

## Life 9 (1, 2, 9)

### The Second Conversion

1. By this time my soul was growing weary, and, though it desired to rest the miserable habits which now enslaved it would not allow it to do so. It happened that, entering the oratory one day, I saw an image which had been procured for a certain festival that was observed in the house and had been taken there to be kept for that purpose. It represented Christ sorely wounded; and so conducive was it to devotion that when I looked at it I was deeply moved to see Him thus, so well did it picture what He suffered for us. So great was my distress when I thought how ill I had repaid Him for those wounds that I felt as if my heart were breaking, and I threw myself down beside Him, shedding floods of tears and begging Him to give me strength once for all so that I might not offend Him.

2. I had a great devotion to the glorious Magdalene and often thought of her conversion, especially when I communicated, for, knowing that the Lord was certainly within me then, I would place myself at His feet, thinking that my tears would not be rejected. I did not know what I was saying; but in allowing me to shed those tears He was very gracious to me, since I so soon forgot my grief; and I used to commend myself to that glorious Saint so that she might obtain pardon for me.

9. I believe my soul gained great strength from the Divine Majesty: He must have heard my cries and had compassion on all my tears. I began to long to spend more time with Him, and to drive away occasions of sin, for, once they had gone, I would feel a new love for His Majesty. I knew that, so far as I could tell, I loved Him, but I did not know, as I should have done, what true love of God really means. I think I had not yet quite prepared myself to want to serve Him when His Majesty began to grant me favors again. It really seems that the Lord found a way to make me desire to receive what others strive to acquire with great labor -- that is to say, during these latter years, He gave me consolations and favors. I never presumed to beg Him to give me either these things or tenderness in devotion: I only asked for grace not to offend Him and for the pardon of my grievous sins. Knowing how grievous they were, I never dared consciously to desire favors or consolations. His compassion, I think, worked in me abundantly, and in truth He showed me great mercy in allowing me to be with Him and bringing me into His presence, which I knew I should not have entered had He not so disposed it. Only once in my life -- at a time when I was suffering from great aridity -- do I remember having asked Him for consolations, and when I realized what I was doing I became so distressed that my very shame at finding myself so lacking in humility gave me what I had presumed to ask. I knew quite well that it was lawful to ask for it, but I thought it was only so for those who have done all in their power to obtain true devotion by not offending God and by being ready and determined to do all that is good. Those tears of mine, as they did not obtain for me what I desired, seemed to me effeminate and weak. But all the same I think they were of some benefit to me; for, as I say, especially after those two occasions when they caused me such compunction and such distress of heart, I began to devote

myself more to prayer and to have less to do with things that were hurtful for me: these last I did not wholly abandon, but, as I say, God kept on helping me to turn from them. As His Majesty was only awaiting some preparedness on my part, His spiritual favors continually increased, in the way I shall describe. It is not usual for the Lord to give them save to those who have a greater purity of conscience.

### Questions to Consider:

Notice the traits that are characteristic of St Teresa and those of Jesus---describe them

What sacrament does she owe her conversion to? Are there any commonalities?

The reasons for the meeting changed...What's new?