



## II BEFORE BEGINNING...

Let's move to the actual prayer, the interior prayer. If you begin without forethought, you could run into difficulties. To get started these few little suggestions could be of help to you:  
-look for a silent spot that agrees with you.  
-choose a Gospel passage and maybe also an object, a hymn or else a picture: any of this will help you focus your attention on Jesus.  
-make yourself comfortable, in a posture that will help you to center yourself & go within yourself.  
-little by little become aware of your breathing, your body and your inner world to be able to go there with minimal distraction.  
-now, center your attention on Jesus: His loving presence is in you and in all things.

## IV DEEPER

The center of our prayer, of our interior prayer, is the person of Jesus. It is not important how you go into prayer. The essential thing is to stay next to Him, to allow yourself to be looked at by Him, to listen to Him, to welcome His light in order to learn to know Him, to enter into His mystery starting at His own heart and to let yourself be enveloped by His presence.  
"Stay here, and that your intellect be silent. Look! Jesus is looking at you. Go with Him, talk to Him, pray with Him, and rejoice with Him. Ask Him for the grace to always know how to please Him, because it is from Him that all good things have come to you."  
It is the moment to receive God's gift, to let Him take the initiative. It is also the moment to answer Him: a word, a gesture, an expansion of the heart, a request.  
It is especially the time to be grateful, to give thanks: His love works wonders! At last, it is the time to ask Him His will, to discover how God is going to concretely be present in your life.

## VI AND AFTER?

Very often your prayer time will be one of peace, interior joy and light...but not always! Life circumstances, your actual situation, the questions that you encounter in interior prayer are such that the feelings that arise in prayer are always different.  
But don't evaluate the quality of your prayer based on this. What's important is that the meeting with Christ took place; that you are in a mindset of loving attention and open to listening. Take the insights received and thank the Lord for His presence and His love that you do or don't feel. Interior prayer is a matter of faith, of persistence, of consistency and of commitment.  
Take a look outside of yourself; aren't you starting to see things differently? Others, daily life, what's going on in the world: everything takes on a new light, the light of hope and love.

## VII PRAYER'S FOOTPRINT

Prayer leaves its footprint within us: '*it has an interior impact*'. It isn't about having 'right desires' or about making 'right resolutions'. Prayer, like friendship, is above all a **gift**, a present that needs to be received with the heart, and it causes something new to grow within us. Prayer changes us. This is noticeable on the outside: '*the internal effects of prayer are confirmed by works*'. All the feelings that can come up during interior prayer are only of relative importance. What is fundamental is the work of Jesus within us and our response to it. It will be reflected in a new way of being and acting in life--new values, new criteria and new, deeper feelings. Jesus loves us without limits and unconditionally; loving Him is not just saying nice words, it is about '*servicing Him with justice, decisiveness and humility*'.  
**Have a great journey!**

## V SOMETHING BEGINS TO HAPPEN

Interior prayer is not a moment but rather a path. Gradually, you will begin to see who Jesus is, His mystery, His way of seeing things, His calling, His feelings, and the love with which He welcomes you and looks for you...at the same time, He will help you to know yourself in a new way: know who you are, how you live. It is about looking at Jesus and yourself, just as you are, as God sees you and desires who you are. Even if it isn't the main point, don't neglect this as it is the only way by which we can live in truth. There is no prayer without truth; just as with friendship! And also, the call of Jesus to live more and more in interior freedom will become meaningful for you. It is true freedom, that which is given by the Gospel. Whatever the circumstances of your life, Jesus invites you to live with and like Him. To be a person of prayer is to follow Jesus, with all the consequences that that may bring.

## III ENTER INTO PRAYER

Now, you have to find your own way to pray, to practice interior prayer: this will depend on what kind of person you are, on your sensitivity, on your current situation. What is important is that you turn to Jesus and look at Him, to enter into His mystery with the help of the Holy Spirit.  
Here are a few suggestions that you might find helpful:  
-imagine the Living Jesus within you.  
-when withdrawing within yourself, look at Him in a Biblical scene.  
-look at an image of Jesus or repeat a sentence that expresses what you would like to say to Him.  
-recite the Our Father very slowly which is Jesus' prayer, savor every word.  
It is a good thing to reflect a bit, to go deeper, to understand...but this mustn't be the center of the prayer, for friendship involves the heart...

## I WHAT IS 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." (V 8 5)  
I invite you to something very simple: live a friendship with Jesus, talk to this friend in silence, in a personal meeting... in prayer...interior prayer. As with all friendships, several conditions are necessary so that the friendship will last, so that it will be ever more solidified. To become a person of prayer, it is necessary to take care of:  
- your relationships with others by being respectful, loving, supportive, forgiving.  
- the relationship with yourself.  
- the relationship with Jesus.  
And then, something else is necessary, 'a determined determination'. Indeed, in order to reap the long-lasting fruits of the relationship with Jesus, you will need to start on the path of interior prayer with determination, enthusiasm --without fearing the difficulties (because there will be some!)---and with consistency.

## IMPORTANT DATES in ST. TERESA of Avila's LIFE



- 1515 March 28: birth of Teresa
- 1535 November 2: Teresa enters the Incarnation Convent
- 1555 Teresa's Conversion (St. Augustine, the wounds of Christ)
- 1562 August 24: the founding of the St. Joseph of Avila Carmel.  
December: Way of Perfection.
- 1568 November 28: First Convent of Discalced Carmelite Friars - John of the Cross.
- 1572 November 16: Spiritual Marriage.
- 1582 October 4 (15): Teresa dies a 'Daughter of the Church', Alba de Torres
- 1614 April 4: Beatification
- 1622 March 12: Canonization
- 1970 September 27: Doctor of the Church

## Learn to Pray with



*Teresa de Jesus*  
**The important thing is not to think much but to love much and so do that which best stirs you to love.**

