

Excerpts from TERESA’S DAUGHTERS:
Women of Reflection and Action

By Teresa Rhodes McGee ‘79

There is a beautiful Celtic tradition of “warming the spirits” by telling the stories of the ancestors. There are three particular memories that shape what I would like to address as *the legacy of the College of Saint Teresa* – and St. Teresa herself.

The first is that in 1979 a speaker introduced me to the concept of a paradigm shift. We were challenged in that address to always be willing to change the way we think, to embrace the metanoia of new consciousness, and to be change agents in the world. *The second* memory is of senior pledge day when we stood in this chapel and promised in the name of our alma mater, the mother of our souls, that we would live into the virtues of purity, loyalty and truth. Today I understand those virtues as the basis of an ethical and faithful life. *The third memory* is an October 15th festival liturgy when we celebrated the feast day of Saint Teresa of Avila. **Sister Joyce Rowland’s OSF ‘49** homily awakened in me a desire to explore the great lady from whom we take our name. My reflections on Saint Teresa are fed by an explosion of information that has become available about her through the work of secular scholars—most of them women. The shift in understanding tells us a great deal about how we are to live as agents of change in our world, most especially when to do so is no fun at all.

The College of Saint Teresa had a patron whose life modeled everything her daughters needed to learn. Teresa would surely have agreed with the Sisters of Saint Francis that education is incomplete if it does not nurture the spirit as well as the mind. The world changes for the better when the disciplined intellect is put into service of compassion, commitment, and the longing for communion that guided Teresa’s life.

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