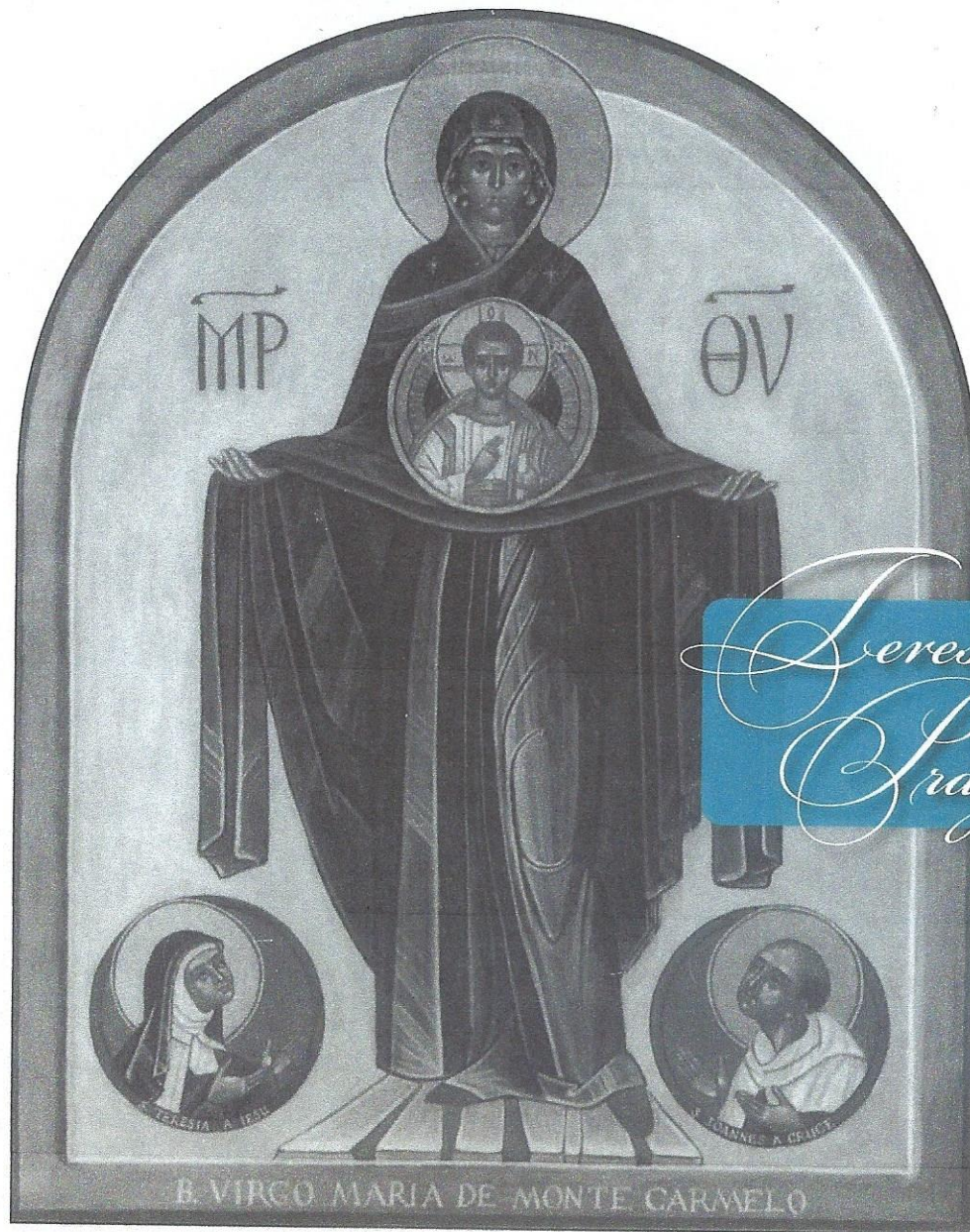


CARMEL CLARION

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St. Joseph's in order to discard all finery, in order to consecrate themselves to the Lord in unlimited self-forgetfulness and humble submission. Postulants also came without any dowries and were received just as joyfully, in fact, even more lovingly. For the Holy Mother was concerned with having the real spirit of the order in her house, not with external goods. Soon the number reached thirteen, which Teresa originally did not want to exceed. (Later it was raised to twenty.) She regulated life in the house with the greatest wisdom.⁵ Each sister received an office in which she served the requirements of the little monastic family. The day was strictly apportioned between work and prayer. And this work, which was to contribute support, had to be simple and modest, not giving rise to pride, and thereby preserving their recollection in God. The work was carried out in solitude and silence. Only during the hour of recreation did the sisters come together in heartfelt and spontaneous conversation. Teresa made this hour into a required practice and set great store by it, to allow the spirit the relaxation that nature demands and to give sufficient opportunity for the practice of sisterly love. But even during this hour of recreation there was no idleness. During lively conversation or joyful song, busy hands raced as fast as they could.

Her little family's spirit was Teresa's greatest reward for all her efforts and sacrifice. She herself stood in wonder before her daughters:

Oh how I recognize all the superiorities of these sisters over me! No sooner had God given them some understanding, some love, than for his sake they disdained the lives to which they used to be attached and sacrificed themselves for him. They find their delight in solitude. All their happiness lies in thoughts of making progress in serving God. Their blessedness is to live alone with him. Many of them spent their youth in the vanity of the world. They intended to find their happiness there and to make decisions according to the world's standards. But precisely these are the most joyful. God rewards them with true joy for the false delights they have left for him. I cannot say how much comfort I feel living in the company of such innocent souls who have renounced everything, [see L, 35, 12]

The saint also had no other desire than to live in this separation from the world with her little family, to lead them ever more deeply into the spirit of prayer, into the heroic exercise of virtues—humility, obedience, complete giving of oneself, poverty, the most heartfelt love for God and for people—and to consecrate with them this whole life of prayer, sacrifice, voluntary penance (on which, however, she set a wise limit and so obviated an unhealthy enthusiasm) to the glory of God and his church, for the salvation of souls and as a support for priests who were doing battle with the great errors of the time. But she was not to conclude her life in the quiet of St. Joseph's.

