

**GOD,
THE JOY OF MY LIFE:**

A BIOGRAPHY

of

SAINT TERESA

OF JESUS OF THE ANDES

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By

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**With the Saint's
SPIRITUAL DIARY**

**Teresian Charism Press
1525 Carmel Road
Hubertus, WI 53033.**

R.E.P. INDUSTRIES INC.
800-426-3527

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sanctity among us. We can comprehend how all the saints are brothers and sisters and that every one of them can become part of our story.

According to Bishop Manual Camilo Vila, the canonization of St. Teresa was also for the Chileans a gift of intercession, and he pointed out in his homily that "this elder daughter" of Chile had shown herself to be an indefatigable intercessor before the majesty of the merciful God. This experience is an immense consolation that has swept through the country, fortifying it in its inmost being. What good it has done us to have a solicitous and powerful sister in heaven!"

The third gift implied in this canonization, said the prelate, is a "gift of encouragement", and he explained that when Chile finds itself at a decisive crossroads, because of a new, emerging culture; because of the journey to full democracy and because of the need for renewal, conversion and reconciliation, Teresa is there to keep us from being carried away by mirages."

After the Mass, the picture of the saint was brought down by the bishops to the crypt of the Church in Auco, where it was placed at the head of the tomb containing the remains of the first Chilean Saint.

People came away from that ceremony with new confidence and courage. Above all, they went back to their homes with the vivid awareness and renewed conviction that the days of the saints are far from over. They know they have a special friend watching over them before the throne of God's mercy.

DIARY 1900-1914

I. Summary And Division of My Life

Dear Mother: You believe you are going to find an interesting story, but I don't want you to be deceived; the story you are going to read is not the story of my life, but the intimate life of a poor soul who, without any merit on her part, Jesus Christ loved in a special way and filled abundantly with His favors and graces. (*Juanita began her diary when she was 15 years old. These first paragraphs were written in ink in 1917, when she dedicated it to her beloved teacher Madre Julia Rios, a Religious of the Sacred Heart, and titled it THE STORY OF THE LIFE OF ONE OF YOUR DAUGHTERS. Mother Rios, the spiritual director of the students at the Sacred Heart school in Santiago, was greatly loved by all because of her virtues and sympathy.*)

The story of my soul is summed up in two words: "To suffer and to love." Here is the whole of my life from the time I became aware of everything, that is to say from 6 years of age or before. I used to suffer, and the good Jesus taught me to suffer in silence and to unburden my poor little heart to Him.

You know, Mother, the way Jesus showed me from the time I was little was the same way He traveled, the way He loved; and because He loved me, He sought to nourish my poor soul in suffering. My life is divided into two periods: the first, more or less from the age of reason until my First Communion. Jesus filled me with favors both in the first period as well as in the second: from my

First Communion till now. Or better still, until my soul enters the harbor of Carmel.

2. Spoiled By All My Family

I was born in 1900 on the 13th day of July. My mother is Lucia Solar de Fernández and my father is Michael Fernández Jaraguemada. (*Juanita was born and lived 7 years in the house of her maternal Grandfather at 1352 Rosas Street in Santiago, Chile. The house has since been demolished.*)

We lived with my grandfather, who was already quite old. You can say that he was a saint, since one could see him praying his rosary all day long. His name was Eulogio Solar.

Jesus did not desire me to be born poor like Himself; I was born in the midst of riches, spoiled by all.

I was the fourth child in the family. The first was named Lucia, who was 7 years old; Miguel, the second, was 6 years old and Luis, the third, was 3. My aunt Juanita Solar lived in my grandfather's house with her four children. My uncle, Luis Albert Domínguez, had already died. The eldest of my cousins was 13 years old and the youngest was 5. My aunt Teresa Vicuña also lived there with her two children. One of her boys died in childhood. Her older child was called Thomas Bernardo (the name of my uncle). And Teresita, her second, was 8 years old. My uncle Francis, (*Francisco Solar Armstrong*) who was a bachelor, also lived there. He was 23 years old.

A short time later Rebecca was born, and there was a difference of 1 year and 8 months between us. (*In 1910 her last brother, Ignacio, came into the world. He died at Santiago November 2, 1976.*) Though quite spoiled, I

was very timid. Rebecca was the opposite. We were both very spoiled. We could do whatever we pleased with my Granddaddy and we used to trick him with our kisses and caresses.

