

# What is Teresian Prayer?

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# Teresa's Salvation Experience

- Teresa's **salvation experience** is obvious. When we look at her life and her intimacy with Jesus we are forced to conclude that **something happened**;
- The Lord made her in such a way that we can clearly see, and in an astounding way, **God's work in her**;
- At a certain point in her life, she could hardly enter into prayer without going into **ecstasy** which was apparent to everyone around her.

# Beauty of the Mystery of Prayer

- We maybe don't have ecstasies but do we fully realize the **miracle** that takes place **each time we pray**?
- When we pray the Lord is as **involved and united** with us as if we were having the ecstasies of St. Teresa;
- The ecstasies, visions and internal words of St. Teresa were **orchestrated** so that we could come to **understand** the **beauty of the mystery of prayer**.

# Reciprocal Relationship

- St. Teresa had a **relationship** with our Lord that went **both ways**. Not only did she speak to him, but he answered her!
- There was a **reciprocal relationship** between Teresa and Jesus;
- Their reciprocal relationship wasn't always or even habitually about visions and internal words.

# All Good Things have come from Silent Prayer

- Teresa made a startling remark when she said: 'All good things that have happened to me have come from **silent prayer**.'
- Twice at the beginning of the Interior Castle she said that the **castle's door is silent prayer** (1<sup>st</sup> mansion) and again the **castle's door is silent prayer and consideration** (2<sup>nd</sup> mansion).

# What is Silent Prayer?

- We are going to **explore what silent prayer is**. If everything comes from silent prayer maybe we want to seriously **consider the practice**;
- When we grasp what happens in prayer we will be able to put Teresa's advice into practice: **The Door to the Castle is Silent Prayer**.
- To begin we are going to **look at Teresa praying**. (**Read Passage**, W 26)

## Consider is a Key Word

- Teresa tells her sisters that if they are sad to look at Jesus, **consider** him. This is a **key** word in Teresa's vocabulary;
- In Spanish it is the word, **mirar**, which means **to look**;
- In Teresa's vocabulary it has a **precise** meaning. Sometimes it means to **look** but when Teresa uses this word to refer to **silent prayer** it is often translated **consider**.

# Look with Faith.

- What allows her to turn towards Jesus who is suffering his passion? It's **Faith**;
- **Consideration** means to **look with faith**;
- What is the **basis** of **silent prayer** and **recollection**? It's **Faith**, or to **look with faith**.
- When you pray you begin by turning yourself towards our Lord. What allows you to turn towards our Lord? It's **Faith**.



# Mother of Spiritual People

- While writing Teresa begins to **consider** (look with faith) Jesus and to **pray before our eyes**;
- This is what makes her **style original**. It's part of her charism as the **Mother of Spiritual People**;
- Teresa is showing us how to pray. We can enter into **her** prayer;
- What moves Teresa as she **looks at** Jesus or **considers him by faith**? What makes her overflow with emotion? It's **Love!**

# Believe to Love

- Silent Prayer for Teresa is to **believe to love** or I **consider by faith** to wake up **love**, a **supernatural love**;
- This is the **heart of prayer** according to St. Teresa;
- **When I believe to love I am practicing silent prayer** as far as St. Teresa is concerned;
- It is what she calls **recollection**. When I believe to love, I am **recollected**.

# Faith! It's always Faith!

- When Jesus was standing in front of someone, He wanted to awaken the person to one thing;
- What is at the **heart of Gospel**? What do you think it is?
- It's always **Faith!**
- The **Verb** became **incarnate** to give us **Faith!**

# Heart of the Gospel

- ‘These signs were written down so that you would believe that Jesus is the Christ...in believing you have life in his name’. John 20:31
- This is the **heart of the Gospel**, everything is here: **believe** in Jesus to receive **life**; the **effect of life** is **love**!
- So here we find to **believe to love**.

