

My Sisters the Saints Study Guide

Questions for Individual or Group Reflection

Chapter 1: Party Girl

1. In this chapter, Colleen discusses her feelings of emptiness and taking her first steps to “open the door to God.” What was your first step? What could your next step be toward God?
2. In the anecdote featuring her boyfriend, Colleen realizes that their relationship is actually a “placeholder” for something more satisfying. Have you ever had a placeholder in your life where God should have been? Do you have one now that needs to be surrendered to Him?
3. Both Saint Teresa of Ávila and Colleen speak of leading a double life. Neither was living in a conspicuously sinful way, yet they each confessed to the torturous feeling of “living in two worlds.” Do you ever feel as though you’re living in two worlds, caught between cultural norms and your faith?

Chapter 2: A Child Again

1. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux wrote about her “little way” which consisted of small, everyday acts of love. These included befriending a particularly cranky nun and not losing patience with others. What are some specific things you could do to better the lives of those around you, as offerings to God in the “little way?”
2. When Thérèse heard of her father’s passing, her reaction was strangely peaceful. How can you find the good—and God’s will—in bad tidings?
3. Just as Alzheimer’s made Colleen’s father more like a child in his faith, Thérèse also strove for childlike faith in God. Why? What qualities do children possess that are essential to your faith?

Chapter 3: Trust Fall

1. Colleen describes accepting a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work as a speechwriter for the President. But this job couldn’t fill the ache in her soul for marriage. Have you ever felt the call to sacrifice something important to you for something better? How have you seen the faithfulness of God in that sacrifice?
2. Colleen describes the atmosphere surrounding the speechwriting staff as a “boys’ club.” Have you ever felt out of place somewhere that you believed God had called you to be? Write out quotes from the saints or Bible verses that remind you of your value to God.
3. Colleen writes that Saint Faustina seemed to embody the verse, “Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding (Prov. 3:5).” At the end of this chapter, Colleen realizes that it is not enough to say she trusts in God; she must act as though she does, whether or not she feels it. What’s the difference? Are actions or words more important? Why?

Chapter 4: A Mother at Heart

1. Saint Edith Stein believed that each woman has a maternal spirit. What does that maternal spirit look like in you?
2. Colleen writes about the dark side of a woman's maternal inclinations, when those inclinations are distorted by sin. These negative traits and habits include nagging, manipulation, domineering behavior and gossip. What are some ways you have seen these weaknesses in yourself? What safeguards can you put in place to curb them?
3. Saint Edith also wrote that "objective work" and daily quiet prayer are twin ways to combat these weaknesses. What are a few concrete ways in which you can apply this doctrine to your own life?

Chapter 5: Into the Darkness

1. Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta wrote about the overwhelming darkness she experienced, even though her entire life was dedicated to God. Despite her depression, though, she never faltered in her good work. Is this frightening or reassuring? Why?
2. When speaking of her infertility and waiting to know whether she would ever be a mother, Colleen's mother told her that the waiting itself was her cross to bear. What crosses have you had to bear? Which are you currently bearing? How is God seeing you through?
3. When has God made you wait for something you really wanted? How did the waiting stretch your faith?

Chapter 6: Triumph of the Cross

1. Colleen writes about how her esteem for Mary grew gradually, and the more she turned to Mary, the more she felt drawn to loving, serving and imitating her Son, Jesus. In what ways has devotion to Mary led you closer to Christ? In what ways has following Mary's example helped you grow in virtue?
2. Colleen's yearning for motherhood was her own cross to carry, but it also made her dependence on God that much stronger. What trials are you most thankful for? How have they deepened your faith?
3. After having read of Colleen's closeness to six saints, which saints would you like to learn more about, both in reading works and through prayer?