From the time I was small they used to say that I was the prettiest of my brothers and sisters but I paid no attention to this. But they kept repeating these same words to me as I grew older, unbeknown to my mother, since she didn't like this. God alone knows what it cost me to overcome this pride or vanity that took possession of my heart as I grew older. My character was timid, my heart sensitive. I used to cry for any reason, but my disposition was extremely gentle; I never used to get mad at anyone.

3. Desires To Receive Holy Communion. School.

It was shortly after the earthquake in 1906 when Jesus began to take my heart to be His own.

I recall how my mother and my aunt Juanita took us to Mass and always explained everything to us. During Mass, when it was Communion time, I was inflamed with desires to receive Our Lord. I used to ask my mother for this favor, but thanks be to God she didn't find me ready for this sublime act. I remember my mother and my aunt Juanita sitting me down at table and asking me about the Eucharist. I answered their questions, but because they saw I was very young, they didn't allow me to receive Communion.

When I was 7 years old I went to Confession. We were prepared for this by the Sisters.

But first I want to describe my starting school. My Granddaddy in no way wanted us (*Juanita and Rebecca*) to start school, but my mother finally prevailed and

placed me with the Teresianist Sisters. I was to go there after lunch and leave at five, but I hardly ever really went. After one month they took me out. I observed that the teachers didn't sufficiently supervise us at recess time and one of the little girls was not very nice. I told my mother what was happening.

My mother went to complain. As a result, the Mother Superior became angry. They put me in a room by myself on examination day and gave me bad marks. Then the Superior scolded me, saying that these things should not be told. I was surprised because I had always been told that I should tell my mother everything. They punished me. I cried a great deal, and when I got home my mother wrote a letter to the Superior telling her that I would not return to the school. I was happy because some of those little girls were very mischievous. There was one from whom I suffered because she was always trying to hurt me. When we went to Chapel she always pulled my veil off. And I, being little, didn't know how to defend myself. I had a cousin whom they attacked very often and I had to defend her. The others loved me. Finally, I don't remember that school with affection, even though I learned to read when I was there. (*This school, conducted by the Carmelite Sisters of Saint Teresa, was located on Saint Dominic Street, very close to Juanita's home*).

4. MY GRANDDADDY DIED.

In 1907, my dear grandfather died as a saint. I remember very well that when we went to our summer home - at Chacabuco - he was all right. My aunt Teresa went there with her two little ones and him and us, from whom she was inseparable.

Every evening he made us mount a horse, flipping a

coin heads or tails to see who would be first. Rebecca always won. He was in good health until one night he was stricken with an attack of paralysis. My aunt immediately took him by land to Santiago and then they said that there was no hope for him. They made him suffer by giving him the most horrible medicines. Finally my poor little old man did not know how he felt. On the 13th of May, the day of his death, he received the Sacraments. He called his children and counseled them. By the side of his room there was an oratory. They began to say Mass when they saw that his face was filled with great fear, and he kept saying "take him away" while he covered his face with his hands. There were terrible temptations from the devil. My mother threw holy water on him and the devil left. The devil then tempted him another time and left so that his death was like his life: in peace. At the moment of the Consecration of the Mass, when the Sacred Host was elevated, his soul took flight for heaven, without anyone taking notice. It seemed that he was sleeping. His death was that of a saint, as was his life.

We were immediately notified at Chacabuco. I remember that I was in bed sleeping and they came to notify us. They didn't pay much attention to us little ones. We didn't cry because my brother Luis was very sick and had barely escaped death, so they didn't want to inform him. Thus it was that without any effort we remained very quiet. After a while they began to dress us and Luis began to shout and cry bitterly. They went to see him and he began to say: "Why did they deceive me? Why didn't they tell me? My grandfather is dead." He cried oceans of tears. No one knew how he came to know of this, because no one had told him. My grandfather told him while he was sleeping. A few days

later my uncle Francis arrived crying and saying the saddest things. This caused me to cry oceans and I couldn't be consoled. They took us to Santiago and seeing Granddaddy's empty room made such a great impression on me that it seemed that everything was finished. It's impossible to imagine how sad I became.

A short time later they auctioned off the house and the farm, dividing it in perpetuity into three little estates. Don Salvador Huidobro inherited the middle estate; my uncle Francis inherited the one on the hill and my mother inherited the one at Baños. My uncle Eugene inherited the house in Santiago. (*Till the death of her grandfather, Juanita and her brothers and sisters alternated between living in Santiago and spending long periods of time at the summer house at Chacabuco, also the property of Don Eulogio.*)

We moved to Saint Dominic Street to a house that, like the other one, was full of very pleasant memories for me. Here something happened that is worth relating. At night, when we put out the light in my room, there was still light from my mamita's room. (*Juanita's mamita, the servant who took care of her from birth, is Ofelia Miranda, a very religious woman and a very good person. Juanita sends greetings to her in numerous letters.*) I used to see my dead grandfather appear at the foot of Rebecca's bed, but I didn't see more than half of his body. He appeared to me eight consecutive days. I was scared to death and went to Rebecca's bed. From that time, I no longer saw him.

