

Although the doctrine is explicitly expounded in Living Flame of Love, the more direct and orderly explanation is found in Ascent of Mount Carmel and Dark Night.(58) In these places St. John gives us *three signs by which the presence of contemplation* can be recognized and proved.

Dark Night 1. 9

1. *Lack of satisfaction either in God's things or in creatures.*

"The first is that as these souls do not get satisfaction or consolation from the things of God, they do not get any from creatures either."

2. *Solicitous care about not serving God.*

"The second sign . . . is that the memory ordinarily turns to God solicitously and with painful care, and the soul thinks it is not serving God but turning back, because it is aware of this distaste for the things of God."

3. *Impossibility to meditate.*

"The third sign . . . is that the powerlessness, in spite of one's efforts, to meditate and make use of the imagination . . . as was one's previous custom."

Ascent 2, 13

1. *Impossibility to meditate.*

"The first is the realization that one cannot make discursive meditation nor receive satisfaction from it as before. Dryness is now the outcome of fixing the senses upon subjects which formerly provided satisfaction."

2. *Disinclination and dissatisfaction of the imagination to be fixed on particular objects.*

"The second sign is an awareness of a disinclination to fix the imagination or sense faculties upon other particular objects, exterior of interior."

3. *Loving awareness of God.*

"The third and surest sign is that a person likes to remain alone in loving awareness of God, without particular considerations, in interior peace and quiet and repose, and without the acts and exercises . . . of the intellect, memory and will . . ."

The signs in the Ascent and in the Dark Night are essentially the same. The only *difference is in the third sign of Ascent* (loving awareness of God), in relation to the second of Dark Night (solicitous care about not serving God). While in the *Ascent* the emphasis is put in the 'loving attention' and peaceful awareness, in the *Dark Night* the analysis stresses the dissatisfaction and lack of consolation that the person feels under God's action (first sign) and the care and painful solicitude of not serving God.