



The Collected Letters of St. Teresa of Avila: 1578-1582, Volume 2

St. Teresa of Avila

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This second and final volume of St. Teresa's correspondence begins with the year 1578, a most troubling time for Teresa. A keen observer of the reality around her as well as within, Teresa in these letters focuses light on many of the struggles in both the Carmelite order and the church of sixteenth-century Spain. She introduces us to major personalities who have left their mark on history.

Through her letters historians gain a better knowledge of the chronology of events in Teresa's life and how she related to the diverse people she had dealings with. A number of everyday particulars that compilers and editors of those times considered unimportant are today prized. Her worries, her troubles and triumphs, her expressions of sadness and joy, are all present here. With a compelling spontaneity, these letters disclose a Teresa in a complex variety of circumstances. The extraordinary gifts of grace bestowed by God on this Spanish Madre fortified her for a demanding ministry of service which entailed heavy responsibilities and that drew her contemplative soul into a whirl of activities. Because of the limited means of travel and communication in the sixteenth century, the organization of a reform like hers, with its unavoidable business matters, had to be dealt with chiefly through correspondence, a chafing duty that became one of Teresa's greatest trials. She often repeated that letter-writing was her biggest burden, a wearisome task that cost her more than all the miserable roads and bad weather experienced on her journeys through Spain.

With its endnotes, biographical sketches, and above all, fresh translation, this second volume of Teresa's Collected Letters opens again another door into the fascinating world of this saint, one of the greatest women history has known.

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