

## **Introduction**

Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all seeking God who makes his home in our hearts at Baptism. Most look for him in the world but do not find him there. St. Teresa of Avila has mapped out the ‘GPS’ so-to-speak to union of the soul with God.

Man’s choice caused him to fall from God’s grace and to be cast out from the garden of Eden. The good news is however that God’s law is written on man’s heart (Romans 2: 14-16) and that as St. Augustine tells us in his Confessions, we were made by God for God and until the heart of man rests in God, it is restless. Seeking to quiet the restless heart westerners often turn to Eastern thought unaware that the Catholic Church offers the path to union with God.

The Carmel offers a way of prayer practiced two hours daily by the friars/nuns. It’s a direct Path to the Heart, to Union with God. Carmel is defined by the belief that God lives in the heart and that we can reach Him there through faith, hope and charity. A relationship results satisfying a person’s thirst to be loved by God. We offer God our availability. It is a leap into the invisible.

The goal of the spiritual life summarized as follows: ‘I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20.

For many though, mystical life is reduced to unnecessary extraordinary phenomena. In reality, it is the fulfillment of Baptismal graces, an increase in the virtues of faith, hope and charity in the heart of the one believing the Kingdom of God is within; for Teresa, all the baptized are invited to a mystical life for which interior prayer is the vital nourishment; this life is not reserved for a few elite souls.

“Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new: late have I loved you. And see, you were within and I was in the external world and sought you there, and in my unlovely state I plunged into those lovely created things which you made. You were with me, and I was not with you. The lovely things kept me far from you, though if they did not have their existence in you, they had no existence at all. You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put to flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours.”

— **St. Augustine of Hippo, Confessions**