

The Saint's Advice to her Nuns

Remember that you only have one soul, that you only die once, that you only have a short life, and that there is only one glory that is eternal: this thought will detach you from many things.

Saint Teresa of Avila

- 1- The mind of man is like soil which, though fertile, will only produce brambles and thorns unless it is cultivated.
- 2- Speak well of all pious people such as religious, priests and hermits.
- 3- When you are among other people, do not talk much.
- 4- Behave with great humility in all the things you do and engage in.
- 5- Don't argue especially about unimportant things.
- 6- Talk to everyone with a moderate modest gaiety.
- 7- Do not mock anything.
- 8- Never correct anyone without discretion and humility and with a secret embarrassment for your own particular faults.
- 9- Always adjust yourself to the mood of the people you are dealing with. Be cheerful with those who are happy, and sad with those who are sad; and finally, be everything to everyone to win them all.
- 10- Never say anything without having thought about it beforehand, and turned it over to Our Lord so as not to say anything that would be unpleasant to Him.
- 11- Do not ever excuse yourself unless there is a good reason to do so.
- 12- Never say anything about yourself that could result in praise, such as your knowledge or virtues, or background, except if there is a possibility of it being useful to the one to whom you say it; and then you have to say it with humility, and consider that it was a gift from the hand of God.
- 13- Never speak with exaggeration, but simply say what you think without emotion.
- 14- Always include something spiritual in your discussions and conversations wherever you find

yourself in order to avoid unnecessary words and arguments.

- 15- Never assure anything without knowing it for sure.
- 16- Never divulge your feelings about anything unless you are asked to do so or charity obliges you to.
- 17- When someone talks about good and spiritual things, listen to him with humility as a disciple would listen to his master, and take for yourself what good he said.
- 18- Admit all your temptations, imperfections and sorrows to your superior and confessor, so that he may assist you by giving you advice and remedies to overcome them.
- 19- Do not remain outside of your cell, or leave it without a reason; and when obliged to leave it, beg God for help so that He may keep you from offending Him.
- 20- Only eat or drink at the prescribed times, and then give great thanksgiving to God.
- 21- Do all things as if you were truly seeing God present before you, for in this way the soul makes great progress.
- 22- Never listen to those who speak ill of someone, and never speak ill of anyone yourself unless it is about yourself; and when you take pleasure in acting this way, you will make a lot of progress.
- 23- Do not do anything without telling God about it first, and offering it to Him and asking Him to make it succeed for His honor and glory.
- 24- When you are joyful, do not let yourself be carried away by inordinate laughing; but that your joy be humble, sweet, modest and uplifting.
- 25- Always consider yourself to be a servant of others, and look on each of them as if he were Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself; because, in this way, you will have no trouble respecting them.
- 26- Be as willing to practice obedience as if it were Jesus Christ Himself commanding you through the mouth of your superior.
- 27- In everything you do, and at all times, examine your conscience, and after realizing your faults, try to

correct yourself with God's assistance. Walking this path, you will reach religious perfection.

28- Do not think about the imperfections of others, but only about their virtues, while only thinking of your imperfections.

29- Be always filled with a great desire to suffer in all things for Jesus Christ and in all situations that may arise.

30- Make fifty oblations (offerings) of yourself to God daily; do so with great fervor and desire to possess Him.

31- Keep present in your mind all throughout the day what you meditated on that morning; do this with special care as you will derive great benefit from it.

32- Carefully preserve the feelings God inspires within you, and practice the good desires He gives you in prayer.

33- Always run away from drawing attention to yourself as much as you can because it is a very dangerous evil in a community.

34- Read your statutes and rule often, and observe them exactly.

35- Consider God's wisdom and providence in all things He has created; take from each a subject to praise Him.

36- Detach your heart from all things: seek God, and you will find Him.

37- Hide your devotion carefully, and never betray without what you feel within.

38- Do not allow the devotion that you have in your heart to be obvious if nothing obliges you to. "My secret is for me alone," said both St. Bernard and St. Francis.

39- Do not complain about your food, about whether it is well or poorly prepared; remember the sponge and vinegar that was presented to Jesus Christ.

40- Do not speak or look up to look at someone when you are eating.

41- Imagine the heavenly table, consider the meat that is eaten there—it is God Himself; consider who the guests are, who the angels are; and raise your eyes to this holy and heavenly table with an ardent desire to have a place there.

42- Since you must see Jesus Christ in the person of your superior, never speak in his presence if there is no need to, and then only speak with great respect.

43- Never engage in cultural behavior that could not be done in front of everyone.

44- Never compare people because comparisons are terrible.

45- When you are criticized, accept it with both inner and outer humility and pray to God for the person who corrected you.

46- When a superior orders you to do something, do not say that another has ordered the opposite, but believe that both have holy intentions, and obey what is asked of you.

47- Avoid curiosity about things that are none of your business; do not talk or seek to know more about it.

48- Look at your past life to mourn it; think of your present lukewarmness and of the virtues you lack to win heaven so that you will always be in awe. This behavior gives excellent results.

49- When members of the community tell you to do something, never fail to do it as long as it is not contrary to obedience; and always respond with gentleness and humility.

50- Never ask for anything special either for your life or clothing if it is not a great necessity.

51- Never stop humiliating and mortifying yourself in all things until death.

52- Get used to doing several acts of love at a time because they ignite and soften the heart.

53- Also do deeds of all the other virtues.

54- Offer all things to the Eternal Father, uniting yourself to the merits of His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

55- Be gentle with others, and uncompromising with yourself.

56- On the feast days of the saints, consider their virtues and pray to our Lord to give them to you.

57- Take great care to examine your consciousness every night.

58- On the days you receive communion, use your morning prayer to consider that as miserable as you

are, you will still receive God, and use the evening prayer to think about the good fortune you had to receive Him.

59- When you are a superior, never reprimand anyone while you are angry, but wait until you are no longer angry, and in this way your correction will be helpful.

60- Work as hard as you can to acquire perfection and devotion, and in all that you do, do it perfectly and devoutly.

61- Practice the fear of the Lord, because from there compunction (contrition or remorse) and humility are born in the soul.

62- Seriously consider how changing people are, and how foolish it is to rely on them; put all your trust in God who doesn't change.

63- Try and discuss all that happens in your soul with a spiritual and learned confessor and follow his advice in everything.

64- Whenever you take communion, ask God for a special grace, then thank Him for the great mercy He showed you by visiting your soul.

65- Although you have several saints as intercessors, speak particularly to St. Joseph as his prayers can do a lot with God.

66- When you are sad and troubled do not abandon the good works of prayer or penance which you are accustomed to doing. It is the devil's plan to make you let them go by filling your mind with worry. But, on the contrary, do more than before and you will see that Our Lord will be very quick to rescue you.

67- Do not speak of your temptations and faults to those in the house who are the most imperfect. It would harm them and you too. Only talk with the most perfect.

68- Remember that you only have one soul, that you will only die once, that you only have a short life, and that there is only one glory that is eternal: this thought will detach you from many things.

69- May your desire be to see God; your fear be to lose Him; your pain be not yet to possess Him; and

your joy be what brings you to Him; and you will live a life in great peace.

Amen