

Contemplation

The Way of Perfection

St. Teresa of Avila

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...it is very possible that while you are reciting the Our Father ... the Lord may raise you to **perfect contemplation...**

His Majesty shows that He listens... it is His grandeur that speaks to the soul, suspending one's **intellect**, binding one's **imagination** ...The soul understands ...this divine Master is teaching it by **suspending its faculties...**

the soul is being enkindled in love...the **will** is enkindled without understanding how....

this good cannot be merited or gained...it a **gift** from the Lord...What I have described is perfect contemplation. (W 25 1-2)



He doesn't tell us to ask for impossible things...

there are times when...the Lord **calms our faculties** and **quiets the soul**...a clear **foretaste** of what will be given those He brings to His kingdom.

And to those to whom He gives here below the kingdom we ask for, He gives pledges ...they may have great hope of going to enjoy perpetually what here on earth is given only in **sips**. (W 30 6)



The beginning of **pure contemplation**...is
the **prayer of quiet**.

But since I'm dealing with vocal prayer,
it may seem...that **vocal prayer** doesn't go
with contemplation;

but I know that it does...

there are many persons who while praying
vocally ...are raised by God to sublime
contemplation...

if you recite your vocal prayers as they should
be recited, with a **pure conscience**...(W 30, 7)



I want to explain this **prayer of quiet**...
the Lord begins to show that He hears our
petition...to **give us His kingdom here
below** so that we may truly **praise and
hallow His name**...

this prayer is **supernatural**...we cannot
procure it through our own efforts...

the Lord puts it (soul) at **peace** by His
presence...all the **faculties** are
calmed...not much more would be
required for it to become one with Him in
union...

it (soul) sees it is in the kingdom, at least
near the King who will give the kingdom
to the soul...

the state resembles an **interior and
exterior swoon**...(W 31 1,2)



A person feels the greatest **delight** in his body and a great **satisfaction** in his soul (prayer of quiet)...

the faculties are still...**two** of them are **free** (Intellect, Imagination).

The **will** is the **one** that is **captive** here.

...if there is some **sorrow**...it comes from a realization that the **will** must return to the state of being **free**...

Persons in this prayer don't want the body to move.... to lose that peace...they don't dare stir...They are within the palace, near the King...He is giving them His kingdom.

In sum, while this prayer lasts they are so absorbed ...with satisfaction and delight...(W 31 3)



Sometimes in this **prayer of quiet** the Lord grants **another favor...**

when this **quiet is great and lasts for a long while...**the **will** wouldn't be able to remain so long in that peace if it weren't **bound** to something...

They are not wholly in what they are doing...the best part is lacking, that is, the **will...is united with its God**, and leaves the other faculties free to be occupied in what is for His service...in worldly matters, these faculties are dull...in a stupor...

This is a great favor...the **active and contemplative lives are joined...**

the **will** is occupied in its work and contemplation ...the **other two faculties** (intellect, imagination) serve in the work of Martha. Thus, **Martha and Mary walk together**.^(W 31 5)



...it would be good to give some **counsels** for those whom the Lord ... has brought here...and think they'll be able to **hold on to that satisfaction** and **don't even dare take a breath...**

this prayer is no longer our work...it's something very **supernatural**...only receive it with **gratitude**, as most unworthy of it...

you will be unable to manage the other two faculties...the **soul** will be in the greatest **quiet** and the intellect **will** be so

distracted...sometimes I want to die in that I cannot cure this wandering of the intellect...the **will** shouldn't pay anymore attention to the intellect than it would to a madman. (W 31 8)



...this **prayer of quiet** is different from that prayer in which the entire soul is **united** with God...

In the prayer of quiet it seems that He wants it (soul) to **work a little**...the **intellect torments the will**, it doesn't cause this torment when there is **union of all three faculties**, for He ...**suspends** them.

With the joy He gives them He keeps them all occupied...the **delight is in the interior of the will**...