5. My Devotion To The Virgin.

Preparation For My First Communion.

When we went to Chacabuco for the last time, my

aunt Juanita gave me a porcelain statue of the Virgin of Lourdes to keep by the side of my bed, provided I would drink my medicine. I used to drink it and so she gave me the statue. This is the Virgin who has never ceased to console me and to listen to me. (*Till his death her brother, Luis Fernández (Lucho) had this statue in his possession.*)

My devotion to the Virgin began at this time. My brother Luis gave me this devotion, which I have kept and will keep, as I hope, until death. Every day Luis used to invite me to pray the rosary, and together we made a promise to recite it for the rest of our lives. This I have done till now. Only once, when I was a little child, did I forget.

Our Lord, from that time on, it can be said, took me by the hand with the Most Holy Virgin. At that time my character was very irate, since I had ferocious fits of anger, but they were far apart. After that time no one made me lose my patience; the children and my brothers deliberately did and said many things to make me angry, but I went on as if I didn't hear them. Because of this my mother spoiled me; but afterward whatever displeased me made me cry and break into hysterical sobbing.

When we went to Chacabuco, a cousin of my mother who could not stand me went with us, and Rebecca was the spoiled one. It's impossible to imagine how much I suffered as a result of this. I was terrible with her and I did not bear with her in any way. (*This is Rosenda Luco Solar. Juanita's mother assured us that Juanita acted very sweetly, despite what she says here.*)

In 1907 we started school. (*This school, located on the Alameda, was run by the Religious of the Sacred Heart. These Sisters were referred to as the English Sisters.*)

You, Mother, know how we upset you because of our character. How well I recall when my mother told you of the fights we had with my brothers, how you called us and made us put things right.

It was from that time on that Our Lord showed me suffering. My father lost part of his fortune and thus we had to live more modestly. Every day I asked my mother's permission to make my First Communion. Finally in 1910 it was granted and I began my preparation. It seemed to me that day would never come, dear Mother, and I wept with longing to receive Our Lord. For a year I prepared myself to receive Holy Communion. During this time the Virgin helped me to cleanse my heart of every imperfection.

In the month of the Sacred Heart I modified my character completely. I did this to such an extent that my mother was happy to see me preparing myself so well for my First Communion.

It was costly for me to obey, especially when I was ordered to do something, then out of negligence I took my time in going to do it. Then I told myself that, even though they did not order me to do so, I would hasten to comply before the others. I didn't fight with the children. Sometimes I had to bite my lips and hurry to get dressed. I performed acts of virtue, which I noted down in a little book. The book was full of my deeds. Oh, what a difference between then and now. Would that I could return to that period of my life. But have I not received more favors from our Lord?

6. My First Communion.

My First Communion day was a cloudless day.

My general confession. I remember that afterward,

when I had left the confessional, they put a white veil on me. In the evening I asked for everyone's forgiveness. I remember the impression it made on my father. I went to ask his forgiveness and he kissed me. Then afterward I knelt down and, shedding tears, I begged him to pardon me for all the pain I had caused him by my conduct. Tears streamed down from my father's eyes as he picked me up and, kissing me, said there was nothing I had to beg his pardon for because I had never displeased him, and he was very happy to see me be so good. Oh, yes, dear father, it was because you were so indulgent and good to me. I begged pardon of my mother, who was crying. I did the same to all my brothers and, finally, my *manita* and the rest of the servants. All were deeply touched when they answered me. And, since I was on retreat, I stayed apart and so did not eat at the family table.

The 11th of September, 1910, the centenary year of my country, was a year of happiness and one of the purest recollections I shall have in my whole life. That was a happy day for me, and a beautiful day for nature as well. The sun gave off its rays and filled my soul with happiness and thanksgiving for the Creator.

I got up early. My mother helped me put on my dress. (*On other days Juanita's manita dressed her.*) She combed my hair. She did everything for me, but I wasn't thinking of anything. I was completely indifferent to everything, except to my soul and God. When we arrived, we began praying the rosary for First Communion. Instead of the Hail Mary, we kept reciting "Come, my Jesus, come. Oh, my Savior, come Yourself to prepare my heart."