13. Spread of the Reform

Again, it was her burning desire for the salvation of souls that led Teresa to new action. One day a Franciscan from the missions visited her and told her about the sad spiritual and moral condition of people in heathen lands. Shaken, she withdrew into

⁵ After she had discovered and tested the most appropriate regimen in living with her daughters, she wrote her "Constitutions," which—except for a few minor changes—today continue to contain the valid rules of her Order. They are contained in her writings. [See *Collected Works of St. Teresa*, vol. 3, pp. 319-333.—Tr.]



her hermitage in the garden. "I cried to the Savior, I pleaded with him for the means of winning souls for him because the evil enemy robs him of so many. I asked him to help himself a little by my prayers, because that was all I could offer him" [F, 1,7]. After petitioning like this for many days, the Lord appeared to her and spoke the comforting words, "Wait a little while, my daughter, and you will see great things" [F, 1,8]. Six months later came the fulfillment of this promise.

In the spring of the year 1567 she received news of an upcoming visit to Spain by the Carmelite General, Giovanni Battista Rossi (Rubeo). "This was something most unusual. The generals of our order always have been situated in Rome. None had ever come to Spain before" [F, 2, 1]. The nun who had left her monastery and founded a new one had reason to be afraid of the arrival of her highest superior. He had the power to destroy her work. With the consent of the bishop of Avila who had jurisdiction of her house, Teresa invited the general to visit. He came, and Teresa gave him a completely candid account of the entire history of the foundation. What he saw convinced him of the spirit that ruled in this little monastery and he was moved to tears. It was evident that here was a perfect realization of the goal for which he had come to Spain. He was considering a reform of the entire Order, a return to the old traditions, but he had not risked proceeding as radically as Teresa. King Philip II had called him to Spain to renew discipline in the monasteries of his land. Fr. Rubeo had found little friendly reception in other places. Now he confided his concerns to Teresa. For her part, she responded with love and a daughter's trust. When he departed from Avila, he left Teresa with permits to found additional women's monasteries of the reform. All these monasteries were to be directly under the general.

