

really engaged in mental prayer under the gentle guidance of my Divine Master.

The three months' preparation for my First Communion passed quickly; the time came for my retreat, and during it I stayed at the Abbey. What days of grace! I do not think such joys can be experienced outside a religious house; the number of children being comparatively small, each one can receive individual care. It is in a spirit of the deepest gratitude that I speak here of the true motherly affection our mistresses showed us; though I do not know why, it was nevertheless plain that they watched over me even more carefully than over my companions.

Every night, the first mistress, her little lamp in hand, softly drew aside my bed curtains and kissed me tenderly. She showed me such affection that, touched by her kindness, I said to her one night: "Mother, I love you so much that I am going to tell you a great secret." I then took from under my pillow the precious book you had given me and handed it to her. She opened it with care, and, looking through it attentively, told me how privileged I was. Several times during the retreat, the truth came home to me that very few motherless children are as affectionately dealt with as I was then.

I followed most closely Father Domin's instructions, taking copious notes. As for my own thoughts, I did not put any of them in writing, for I knew I should remember them quite well. And so it proved.

With what delight I followed the Divine Office, just as the nuns did! I was noticeable among my companions by a large crucifix, which, like the missionaries, I carried in my belt. The crucifix had been given me by Léonie, and it was thought that in wearing it as I did, I was simply imitating my Carmelite sister. And certainly my heart was often in Carmel with my dear little Mother. I knew you were also in retreat, not to prepare for