The moment finally arrived. Two by two we made our entrance into the Chapel. You, my Mother, were at

the head of the procession and Monsignor Jara - who would give us the Sacred Communion - was at the end. We all entered the chapel with our eyes downcast, without looking at anyone. We knelt down on the kneelers which were covered with a very fine white cloth, with a white lily and a candle on each side.

Monsignor Jara spoke such tender and beautiful words to us that we were all crying. I recall one thing he told us: "Ask Jesus Christ that, if you will ever commit a mortal sin, that He take you today, since your souls are as pure as the snow on the mountains. Pray to Him for your parents, the authors of your existence. For those who have lost their parents, this is the moment to seek to be united with them. Yes, you are approaching to become witnesses of the intimate union of your souls with Jesus Christ. Look at the angels of the altar, dear little girls. Look at them, they envy you. All heaven is present." I was crying. Finally he told us that he didn't want to delay any further our union with Jesus because we were already hungering for Him, Jesus Christ Himself.

While we were approaching the altar they were singing that beautiful hymn, "Happy the Soul," which I shall never forget.

It's impossible to describe what took place between my soul and Jesus. I asked him a thousand times that He would take me, and I experienced His dear voice for the first time. "Oh Jesus I love You, I adore You!" I prayed to Him for everybody. And I felt the Virgin near me. Oh, how my heart expanded! For the first time I experienced a delicious peace. After making our thanksgiving we went to the patio to share things with the poor, and each girl went to embrace her family. My Daddy kept kissing me and, being so happy, lifting me up

in his arms. Many little girls came to the house that day. What can I say of the gifts they gave me? The bureau and my bed were filled.

That very happy day ended, which will be the unique day of my life. Shortly after that time we moved from that house (*at 475 Ejercito Street*). Since that first embrace, Jesus did not let me go but took me for Himself.

Every day I went to Communion and talked with Jesus for a long time, but my special devotion was the Virgin. I told her everything. From that day on the earth no longer held any attraction for me. I wanted to die and begged Jesus that He'd take me on the 8th of December.

7. On December 8th I Was Always Sick.

The Virgin And Jesus Spoke To Me.

Every year I used to become sick on the eighth of December, so much so that they believed I was going to die. When I was 12, I came down with diphtheria on the same eighth day of December; I was near death and my mother believed that I was dying because an aunt (*Maria del Carmen Solar Armstrong*) died of this same illness, and I had a worse case of the disease than she had. This aunt died when she was 12 years old. She was a saint from her childhood. To do penance she used to put stones in her shoes; she scourged herself using branches with thorns until she was covered with blood. In her last illness, when the doctors tried to remove the membranes from her throat, she took the instruments and kissed them, saying: "These are the instruments that will bring me to heaven." Then she took her crucifix and said: "Doctors, now do to me what you want." When

the hour of her death came, she begged pardon of my grandparents and then from all, and asked that they excuse her because of the inconveniences of her illness. Then she remained in ecstasy and said: "How great, how immense God is!" In death a smile remained on her lips. I never compared myself to her; I still did not deserve heaven and Our Lord did not take me.

In 1913 I had a dreadful fever. At this time Our Lord was calling me to Himself but I didn't take notice of His voice. Then last year (1914) I got appendicitis, and this made me hear His dear voice that was calling me to make me His spouse later on in Carmel.

My devotion to the Virgin was very great. One day when I was very troubled by something, I told this to the Virgin and asked Her for the conversion of a sinner. Then She answered me. After that, when I called Her the Virgin spoke to me. Once, I asked Her about a doubt I had. Then, a voice answered me. I said to it: "This is not the voice of my Mother, because She can't be telling me this." I called Her and She said that the devil had answered me. I became fearful. Then She told me that whenever I heard the voice I should ask: "Are you my Mother?" And this is what I always do. Every time I wanted to know something I asked Her and what She told me gave me certainty. My attack of appendicitis was getting worse and I had to remain in bed. They took me out of school and for this I was very happy.

