

## The Way of Perfection

### Part 5: Our Father

“Hallowed be Thy Name,  
Thy Kingdom Come”

(Prayer of Quiet, Nature of ...)

Chapter 31 (summary)

Saint Teresa of Avila

**Chapter 31** Continues on the same subject. Explains the nature of the Prayer of Quiet. Gives some advice for those who experience it. This chapter should be carefully noted.

Well, daughters, I want to explain the **Prayer of Quiet** ... In this prayer it seems the Lord begins to **show** that He **hears** our petition. He begins to **give** us **His kingdom** here **below** so that we may truly **praise** and **hallow** (bless) His name ...

**2.** This prayer is **supernatural**. We cannot achieve it through our own **efforts**. In this prayer, the soul enters into **peace** or better, the **Lord puts it at peace by His presence**, as He did for Simeon, so that all the **faculties** are **calmed**. The **soul** understands ... that it is now **close to God** and that **not much more** would be required for it to become one with Him in **union**.

The soul does not see Him with the **eyes** of the **body** or **soul**. Simeon only saw the little, poor child ... He could have easily judged the babe to be the son of poor people rather than the **Son of our heavenly Father**. It was the **child Himself** who made Simeon understand.

This is how the soul understands here, though not with clarity. It doesn't understand how it understands. It sees it is in the kingdom, at least near the King who **gives it the kingdom**. The soul has so much **reverence**, it doesn't even dare ask for this.

The state resembles an interior and exterior **sworn**. The body wants **no activity** as one who has almost reached the journey's end. It only wants to rest to be better able to continue; in this **rest** his strength is double.

**3.** A person feels the greatest **delight** in his **body** and a great **satisfaction** in his **soul**. He feels so happy merely being close to the **fount** that he is satisfied without even drinking. It seems there is nothing else for him to **desire**.

The **faculties** are **still**; they wouldn't want to be busy; all else seems to hinder them from **loving**. They are **not** completely **lost** though ... in fact, two of them are free. The **will** is the only **captive** here. If there is some **sorrow** experienced in this state ... it is the **realization** that the **will** must **return** to the state of **being free**.

The **intellect** wouldn't want to understand more than one thing; nor would the **memory** want to be occupied with anything else. Persons in the prayer see that only **one thing** is **necessary** ... They don't want the body to move for fear of **losing the peace**; thus they don't dare stir. It pains them to speak; in their saying the “Our Father” just once, a whole hour passes...

They are **within the palace**, near the **King** ... who is beginning to give them His **kingdom**. They don't feel that they are in the world. They want only to see and hear about their God. Nothing pains them, nor does it seem anything ever will.

In sum, while the prayer lasts they are so **absorbed** and **engulfed** with **satisfaction** and **delight** ... that they do not remember there is more to desire; they would eagerly say with St. Peter: “**Lord, let us build three dwelling places here.**”

**4.** Sometimes in this **prayer of quiet** the Lord grants another **favor** that can be difficult to understand without a great deal of experience. When the **quiet** is **great** and lasts a day or two, it seems the **will** wouldn't be able to **remain** in the **peace** so long without being **bound** to something.

They (the **memory** & the **intellect**) see that they are not completely in what they are doing. The best part, the **will**, is lacking. It seems the **will** is **united** with its **God**, leaving the other two **faculties** (the **memory** & the **intellect**) free to be occupied in His **service**. In worldly matters though, these faculties are **dull** and at times as though in a **stupor**.

**5.** It is a **great favor** granted by the Lord. The **active** and **contemplative** lives are **joined**. The **three faculties** of the **soul** (will, memory, intellect) serve the Lord together. The **will** is occupied in its work and **contemplation**; the **other two faculties** serve in the work of

**Martha.** Thus **Martha and Mary walk together.**

... Perhaps as the soul is so satisfied in this **prayer of quiet**, the faculty of the **will** remains more **continually united** with Him who alone can satisfy it.

**6.** I think it would be good to give some **counsel** for those of you, Sisters, whom the Lord has brought here.

The **first counsel** would be that that since they see they cannot obtain this prayer by themselves, the **temptation** is to try to hold on to the **satisfaction** and so don't dare take a breath.

This is **foolish** ... This prayer is no longer our work, it is something **supernatural** and **beyond our power** to acquire. The **best way** to **hold on** to this **favor** is to understand clearly that we can neither bring it about nor remove it but only **receive** it with **gratitude** by raising our eyes to Him, as the publican did.

