

Opening Remarks

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Mystical Life

- ❖ **Mystical life** is the fulfillment of **Baptismal grace** and an **increase** of the **virtues** of faith, hope and charity in the heart of he who believes the Kingdom of God is found within.
- ❖ For Teresa all who are baptized are invited into mystical life, **not** just a **few elite souls**.
- ❖ Interior prayer is the **path to union with God**. This way of prayer is practiced two hours daily by all Discalced Carmelites.



Theresa de Jesus

*Interior Prayer is, in my opinion,
simply an intimate exchange of friendship
where we speak often, one on one,
with God who we know loves us.*

St. Theresa of Avila (V 8, 5)

The Royal Road to Heaven



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**...how you begin is very important—in fact, all important. You must have a great and very resolute Determination to **Persevere** until reaching the end, come what may....

St. Teresa of Avila (w 21)

Draw near, then, to this
Good Master with
strong determination
to learn what He teaches you...
He will not abandon you if
you do not abandon Him. (W 26)



It is also a great help to take a good book ...
to recollect one's thoughts ... and little
by little accustom the soul with coaxing
& skill not to grow discouraged.

Imagine that many years have passed since
the soul left the house of its Spouse ...

For so we sinners are: our soul and our
thoughts are so accustomed to
wandering about at their own pleasure...

In order that it get to love remaining at
home once again, a great deal of skill is
necessary. If little by little this is not
accomplished, we shall never do
anything.

...If we make the effort,
practice this recollection for
some days ...the **gain** will be
clearly seen...(IV 28 7)



At the beginning since the recollection
is not so deep – for there are **greater
& lesser degrees** of recollection...

Even though they **go out again** afterward,
their having **already surrendered** is a
great thing; for they go out as **captives
and subjects** and do not cause the
harm they did previously.

And when the **will calls them back
again**, they come more quickly, until
after many of these entries the Lord
wills that they rest entirely in **perfect
contemplation**.

Important Dates in Saint Teresa's Life

- **1515** (March 28): The **birth** of Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada.
- **1535** (November 2): Teresa enters the Incarnation **Convent**.
- **1554** Teresa's **Conversion** (Saint Augustine, Christ's wounds)
- **1562** (August 24): **Foundation** of Saint Joseph's Carmel.
(December): Teresa begins The Way of Perfection.
- **1568** (November 28): The foundation of first male Discalced Carmelite monastery with John of the Cross.
- **1572** (November 16): Teresa experiences the Grace of **Spiritual Marriage**.
- **1582** (October 4/15): Teresa **dies** "Daughter of the Church" in Alba de Tormes.
- **1614** (April 4): Teresa's **Beatification** by Paul V.
- **1622** (March 12): Teresa's **Canonization** by Gregory XV.
- **1970** (September 27): Teresa is named **Doctor** of the Church by Paul VI.

The Desert Fathers

As a Christian Religious Community, the Carmel...

- ❖ ..is only 800 years old, **born** in the 1200's on Mount Carmel by a spring known as the 'fountain of Elijah';
- ❖ The early Desert Carmelites, the Prophet Elijah being one of them, led **disciplined lives** of **unceasing prayer, reflection, fasting, silence, solitude, work**, taking the **Eucharist** together, having weekly **meetings** to correct & encourage one another;

- ❖ They **abstained** from meat, lived in poverty, all was owned in common;
- ❖ The leader was **elected** and lived at the entrance to the site;
- ❖ The **oratory** was situated in the midst of their cells; it formed the center of their lives.

The Rule of Albert

- ❖ Albert Avogadro, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, elaborated the **Official Rule** of the Order between 1206 -1214;
- ❖ The Rule was based on the **hermetical life** of the early desert hermits;
- ❖ The **Standard of Conduct** for the Carmel Order;
- ❖ St. Theresa of Avila began her **reform** in the 16th century, rejecting the **mitigated rule**;
- ❖ As other reformers before her, she used the original setting on **Mt. Carmel** as her **blueprint**.

Lord teach us to pray



Lord, teach us to pray....

More people than you would think would be capable of practicing interior prayer, but no one taught them.

And, without an interior life,
the baptized run out of breath,
their actions become noisy gongs and
even their religious practice, when it exists,
dries up.” John Paul II September 29, 1982

Lord, teach us to pray....

- ❖ We need a Christianity that distinguishes itself above all in the art of prayer. {...} We also know that prayer must not be considered self-evident. It is necessary to **learn to pray**
- ❖ Through prayer a dialogue develops with Christ which allows us to become his **intimate friends**: “Remain in me and I in you” (John 15:4). This **reciprocity** is the **essential element** of the soul in the Christian life ...
- ❖ “Yes, our Christian communities must become authentic ‘schools’ of prayer,..... allowing history to be built according to God’s design. ‘

John Paul II Apostolic Letter
January 6, 2001, Novo Millenio Ineunte