



The Little Flower Weekly



A Supplement to the St. Therese Parish Bulletin



"We need no wings to go in search of Him, but have only to look upon Him present within us."

-St. Teresa of Jesus
1515—1582

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JOG-A-THON RESULTS

Dear St. Therese Parish Community,

We want to thank you for your support for last week's Jog-a-Thon. Thank you for coming out to cheer all of the Friars as they walked, jogged, ran, and rode on a skateboard or roller blades on a hot 97-degree day. Thank you to Fr. Matthias who ran in San Jose for our School.

Thanks to your generosity and the generosity of a matching donor, **we have made over \$20,000!** It is still not too late to pledge or make a donation! We are grateful for your sacrificial giving especially in these difficult times. Thank you, runners and friars, for your talents. Let's continue to run the race so as to win!

God bless you,

Alma Cornejo, Principal of Saint Therese Carmelite School





REPORT ON THE "MARCH FOR FAITH"



Fr. Philip leading the Rosary at the March for Faith

THE FOLLOWING IS A REPORT FROM THE "MARCH FOR FAITH" COALITION ABOUT THE MARCH ON OCTOBER 10, 2020

More than 100 people from across southern California—and from as far away as Texas!—gathered at La Placita in Los Angeles on Saturday, October 10, to “march for Faith”. They brought banners, signs, American flags, and Bibles to the Plaza across the street from Our Lady Queen of Angels. Susan Arnall, President and co-founder of March for Faith, articulated the purpose of the march: “Politicians are targeting us now because of our faith, because of our religion. The State is making the faithful homeless, literally kicking us out of our houses of worship, forcing us to worship on sidewalks and parking lots. To paraphrase Archbishop Cordileone, the Archbishop of San Francisco, we are being put at the back of the line.... Our rights come from God, not government. There are forces within our government that are attacking our God-given liberties. They are not going to stop unless we stand up to them as a coalition of faith in the public square.

A Carmelite priest, **Fr. Phillip of St. Therese in Alhambra**, gave a stirring invocation that “religion is essential.” He quoted Blessed Titus Brandsma, a Catholic priest imprisoned in Dacau and killed in WWI: **“Those who want to win the world for Christ must have the courage to come into conflict with the world.”** He continued, “Pray for our Governor and other politicians who have wrongfully and *unconstitutionally* declared churches unessential. I strongly believe that churches are not museums for saints but that they are hospitals for the sick.... Pray today...for religious leaders...that they, with their God-given authority, will push back an overreaching government... Prayer is power!” He also praised San Francisco’s Archbishop Cordileone’s recent rally to “Free the Mass,” noting that “today the churches in San Francisco are once again open.”

Constitutional attorney **Dean Broyles from The National Center for Law & Policy** drove almost two hours to speak. He quoted the First Amendment, reminding marchers that: “God does not coerce belief and neither should the State. The State has no jurisdiction whatsoever to suspend our faith... The U.S. Constitution is the supreme law of the land and is not suspended by a virus... The Church must remain sovereign in its authority. We must resist, denounce, and destroy any argument that the State has any authority to control the Church, including its beliefs and practices.” In closing, Broyles drew vigorous applause, thanking the faithful who had come to march, “When do we care enough about our faith to march in the streets?...Today you are marching, and I thank God I have lived to see this day. May God bless you and may God bless America.”

Attorney **Brad Dacus from The Pacific Justice Institute** was the final speaker. He illustrated the looming constitutional crisis facing people of faith today: **“How many of you would have thought for one moment that we would be potentially arrested or tried because we went to church or had a church service? That’s what we are facing here in the United States today.** In Seattle, churches are allowed to open at twenty-five percent capacity. Movie theaters can operate at fifty percent capacity. Is our body impacted differently medically if you’re sitting there watching a movie versus hearing a sermon? No, of course not. This is overt State hostility against people of faith. Dacus then paraphrased a Pennsylvania judge, proclaiming “Government cannot forever, under the cloak of emergency and crises, step and trounce upon our fundamental rights under the Constitution.” Following the speeches, the crowd peacefully marched back to La Placita.