One day I was alone in my room. Because of my illness they spoiled me so that I couldn't remain alone. I want to relate that one day Lucita (*Lucía, her older sister*) was sick and Elisea - a servant who took care of my dear grandfather - went to be with her. Then I became envious and troubled and began to cry. My tearful eyes began to fix themselves on a picture of the

Sacred Heart, and I heard a very sweet voice say to me: "What! I, Juanita, am alone on the altar for your love, and you can't even suffer for a moment?" From that time, the dear Jesus spoke to me, and I spent entire hours conversing with Him. That's the reason I enjoyed being alone. He went on teaching me how I should suffer and not complain, and about intimate union with Himself. Then He told me that He wanted me for Himself, that He would like me to become a Carmelite. Ah! Mother, you can't imagine what Jesus was doing in my soul. At that time I didn't live in myself, it was Jesus who was living in me. I used to get up at seven o'clock, at the time Rebecca was going to school. I kept to a schedule for the whole day and I was doing all things with Jesus and for Jesus.

Our Lord showed me the goal of sanctity. I was to attain this by doing all things as well as I possibly could. Just shortly after that, the priest, my confessor, repeated the very same words to me. Then I told him what Our Lord had told me.

8. Appendicitis Operation.

Every day my pains and illness became worse. On the eighth of December I felt I was going to die. From that day I remained in bed until I was able to get up after my operation. My mother began a novena to Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus (the Carmelite), because I'm very devoted to her. I became better, but on the 24th my mother forgot to recite the novena at night and the next day I got up feeling much worse. At noon on that day I became so weak they believed I was about to die, but Our Lord wanted to spare me. Oh, how good God is to me!

It was decided that I had to have the operation. On

Monday the 28th they rented a room in Saint Vincent's. Only God knows what I suffered. It gave me great pain to think of dying outside my home. On the other hand, I felt such great repugnance to sleeping in beds where other sick people have been.... Thus it is that I felt horrible in going.

Little Ignacio came into my room, his little eyes filled with tears, but hardly had he seen me than he dried the tears and began to be playful. I didn't see him cry for even a moment, an admirable thing in a little boy who was scarcely 4 years old. On Monday I went by car with my mother and my mamita to the hospital. I was almost dead from fatigue when I arrived at my room in Saint Vincent's, but then I recovered. At 5 o'clock in the morning I went to Communion. How beautiful that Communion was! I believed it was to be my last. With all my soul I asked our Lord that He would give me courage and serenity. What would have become of me without the help of Jesus? Oh, my most sweet Jesus, I love You!

The young girls came to see me. I calmly played cards with them. Later the nurse came to prepare me. Then the doctors, etc. After lunch my nerves were so bad that I didn't know what was happening to me and I began to cry and to laugh. My mother gave me some medicine and I remained very calm. The little girls came at two o'clock with aunt Juanita and I asked her if she might stay for the operation. She promised me that she would. Later my uncle Eulogio, my mother's brother, arrived, and also Juanita Ossa de Valdés, but they carried on such a different kind of conversation from the one I was expecting. They tried to amuse me, but I was preparing to die. We were in the midst of this when the (*hospital*) Sister came looking for me. I can't say how

good the Sisters were to me. When they could, they always kept me company. They prepared flowers for me in my room so it would look cheerful.

I took my statue of the Virgin and embraced my crucifix; I kissed them and said to them: "Soon I'll contemplate you face to face. Farewell." They placed a quantity of relics on me and I got on my stretcher. My aunts took me, but my mother went by my side, and also Lucita and Rebecca. Each Sister I saw was asked to pray for me and I spoke with all of them. I went for two blocks before arriving at the clinic. I passed by the men's section. I had gotten to the point that I was unable to stop my tears, when I spied a very old servant who had undergone many operations. It gave me such pain to think that I wouldn't see her anymore and, further, it seemed to me that they were taking me as a lamb to the slaughterer to kill me. I began to cry. I gave out a shout. A sob escaped from me, but I told myself I must not cry. I dried my tears and appeared calm so I wouldn't give my mother pain. Afterward I begged Jesus that my mother wouldn't say goodbye and Jesus granted me this. My mother and my uncle Eulogio remained behind, but without my being aware of it. When I arrived at the clinic some of the servants took me up the stairs. Then Lucia and Rebecca said goodbye to me - for me, that goodbye was like a dart that tore my heart to pieces and my tears began to fall. But had I not promised Jesus that I wouldn't cry? Making a great effort I dried my tears and said goodbye to them.

The doctors came out. They began to converse with me calmly, but they seemed like butchers to me; however, Jesus conquered for me. Before receiving the chloroform, I kissed my medal and placed myself in the Heart of Jesus, bidding farewell to the world.

