

## The Way of Perfection

### Prologue

Saint Teresa of Avila

The book called *The Way of Perfection* was written by Teresa of Jesus, a nun of the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel. This book is intended for the discalced nuns who observe the **primitive rule of our Lady of Mount Carmel**.

JHS

This book deals with the **advice** and **counsel** Teresa of Jesus gives to her religious Sisters and daughters who live in the monasteries that, with the help of our Lord and ... our Lady, she founded.

These monasteries follow the **primitive rule of our Lady of Mount Carmel**. She directs her counsel particularly to the Sisters at St. Joseph's monastery in Avila, which was the **first foundation** and the place where she was prioress when she wrote this book.

In all that I say in this book I submit to what our Mother the Holy Roman Church holds. If there should be anything contrary to that, it will be due to my not understanding the matter. And so I beg the learned men who will see this work ... to correct any mistake there may be ...

If there should be anything good in this work, may it be for the honor and glory of God and the service of His most Blessed Mother, our Lady and Patroness, whose habit I wear despite my being very unworthy to do so.

JHS

### Prologue

1. The Sisters in this monastery of St. Joseph have known that I received **permission** from ... Friar Domingo Banez, of the order of the glorious St. Dominic, who is at present my confessor, to **write some things about prayer**.

It seems I might be able to meet with **success** in doing this because I have **discussed prayer** with many spiritual and holy persons. The Sisters have urged me so persistently to tell them something about it that I have decided to **obey** them ...

And I trust in the Sisters' prayers that possibly through them the Lord will be pleased that I manage to say something about the ... manner of life proper to this house.

And if my confessor who will be the first to see this book, will either make corrections or burn it. I will not have lost anything by obeying these servants of God ...

2. I am thinking of listing some **remedies** for certain common, small **temptations** of the devil, for since they are so common perhaps little attention is paid to them.

And I shall write of other things as the Lord inspires me or that might come to my mind; for since I don't know what I'm going to say, I cannot say it in an orderly way ... May the Lord have a hand in all that I do so that it may conform to His holy will; these are my desires always ...

3. I know that there is no lack of love in me or of the desire to help as much as I can that the **souls** of my Sisters may **advance** in the **service of the Lord**. This love together with my age and experience ... may help me in speaking of **ordinary things** more successfully than learned men ...

The wiles of the devil are many for women who live a very cloistered life. He sees that new weapons are needed to do harm. I have defended myself poorly. So, I desire that my Sisters might take warning from my experience. I shall say nothing of what I have not **experienced** myself, **seen** in others or received an **understanding** of from our Lord in prayer.

4. Not long ago I was **ordered** to write an **account of my life**, in which I also dealt with some things about **prayer**. It could be that my confessor would not want you to see this account and so I shall put down here some of what was said there. I shall also write of other things that to me seem necessary.

May the Lord's own hand be in this work, as I have begged Him; and may He direct the work to His glory, amen.