Bishop Daly v. Bishop McElroy on Abortion & the Election

Submitted to the Little Flower Weekly by Fr. Thomas Koller, Pastor of St. Therese

NATIONAL CATHOLIC REGISTER (Joan Frawley Desmond)— **Bishop Thomas Daly of Spokane** told the National Catholic Register that he strongly disagreed with **San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy's** guidance to Catholic voters. In his October 13 remarks, Bishop McElroy indicated it was acceptable for Catholics to support Democratic nominee Joe Biden's pro-abortion-rights stance because, according to the Bishop, the "formulation of individual laws regarding abortion" lies in the "realm" of prudential judgment. In response, Bishop Daly told the Register, "Reading through Bishop McElroy's statement, I noticed that he never mentions that **abortion is the 'preeminent' moral issue for Catholics. Bishop McElroy is a moral theologian, but one of the most important roles of a bishop is to teach, and he is not doing that.**" During the discussion, titled "**Voting as an Authentic Disciple,**" Bishop McElroy addressed the question of how Catholic voters should consider a candidate's position on abortion. According to the *National Catholic Reporter*, Bishop McElroy said that because the Church teaches that some actions, including abortion, are "intrinsically evil, always and everywhere wrong," Church leaders have argued that "candidates who seek laws opposing intrinsically evil actions automatically have a primary claim to political support in the Catholic conscience." The San Diego bishop did not agree with this position and told his audience that "the framing of legislation is inescapably the realm of prudential judgment, not intrinsic evil. While a specific act of abortion is intrinsically evil, the formulation of individual laws regarding abortion is not. It is an imperative of conscience for Catholic disciples to seek legal protections for the unborn. But whether these protections take the form of sanctioning the doctor or the pregnant mother, whether those sanctions should be civil or criminal penalties, are all questions of deep disagreement among advocates wholeheartedly devoted to the protection of unborn children."

The 2020 election pits President Donald Trump, a Republican who has pledged to continue to implement and promote pro-life policies, against Joe Biden, a self-identified Catholic who backs *Roe v. Wade*, opposes the Hyde Amendment, and has promised to pass legislation securing legal abortion should *Roe* be overturned. Bishop Daly recalled that before the November 2019 vote on updating the U.S. bishops' election-year statement, "Cardinal Blasé Cupich and Bishop McElroy wanted changes in the document, with Bishop McElroy arguing that it isn't Catholic teaching that abortion is the preeminent issue that we face as a world, and Archbishop Charles Chaput stood to challenge that statement."

During that intense debate over the language on abortion that would be added to a letter accompanying the USCCB's election-year guidance, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," Bishop McElroy argued that identifying abortion as a "preeminent priority" was at odds with Church teaching and with Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad). The exhortation states that the lives of the unborn are "equally sacred" with "the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection." Bishop McElroy said "It is not Catholic teaching that abortion is the preeminent issue that we face in the world of Catholic social teaching."

"I am certainly not against quoting the Holy Father's full statement. I think it's a beautiful statement," said Archbishop Chaput. "But I am against anyone saying that our stating that it [abortion] is 'preeminent' is contrary to the teaching of the Pope," he added, sparking applause. Bishop McElroy also suggested in his St. Mary's comments that voters should not question the Catholicity of a candidate who does not support pro-life policies. "One very sad dimension of the election cycle we are witnessing," he said, is "the public denial of candidates' identity as Catholics because of a specific policy position they have taken. Such denials are injurious because they reduce Catholic social teaching to a single issue. But they are offensive because they constitute an assault on the meaning of what it is to be Catholic." Bishop Daly noted Bishop McElroy said it was "offensive" to question a candidate's Catholic identity, irrespective of the policies they uphold. "But in his description of what constitutes a Catholic, there is no mention of loving Christ and loving the truth," Bishop Daly said. "The truth is that life begins at conception and must be protected and revered until natural death. That belief forms who we are as Catholics, but it is left out of his definition of being a Catholic, as far as I am concerned. I keep thinking of those words from Deuteronomy: 'I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live.'"