No provincial was to have the right to hinder their foundation or to involve himself in their affairs. When he returned to Madrid, Fr. Rubeo spoke enthusiastically to the king about Teresa and her work. Philip II asked for her prayers and those of her daughters, and was from then on the most powerful friend and protector of the reform. After returning to Rome, the Father General gave the saint even more power: to found two monasteries for men according to the primitive Rule if she could obtain the permission of the present provincial and that of his predecessor. This permission was obtained for her by the bishop of Avila, who himself had been the first to express the wish for monasteries of friars of the reform. Teresa now found herself in an unusual position. Instead of a quiet little monastery to which she could retreat with a few selected souls, she was now to found an entire order for men and women. "And only a poor, unshod Carmelite was there to accomplish this, even though furnished with permits and the best wishes, but without any means for initiating the work and without any other support than that of the Lord..." [F, 2, 6]. But this support sufficed. Before long, what was most important for a monastery of men appeared: the first friars. While she was making the first foundation for nuns in Medina del Campo, the prior of the Carmelite monastery of the mitigated rule there, Fr. Antonio de Heredia, energetically stood by Teresa's side. When she told him of her plan, he declared himself ready to be the first male discalced Carmelite. Teresa was surprised and not absolutely happy, because she did not fully credit him with having the strength to sustain the primitive Rule. However, he stayed firm in his decision. A few days later, a companion for him appeared who was



King Phillip II

most satisfactory to the saint: a young Carmelite at that time called John of St. Matthias, who from his early youth had lived a life of prayer and the strictest self-denial. He had gained the permission of his superior to follow the primitive Rule personally. Not satisfied with this, he was thinking of becoming a Carthusian. Teresa persuaded him, instead, to become the living cornerstone of the Carmelite Order of the primitive Rule.

Some time later a little house in Duruelo, a hamlet between Avila and Medina del Campo, was offered to her for the planned foundation. It was in miserable condition, but neither Teresa nor the two fathers were taken aback by it. Fr. Antonio still needed some time to end his priorship and put all his affairs in order. In the meantime, Fr. John joined Holy Mother to acquaint himself with the spirit and rule of life of the reform under her personal direction. On September 20, 1568 he went to Duruelo, having been clothed by Teresa in the habit of the reform, which she herself had made for him. As the Holy Mother had anticipated, he divided the single room of the pitiful little hut into two cells, an attic room into the choir, a vestibule into a chapel where he celebrated the first Mass the next morning. Soon he was considered a saint by the peasants in the neighborhood. On November 27, Fr. Antonio joined him. Together they now committed themselves to the primitive Rule and changed their names. From then on they were called Anthony of Jesus [Antonio de Jesus] and John of the Cross [Juan de la Cruz].

A few months later the Holy Mother could visit them and get to know their way of life. She says about this:

I came there during Lent in the year 1569. It was morning. Father Antonio in his always cheerful mood was sweeping the doorway to the church. "What does this mean, my father," I said, "and where is your self-respect?" ... "Oh, cursed be the time when I paid attention to that," he answered chuckling. I went into the chapel and was seized by the spirit of fervor and poverty with which God had filled it. I was not the only one so moved. Two merchants with whom I was friendly and who had accompanied me from Medina del Campo looked at the house with me. They could only weep. There were crosses and skulls everywhere. I will never forget a little wooden cross over a holy water font to which an image of the Savior had been glued. This image was made of simple paper; however, it flooded me with more devotion than if it had been very valuable and beautifully made. The choir, once an attic room, was raised in the middle so that the fathers could comfortably pray the Office. But one still had to bow deeply when entering. At both sides of the church, there were two little hermitages where they could only sit or lie down and even so their heads would touch the roof. The floor was so damp that they had to put straw on it. I learned that the fathers, instead of going to sleep after matins, retreated to these little hermitages and meditated there until prime. In fact, they once were praying in such recollection that when snow fell on them through the slats in the roof, they did not notice it at all, and returned to the choir without it occurring to them even to shake their robes. [F, 14, 7]



Our friars in Duruelo at the site of 1st foundation

Duruelo was the cradle of the male branch of the reformed Carmel. It spread vigorously from there, always directed by the Holy Mother's prayer and illuminating suggestions, but nevertheless relatively independent. The humble little John of the Cross, the great saint of the church, inspired it with the spirit. But he was entirely a person of prayer, of penance. Others took on the external direction.

