

Act of Faith

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An Act of Faith

- ❖ When we pray we unconsciously turn towards God; we make an **act of faith** and God comes;
- ❖ Through an **act of faith** my relationship with God begins, develops and grows;
- ❖ It is the **ABSOLUTE** basis of the **Christian life.**



An Act of Faith

- ❖ The goal of Jesus is to **open the doors of faith** to allow the person to **open to faith**;
- ❖ This act of faith was the **foundation** for all that followed;
- ❖ Jesus said that to be able to work miracles, **faith was essential**.
- ❖ He was unable to work miracles in Nazareth due to their **lack of faith**.



MYSTIC

- An Act of Faith may seem insignificant, but it allows us to enter a **relationship** with **Christ**;
- If we allow the Holy Spirit to **develop our faith**, our relationship with Christ deepens and we become a **mystic**;
- A mystic isn't someone who levitates 50 cm., but someone who has a **real relationship** with Christ.



MYSTIC

- A **two-way relationship with Christ** through the action of the Holy Spirit;
- The Holy Spirit develops our **capacity** to make acts of faith or to **practice** the virtue of faith;
- We are **all called** to be **mystics**.



What is the Act of Believing?

- ❖ Entering into a **relationship with God**, he is part of the **immaterial world**;
- ❖ There is a **canyon** between God and us;
- ❖ God has a **universal love** for His creatures;
- ❖ God invites us into a two-way relationship.



What is the Act of Believing?

- ❖ God puts the capacity to **know the immaterial world** into our soul at **Baptism**;
- ❖ At Baptism we receive the Theological Virtues of **Faith, Hope, Charity**;
- ❖ These Virtues allow us to **interact** with God and to **come to know** Him;
- ❖ God permits us to make **an act of faith** (to believe without seeing) to enter into a relationship with Him but we must **exercise it**.



Analyzing the Act of Faith

- ❖ The concept of the Trinity goes **beyond human intelligence**;
- ❖ God is **One and Triune** at the same time;
- ❖ The Trinity can't be **proved**; we **trust** God and the Church;
- ❖ But something is **missing**; **why** should I trust?

Analyzing the Act of Faith



- ❖ When I make an act of faith, the Lord comes and **firms up** my faith;
- ❖ He lives in me and enables me to **do the impossible with confidence**;
- ❖ A strong and peaceful **certitude** in Him; (martyrs)
- ❖ He transforms me completely.

Analyzing the Act of Faith

I stand at the door and knock,
if anyone opens to me
I will come in and dine with him
and he with me. (Rev. 3:20)

- ❖ The door opens, I **accept to believe**, the Lord enters;
- ❖ The meal is a **reciprocal relationship** with Him;
- ❖ The meal **nourishes** me, it **transforms** me.





Conclusion

- ❖ Making an act of faith is under my control;
- ❖ If I choose to **believe without seeing or make an act of faith**, God gives me the strength to do so;
- ❖ I receive the **general capacity** to make an **act of faith** at **Baptism**;
- ❖ It is then up to me to **exercise it**.
- ❖ Making an act of faith is not always comfortable. It is **an act of my soul** (immaterial) and doesn't take my body into account.



Conclusion

- ❖ An act of faith can be **painful** because God comes in in a **strong and close way**;
- ❖ I am not used to it;
- ❖ Prayer can be **uncomfortable**;
- ❖ St John of the Cross stated that **faith** is the only way under **my control** to achieve **union with God**.

If Faith is the Only Door to Mystical Life, what will I do?

- ❖ Teresa of Avila, 1515-1582, strove **to live in the presence of God**;
- ❖ **Recollection** or the exercise of the **act of faith**, changed Teresa's life;
- ❖ She **considered** Jesus. She looked at Him with her eyes of faith;
- ❖ Jesus came to her;
- ❖ Teresa noticed **flowers of virtue**. God transformed her.



Recollection & Prayer without Ceasing

- ❖ Rule of Albert mandates **prayer without ceasing**;
- ❖ Teresa had many **responsibilities**;
- ❖ Teresa realized that she could practice prayer without ceasing by **being attentive to Jesus throughout the day**;
- ❖ This attention to Jesus **transformed** her;
- ❖ What I did for Teresa **I will do for you**.

