

The Prayer of Recollection

The Way of Perfection
St. Teresa of Avila

Prayer of Recollection

Foundations of Prayer

- ❖ **Love of Neighbor**: importance of friendship and its growth into perfect love, **compassion** is essential.
- ❖ **Detachment**: in observing the human condition Teresa was struck by how quickly things come to an end; the result of detachment is **inner freedom** from worry about bodily comfort, honor and wealth.
- ❖ **Humility**: **Humility and detachment are so closely joined** that Teresa couldn't speak of one without the other; **humility implies detachment from oneself -- from worry about esteem and honor**; by humility the soul draws love to itself; in humility one realizes that every good thing comes from God and could be taken away; humility does not disturb or disquiet, it comes with peace, delight, and calm; the pain of genuine humility expands the soul enabling it to serve God more.

Do not be frightened,
daughters, by the many things
you need to consider in order
to begin this divine journey
which is
the Royal Road to heaven.
A great **treasure is gained by**
travelling this road;
no wonder we have to pay
what seems to us a high price.
The time will come when
you will understand how
trifling everything is next to so
precious a reward. (W 21 1)

...How they are to **begin** is very
important - in fact, all important.
They must have a great and very
resolute **determination** to
persevere until reaching the end
(to drink from this water of life),
come what may, happen what
may, whatever work is involved,
whatever criticism arises, whether
they arrive or whether they die on
the road, or even if they don't
have courage for the trials that are
met, or if the whole world
collapses. (W 21 2)

Realize, Daughters,
that the **nature of mental prayer**
isn't determined by whether or not
the mouth is closed.

If while speaking I thoroughly
understand and know that
I am speaking with God and
I have greater awareness of this than
I do of the words I'm saying,
mental and vocal prayer are
joined...

(W 22 1)

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)

Method for Recollecting One's Mind

Begin with an
**examination of
conscience, the act of
contrition, and the sign of
the cross must come first.**

...since you are alone,
**strive to find a
companion.** What better
companion than the Master
Himself who taught you
this prayer?

Represent the Lord Himself
as close to you and behold how
lovingly and humbly He is teaching you ...
remain with so good a friend
as long as you can.

If you grow accustomed to
having Him present at your side, and
He sees that you do so with love and that
you go about striving to please Him,
you will not be able –as they say- to get
away from Him; He will never fail you; He
will help you in all your trials;
you will find Him everywhere.

Do you think it's some small matter to
have a friend like this at your side? (W 26 1)

I am not asking you now that
you think about Him or that
you draw out a lot of concepts or
make long and subtle reflections
with your intellect.

I am not asking you to do anything
more than **look at Him...** (W 26 3)

Carry about an **image or
a painting of this Lord...**

look at it ...

Speak often with Him...

He will inspire you with
what to say...

acquire the habit. (W 26 9)

It is also a great help to
take a **good book** written in
the vernacular in order to recollect
one's thoughts
and pray well vocally...
little by little accustom the soul
with coaxing and skill
not to grow discouraged;

...many years have passed since the
soul left the house of its Spouse...
our soul and our thoughts are so
accustomed to **wandering about** at
their own pleasure –grief-
that the poor soul doesn't
understand itself.

In order that it get to love
remaining at home once again,
a great deal of skill is necessary.

(W 26 10)

Do you think it matters little for a soul with a **wandering mind** to understand this truth...there is no need to go to heaven ... to speak with one's Eternal Father or find delight in Him? Nor is there any need to shout ... He is near enough to hear us ... All one need do is go into solitude and look at Him within oneself... with great humility speak to Him as to a father.

Beseech Him as you would a father, tell Him about your trials, ask Him for a remedy ... realizing that you are not worthy to be His daughter. (W 28, 2)

The intellect is recollected much more quickly with this kind of prayer even though it may be vocal; it is a prayer that brings with it many blessings.

This prayer is called '**recollection**' because the soul collects its faculties together and enters within itself to be with its God.

And the divine Master comes more quickly to teach it and give it the **prayer of quiet** than He would through any other method it might use. For centered there within itself, it can think about the Passion and represent the Son ... and not **tire the intellect**.

Those who can enclose themselves within this little heaven of our soul, where the Maker of heaven and earth is present ... should believe they are following an excellent path and that they will not fail to drink water from the fount...it is the **path of heaven**.

(W 28 4, 5)

At the beginning since the recollection is not so deep – for there are greater and lesser **degrees of recollection**— the soul should get used to this recollection ...

If we make the effort to practice this recollection for some days, and get used to it, the gain will be clearly seen ... (W 28 7)

Let's speak a little about how we should get accustomed to a method that's so good ...

Let's imagine that within us is an extremely **rich palace**, built entirely of gold and precious stones... you have a part to play in order for the palace to be so beautiful;

For there is no edifice as beautiful as is a soul pure and full of **virtues**... in this palace dwells this mighty King ...seated upon an extremely valuable throne, which is your heart...(W 28 9)

I understood that I had a soul. But what this soul deserved and who dwelt within it I did not understand because I had covered my eyes with the **vanities of the world** ...

if I had understood as I do now that in this little palace of my soul dwelt so great a King, I would not have **left Him alone** so often. I would have remained with Him ... striven...not to be so unclean. (W 28 11)

The solitude enjoyed between
the soul and its Spouse
when the soul desires
To enter this **paradise** within itself
to be with its God...
you must understand that this
recollection is
not something **supernatural**,
but that it is something we can desire
and achieve ourselves with the help of
God —
for without this help we can do nothing,
not even have a good thought.
This **recollection**...is an enclosure of
the faculties within the soul. (W 29 4)

I'm speaking only of how
vocal prayer should be recited...
we should see and be present to the One
with whom we speak...
all the **harm** comes from not truly
understanding that He is near,
but in imagining Him as far away...
to **acquire the habit** of easily
recollecting our minds and
understanding what we are saying
and with whom we are speaking...
the **exterior senses**
must be recollected...be occupied...
We have **heaven within ourselves** since
the **Lord of heaven** is there. (W 29 5)

With this method we shall pray vocally with much calm, any **difficulty** will be removed...He is very fond of taking away our difficulty...

Get used to praying the **Our Father** with this recollection, you will see the benefit before long.

This is a manner of praying that the soul gets so quickly used to that it doesn't go astray, nor do the faculties become restless... try this method... it may mean some struggle... before the **habit** is acquired. (W 29 6)

I never knew what it was to **pray with satisfaction** until the Lord taught me this method. ... so many **benefits** from this **habit of recollection**...

you can, if you want, avoid ever withdrawing from such good company;

...if you can, **practice this recollection** often during the day; if not, do so a few times...once this recollection is given by the Lord, you will not exchange it for any treasure. (W 29 7)

...if you try, within a year, or perhaps half a year you will **acquire the habit** ... see how little time it takes for a gain as great as is that of **laying a good foundation**. (W 29 8)