Bishop Daly said that the San Diego bishop's remarks "effectively constituted a defense of Biden and other prominent Catholic elected officials who publicly support unrestricted abortion." "But if abortion is intrinsically evil, which Bishop McElroy admits to, how can Catholics vote for a candidate like Biden?" asked Bishop Daly. "He has moved in an aggressive way to do all he can to make sure abortion is available. He has walked away from the Hyde Amendment. If elected, he will push for legislation that furthers abortion. He is not passive on this issue. There is no nuance. He has taken a strong stand."

Requiem Mass for All Souls Day

As reported in the bulletin, on **Monday, November 2**, we will commemorate the souls of our loved ones at a special **REQUIEM MASS**, which will include the **Faure Requiem**, sung by the **St. Therese Choir**, directed by **Charlotte Lansberg**.

When you arrive, **YOU** are invited to fill out a card with the names of your loved ones, and they will then be prayed for all during November. Also, from 7:00 to 7:30, you will also be given the opportunity to **light a candle for your loved ones before Mass starts at 7:30 p.m.**



During the Mass, which starts at 7:30 p.m., the following names—those whose funerals have taken place at St. Therese since All Souls' Day 2019, as well as the names of loved ones whose funerals took place in the last year at other churches—will be **remembered by name in a sung litany**.

Elena Baldo

Robert Black

Barbara Bushere

William Cain

Genie Campbell

Hector Castro

Marie Chavez

Christina Chernick

Akira Curtiss

Roland DeLaRosa

Fr. Joseph Glynn

Evangeline Holman

Gilbert Holman

Patricia Jackson

Maria Leone

James Magro

Charles Marikian

Clara Grace Maringka

Mary Kay McMaster

Hugh McTeague

Jean Motz

William Murray

Marie Nesvig

Richard Nolan

Efrain Parra

Fernando Perez

Victor San Lucas

Richard Stewart

Daisy Torres

William Vasquez

George Watson



"It is therefore a holy and wholesome thing to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins."

(2 Maccabees 12:46)

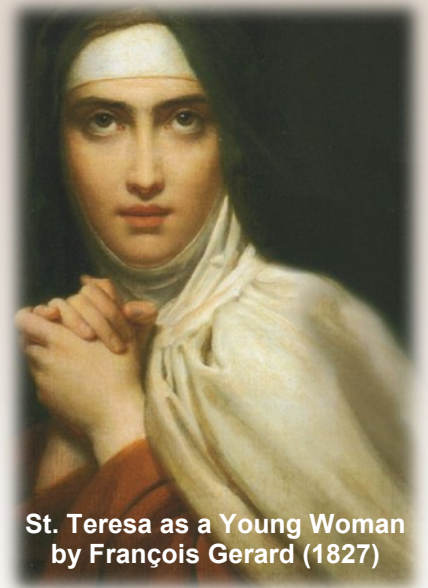
Bio of St. Teresa of Avila

St. Teresa is revered by the Discalced Carmelite Friars as the Holy Mother of their Order. She was born Teresa de Ahumada y Cepeda in Avila, Castile, Spain, on March 28, 1515. Her paternal grandfather, Juanito de Hernandez, was a Jewish convert to Christianity and was condemned by the Spanish Inquisition for allegedly returning to the Jewish faith. Her parents were of a very high estate, with her father, Alonso Sánchez de Cepeda, being a rather wealthy merchant. He bought a knighthood and successfully assimilated into Christian society. He was rigidly honest and pious, but he may have carried his strictness to extremes. Teresa's mother, Beatriz de Ahumada y Cuevas, loved romance novels but because her husband objected to these fanciful books, she hid the books from him. This put Teresa in the middle—especially since she liked the romances, too. Her father told her never to lie, but her mother told her not to tell her father. Later, she said she was always afraid that no matter what she did she was going to do everything wrong.