My father and my aunt Juanita should have been there, but my father didn't have the courage. When I awoke my head was aching and I didn't know where I was. I believed that I had come from another world, that's why I began to cry when I saw each person. The pain was terrible. The chloroform caused terrible aftereffects, but I remembered to offer myself to Our Lord, since my mother had reminded me to do so. For a single instant, but no longer, I was in despair, but I immediately repented.

On New Year's Day a letter arrived. That day the Sister who was taking care of me, who was so good, said to me after I had gone to Communion: "There is a letter for you." I was happy and thought that my friends had written to me. But imagine my surprise when I opened it and it was from Jesus, in French. The letter was precious and the Sister had sent it to me, with many beautiful holy cards.

This good Sister showed me a thousand kindnesses. Every day she arranged flowers so the room would be cheerful. A doctor from the clinic sent me orchids, an especially expensive flower. It was the first time anybody had sent me flowers and I remembered to give them to Jesus. This sacrifice cost me dearly, but I made it. *(The dramatics of her narration are explained by the danger of death that the operation entailed in those days).*

YEARS 1915 - 1916

9. A Fit Of Temper I Had.

Soon after we left the clinic we went to a house my father had rented at Chacabuco. I was unable to go

horseback riding, which was a great sacrifice for me because nothing pleased me more than the horse. We had a very good time. There were Missions. We often had Mass, and I was very happy.

For greater humiliation I will relate a fit of anger I had that was so great that it seemed that I was mad. The cause of it was that my sister and my cousin who was with us did not want to go bathing with us, because we were very small. It disgusted me that they called me "little" so I didn't want to go swimming, but they forced me. When we were getting dressed the little girls came to hurry us up, but I answered them that I wouldn't get dressed until they had left. But they didn't want to leave, and my mother told me that I should dress. I, obstinately, didn't want to. My mother punished me but it was all useless. I began to cry and so great was my anger that I wanted to throw myself into the bathtub. My mamita began to dress me, but I kept on being angry. When I was ready, I repented of what I had done and I went to ask my mother's pardon. She was very upset to see me this way and said that she was going to return to Santiago so she wouldn't be with a little girl who was so angry. She didn't want to forgive me; as a result, I was crying and inconsolable. She threw me out of her room and I went to hide so I could cry freely. When it was time to take tea I didn't want to go until I was forced to do so. I felt ashamed and didn't want to look at anyone, since I had given such bad example. I don't know how many times I begged pardon, until my mother told me that night that she would see what my conduct was like in the future.

I believe that I had perfect contrition for this sin; I don't know how many times I wept for it. And every time I remember it, I feel sorry for having been so

ungrateful with Our Lord who had so recently given me back my life. (Her mother later explained that Juanita's anger was due to nervousness caused by the anesthetic).

10. Today I Am 15 Years Old.

July 13. Today I'm 15 years old. Fifteen years old! The age all would like to be; the younger ones, to be considered as grownups, and the older ones and those who have passed this age, even those who are 25 years old, would like to return to this age because it is happiest of all.

Yet I keep on thinking: 15 years, 15 years that God has preserved my life. He gave it to me in 1900. In creating me He preferred me to millions of beings.

In 1914, the year that just ended, I was sick and nearly died, but He gave me life another time. On my part, what have I done for so great a favor and because God has twice given me life?

Fifteen years old! What have I been concerned with in these 15 years? What have I done to please that omnipotent King and most merciful Creator who created me? Why did He prefer me to so many other creatures?

The future hasn't been revealed to me, yet Jesus has pulled back the curtain and I have glimpsed the beautiful shores of Carmel.

How many times have I not begged God to take me from this world. And He almost deigned to grant my pleas but has sent me illnesses from which they believed He wouldn't save me. Yet Jesus has taught me that I must not ask for this and has put as a limit for my journey of life 9 more years in the blessed harbor of Carmel. (Juanita, filled with enthusiasm from reading *Saint Thérèse*, had formed an idea that, like Thérèse, she

herself would die at the age of 24)

Fifteen is the most dangerous age for a young girl because it marks her entrance into the tempestuous sea of the world. But now that I'm 15 years old, Jesus has taken command of my ship and has protected it from encountering other vessels. He has kept me in solitude with Himself. Consequently, my heart, by knowing this Captain, has fallen under the spell of His love, and here He keeps me captive. Oh, how I love this prison and this powerful King who keeps me captive; and how I love this Captain who amid the waves of the ocean doesn't allow me to suffer shipwreck.