Besides Fr. Antonio, there were the enthusiastic Italians, Fr. Mariano and Fr. Nicolas Doria. But, above all, the most faithful support for the Holy Mother during her last years was, as she was convinced, the choice instrument of the reform, the youthful, brilliantly gifted Fr. Jeronimo Gracian of the Mother of God.

Teresa herself had hardly any time for quiet monastic life after she left the peace of St. Joseph's upon founding the first daughter house in Medina del Campo. She was called now here, now there, to establish new houses of the reform. Despite her always fragile health and increasing age, she indefatigably undertook the most difficult journeys as often as the Lord's service required. Everywhere there were hard battles to endure: Sometimes there were difficulties with the spiritual and civil authorities, sometimes the lack of a suitable house and the basic necessities of life, sometimes disagreements with upper-class founders who made impossible demands of the monasteries. When finally all obstacles had been overcome and everything organized so that the true life of Carmel could begin, she who had done it all had, without pause, to move on to new tasks. The only consolation she had was that a new garden was blooming for the Lord to enjoy.

14. Prioress at the Monastery of the Incarnation

While the spiritual gardens of Mother Teresa were spreading their lovely fragrance over all of Spain, the Monastery of the Incarnation, her former home, was in a sad state. Income had not increased in proportion to the number of nuns, and since they were used to living comfortably and not (as in the reformed Carmel) to finding their greatest joy in holy poverty, discontent and slackening of spirit spread. In the year 1570, Fr. Fernandez of the Order of St. Dominic came to this house. He was the apostolic visitor entrusted by Pope Pius V with examining the disciplinary state of monasteries in Castile. Since he had already become thoroughly acquainted with some monasteries of the reform, the contrast must have shocked him. He thought of a radical remedy. By the authority of his position, he named Mother Teresa as prioress of the Monastery of the Incarnation and ordered her to return to Avila at once to assume her position. In the midst of her work for the reform, she now had to undertake a task that for all intents and purposes appeared impossible. Exhorted by the Lord himself, she declared her readiness. However, with the agreement of Fr. Fernandez, she gave a written statement that she personally would continue to follow the primitive Rule. One can imagine the vehement indignation of the nuns who were to have a prioress sent to them—one not elected by them—a sister of theirs who had left them eight years earlier and whom they considered an adventuress, a mischief-maker. The storm broke as the provincial led her into the house. The provincial, Fr. Angel de Salazar,⁶ could not make himself heard in the noisy gathering. The "Te Deum" that he intoned was drowned out by the sounds of indignation. Teresa's goodness and humility finally brought about enough quiet for the sisters to go to their cells and to tolerate her presence in the house.

They were saving the decisive declarations for the first chapter meeting. But how

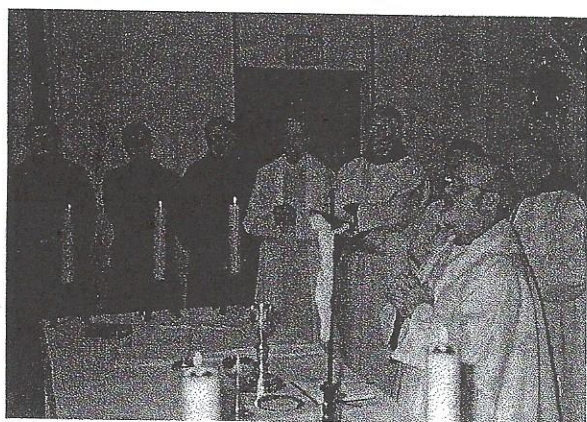
⁶ See note 7. [Ed.]