Teresa was the "most beloved" among her nine brothers and sisters. From her youth, Teresa showed great zeal and piety, as well as courage. **She was considered by all those around her to be quite beautiful.** Plus, she had an irresistible charm, a sharp wit, a kind nature, and much enthusiasm. Everyone loved to be around her. She was skilled in embroidery, wonderful at housekeeping, and an excellent writer. When she was five years old, she convinced her older brother that they should, as she says in her *Life*, "go off to the land of the Moors and beg them, out of love of God, to cut off our heads there." They got as far as the road from the city before an uncle found them and brought them back. Some people have used this story as an early example of sanctity, but some think it's better used as an early example of her strong will. After this incident, she led a fairly ordinary life, though she was convinced that she was a horrible sinner.

When Teresa was 14 her mother died, and Teresa became grief-stricken. This prompted her to embrace a deeper devotion to the Virgin Mary as her spiritual mother. Along with this good resolution, however, she also developed immoderate interests in reading popular fiction (consisting, at that time, mostly of medieval tales of knighthood and romance), paying great attention to her appearance and her clothing, flirting with boys, and rebelling—like other teenagers throughout the ages. When she was 16, her father decided she was out of control and sent her to a convent. At first she hated it but eventually began to enjoy it—partly because of her growing love for God, and partly because the convent was a lot less strict than her father. Still, when the time came for her to choose between marriage and religious life, she had a tough time making the decision. She'd watched a difficult marriage negatively affect her mother; on the other hand, being a nun didn't seem like much fun. When she finally chose religious life, she did so because she thought that it was the only safe place "for someone as prone to sin" as she was.

Once installed at the Carmelite convent permanently, she started to learn and practice mental prayer, at which she "tried as hard as I could to keep Jesus Christ present within me. My imagination is so dull that I had no talent for imagining or coming up with great theological thoughts." Teresa prayed this way off and on for eighteen years without feeling that she was getting results. Part of the reason for her trouble was that the convent was not the safe place she assumed it would be. Many women who had no place else to go wound up at the convent, whether they had vocations or not. Nuns were encouraged to stay away from the convents for long period of time to cut down on expenses. They also arranged their veils attractively and wore jewelry. Prestige depended not on piety but on money. There was a steady stream of visitors in the convent parlors, and parties that included young men. What spiritual life there was involved hysteria, weeping, exaggerated penance, nosebleeds, and self-induced visions.



St. Teresa as a Young Woman
by François Gerard (1827)





Teresa suffered the same problem that Francis of Assisi did—she was too charming. Everyone liked her and she liked to be liked. She found it too easy to slip into a worldly life and ignore God. The convent encouraged her to have visitors to whom she would teach mental prayer because their financial gifts helped the community economy. But Teresa got more involved in flattery, vanity, and gossip than in spiritual guidance—all of which kept her from God. Then Teresa fell ill with malaria. She had a seizure, and people were so sure she was dead that, after she woke up four days later, she learned they had dug a grave for her. Afterwards, she was paralyzed for three years and was never completely well. Yet instead of helping her spiritually, her sickness became an excuse to stop her prayer completely: she couldn't be alone, she wasn't healthy enough, and so forth. Later she would say, "Prayer is an act of love, words are not needed. Even if sickness distracts from thoughts, all that is needed is the will to love." For years she hardly prayed at all "under the guise of humility." She thought that, as a wicked sinner, she didn't deserve to get favors from God. But turning away from prayer was like "a baby turning from its mother's breasts; what can be expected but death?"

She experienced periods of religious ecstasy through the use of the devotional book, *Third Spiritual Alphabet* (published in 1527 and written by Francisco de Osuna). This work, following the example of similar writings of medieval mystics, consisted of directions for an examination of conscience and for spiritual self-concentration and inner contemplation. She claimed that she rose from the lowest stage, "recollection," to the "devotions of silence" or even to the "devotions of ecstasy," which was one of perfect union with God. During this final stage, she said she frequently experienced a rich "blessing of tears." As the Catholic distinction between mortal and venial sin became clearer to her, she says she came to understand the awful terror of sin and the inherent nature of original sin. She also became conscious of her own natural impotence in confronting sin, and the necessity of absolute subjection to God. However, she expressed that she found prayer difficult. "I was more anxious for the hour of prayer to be over than I was to remain there. I don't know what heavy penance I would not have gladly undertaken rather than practice prayer." She was distracted often: "This intellect is so wild that it doesn't seem to be anything else than a frantic madman no one can tie down." Teresa sympathizes with those who have a difficult time in prayer: "All the trials we endure cannot be compared to these interior battles."

