

# Barbara mujica's sister teresa

Religion



Book review Barbara Mujica's *Sister Teresa* is a novel that speaks about religious and theological issues in society. The author takes the reader through the life of the beautiful woman Teresa. Teresa is depicted as the most beautiful woman in a place called Avila in Spain. Early in the novel, we notice that Teresa is a very wild and stubborn child in the family. She is in relationship with Don Javier, a very handsome man who also happens to be Teresa's cousin. This is so scandalous, hence, the father sends her to a convent so that the marriage does not occur, and so that she may learn discipline. It turns out well for the father since Teresa embraces the austere life and decides to dedicate her life to Jesus instead of Don Javier. She discovers her inner spirituality (Mujica 23). We are also introduced to Angelica, who after unsuccessfully trying to be married off, decides to follow Teresa's lead and go to the convent. However, she does not do this out of faith, but just because she has been forced to do this out of necessity. The convent in those days had another role unlike the one we are used to in that, it provided temporary homage to a woman in case her looks and money were not enough to lure a man to come and marry her. In the convent, the character traits of Angelica and those of Teresa contrast immensely. Angelica is a very worldly girl whose reason for going to the convent was not spiritual, but because she wanted temporary homage before she would resolve her problems. Teresa on the other hand is a spiritual being who took convent matters seriously. She has a very deep spiritual immersion that contrasts with Angelica's. We see how Teresa is remorseful for her sinful acts with Javier. She confesses about this and she gets very elated because it is as if her heart is satisfied. She feels forgiven. On the other hand, Angelica does not seem happy concerning this issue. According to Angelica, Teresa's

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actions are a very deep transgression, hence should not be forgiven (Mujica 45). From this, the author is illustrating a very important spiritual tenet, forgiveness and remorse. We all can see Teresa's remorse judging from the way she prays and begs for forgiveness. Another point that the author seems to be making here is the issue of spiritual seriousness and commitment. Teresa epitomizes spiritual commitment as opposed to Angelica who represents the unserious in spiritual life. She lives in the convent but beyond the convent gowns lies a wild chic who is intoxicated with worldly affairs. Teresa has been portrayed as the hero by the author, but her entire life journey is riddled with so many illnesses and disease incidences. At some point in her life, she becomes a comatose patient. She is paralyzed all over the body and this renders her immobile. The closest person who can take care of her is Angelica. Angelica starts to take care of her, albeit grudgingly. Angelica is a very jealous sister but Teresa does not mind of this. A clairvoyant then prophesies that Teresa is going to be elevated to sainthood. Young sisters including Angelica continue being less fond of Teresa. Teresa's beauty, kindness and humor continue for the rest of her life until her death in 1582 (Mujica 67). The author has outlined various spiritual aspects in his description. He contrasts the two character traits of Angelica and Teresa by asserting that Teresa is a good nun as compared to Angelica who is still possessed by earthly things. The author has used the book to give a tale of conviction. The author is describing to the reader concerning the making of a saint. Teresa passes through many challenges, adversaries, admirers and many more people, and through this, she is able to discuss on many spiritual tenets. Her tale gives the reader life lessons that can be encompassed in modern life experiences. The religious principle that the author is simply

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passing across is that no matter what situation may be facing us, we should not give up at all. Teresa passes through tough and inclement conditions, but she does not allow this to compromise her faith. She still continues to enjoy a good relationship with her God. The author has used sister Angelica as a person who knows Sister Teresa better, just like God does. She also undergoes personal challenges and spiritual crises, factors that shape her will. The author has used her as a sample of change. At the end we see her giving encouraging words about Sister Teresa, indicating her journey to change. Works Cited Mujica, Barbara. *Sister Teresa: The Woman Who Became Saint Teresa of Avila*. New York: Overlook Pr, 2006. Print