# Solemn Witness was Essential

- When Jesus' side was pierced, St. John points out that both water and blood poured out; John 19
- A Solemn Witness was **essential** for St. John because blood & water are the signs!
- **Blood** is the **sign of life**. Jesus gave his life;
- The **water** is the **water of penance**, the **forgiveness of sin**.

# Goal of our Life on Earth

- The **goal** of this life is the **preparation for heaven**;
- **Recollection is living out the heart of Christian life.... Believe to Love!**
- The **effect** of this **divine life** is **love**. Nothing else.
- **Silent prayer** is to **believe**; by believing I receive **Life** which **saves** and **transforms me**.

# Vital Daily Prayer Time

- What are the **practical consequences** ?
- St. Teresa tells us that **it isn't easy to believe to love;**
- It's important to **set aside a time daily to believe to love.** Nothing else!
- Silent prayer is not uniquely a time of practice but rather a **meeting with someone;**
- It's the **time I set aside to be with my friend.**

# Believe to Love Sums it up

- If I have a friend, I spend time with him; I am even willing to '**waste time with him**'
- A Co-worker's a friend that I tolerate when I'm doing something else at work;
- Right now, **Jesus** is a good **work colleague**, he wants to be your **friend**; He has been waiting to be invited;
- **Try ten minutes** of prayer!



# Believe to love sums it up

- The first thing to do is to turn towards Jesus in his humanity;
- Jesus is the **fountain of salvation on earth**. There is no other;
- It's in drinking out of the hose that feeds the **fountain** that we **reap the benefits**.

# What are the Benefits?

- If I go to the humanity of Christ, my own humanity is **transformed**;
- For my humanity to be transformed, I **need another humanity**;
- When his humanity comes into contact with mine, it is deeply **transformed**;
- I have an **experience of salvation** that transforms me from the inside out.

# Two Ways to Welcome Virtues

- **Practice** a virtue, it becomes a **habit**;
- The true Christian regime is to turn towards Christ who **transformed Teresa's humanity**;
- **He** put **qualities** directly in her; he's dying to do the same for us;
- The heart of salvation isn't a constant struggle but rather Christ who **saves and transforms** us.

# Two Ways to Welcome Virtues:

- I am aware of new virtues in myself; they are too **weak** to keep us on the narrow path;
- What will we do? Will we try and practice them? If we do, this **gives the Lord permission** to continue to make the virtues grow;
- We can also say '**no**' which tells the Lord that we prefer our life as it is without virtues;
- What does the **Lord expect** from us when we receive and welcome the virtues? (*St. Theresa's Salvation Story* )

# The Exercise of his Presence

- If **Believe to Love** is the heart of my life, I have no time to waste!
- The **first step** is the **exercise** of the **practice of the presence of Christ in his humanity**;
- **Throughout the day** try to remember to take a moment to look at Jesus;
- You open the door for Jesus to enter. He gives you **his salvation** and **transforms you**.

# Concrete Examples

- Her convents were very small, poor but very clean. There were with **pictures of Jesus everywhere;**
- So why wouldn't we want to **increase the number of pictures we have of Jesus or whatever helps us to think of him;**
- The **goal** of these **pictures** is to make you **love** him ever more.

# Exercise of the Virtues

- A relationship with someone is not an intellectual exercise;
- **Love is shown by actions;**
- Having the **right mindset in daily life is very important.**

# Exercise of the Virtues

- St. Teresa called '**the exercise of the virtues**' the **concrete love of our brother**;
- This love is not possible without prayer. We can't love our brother without **recharging our batteries**;
- Our batteries are re-charged by **spending time** with our **friend** in **silent prayer**.



# Conclusion

- Jesus doesn't want us working 24/7, he wants us to rest;
- He would like us to take the time to have **tea with him**. He invites us to **come and rest** with him;
- As a matter of fact, he often invited his disciples to rest in the Bible: Come with me **off the beaten path** and **rest**. Mark 6:31