us preach the peace of Christ like he did. “[He] went about doing good” (Acts 10:38 KJV); he did not stop his works of charity because the Pharisees and others hated him or tried to spoil his Father’s work. He just went about doing good. Cardinal Newman wrote, “Help me to spread thy fragrance everywhere I go; let me preach thee without preaching, not by words but by my example by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do, the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to thee.”

DAY 2

THE AIM OF A RETREAT IS TO ADVANCE IN THE knowledge and love of God, to purify ourselves, and to reform and transform our lives according to the life of our model, Jesus Christ. It is a time of greater silence, of more fervent prayer, of special penance, and more intense

spiritual activity. It is not so much a looking back on the achievements and failure of the past, as a looking forward to a more generous imitation of our Lord himself.

DAY 3

TODAY, WHEN EVERYTHING IS BEING QUESTIONED and changed, let us go back to Nazareth. Jesus had come to redeem the world, to teach us the love of his Father. How strange that he should spend thirty years just doing nothing, wasting his time! Not giving a chance to his personality or to his gifts! We know that at the age of twelve he silenced the learned priests of the temple, who knew so much and so well. But when his parents found him, “he went down . . . to Nazareth, and was subject unto them” (Luke 2:51 KJV). For twenty years we hear no more of him, so that the people were astonished when he went in public to preach. He, a carpenter’s son, doing just the humble work in a carpenter’s shop for thirty years!



DAY 4

THERE ARE THREE SIGNS OF GENUINE HUMILITY:

see if you possess these:

Deference, respect, and obedience toward your superiors.

The joyous acceptance of all humiliations.

Charity toward your sisters, particularly toward those who are poor and humble.

DAY 5

MARY IN THE MYSTERY OF HER ANNUNCIATION

and visitation is the very model of the way you should live, because first she received Jesus in her life, then she went in haste to give to her cousin Elizabeth; what she had received, she had to give. You must be like her, giving in haste the Word you have received in meditation. In every Holy Communion, Jesus the Word becomes flesh in our life, a special, delicate, beautiful gift of God; it's a privilege. Why you . . . and not someone else? I don't know. But you must protect it with tender care because he is giving himself, the Word, to you to be made flesh, to each one of you, and to those who will come after.

6



DAY 6

THE INTERIOR SILENCE IS VERY DIFFICULT, BUT we must make the effort to pray. In silence we will find new energy and true unity. The energy of God will be ours to do all things well, and so will the unity of our thoughts with his thoughts, the unity of our prayers with his prayers, the unity of our actions with his actions, of our life with his life. All our words will be useless unless they come from within. Words that do not give the light of Christ increase the darkness.

DAY 7

PRAYER, TO BE FRUITFUL, MUST COME FROM THE heart and must be able to touch the heart of God. See how Jesus taught his disciples to pray. Call God your Father; praise and glorify his name. Do his will as the saints do it in heaven; ask for daily bread, spiritual and temporal; ask for forgiveness of your own sins and that you may forgive others, and also for the grace not to give in to temptations and for the final grace to be delivered from the evil that is in us and around us.

DAY 8

WE HAVE TO LOVE UNTIL IT HURTS. IT IS NOT enough to say, “I love.” We must put that love into a living action. And how do we do that? Give until it hurts. Some time ago, in our children’s home, we didn’t have sugar for our children. A little boy, four years old, heard “Mother Teresa has no sugar for the children.” He went home and told his parents, “I will not eat sugar for three days. I will give my sugar to Mother Teresa.” After three days the parents brought him to our house. He was so small that he could scarcely pronounce even my name, and yet he taught me how to love with great love. It was not how much he gave, but that he gave with great love, and he gave until it hurt.

DAY 9

LET THERE BE NO PRIDE NOR VANITY IN THE work. The work is God’s work; the poor are God’s poor. Work for Jesus and Jesus will work with you, pray with Jesus and Jesus will pray through you. The more you forget yourself, the more Jesus will think of you. The more you

detach yourself from self, the more attached Jesus is to you. Put yourself completely under the influence of Jesus so that he may think his thoughts in your mind; do his work through your hands—for you will be all-powerful with him who strengthens you.

DAY 10

WE ARE BUT INSTRUMENTS THAT GOD DEIGNS TO use; these instruments bring forth fruit in the measure that they are united to God, for Saint Paul said, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6 kjv). We obtain grace in proportion to our sanctity, to our fervor, to our degree of union with our Lord.



DAY 11

OUR OBEDIENCE, BY BEING PROMPT, SIMPLE, BLIND, and cheerful, is the proof of our faith. If “God loves a cheerful giver,” how much more would he not love an obedient giver (2 Corinthians 9:7 esv)? We must obey like

Christ obeyed, unto death, even death on the cross. He saw the will of his Father in everything and everybody, so that he could say, “I always do the things that are pleasing to him” (John 8:29 ESV). He obeyed Caiaphas and Pilate because their authority was given “from above.” He submitted to them with obedience and dignity. He did not look at the human limitations of Caiaphas and Pilate. He looked at his Father, for whose love he submitted himself to them. Let us obey like Jesus and our lives will become pleasing to God, and he will say, “This is my beloved child in whom I am well pleased.”

DAY 12

WE MUST BE AWARE OF OUR ONENESS WITH Christ, as he was aware of oneness with his Father. Our work is truly apostolic only insofar as we permit him to work in us and through us, with his power, with his desire, and with his love.