

**Reading the writings of Therese of the Child Jesus  
Teresian Anniversaries 2023-2025  
2025: Prayers and other writings**

**Text 3:  
Abandonment is the delicious fruit of love (Poem 52)**

Suggestion for the community meeting:

1. Read the text together
2. One of those present, having prepared a contribution in advance, discusses the text using the commentary (and other aids, if necessary).
3. Community dialogue on the text.

It would be helpful to have made individual readings and reflections on Therese's text before the community meeting.

**Abandonment is the delicious fruit of love**

J M. J T.  
31<sup>st</sup> May 1897

1. There is on this earth  
A marvelous tree  
Its root, O mystery!  
Is in Heaven....

2. Never under its shade  
Can anything hurt,  
There without fear of the storm  
We can rest.

3. Of this Ineffable Tree  
Love is the name,  
And its delectable fruit  
Is called Abandonment.

4. This fruit from this life  
gives me happiness  
My soul is happy  
By its divine smell.

5. This fruit when I touch it  
Seems like a treasure to me  
Bringing it to my mouth  
It is even sweeter to me.

6. It gives me in this world  
An ocean of peace  
In this deep peace  
I rest forever...

7. Only Surrender Delivers Me  
In your arms, oh Jesus  
It is he who makes me live  
Of the lives of the elect.

8. To you I surrender myself  
O my Divine Spouse  
And I am not ambitious  
But for your gaze so sweet.

9. I want to smile at you  
falling asleep on your heart  
I want to say it again  
How I love you, Lord!

10. Like the daisy  
With the vermilion chalice  
Me little flower  
I open myself to the sun.

11. My Sweet Sun of Life  
O my Loving King  
It is your Divine Host  
Little like me...

12. Of his Celestial Flame  
The bright ray  
Gives birth in my soul  
To the perfect Surrender.

13. All Creatures  
can leave me  
I will know without complaint  
Near you I can do without.

14. What If You Leave Me  
O my divine treasure  
Deprived of your caresses  
I want to smile still.

15. In Peace I Will await  
Sweet Jesus, your return  
And never suspend  
My songs of love.

16. No, nothing worries me  
Nothing can trouble me  
Higher than the lark  
My soul knows how to fly.

17. Above the Clouds  
The sky is always blue  
We touch the shores  
Where the Good Lord reigns.

18. I Await in Peace the glory  
of that heavenly abode  
Because I find in the Ciborium  
The sweet Fruit of Love!

## Introduction to the Text

This poem dates from May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1897, and unlike the preceding one (Text 2 – Poem 17), was requested explicitly by Sister Therese of Saint Augustine. It was she who had forced Therese's hand to her first composition in 1893 (Poem 1 : *The Divine Dew or The Virginal Milk of Mary*). As virtuous as she was rigid, this sister had made the vow of abandonment to God's good pleasure.

In the first three stanzas, we find the symbol of the tree, which is rare for Therese. For her, it never evokes the cross of Jesus, as is usual in Christian literature. Here it is both the Paradise of *Genesis* and *Song of Songs*.

In Stanzas 4, 5 and 6, the delectable fruit is the antithesis of that in *Genesis*. One can touch it without fear and eat of it, it will not bring the disorder of sin and death, but rather an 'ocean of peace' and 'from this life gives me happiness'.

Stanzas 7, 8 and 9 bring us into the abandonment of love. Abandonment here is delicious, its force and authenticity come from the fact that it is combined with passive abandonment and relinquishment.

Stanzas 10, 11 and 12 show us the Eucharist as the source of abandonment.

Stanzas 13, 14 and 15 connect abandonment and relinquishment, a theme begun a few stanzas earlier. Therese discreetly alludes to her spiritual trial.

The poem concludes with stanzas 16, 17 and 18, with the victorious liberty of love. The same day, Mother Agnes cites stanza 17 and speaks of a 'more powerful attraction to Heaven' (*Letter of correspondents of Therese*, LC 182).

### For community discussion:

1. *What is the text saying?* Understanding the content and initial meaning of Therese's text.
2. *What does the text say to us today?* Discern the present-day relevance (social, ecclesial, spiritual. . .) of the text.
3. *What does the text say to me/us?* Consider the personal and community relevance of the text.

The purpose of this process is to allow Therese to speak to us herself, to question and encourage us, and to open us up to her clarifying and confirming our own personal and community path. The questions suggested are only indicative, and could perhaps be used in individual meditation and community sharing.

### Questions:

1. This poem, one of Therese's last, has 18 stanzas. One way to structure this poem is to divide it into 6 parts, each with 3 stanzas: what title could I give to each part?
2. What are the principal effects of Abandonment for Therese?
3. This poem evokes in many ways the Mystery of the Eucharist: how does Therese understand this Mystery? What essential fruit does it produce in her life? What is our own relationship to the Eucharist, could we join with Therese in this?
4. This poem by Therese could be seen as a spiritual testament, where she deepens the meaning of true abandonment. See Letters 226, 258 and 263 from the same period. 'Perfect abandonment, that's my only law' (Poem 32). How do we experience this abandonment? How can we describe it? Does this impulse occupy a central place in our spiritual life and our apostolic activities?