



**Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger:**  
**The heart forms itself according to what it loves.** Letter #3

## Let God Love You

*Because God first loved us, we respond in love, freely choosing to follow Christ.* (SSND Constitution, *You Are Sent*, C10)  
Very often in discernment and in living out our lives of faith, we focus on our call to love God, to follow God's ways, and to love others. This is good and important. But very often, we forget that our desire and efforts to love God come from God first loving us. Although we often say we know that God loves us, many times it is followed by a "but," because deep down we really can't quite believe it. We easily get caught in the subtle and mistaken belief that we must earn God's love.

Spiritual writer and theologian, Fr. Henri Nouwen, wrote in his book *Life of the Beloved*,<sup>1</sup> "Being the Beloved expresses the core truth of our existence...I kept running around it in large and small circles, always looking for someone or something able to convince me of my Belovedness. It was as if I kept refusing to hear the voice that speaks from the depth of my being and says: 'You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests.' That voice has always been there, but it seems that I was much more eager to listen to other louder voices saying: 'Prove that you are worth something ...do something relevant, spectacular, or powerful, and then you will earn the love you so desire.' Meanwhile, the soft, gentle voice that speaks in the silence and solitude of my heart remained unheard or, at least unconvincing." (p. 34) Giving us hope, he went on to describe his growing into that love, sharing, "Every time you listen with great attentiveness to the voice that calls you the Beloved, you will discover within yourself a desire to hear that voice longer and more deeply. It is like discovering a well in the desert." (p. 37)

Discernment requires interior freedom and there is no greater freedom than when we truly know ourselves loved, when we experience deep within that God profoundly loves us as we are with all our gifts and limitations, that we truly are God's beloved. The following reflections invite you to taste again God's love.

### Romans 8: 38-39

*For I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, neither heights nor depths – nor anything else in all creation – will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Savior.*

### St. John of the Cross<sup>2</sup>

*You looked with love upon me  
and deep within your eyes imprinted grace;  
this mercy set me free,  
held in your love's embrace,  
to lift my eyes adoring to your face* (Stanza 32)

### Magnificat of Coming Home (Excerpt)<sup>3</sup>

*My soul proclaims the wonder of your friendship  
My spirit is weeping within me for joy  
My heart spills out tears with delight  
They mix with my joy and I tremble  
feeling totally claimed by your love.*

*You showed me that your home was within me  
that living in me was your joy  
I wept still more tears at the thought  
of you in me and I in you,  
A dwelling place I am, I kept saying  
A home for the God of my life  
My soul has turned into heaven  
I am little and great all in one.*

## Reflection Questions ~

1. What speaks to your heart in what you have read today? What draws you in? Is there anything you resist, a “but” that wells up within you?
2. Take some time to quiet yourself and breathe deeply. Imagine God looking at you with great love. Pay attention to what you experience without judgment.

## Looking Ahead:



### Sisters in the Cities

Ever wonder about who religious sisters are today? Women ages 18-45 are invited to meet virtually with the School Sisters of Notre Dame, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and the Visitation Sisters of North Minneapolis for prayer and conversation.

October 15, 2020

November 12, 2020

December 10, 2020

7-8:30 p.m. Central Time

RSVP to Sister Stephanie to receive the Zoom link: [sspandl@ssnd.org](mailto:sspandl@ssnd.org).



### “Pray with Us” Online Evening Prayer with the SSND Vocation Team

October 27, 2020

November 24, 2020

December 22, 2020

7-8 p.m. Central Time

Register for the Zoom Link at [ssnd.org/events/](https://ssnd.org/events/)

### Twin Cities Nuns & Nones (online gathering)

October 19, 2020 - Fall Poetry

November 4, 2020 - Discussion of *My Grandmother's Hands*, chapters 10-12

November 16, 2020 - Topic TBD

6:30-8 p.m. Central Time

<https://www.facebook.com/nunsandnonestwincities/>

### Evening Prayer with Chicago SSNDs

Saturday, November 7, 6 p.m. Central Time

Pray virtually with some of our SSND sisters in Chicago during National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW).

RSVP to Sister Jill to receive the Zoom link:

[jlaszewski@ssnd.org](mailto:jlaszewski@ssnd.org)

### National Vocation Awareness Week

November 1-7, 2020

### This month's resource:

Franciscan Media: “Letting God Love Us”

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/letting-god-love-us/>

## Quote Acknowledgment

<sup>1</sup> Nouwen, Henri (1992). *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co.

<sup>2</sup> John of the Cross, The Canticle, as quoted in Matthew, Father Iain (1995). *The Impact of God: Soundings from St. John of the Cross*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd.

<sup>3</sup> Wiederkehr, Macrina (1988). *A Tree Full of Angels: Seeing the Holy in the Ordinary*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.