**7.** It is good to find more **solitude** to make room for the Lord ... At most, a **gentle word** from time to time is enough ... lest the **will** be **distracted** by the **intellect** busying itself with many words.

**8.** You will often be unable to manage the **two other faculties** (intellect & memory). The **soul** will be in the greatest **quiet** and the **intellect** **distracted** ...

It feels as if it were in a **stranger's house** as a **guest** and so seeks **another dwelling place**. The intellect knows little about remaining **stable**.

Perhaps it is just me, but sometimes I want to die because I cannot seem to cure the **wandering intellect**. Yet at other times, it takes up residence in its own house and **accompanies** the **will**.

It is truly wonderful when all **three faculties** are in **accord**. But note well, when the **will** is in this **quiet**, it should **not pay** any more **attention** to the **intellect** than it would to a **madman**. Should it strive to draw the intellect to itself, it will become **disquieted**. Thus, in this state of prayer, there will be **no more gain** and a **loss** of what the Lord was giving the will.

**9.** Notice this **comparison** given by the Lord. The soul is like an **infant** that still **nurses**. Without the babe's effort, the mother puts the

milk in its mouth. And so it is here, without the **effort of the intellect**, the **will** is **loving**. The Lord wants the **will** to understand that it is with Him and need only "**swallow what is placed in its mouth**." ... During this time the **will** forgets itself ...

If the **will** fights with the **intellect** at this time to draw it into prayer ... it will be forced to "**let the milk fall from its mouth**" and lose the divine nourishment.

**10.** The **prayer of quiet** differs from the **prayer of union** in that in the latter, the entire soul is united with God. The Lord "**places the milk within the soul without it having to swallow**." In the **prayer of quiet** it seems His Majesty wants the soul to **work** a little.

The **intellect** is what **tortures** the **will** in the **prayer of quiet** while in **union** all three **faculties** have been **suspended** and are occupied with the **joy** the Lord gives them. Again in the **prayer of quiet**, there is a **quiet** and **contentment** of the **will** ... different from earthly satisfactions ... This delight is felt in the **interior** of the will while life's consolations are experienced in the **exterior** of the will—in the outer bark so to speak.

When the **will** sees itself in this **degree of prayer**, it laughs at the **intellect** – or mind—foolishly going after **worldly pursuits**. The **will** remains in this **quietude** while the **intellect** comes and goes.

In **quiet**, the **will** is the ruler and powerful one ... if the **will** strives to draw the **intellect** by force, they both will be lost. As the saying goes, whoever tries to grasp too much loses all ....

**11.** To the soul placed in this prayer, it seems it has been **granted its petition** for His Kingdom ... For this reason, Sisters, I want us to look at how we recite the Our Father and all vocal prayers.

For when this prayer is granted, we forget the things of the world. When He arrives, the Lord casts out all else. Yet, not all who experience this prayer are **detached** from the world, but I would like them to keep on **detaching themselves** from all. If they don't they will remain in the **same state**.

A soul to whom God gives such pledges has a **sign** that He wants to give it a great deal. If not impeded by its own fault, it will **advance** very far. But if the Lord sees that after He has

placed the kingdom of heaven in the soul's house, this soul turns back to **earthly things**, He will not only fail to show it the **secrets** of His kingdom but will seldom grant it this **favor**, and then for just a short time.

**12.** ... In my opinion, this is why there are **not** more **spiritual people**. When individuals do not respond by **service** that is in conformity with so great a **favor**, when they do not **prepare** themselves to receive it again but **take back** their **will** ... the Lord goes in search of those who do **love** Him and so gives more to them...

There are persons, such as myself, who turn a **deaf ear** to the Lord ... when He gives them **holy inspirations** and **light** concerning the nature of things. In sum, He gives this **kingdom** and places them in the **prayer of quiet**.

Yet, they are so fond of quickly reciting **vocal prayers** as if to get the job done... so that though the Lord places His **kingdom** in their hands, they do not receive it. They think they are doing better with their vocal prayers and so **distract** themselves from the **prayer of quiet**.

**13.** Do not do this, Sisters, but be on your **guard** when the Lord grants you this **favor**. Consider that you are losing a great **treasure** and do more by saying **one word** of the Our Father from time to time than by rushing through the entire prayer many times.

You are **very close** to the One you petition; He will not fail to hear you. Believe that here lies the **true praise** and **hallowing** of His name. For now, as one who is in His house, you **glorify** and **praise** Him with more **affection** and **desire**. It seems you cannot fail to serve Him.

I counsel you to be very careful in this matter as it is **extremely important**.

Amen