

Spiritual Testimonies 65

The Present State of Her Spiritual Life

(Palencia, 1581)

Saint Teresa of Avila

1. Who would be able to explain to your Excellency the **quiet** and **calm** my soul experiences! It is so certain to enjoy the **possession of Him**, although not the **fruition**. It's as though someone had made to another the **promise** of a large revenue at some point but until then the person only enjoys the **promise** of having the **fruition** of this revenue.

The soul feels **gratitude**, but would rather not rejoice, as it thinks it only deserves to **serve**, even if this service involves **suffering**.

Sometimes it seems that the period from now until then end of the world would be short to serve the one who gave it this possession.

This soul is no longer subject to the **world's miseries** as it used to be. Although it suffers more, this is only on the **surface**.

The soul is like a lord in its **castle** and does not lose its **peace**. This security does not remove the **fear of offending God** and of not ridding oneself of all that would be a **hindrance to serving Him**.

The soul proceeds cautiously and forgetful of self. In this state, all is directed to the **honor of God**, to the greater fulfillment of **His will**, and to **His glory**.

2. ... In what pertains to the soul's body and health there is less **mortification** and more care in eating; and in doing **penance**, the soul does not have the desires it did. All is directed toward having the **power to serve** God more in other things. As a sacrifice, it offers Him the care it takes of its body. This care wearies it much.

Sometimes it tests itself; but it cannot do so without harm to its health ... The desire it has for its health brings about a lot of self-love... But, ... it made me happier to perform a lot of penance. When I did so at

least I was doing something; I gave good example, and I did not have the trial of not serving God in anything ...

3. The **imaginative visions** have ceased. It seems however, that the **intellectual vision** of the **three Persons** and of the **humanity of Christ** continue. The **intellectual vision** is much more sublime. The **imaginative visions** were from God, they disposed the soul for its present state. Since it was so **miserable** and had such little **fortitude**, God led it as He saw necessary. In my opinion, when visions are from God they should be prized.

4. The **interior locutions** have not gone away because when necessary, God gives me advice. I would have made a big blunder in Palencia if it were not for this.

5. The **acts** and **desires** do not seem to bear the force they did. Although they are great, the strength the souls has for doing the **will of God** and what is for **His greater glory** is greater. To achieve this end, His Majesty knows what is fitting and so the acts and desires end quickly.

Hence I sometimes feel fear ... that my soul is in a stupor and that I am **doing nothing** because I cannot do **penance**.

Acts of desire to suffer, be a martyr and to see God have no force ... It seems I only live to eat and sleep and not suffer.

Sometimes I fear lest I be deceived ... but there does not seem to be any strong attachment to any creature or to all the glory of heaven but rather to loving this God of ours. This **attachment** to loving God does not diminish; instead, it increases along with the **desire that all serve Him**.

6. Besides this love, one thing amazes me: those interior, extreme **feelings** that used to torment me when I saw **souls being lost** ... are no longer felt. But I do not think the desire that He not be offended is any less.

7. ... In all these **experiences**, present or past, I have not had power to do anything more, nor do I now; ... As a result I no longer have any need to seek out learned men or tell anyone anything. I only need the **satisfaction** of knowing whether I am going along all right or whether I can do something ... Neither has the knowledge been taken away that some souls whom I am interested in and that die are in heaven...

8. The *solitude* that makes one think cannot give that understanding...

9. The **interior peace**, and the lack of strength that pleasures or displeasures have for taking this peace away in any lasting manner, ...

The presence of the three Persons is so impossible to doubt it seems one experiences ... that they will make their abode in the soul.

God does this by grace and by His presence. He wants to give the experience of this presence. It brings with it an abundance of blessings, especially the **blessing of knowing God is there**.

This presence is almost continual, except in sickness. Sometimes it seems God wants one to **suffer** without **interior consolation**; but never... does the will turn from its desire that **God's will** be done in it.

This **surrender** to the will of God is so powerful that the soul wants neither death nor life, unless for a short time when it longs to die to see God.

But soon the presence of the three Persons is represented to it so forcefully that this presence provides a **remedy** for the pain of His absence.

There remains the desire to live, if He wills, to serve Him more. And if through my **intercession**, I could play a part in getting a soul to **love** and **praise God more**, even if for only a short time, I think that would matter more to me than being in glory.

Amen