

## THE TREASURE of Carmel

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." Matt. 13:44

This Verse illustrates an important aspect of Silent Prayer that we are going to discover together...

### The Plan:

What is Silent Prayer?

What is the Goal of Silent Prayer?

How do you Practice Silent Prayer?

### 1/What is Silent Prayer?

Silent prayer is talked about a lot in Carmel, it is an important part of the Charism,

What gives us the authority to talk about Silent Prayer?

Why is the Carmel referenced when it comes to Silent Prayer more so than the other orders such as the Dominicans, Franciscans or Jesuits for example?

Does the Carmel have something special bring to this discussion?

To **answer** that question, we will turn to the **Catechism** of the Catholic Church for the answer.

The Catechism is arranged in **4 principal parts** or the **4 Pillars of Christianity**:

- The Profession of Faith (the Apostle's Creed);
- The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (the Sacred Liturgy, the sacraments);
- Life in Christ (Ten Commandments, Beatitudes);
- Christian Prayer** (Lord's Prayer)

### Life of Prayer (Chapter 3)

2697 ... "We must remember God more often than we draw breath."

2698 The Tradition of the Church proposes to the faithful certain rhythms of praying ... through the cycle of the liturgical year, its great feasts.

2699 ... Christian Tradition has retained three major expressions of prayer: vocal, meditative, and contemplative. They have one basic trait in common: composure of heart.

### a/ **Vocal Prayer:**

2700 ... "Whether or not our prayer is heard depends not on the number of words, but on the fervor of our souls."<sup>2</sup>

2701 ... To his disciples, drawn by their Master's silent prayer, Jesus teaches a vocal prayer, the Our Father....

2704 ... Even silent prayer, however, cannot neglect vocal prayer... Thus vocal prayer becomes an initial form of contemplative prayer.

### b/ **Meditation:**

2705 Meditation is above all a quest... The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books, particularly the Gospels, holy icons...

2707 There are as many and varied methods of meditation ... But a method is only a guide; the important thing is to advance, with the Holy Spirit, along the one way of prayer: Christ Jesus.

2708 Meditation engages ... but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him.

### c/ **Contemplative Prayer** (silent prayer):

2709 What is contemplative prayer?

St. Teresa of Avila answers:

"**Contemplative prayer [oracion mental] in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.**" ...

We can break down Teresa's definition word for word -(Commentary not included here, see pwr pt)

### 2/ **What is the Goal of Silent Prayer?**

The whole aim of any person who is beginning prayer—and don't forget this because it's very important—should be that he work and prepare himself with determination and every possible effort to **bring his will into conformity with God's will.**

Be certain that, as I shall say later, the **greatest perfection attainable along the spiritual path lies in this conformity.** It is the person who lives in

more perfect conformity who will receive more from the Lord and be more advanced on this road.

Don't think that in what concerns perfection there is some mystery or things unknown or still to be, for in perfect conformity to God's will lies all our good. (C 2,8)

From the moment of **Baptism**, the Holy Trinity resides in our soul; God wants to purify us, to sanctify us from the effects of sin to unite us with Him; United with Him, the presence of the Trinity radiates through your whole being.

The **goal of Silent Prayer is union with God**, especially in the will because it is with my will that I make choices for my life;

-The more I am united to his will, the more I will accomplish his will, the happier I will be, the more I will bring the kingdom of God to earth allowing the life of God to radiate out into the world;

-The challenge of Silent Prayer is to be ever more united to God, to Christ in his Pascal Mystery, in his Passion, in his Resurrection so that the life of God irrigates my whole life and radiates to those around me in my workplace and in my family.

### 3/ How to Practice Silent Prayer?

#### **-Determined Determination**

-Same time daily, this time belongs to God alone; --

-Decide on a time, a place, a length of time, aids such as a book, picture, or vocal prayer;

-Spiritual Director, a school of prayer, an OCDS community.

**-Difficulties:** It is hard to develop a life of prayer, it's a struggle to develop this habit; Spiritual Combat

There is one who doesn't want us to experience union with God because we will bring others with us

#### **Distractions**

**Dryness** Important to have a fixed length of time.

#### **Conclusion:**

**- Union with God**-The daily practice of prayer allows me to become more and more united to him to include my whole being;

**- Relationships**-A life of silent prayer is about a friendship with the Trinity or a specific member of the Trinity. Teresa had a friendship with the Christ in his humanity; My relationship with God in prayer allows me to understand the depth, vitality and beauty of human relationships with my spouse, friends; We take better care of our relationships, become more respectful of others, treating them

with dignity and respect who like us are Temples of the Holy Spirit.

**- Interior Life** -Living my life in God's presence as his child gives me liberty and allows me to maintain an appropriate distance from the world around me; I can be in the world but not of it; I can keep the world in perspective.

### **The Treasure of Carmel**

Do not be frightened, daughters,  
by the many things you need to consider in order  
to begin this Divine Journey (of prayer)  
which is the Royal Road to Heaven.

A great **treasure** is gained by travelling this road...

Teresa of Avila (W 21,1)

All of us who wear this holy habit of Carmel are called to prayer & contemplation. This call explains our origin... descendants ... of those holy fathers on Mount Carmel who in ... solitude & contempt for the world sought this treasure, this precious pearl of contemplation ..... Yet few of us dispose ourselves that the Lord may communicate it to us... the practice of the virtues is necessary for arriving at this point ... So, my Sisters, ... be brave in begging the Lord to give us His grace ... that nothing will be lacking through our own fault; that He show us the way & strengthen the soul that it may dig until it finds this hidden treasure. (C, 5, 1)

44 The Kingdom of God is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found & covered up  
Then in his joy he goes & sells all he has and buys that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls,

46, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went out & sold all that he had & bought it.

Matt. 13:44-46