Each day Jesus nourishes me with His adorable Body and, together with this delicate food, I hear a sweet and soft voice like the harmonious echoes of the angels of heaven. This is the voice that guides me, that loosens the sails of the ship of my soul so I will not perish, will not sink. I always hear that dear voice which is the voice of my Beloved, the voice of Jesus in the depths of my soul. And in my pains, in my temptations, He is my Consoler, He is my Captain.

May my Jesus always lead me by the way of the Cross. And then my soul will take flight, where it can encounter the air that gives life and where there is repose.

11. Boarding School.

During vacation time I wrote to you, Mother, giving you an understanding of my vocation which you had already guessed.

We came in March and I started school but you, my Mother, were already ill at the time. How I suffered and how I prayed for your recovery. But the Lord didn't want

to make you better and made you drink the chalice of bitterness that He reserves for those He loves. They moved you to the school on Maestranza Street. (*This is the school of the Religious of the Sacred Heart on Maestranza Street - now Portugal Street - here Juanita and Rebecca entered as boarders during the last days of July, 1915.* What pain this separation caused me. But together with you it was offered to Our Lord. In seeing you so filled with strength and so heroic, I was filled with courage and asked myself: "Isn't Jesus the One who is her support and isn't He the One who is assisting her?")

I wrote you a letter in which I showed you my heart, and after a few days I went to see you, without realizing that very shortly I would also be there. During the semester my mother told us that we would enter as interns (*boarding*) students. Despite my pain, the least I could do was to thank the Lord, who was paving the way so I would become more separated from the things of the world. He was calling me to be with Him, so I'd become accustomed to live more apart from my family before my entrance into Carmel. (*From what Juanita writes here we see the immense sacrifice needed to adapt herself to the discipline of the boarding school; see also her letter to the Virgin. In her letters of February and March, 1916, she characterizes the boarding school as a jail or a dungeon. She gives us assurance that the thought of the school disturbed the happiness of her vacation and brought her to exclaim: "The boarding school should be reduced to ashes"*).

What I suffered can be seen from the lines I wrote each day when I was getting ready for bed; they are a sort of diary. (*Juanita made several mistakes in dates; these have been corrected.*)

Thursday, 2 September 1915. It is 1 month and 2 days ago that they told us we would enter as boarding students.

I believe I shall never become accustomed to live far from my family: my father, my mother, those beings I love so much. Ah, if they knew how I suffer, they would sympathize with me! Nevertheless I must console myself. Will I live my whole life without being separated from them? This is what I would like: to repay them by taking care of them for all they've done for me. But the voice of God is demanding more and I must follow Jesus to the end of the world if He desires it. In Him I find everything. He alone takes up my thoughts. And all the rest, outside of Him, is shadow, affliction, and vanity. For Him I'd leave all things to go and hide behind the grilles of Carmel, if this is His will, and live for Him alone. What happiness, what joy! It's Heaven on earth.

But in the meantime, the years I'll have to wait before I give Him the most sweet name of Spouse seem like centuries. How sad are the days of this exile! Yet He's united to me and very often says to me: "My dearest friend." This infuses strength into me and I go on forcing myself to make myself a little less unworthy of the title that I'll bear. Where is the place where we'll celebrate our espousal and the place where we'll live united? He told me it will be Carmel. But each time I want to look at Him more closely, it seems that He covers Himself with a veil so that I see nothing, and without hope I retire sad and disconsolate. I see that my body will not resist and all those who are aware of this say to me that (*the Carmelite*) Order is very austere while your health is very delicate. But You, Jesus, are my Friend and as such You grant me your consolation. One day I went home for the day and found that the Mother Superior of Carmel

(of the Carmelite Monastery called Carmen Alto, then located across from Saint Lucy Hill on Carmel Street; today, it is at 3252 Pedro Valdivia Avenue), without knowing me, had sent a picture of little Thérèse of the Child Jesus to me with my mother. It gave me great joy. I'll commend myself to little Thérèse so she may cure me and that I can become a Carmelite. But I only desire what fulfills the will of God. He knows best what is fitting for me. Oh, Jesus, I love You; I adore You with all my soul!

12. Toothache. Religious Vows. Visits.

First Friday. Last night Mother Izquierdo came to see me in my bedroom. I told her that I had a very bad toothache and had a headache all day. She spoke these words that Jesus had spoken to me in other trying circumstances: "My child, Jesus loves you very much. He surrounds you with His Cross. Offer this pain like a flower for your Communion tomorrow." I love this Sister very much. She's a true saint.

