

The Treasure of Carmel



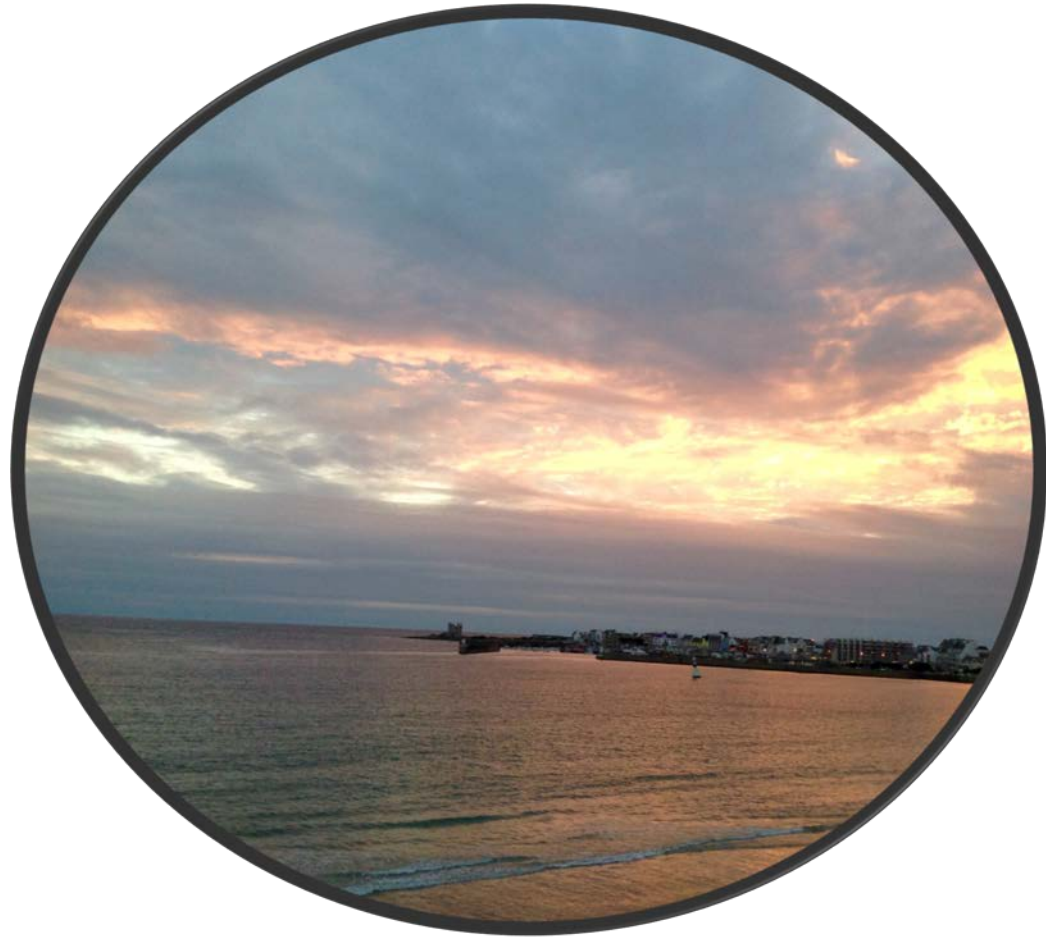
The Kingdom of God is Like...

The Kingdom of God is like a
treasure hidden in a field
Which a man found
And covered up
Then in his joy he goes and
Sells all he has
And buys that field

Matt. 13:44



An Important Aspect



This Verse illustrates an important aspect of

Silent Prayer

A bit of suspense...

The Plan

- What is **Silent Prayer**?
- What is the **Goal of Silent Prayer**?
- How do you **Practice Silent Prayer**?

What is Silent Prayer?

- **Silent Prayer** is talked about a lot in Carmel; it is an important part of **Carmel's Charism**;
- What gives the Carmel the **authority** to discuss 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 these questions** we will turn to the **Catechism** of the Catholic Church.



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

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

Let's examine the
3 Most Common Expressions of Prayer

Chapter 3: Life of Prayer

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

2698 The Tradition of the Church proposes ... rhythms of praying ... 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.





Vocal Prayer

2700 ... "Whether ... our prayer is heard depends ... on the fervor of our souls."

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

2704 ... Even interior prayer... cannot neglect vocal prayer ... vocal prayer becomes an initial form of contemplative prayer.



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. (I am the way, the truth, the life)

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



Contemplative Prayer

2709 What is contemplative prayer?

"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." St. Teresa of Avila

Saint Teresa of Avila's Definition of Contemplative Prayer

Let's break down Teresa's definition word by word...

Contemplative prayer 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.



...In My Opinion...

Saint Teresa of Avila

was declared

Doctor of the Church
in 1970 by Pope Paul VI

The first woman
to be so honored



...An Exchange of Intimate Friendship...

- ❖ Friendship supposes sharing, an equality.
- ❖ In silent prayer, the Lord, present in the deepest part of ourselves, behaves towards us as a friend...this is a **mystery**.
- ❖ Our Spiritual life is based on this **Act of Faith**.



...One on One...

- Interior or silent prayer is the experience of intimacy with the Lord; it is the Lord who draws us into solitude.
- One enters into a ‘heart to heart’ with the Lord; into a personal relationship with Him.



...Often...

- We are all called by the Lord to this daily meeting with Him in prayer.
- We find this affirmation in Scripture: Pray without ceasing (1 Thel.5:17).



...With the One who we know loves us...

- We know that the Lord loves us:
God is love. (1 Jn. 4:8)
- We know that He is present within us:
Don't you know that your body is a
temple of the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor. 6: 19)
- Jesus waits for us in interior prayer:
Here I am I wait at the door and I knock.
If someone hears my voice and opens the door,
I will enter and dine with him, me near him and
him near me. (Rev. 3:20)
- This relationship is not based on feelings:
'who we know loves us' **NOT** 'who we feel loves us'

**It's Faith that enables this
friendly relationship with God!**

Saint Teresa of Avila's Definition of Contemplative Prayer

"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." (v 8,5), (ccc 2709)

What is the Goal of Silent Prayer

Aim of any Person beginning Prayer ...and don't forget this!

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 understood,

for in **perfect conformity to God's will** lies **all our good**. (C 2,8)

A Temple of the Trinity



- 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 in order to unite us with Him;
- United with Him, the presence of the Trinity radiates through your whole being.

Goal of Silent Prayer

- 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 in 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.

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

A Life of Silent Prayer



- A life of Silent Prayer is a about a relationship with the Trinity within,
- All three Persons or a specific person,
- For St. Teresa it was the Christ Incarnate or Christ in the Flesh.

Conclusion



Union with God

The daily practice of prayer allows you to become more and more united to him to include your 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 which is the Royal Road to
Heaven. A great **treasure** is gained
by travelling this road...

Teresa of Avila (W21,1)

The Treasure of Carmel

... sought this
treasure,
this precious pearl
of
contemplation ...

...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** ...

The Treasure of Carmel



...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 we ...
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)

The Treasure of Carmel

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