*Our Holy Mother and Father,
Teresa and John*

amazed they were when they entered the chapter room at the sound of the bell to see in the prioress' seat the statue of our dear Lady, the Queen of Carmel, with the keys to the monastery in her hands and the new prioress at her feet. Their hearts were conquered even before Teresa began to speak and in her indisputably loving manner presented to them how she conceived and intended to conduct her office. In a short time, under her wise and temperate direction, above all by the influence of her character and conduct, the spirit of the house was renewed. Her greatest support in this was Fr. John of the Cross, whom she called to Avila as confessor for the monastery.

This time of greatest expenditure of energy when Teresa, along with being prioress of the Monastery of the Incarnation, retained the spiritual direction of her eight reformed monasteries, was also a time of the greatest attestation of grace. At that time she had a vision that she herself described as a "spiritual marriage." On November 18, 1572, the Lord appeared to her during Holy Communion. "He offered me his right hand and spoke, 'See this nail. It is the sign of our union. From this day on you are my bride. Up to now you had not earned it. But now you will not only see me as your Creator, your King, your God, but from now on you will care for my honor as my true bride. My honor is yours; your glory is mine'" [ST, 31]. From that moment on, she found herself united blissfully with the Lord, a union that remained with her for the entire last decade of her life, her own life



*Mass at the Incarnation Monastery,
Chapel of the Transverberation*

mortified, "full of the inexpressible joy of having found her true rest, and of the sense that Jesus Christ was living in her."⁷ She characterized as the first result of this union "such a complete forgetfulness of self that it truly seems as if this soul had lost its own being. It no longer recognizes itself. It no longer thinks about heaven for itself, about life, about honor. The only thing she cares about any longer is the honor of God" [C, 7, 3, 2]. The second result is an inner desire for suffering, a desire, however, that no longer disturbs her soul as earlier. She desires with such fervor that God's will be fulfilled in her that everything that pleases the divine Master seems good to her. If he wants her to suffer, she is happy; if he does not, his will be done.

But the following surprised me the most. This soul whose life has been martyrdom, because of her strong desire to enjoy the vision of God, has now become so consumed by the wish to serve him, to glorify his name, and to be useful to other souls that, far from wishing to die, she would like to live for many years in the greatest suffering...

In this soul there is no more interior pain or dryness, but only a sweet and constant joy. Should she for a short time be less attentive to the presence of God, he himself immediately awakens her. He works to bring her to complete perfection and imparts his doctrines in a completely hidden way in

⁷ Interior Castle, seventh dwelling places, chap. 3. [The text does not appear in precisely this form in the ICS translation.—Tr.]

the midst of such a deep peace that it reminds me of the building of Solomon's temple. Actually, the soul becomes the temple of God where only God alone and the soul mutually delight in each other in greatest quiet. [C, 7, 3, 6-11]