Yet her experience gives us wonderful descriptions of mental prayer: "For mental prayer, in my opinion, is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us. The important thing is not to think much but to love much and so do that which best stirs you to love. Love of God is not great delight but desire to please Him in everything." In time, God gave her spiritual delights during prayer: the prayer of quiet where God's presence overwhelmed her senses, raptures where God overcame her with glorious foolishness, prayer of union where she felt the light of God melt her soul away. Sometimes her whole body was raised from the ground. If she felt God was going to levitate her body, she stretched out on the floor and called the nuns to sit on her and hold her down. Far from being excited about these events, she "begged God very much not to give me any more favors in public."

In her books, she analyzes and dissects mystical experiences the way a scientist would. She never saw these gifts as rewards from God but instead as the way He "chastised" her. The more love she felt, the harder it was to offend God. She says, "The memory of the favor God has granted does more to bring such a person back to God than all the infernal punishments imaginable." Her biggest fault was her friendships. Though she wasn't sinning, she was very attached to her friends until God told her, "No longer do I want you to converse with human beings but with angels." In an instant He gave her the freedom that she had been unable to achieve through years of effort. After that, God always came first in her life. Some friends, however, did not like what was happening to her and got together to discuss some "remedy" for her. Concluding that she had been deluded by the devil, they sent a Jesuit to analyze her. The Jesuit reassured her that her experiences were from God but soon everyone knew about her and was making fun of her. One confessor was so sure that the visions were from the devil that he told her to make an obscene gesture called the fig every time she had a vision of Jesus. She cringed but did as she was ordered, all the time apologizing to Jesus. Fortunately, Jesus didn't seem upset but told her that she was right to obey her confessor.

In her autobiography she would say, "I am more afraid of those who are terrified of the devil than I am of the devil himself." The devil was not to be feared but fought by talking more about God. Teresa felt that the best evidence that her delights came from God was that the experiences gave her peace, inspiration, and encouragement. "If these effects are not present, I would greatly doubt that the raptures come from God; on the contrary, I would fear, lest they be caused by rabies." On St. Peter's Day in 1559, Teresa became firmly convinced that Jesus Christ presented Himself to her in bodily form, though invisible. These visions lasted almost uninterrupted for more than two years. In another vision, later called the Transverberation, a seraph drove the fiery point of a golden lance repeatedly through her heart, causing an ineffable spiritual-bodily pain. "I saw in his hand a long spear of gold, and at the point there seemed to be a little fire. He appeared to me to be thrusting it at times into my heart, and to pierce my very entrails; when he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out also, and to leave me all on fire with a great love of God. The pain was so great, that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain, that I could not wish to be rid of it..." (This vision was the inspiration for one of Bernini's most famous works, the Ecstasy of Saint Teresa at Santa Maria della Vittoria, which is now in Rome.) The memory of this episode served as an inspiration throughout the rest of her life, and motivated her lifelong imitation of the life and suffering of Jesus, epitomized in the motto usually associated with her: *Lord, either let me suffer or let me die.*

Sometimes, however, she couldn't avoid complaining to her closest Friend about the hostility and gossip that surrounded her. When Jesus told her, "Teresa, that's how I treat my friends," Teresa responded, "No wonder you have so few..." But since Christ has so few friends, she felt they should be good ones. And that's why she decided to reform her Carmelite order. The incentive to give outward practical expression to her inward motive was inspired in Teresa by the Franciscan priest, St. Peter of Alcantara, who became acquainted with her early in 1560 and then became her spiritual guide and counselor. She resolved to found a reformed Carmelite convent, correcting the laxity, which she had found in the Cloister of the Incarnation and others. Guimara de Ulloa, a woman of wealth and a friend, supplied the funds. Teresa worked for many years encouraging Spanish Jewish converts to follow Christianity. When plans leaked out about her first convent, St. Joseph's, she was denounced from the pulpit, told by her sisters she should raise money for the convent she was already in, and threatened with the Inquisition. The town started legal proceedings against her. All because she wanted to try a simple life of prayer. In the face of this open war, she went ahead calmly, as if nothing was wrong, trusting in God. At St. Joseph's, she spent much of her time writing her *Life*. She wrote this book not for fun but because she was ordered to—just as was St. Therese of Lisieux. Many people questioned her experiences and this book would either clear her or condemn her. Because of this, she used a lot of camouflage in the book, following a profound thought with the statement, "But what do I know? I'm just a wretched woman." The Inquisition liked what they read and cleared her.