In the prayer of quiet the will is the ruler and the powerful one. (W 31 10)



...to the soul placed in this prayer it seems the Eternal Father has already here below granted its petition for His Kingdom...

when this favor is granted by God we shall forget the things of the world...

a soul to whom God gives such pledges has a **sign** that He wants to give it a great deal...

if the Lord sees that after **He places the kingdom of heaven in the soul's house** this soul **turns to earthly things**, He will fail to show it the secrets in His kingdom...seldom grant it this favor (w 31, 11)



When individuals do not respond by **service** ...and take back their wills...the Lord goes in search of those who do love Him to give more to them...

But there are persons...who make themselves **deaf** when the Lord... gives the kingdom and places them in this **prayer of quiet**...they do not receive it...they distract themselves from the prayer of quiet...

Do not do this...be on your guard when the Lord grants you this favor...consider that you are losing a great **treasure**...

You are very close to the one you petition...herein lies the **true** praise and hallowing of His name... (W 31 12,13)



“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”...your Father does what you ask Him ... giving you His kingdom here on earth... for **once earth has become heaven**, the possibility is there for **His will to be done in you**...His will must be done...like it or not, and it will be done in heaven and on earth... **great gain** comes from **freely abandoning your will to His**...what a great loss there is when we do not carry out what we offer to the Lord in the Our Father! (W 32 4)



...I want to ...remind you **what His will is...**do you want to know how He answers those who say these words to Him sincerely? Ask His glorious Son who said them with such **determination** and **complete willingness** ... sorrows, injuries and persecutions He suffered ...**death on a cross...**By that we understand what His will is. For these are His **gifts to the world.**

He gives according to the love He bears us...the **measure** for being able to bear a **large or small cross is love** ... **strive to suffer what His Majesty desires you to suffer.** (W 32 7)



Let's give Him the **jewel** ...The truth is that He **rewards us beforehand** so that we might give the jewel to Him...

those in the world will be doing enough if they truly have the determination to do His will...

everything I advise you is directed toward the **complete gift of ourselves to the Creator**, the **surrender of our wills to Him**, and

detachment from creatures ... we are preparing ourselves that we may quickly **reach the end of our journey and drink the living water from the fount** ... unless we give our wills we will never be allowed to do so... **drinking from the fount is perfect contemplation.** (W 32 9)



In this **contemplation**...we don't do anything ourselves...nor is there anything else necessary ...than to say...**Your will, Lord, be done in me ...**

If you want it to be done with trials, strengthen me and let them come; if with persecutions, illnesses, dishonors, and a lack of life's necessities, **here I am. I will not run away**, my Father, nor is it right that I turn my back on You.

Since Your Son gave You this will of mine in the name of all, there is no reason for any lack on my part.

But grant me the favor of Your Kingdom that I may do Your will, since He asked for this kingdom for me, and use me as You would Your own possession, in conformity with Your will. (w 32, 10)



...strength lies in this gift!...
when accompanied by the
necessary determination,
it draws the Almighty so that
**He becomes one with our
lowliness, transforms us into
Himself, and effects a union
of the Creator with the
creature...**(W 32 10)



...the more **our deeds** show that these are not merely polite words, all the more does the Lord bring us to Himself and raise the soul from itself and all earthly things so as to make it capable of receiving great favors, for He never finishes repaying this service in the present life....

Not content with having made this soul one with Himself, He begins to **find His delight in it**, to **reveal His secrets**, and **rejoice** that it knows what it has **gained ...**



...He makes it **lose these exterior senses** so that nothing will occupy it. This is **rapture**.

And He begins to **commune with the soul in so intimate a friendship** that He not only **gives it back its own will but gives it His**.

For in so great a **friendship** the Lord takes joy in putting the **soul in command ...**

He does what it asks since **it does His will**.

(W 32 12)



It (soul) often grows **weary** seeing itself subject to so many difficulties, impediments and fetters...

from dwelling in the **prison of this body.**

It would want to repay something of what it owes...

only **humility** can do something ...

a clear perception ...the truth...about what a trifle we are and how very great

God is. (W 32 13)



I give you one counsel...
don't think that through your
own strength or efforts you can
arrive,

for reaching this stage is
beyond our power....

With **simplicity and humility**,
which will achieve everything,
say: **fiat voluntas tua.**

(thy will be done) (W 32 14)