



To Be A Daughter

~~Erin Gaynor

What does it mean to be a Daughter?

Being a Daughter, in short, means everything to me. My entire life seems to be one ongoing test. A test of patience. A test of stamina--physically, emotionally and spiritually. A test of faith. A test of obedience. A test of love.

My life seems to consist of more acutely trying times than at others. When I was born, the expectation for my survival was slim. For me thriving, the expectation was none. Though, back in 1981, I was blissfully unaware of just how much the odds were stacked against me. My mom, on the other hand, was not. Not only did I survive, I thrived. It wasn't easy but I not only survived but I thrived with the love, devotion, patience, persistence, and guidance of my mom (and in my teenage years, my dad)

When the possibility for me to become a Daughter came along, it was at one of those acutely trying times- both physically and emotionally. I found myself going along from day-to-day feeling pretty terrible, both physically and emotionally. From a physical standpoint, I was sick and I was in pain. The least little things would cause me physical illness and the pain never completely went away. From an emotional standpoint, I was anxious and depressed. Anxious because I never knew if I would feel better or worse the next day, always afraid to make plans, knowing that I may have to cancel them at a moments notice. Depressed because there was so much going on, and I wished that I were able to function like a normal person. Not wishing to walk, but just wishing that I could make plans and not always have the threat of being too ill or in too much pain to do those things I desperately wanted to do.

When the opportunity to become a Daughter was brought to me, I was eager and apprehensive. Eager because I heard about Daughters, over the years, from my mom and badly wanted to be a part of something meaningful. I was apprehensive because of the fear that my health wouldn't allow me to pull my weight in The Order. In the back of my mind, I was worried that I would be a burden to The Order. Eagerness won out over apprehensiveness.

So, I prayed. I prayed like never before! I prayed that if it were in God's will, that He grant me the strength and the stamina to attend the discernment classes and fully participate to the best of my ability. When, week-after-week I was able to make the discernment classes and participate I thanked God for allowing me to embark on this amazing journey. When the Daughters' cross was lovingly draped around my neck on the day we were admitted, I officially became one of the charter members of the newly created Esther Chapter of The Order of the Daughters of the Holy Cross. I realized at that moment that it was God's will for me, "for such a time as this."

Being obedient to God's will is just one thing that it means to be a Daughter. Despite adverse circumstances, trusting in God's will and being obedient to that will is just the tip of the iceberg for me. The fellowship has opened doors to share my life with others.

The Order means opportunities to socialize with women who all have similar beliefs and who are working toward a common goal of serving our Heavenly Father. I also get the opportunity to share about The Order with women who may not know about us, as well as with women who have heard, but have not been able to become a member. I tell them how, as much as I genuinely wanted to be a part of such a wonderful organization, it took years of time, patience, prayer, and trust for me to end up in a place where participation was a viable option for me. Participation becoming an option for me did not make said participation smooth sailing. I still had to contend with being ill and being in pain so often that I seriously considered withdrawing on more than one occasion.

I have been a Daughter for about a year and a half. In the past year, I have felt a more joyful purpose in my life than I ever remember feeling before.