15. Doing Battle for Her Life's Work

The greatest grace that can befall a soul was probably necessary to strengthen the saint for the storm that was soon to break over the reform. Even during her term as prioress, she had to resume her journeys of foundation and leave a vicaress in charge in Avila. At the end of her years as prioress it was only with some effort that she stopped the nuns from re-electing her. Those who had so struggled against her assuming the position clung to her with such great love. Her humility and goodness, her superior intelligence and wise moderation in this case had been able to bridge the rift between the "calced" and the "discalced." Her spiritual sons were not so lucky. They had founded new monasteries in addition to the two for which the general of the Order, Fr. Rubeo, had previously given Teresa authorization. They had the permission of the apostolic visitor from Andalusia, Fr. Vargas, but no arrangement with the Order's superiors. Their extraordinary penances (which often caused the saint herself concern) and their zeal soon aroused the admiration of the people. This, along with the apostolic visitor's evident preference for the monasteries of the reform, made those not of the reform fear they themselves would soon be pushed entirely into the background, even that the reform might be imposed on the entire Order. Their envoys turned the general in Rome completely against the discalced as disobedient and as agitators. To suppress their "revolt," Fr. Tostado, a Portuguese Carmelite with special authority, was sent to Spain. A clash between the two branches of the Order ensued, which must have filled the heart of the humble and peace-loving Holy Mother with the greatest pain. In addition, it appeared that her entire work was threatened. She herself was called "a gadabout" by the new papal nuncio in Spain, "disobedient, ambitious, who presumes to teach others like a doctor of the church despite the prohibition of Saint Paul." She was ordered to choose one of the reformed monasteries as her permanent residence and to make no further trips. How grateful she would have been for the quiet in the monastery of Toledo, which Fr. Gracian suggested to her, had there not been such a hostile design behind the command! All the monasteries of the reform were prohibited from taking in novices, condemning them to extinction. Her beloved sons were reviled and persecuted. Fr. John of the Cross, who had always kept himself far from all conflict, was even secretly abducted and kept in humiliating confinement in the monastery of the calced in Toledo. He was cruelly abused until the Blessed Virgin, his protectress since childhood, miraculously freed him. In this storm that finally made everyone lose courage, Holy Mother alone stood erect. Together with her daughters, she stormed heaven. She was indefatigable in encouraging her sons with letters and advice, in calling her friends for help, in presenting the true circumstances



St. John of the Cross

to the Father General who had once been so good to her, in appealing to her most powerful patron, the king, for protection. And finally she arrived at the solution that she recommended as the only possible one: the complete separation of the calced from the discalced Carmelites into two provinces. The Congregation of Religious in Rome had been occupied with the unfortunate conflict for a long time. A well-informed cardinal, whom Pope Gregory XIII questioned concerning the state of affairs, responded, "The Congregation has thoroughly investigated all the complaints of the Carmelites of the mitigated Rule. It comes down to the following: Those with the mitigated Rule fear that the reform will finally reform them also." The pope then decided that the monasteries of Carmelite friars and nuns of the reform were to constitute a province of their own under a provincial chosen by them. A brief dated June 27, 1580 announced this decision. In March of 1581, the chapter of Akala elected Fr. Jeronimo Gracian as its first provincial in accordance with the Holy Mother's wishes.

16. The End

Teresa greeted the end of the years of suffering with overflowing thanks. "God alone knew in full about the bitterness, and now only he alone knows of the boundless joy that fills my soul, as I see the end of these many torments. I wish the whole world would thank God with me! Now we are all at peace, calced and discalced Carmelites, and nothing is to stop us from serving God. Now then, my brothers and sisters, let us hurry to offer ourselves up for the honor of the divine Master who has heard our prayers so well" [F, 29, 31-32]. During the short span of time still given to her, she herself sacrificed her final strength for new journeys to make foundations. The erection of the monastery in Burgos, the last one that she brought to life, cost her much effort and time. She had left Avila on January 2, 1582, to go there. It was July before she could begin the trip home, but she was not to reach the desired goal any more. After she had visited a number of other monasteries of the nuns, Fr. Antonio of Jesus brought her to Alba to comply with a wish of the Duchess Maria Henriquez, the great patroness of that monastery. Completely exhausted, Teresa arrived on September 20. According to a number of witnesses, she had predicted some years earlier that she would die at this place and at this time. Even though the attending physician saw her condition as hopeless, she continued to take part in all the monastic exercises until September 29. Then she had to lie down. On October 2, in accordance with her wish, Fr. Antonio heard her last confession. On the third she requested Viaticum. An eyewitness gave this report: "At the moment when the Blessed Sacrament was brought into her cell, the Holy Mother raised herself without anyone's help and got on her knees. She would even have gotten out of her bed if she had not been prevented. Her expression was very beautiful and radiated divine love. With a lively expression of joy and piety, she spoke such exalted divine words to the Lord that we were all filled with great devotion." During the day she repeated again and again the words from the "Miserere" (Psalm 51): *Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, no despicias* ("A broken and contrite heart, God, you will not despise"). In the evening she asked to be anointed. Concerning her last day, October 4, we again have an eyewitness account by Sr. Maria of St. Francis:

