

HEALED

BY TRUTH

Dear Teens,

When I was a child, my parents did not protect my innocence, and they did not teach me the truth about love and sexuality. It has taken me many years to find hope and healing, and I want to share some thoughts with you.

I can see what you are going through right now. There are a lot of confusing and contradictory messages out there regarding love, marriage, and sexuality. Some of you have parents who are good at guiding you through, but many of you do not. We don't get to choose who our parents are, or our families, or where we're born. But we can decide how we will live our lives as adults.

That was the tipping point for me. My parents thought I would go out and explore the world with my sexuality like they did, and they couldn't have been more wrong. After all the abuse, neglect, and trauma of my childhood, I didn't want anything to do with sex or family. I was hurt in the deepest ways possible.

When I turned eighteen years old, I ran away from home and became a nun in a monastery. I had some pretty powerful divine interventions in my childhood, and I was drawn to a life of prayer.

In the monastery, I learned to quiet my mind. It took one whole year of silence and solitude before all the noise stopped in my head. The second year, I learned to hear my own voice, apart from everyone else's. The third year I learned to recognize God's voice.

The reason I am telling you this is because there are billions of voices in the world right now, and they all have different opinions of who you are and who you should be, and most of them have agendas. I think you already know that you won't be happy with someone else's opinion of you. There's a true *you* inside, and only God knows the depths. It's your job to find out.

I encourage you to have moments of silence in your life. You don't have to join a monastery, but it is good to hear your own voice and to find God's voice. Learn the ancient art of self-mastery, which leads to a lifetime of self-respect. Through self-mastery you will learn to discipline your body, mind, and soul. You will learn how to fight against disordered thoughts and desires. You will learn the honor of virtue, and the power of a pure heart.

Most adults think you are not interested in these things, but I think they are wrong. I think you are smarter than they realize. I think you can sense that making hasty decisions about the deepest parts of your humanity and acting out on whims and passing desires will only lead to emptiness and pain. I think you can sense there's something greater.

I am thankful for my time in the monastery, and for breaking the chain of generational abuse. If I could make it through the rough terrain of abuse, neglect, and trauma, and find happiness in life, I think you can too. It won't be easy, but it is possible.

I encourage you to find your identity in the silence of your heart. Find out who you really are. Find your voice. Find God's voice. Learn the truth about marriage, love, and sexuality before you make any decisions about how you're going to live the rest of your lives.

I am so happy and honored to know so many young people like you, with a whole future of creativity and possibility in front of you. In the words of a young man who was not afraid to face mountains of difficulties, *Verso l'alto!* (To the heights!)

Sincerely yours,

CARRIE  BUCALO

--A mother who believes in you.