

*Life 22 (1,3,4,5,6,7)*

**The Humanity of Christ #1**

1. There is one thing that I want to say, if Your Reverence thinks it well that I should do so, as in my opinion it is important. It will serve as what may be necessary advice; for there are some books written about prayer which say that, although of itself the soul cannot reach this state, since the work wrought in it by the Lord is entirely supernatural, it can get some way towards it by raising the spirit above all created things and causing it to rise aloft in humility after it has spent some years in the Purgative life and made progress in the Illuminative. I do not know why they call it Illuminative but I understand it to mean the life of those who are making progress. And these books advise us earnestly to put aside all corporeal imagination and to approach the contemplation of the Divinity. For they say that anything else, even Christ's Humanity, will hinder or impede those who have arrived so far from attaining to the most perfect contemplation. They quote the words of the Lord on this subject to the Apostles with regard to the coming of the Holy Spirit -- I mean, after He had ascended into Heaven. (see Jn. 16: 7)

3. As I had no director, I used to read these books, and gradually began to think I was learning something. I found out later that, if the Lord had not taught me, I could have learned little from books, for until His Majesty taught it me by experience what I learned was nothing at all; I did not even know what I was doing. When I began to gain some experience of supernatural prayer - I mean of the Prayer of Quiet -- I tried to put aside everything corporeal, though I dared not lift up my soul, for, being always so wicked, I saw that to do this would be presumption. But I thought I was experiencing the presence of God, as proved to be true, and I contrived to remain with Him in a state of recollection. This type of prayer, if God has a part in it, is full of delight, and brings great joy. And in view of the advantage I was deriving from it and the pleasure it was bringing me, no one could have made me return to meditation on the Humanity -- on the contrary, this really seemed to me a hindrance. O Lord of my soul and my Good, Jesus Christ crucified! Never once do I recall this opinion which I held without a feeling of pain: I believe I was committing an act of high treason, though I committed it in ignorance.

4. All my life I had been greatly devoted to Christ (for this happened quite recently: by "recently" I mean before the Lord granted me these favors -- these raptures and visions), so I remained of this opinion only for a very short time and then returned to my habit of continually rejoicing in the Lord. Especially after communion, I would wish I had His portrait and image always before my eyes, since I could not have it as deeply engraven on my soul as I should like. Is it possible, my Lord, that for so much as an hour I could have entertained the thought that Thou could hinder my greatest good? From where have all good things come to me save from Thee? I do not want to think that I was to blame for this, for I grieve greatly about it and it was certainly a matter of ignorance. So Thou, in Thy goodness, were pleased to bring it to an end by giving me one who would cure me of this error and afterwards by permitting me often to see Thee...(Fr. Diego De Cetina)

5. I believe myself that this is the reason why many souls, after succeeding in experiencing the Prayer of Union, do not make further progress and achieve a very great spiritual freedom. There are two reasons, I think, on which I can found my opinion; there may, of course, be nothing in it, but what I say I have observed in my own experience, for my soul was in a very bad way until the Lord gave it light: all the joys it had experienced had come in little sips, and, once these were over, it never experienced any companionship, as it did later, at times of trial and temptation. One of these reasons is that the soul is somewhat lacking in humility and that what it has is so completely disguised and hidden as not to be noticed.

6. With so good a Friend, so good a Captain at our side, who came forward first of all to suffer, one can bear everything. He helps us; He gives us strength; He never fails; He is a true Friend. I can see clearly, and since that time have always seen, that it is God's will, if we are to please Him and He is to grant us great favors, that this should be done through His most sacred Humanity, in Whom, His Majesty said, He is well pleased. Very, very many times have I learned this by experience: the Lord has told it to me. I have seen clearly that it is by this door that we must enter if we wish His Sovereign Majesty to show us great secrets.

7. Therefore, Sir, even if you reach the summit of contemplation Your Reverence must seek no other way: that way alone is safe. It is through this Lord of ours that all blessings come. He will show us the way; we must look at His life – on this road you walk safely.

**Questions to consider:**

What are the characteristics of the 'enlightened thought' presented by St. Teresa?

What are the reasons that pushed St. Teresa to follow this line of thinking?

What caused her to dismiss it?

According to St. Teresa, how is the humanity of Christ essential in divine union?