Wednesday the 8th. Today two novices took their vows; it made a great impression on me. They came forward and in the presence of the Sacred Host promised Him to be His brides. Oh, what sublime dignity! When will I be able to say my final farewells to the world? And one of the postulants received her habit. You can say that she's the bride of Jesus.

After that, young girls came from the day school and we were allowed to stay with them till 11:30.

I saw a great number of Sisters there, among them Mother Popelaire, who had been my teacher for 4 years. I love her very much and don't know why I felt sorry for myself and began to cry. This caused Rebecca to imitate

me. Then I saw that it was necessary to be calm to console her, and this in effect is what happened.

We were with Mother Ríos. What pleasure could be greater! And as I do all that is possible to imagine I'm in Carmel, I sat on the ground at Mother's feet, an example the other girls followed.

On Sunday I shall be alone with Mother Ríos. This causes me fear since I'm thinking of telling her all the changes that have occurred in me since the operation, about my vocation to be a Carmelite, in short, everything. I don't know what I'll do, since it costs me so much to express all that's happening to me. I was happy all day long, but as always, Jesus sent me a little present: it was a cross, which pleased me very much.

Saturday the 11th. Even though I want to write in my diary every day, it's impossible for me. Today I went to Confession. What relief I felt, since I have sins that, even though they're involuntary, it doesn't please me to have since by them I'm separated from Jesus and I cause Him pain. And as I love Him, I would much rather die before offending Him. Yesterday and today I have not eaten caramels, since I have offered them to Jesus, which pleases Him more than me.

13. Decisive Interview.

Sunday the 12th. I have a lot to relate, and above all to give great thanks to Jesus because He allowed me to see Mother Ríos and tell her practically everything. We spoke a great deal. I told her that I was in no way used to this and she said the reason for this was the age in which I had entered. We rapidly passed over this, because she wanted to know what I had left her guessing about in my letter.

First, she made me begin to speak about my operation. She made me see the great goal to which God has destined me by restoring my life and the numerous favors He has granted me. I told her my resolution and she told me she had already guessed it, because God is planning something by giving me life for the second time.

I talked of my flirtation, and she asked me how I could have a boyfriend after so many calls from God. Even though it was not a sin, I should consider that the One who called me was the King of heaven and earth. Who was I to play in this way? Was I not a vile and miserable creature? Why should I give my love to a man when God was asking for it? If a man loved me and I paid attention to it, would I not be daring to divert myself? And why was I doing that with God? It is a very grave thing, it is much more serious than a marriage. She said I should consider that it was not for a day or for all of my life, but for eternity. Human love dies out, but divine love embraces everything. I should remember that many were called and few were chosen. Each time I go to Communion, she said, I should speak with dear Jesus about this and strive to become better each day by cultivating the virtues. I should make my prayer with my head on the ground, since I was speaking with the all-powerful One, the One who had abased Himself for me to choose me as His bride. (*Despite what Juanita wrote here, all who knew her unanimously affirmed that she never had any friendship with any particular young man; that she was very circumspect in her dealings with young men, even though she conducted herself spontaneously and joyfully with her brother's friends. This is a far cry from what we mean today by courtship. What she calls a courtship is reduced to not being rude, rewarding with a pleasant smile a young man who, manifesting his interest in her, sent her a bouquet of*

flowers or came to her house "walking up and down the block with her," as they then used to say).

I also told her that I desired to enter Carmel. She asked me: And your health? Can you endure it? Oh, I'll not pay any attention to this miserable body. I'd like to fly but it won't let me. How much abhor you, vessel of corruption, because you oppose the desires of my soul. You are delicate. You don't take well to austerities, and you need to be spoiled. But my Jesus will do what He wants. May His holy will be fully accomplished. This cruel incertitude is like a torment for my soul. Because in this way it's better for me to unite myself to my Jesus in the Garden and console Him a little. It's the chalice that's approaching my lips, yet I believe He'll not force it on me.

Mother Ríos told me that she'd pray a great deal for me and my health, and that I should only think that I was to become the bride of Jesus. She recommended that I read the lives of Saint Teresa of Avila and of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. I told her that I had read the latter many times and had drawn great profit from it since her soul had some points like mine. And also because I, like she, have received many favors from Our Lord, which made her come to perfection very quickly; while I repay Jesus so poorly. This moves me deeply and I promised Him to be better.

Rebecca arrived. I was sorry I had to leave.

14. September Vacation.

March 14. Today is the feast day of Mother Izquierdo. (*Mother Eugenia Izquierdo, the Sister in charge of the students, was distinguished for the solid formation she gave her pupils. After being Superior of*