Prayer without Ceasing & a very Busy Life?

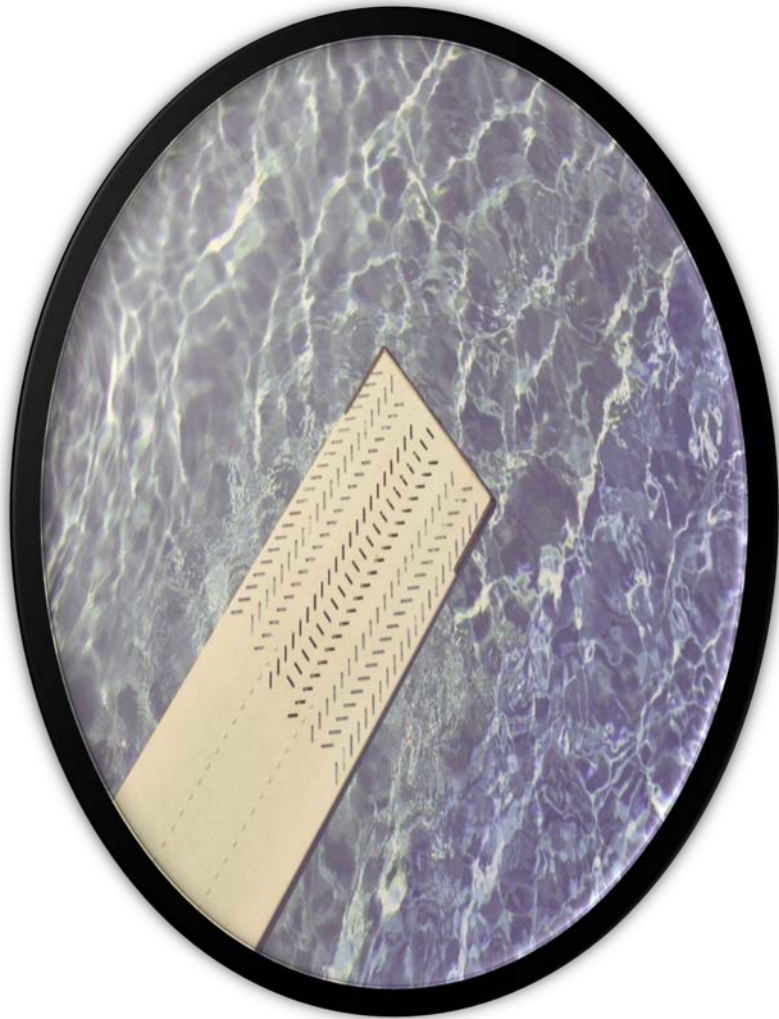


- ❖ Teresa founded 17 convents and had endless problems;
- ❖ Acts of Liberty or Will;
- ❖ Act of Charity & the Act of Faith operate the same way;
- ❖ Teresa offered this freedom of her will to Jesus.



The Challenge is to
Believe & Love

- ❖ It is about making our lives an **inward journey**;
- ❖ Teresa's teaching is really putting into practice the **Sermon on the Mount** ;
- ❖ The idea of St. Teresa is to place all the acts of my life under the **watchful eye of Jesus!**



Teresa's 4 Virtues

- ❖ **0/** Continuous prayer or **practicing the Continuous Presence of Jesus**, the source of grace; it's the **foundation**;
- ❖ **1/ Humility** is the **springboard** for this exercise of faith;
- ❖ **2/ Detachment** from a problem when I ask the Lord to **set me free** from it;



Teresa's 4 Virtues

- ❖ 4/ What is **Brotherly Love**?
- ❖ The **grace** received in prayer must be transmitted as **charity in service to others**;
- ❖ Grace is a **fresh product**;
- ❖ **Share the Grace** or make an **Act of Charity**;

Teresa's 4 Virtues

- ❖ When I am **lost in life** and **can't find my way** what should I do?
- ❖ The answer is always to make an **act of charity** or to be of **service to someone else!**
- ❖ Try it in small, things; don't miss an **opportunity** to make an **act of charity!**