"May God protect me from gloomy saints," Teresa said, and that's how she ran her convent. To her, spiritual life was an attitude of love, not a rule. Although she proclaimed poverty, she believed in work, not in begging. She believed in obedience to God more than in penance. If you do something wrong, don't punish yourself—change. When someone felt depressed, her advice was that she go some place where she could see the sky and take a walk. When someone was shocked that she was going to eat well, she answered, "There's a time for partridge and a time for penance." To her brother's wish to meditate on Hell, she answered, "Don't." At 51, she felt it was time to spread her reform movement. She braved burning sun, ice and snow, thieves, and rat-infested inns to found more convents. But those obstacles were easy compared to what she faced from her brothers and sisters in religious life. She was called "a restless disobedient gadabout who has gone about teaching as though she were a professor" by the Papal Nuncio. When her former convent voted her in as prioress, the leader of the Carmelite order excommunicated the nuns. A vicar general stationed an officer of the law outside the door to keep her out. The other religious orders opposed her wherever she went. She often had to enter a town secretly in the middle of the night to avoid causing a riot.

In 1567, she received a patent from the Carmelite general, Rubeo de Ravenna, to establish new houses of her order. In this effort and later visitations, she made long journeys through nearly all the provinces of Spain. Of these, she gives a description in her *Libro de las Fundaciones*. Between 1567 and 1571, reform convents were established at Medina del Campo, Malagón, Valladolid, Toledo, Pastrana, Salamanca, and Alba de Tormes. The help she received was sometimes worse than the hostility. A princess ordered Teresa to found a convent and then showed up at the door with luggage and maids. When Teresa refused to order her nuns to wait on the princess on their knees, the princess denounced Teresa to the Inquisition. In another town, they arrived at their new house in the middle of the night, only to wake up the next morning to find that one wall of the building was missing. Why was everyone so upset? Teresa said, "Truly, it seems that now there are no more of those considered mad for being true lovers of Christ." No one in religious orders or in the world

wanted Teresa reminding them of the way God said they should live. Teresa looked on these difficulties as good publicity. Soon she had postulants clamoring to get into her reformed convents. Many people thought about what she said and wanted to learn about prayer from her. Soon her ideas about prayer swept not only through Spain, but also throughout all of Europe.

As part of her original patent, Teresa was given permission to set up two houses for men who wished to adopt the reforms; she convinced John of the Cross and Anthony of Jesus to help with this. They founded the first convent of Discalced Carmelite Brethren in November 1568 at Duruello. Another friend, Gerónimo Gracian, gave her powerful support in founding convents at Segovia (1571), Beas de Segura (1574), Seville (1575), and Caravaca de la Cruz (Murcia, 1576), while the deeply mystical St. John of the Cross, by his power as teacher and preacher, promoted the inner life of the movement. In 1576 a series of persecutions began on the part of the older observant Carmelite order against Teresa, her friends, and her reforms. Pursuant to a body of resolutions adopted at the general chapter at Piacenza, the "definitors" of the order forbade all further founding of convents. The general chapter condemned her to voluntary retirement at one of her institutions. She obeyed and chose St. Joseph's at Toledo.

Finally, after several years, her pleadings by letter with King Philip II of Spain secured relief. As a result, in 1579, the processes before the inquisition against her and others were dropped, which allowed the reform to continue. A brief of Pope Gregory XIII allowed a special provincial for the younger branch of the discalced nuns, and a royal rescript created a protective board of four assessors for the reform. During the last three years of her life, Teresa founded convents at Villanueva de la Jara in northern Andalusia (1580), Palencia (1580), Soria (1581), Burgos, and Granada (1582). In total seventeen convents, all but one founded by her, and as many men's cloisters were due to her reform activity of twenty years.