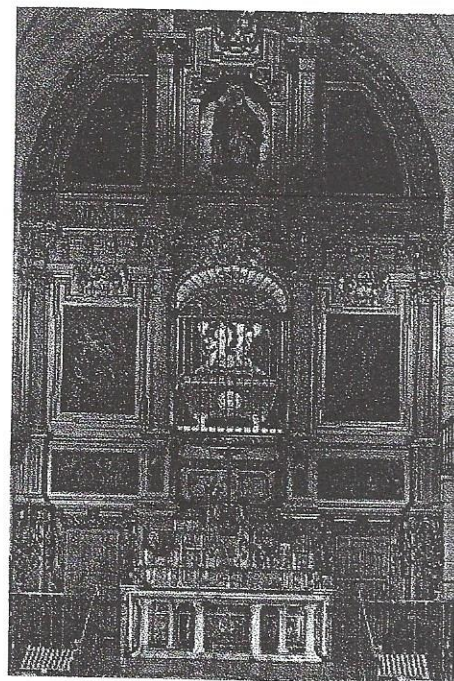
On the morning of the feast of St. Francis, at about 7 o'clock, our Holy Mother turned on her

side toward the nuns, a crucifix in her hand, her expression more beautiful, more glowing, than I had ever seen it during her life. I do not know how her wrinkles disappeared, since the Holy Mother, in view of her great age and her continual suffering, had very deep ones. She remained in this position in prayer full of deep peace and great repose. Occasionally she gave some outward sign of surprise or amazement. But everything proceeded in great repose. It seemed as if she were hearing a voice that she answered. Her facial expression was so wondrously changed that it looked like a celestial body to us. Thus immersed in prayer, happy and smiling, she went out of this world into eternal life.

The wondrous events that occurred at the Saint's burial, the incorrupt state of her body that was determined by repeated disinterments, the numerous miracles that she worked during her life and then really in earnest after her death, the enthusiastic devotion of the entire Spanish people for their saint—all of this led to the initiation of the investigations preparatory to her canonization, already in the year 1595. Paul V declared her blessed in a brief on April 24, 1614. Her canonization by Gregory XV followed on March 22, 1622. Her feast day was designated as October 15, because the ten days after her death were dropped (October 5-14, 1582) due to the Gregorian calendar reform.

Luis de Leon⁸ said of Teresa: "I neither saw nor knew the saint during her lifetime. But today, albeit she is in heaven, I know her and see her in her two living reflections, that is, in her daughters and in her writings... "Actually, there are few saints as humanly near to us as our Holy Mother. Her writings, which she penned as they came to her, in obedience to the order of her confessor, wedged in among all of her burdens and work, serve as classical masterpieces of Spanish literature.

In incomparably clear, simple and sincere language they tell of the wonders of grace that God worked in a chosen soul. They tell of the indefatigable efforts of a woman with the daring and strength of a man, revealing natural intelligence and heavenly wisdom, a deep knowledge of human nature and a rich spirit's innate sense of humor, the infinite love of a heart tender as a bride's and kind as a mother's. The great family of religious⁹ that she founded, all who have been given the enormous grace of being called her sons and daughters, look up with thankful love to their Holy Mother and have no other desire than to be filled by her spirit, to walk the way of perfection hand in hand with her to its goal. ☩



Tomb of our Holy Mother St Teresa of Jesus



⁸ A learned Augustinian who published the first printed edition of Teresa's writings (1588).

⁹ At her death Teresa left behind fourteen monasteries of the reform for men and sixteen for women. Soon thereafter the Order spread to France. Today it is established all over the World. A great number of lay people are united with it by the Secular Order and the Scapular Fraternity. The Teresian Prayer Organization (at the Carmelite Monastery in Würzburg) assembles everyone who wants to intercede for the needs of the Holy Church and the Holy Father into a great prayer army, and lets them participate in all the good works of the Carmelite Order.