Her final illness overtook her on one of her journeys from Burgos to Alba de Tormes. **She died in 1582**, either before midnight of October 4 or early in the morning of October 15, which is celebrated as her feast day. Her death came just as Catholic nations were making the switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar. Her last words were, "My Lord, it is time to move on. Well then, may your will be done. O my Lord and my Spouse, the hour that I have longed for has come. It is time to meet one another." In 1622, forty years after her death, she was canonized by Pope Gregory XV. The Cortes exalted her to patroness of Spain in 1617, and the University of Salamanca previously conferred the title Doctor Ecclesiae with a diploma. The title is Latin for Doctor of the Church, but is distinct from the papal honor of Doctor of the Church, which is always conferred posthumously and was finally bestowed upon her by Pope Paul VI in December 27, 1970, along with Saint Catherine of Siena, making them the first women to be awarded the distinction. Teresa is revered as the Doctor of Prayer. The mysticism in her works exerted a formative influence upon many theologians of the following centuries, such as Francis of Sales, Fénelon, and the Port-Royalists.

Teresa is one of the foremost writers on mental prayer, and her position among writers on mystical theology is unique. In all her writings on this subject, she deals with her personal experiences. Her deep insight and analytical gifts helped her to explain them clearly. Her definition was used in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "Contemplative prayer in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us." Thus, she spoke to the Lord as friend speaks to a friend, as a daughter speaks to her father. For Teresa, this relationship with her Lord was not so much a matter of words, as of life made loving by the Holy Spirit. Wedded to this Spirit, Teresa was able to incarnate Jesus in everyday life in the "interior castle" of her soul. These were when she set aside moments and time in which to give his Majesty personal attention. As a result, throughout this oneness in heart with Jesus her Spouse, she naturally touched the lives of others whom she daily met either personally or through her writings.

The Holy Mother Teresa wrote a beautiful poem that has been used as a prayer throughout the centuries. It is simple in its format, which is why many turn to it in times of distress. If you are feeling afraid or anxious right now, consider praying this prayer, opening your heart to God, adding your own words, and invoking God's help in your hour of need.

***Let nothing disturb you, Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away: God never changes.
Patience obtains all things. Whoever has God lacks nothing.
God alone suffices.***

TERESA OF AVILA TRIVIA



To get to know the Holy Mother of the Carmelite Order better, here are a dozen interesting facts about the saint:

1. She felt that a day when she couldn't read a new book was a day lost.
2. With the complicity of her mother and behind the back of her strict father, she read books about the great deeds of knights, which were very popular at the time.
3. There are hypotheses that suggest that Teresa was part of a network of women who exchanged books.

4. She was independent and autonomous. When she understood that God was calling her to be a nun, and after she told her father (who rejected the idea), she decided to leave her parents' house, and she went to the monastery of the Incarnation (in Avila).

5. The day she entered the monastery (November 2, 1535), the bells were ringing for All Souls day.

6. She overcame bureaucratic and economic obstacles, as well as the male chauvinism of the time.

7. She established small convents throughout Spain. She traveled on foot, and thus became called the "walking" ("andariega") saint.



8. She taught her nuns to think and pray on their own, and to concentrate in order to hear the Lord interiorly, in what she called the "Interior Castle."

9. She was closely watched because she was suspected of heresy, but they couldn't find anything that contradicted the idea that she was obeying God's will.

10. She always abandoned herself to God's will, and was a very determined woman who knew where she was going. She often used to say, "I am yours, Lord; I was born for You. What do you want from me?"

11. In 1970, together with Saint Catherine of Siena, she was declared a Doctor of the Church.

12. She said she sometimes felt like "a lion" and other times, like "an ant."



"Christ Has No Body..." by St. Teresa of Avila



Christ has no
body but yours,
No hands, no feet
on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes
with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with
which He walks to do good.
Yours are the hands,
with which He blesses
all the world.
Yours are the hands,
yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes,
you are His body.
Christ has no body
now but yours.



No hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

