

4/ Communion in Friendship

A. Prayer of Quiet & of Union

Chapter 6

Meditations on the Song of Songs
by Teresa of Avila

Treats of how the benefits of this loving union surpass all the desires of the bride. Speaks of the suspension of the faculties (of the soul-will/intellect/memory) and tells how some souls reach this sublime prayer in a short time.

The King brought me into the wine cellar and set charity in order within me. (Sg. 2:4)

Now that the soul is resting under the **longed-for shadow**, what is left for it to desire? It doesn't think there is anymore to desire. But our King has still much to give. He would never want to do anything else than give if He could find receivers. The Lord is never content to give the little we desire ... He grants the soul in answer to its petitions, an opportunity to **merit** and **suffer** something for Him. The soul's intention was to suffer only what it could bear. His Majesty can increase one's ability to bear, in payment for the little it had determined to do for Him. He will give so many **trials, persecutions** and **illnesses** that the poor soul will not know itself.

2. This happened to me when I was quite young. Sometimes I would tell Him that I did not want so much, but He gave me strength and patience. I am still amazed at how I was able to suffer. I would not exchange those trials for all the world's treasures.

The bride says: *The King brought me.* How appropriate this name. The Lord has no superior, nor will His reign end.

A soul in such a state understands much about the greatness of this King. It is impossible however in this life though to understand everything.

3. She says: *He brought me into the wine cellar; set charity in order within me.*

This is a great favor ...

When it comes to the favors of God, to one He gives a little wine of **devotion**; to another **more**; with another He increases it in such a way that the person begins to go out from himself, from his **sensuality** and from all **earthly things**; to some He gives great **fervor** in His **service**; to others, **impulses of love**; to others, great **charity** toward their neighbors.

These gifts are given in such a way that these persons go about so **stupefied**; they do not feel the great **trials** that take place here. Much is contained in what the bride says. He brings her into the **wine cellar** so that she may come out **enriched**. It seems the King wants to give her everything. He wants her to drink in conformity with her desire and become **wholly inebriated**, drinking of all the wines in God's storehouse.

Let the soul rejoice and admire God's grandeurs ... Let it die in this **paradise of delights**. Blessed by such a death that makes one live!

... The marvels the soul understands are so great — without understanding how it understands — it remains outside of itself. The bride refers to this in saying: *He set charity in order within me.*

4. Words that should never be forgotten by the soul to whom the Lord gives delight!

How impossible it is to deserve if the Lord does not give the wealth required for it. The soul is not even awake to love but in a blessed sleep, a happy inebriation that makes the Bridegroom supply what the soul needs; that is, **set up so wonderful an order.**

While the **faculties** are dead or asleep, **love remains alive.** The Lord ordains the soul to function, without it understanding how, that **it is made one, in great purity,** with the very **Lord of love,** who is God.

No one hinders the soul, neither senses nor faculties (intellect, will, memory), nor is the will aware of itself.

5. I was wondering if there was a **difference** between the **will** and **love.** It seems there is. It seems that **love** is like an arrow sent forth by the will ...

With people who have received this great favor of **holy inebriation** in prayer, it is apparent exteriorly that they are not themselves. They are completely unable to explain what they feel or understand anything of how love works here.

6. The **gain** from this kind of prayer is recognized through the **effects,** the **virtues,** the **living faith** and the **contempt** for the world left in the soul.

These blessings are **gifts** ... Thus what the bride says is clear: the wisdom of God supplies for the soul here. He ordains how the soul gains these favors because the soul is so outside of itself that it can do nothing with the faculties. How can it merit? ...

7. Oh, secrets of God! There is no more to do here but to **surrender** our **intellects** which are no help when it comes to understanding the grandeurs of God.

In spite of all the wisdom of the Blessed Virgin she asked the angel: ***How can this be?*** But once he answered, ***The Holy Spirit will come upon you; the power of the Most High will overshadow you,*** there was no further discussion. She at once understood that if these two intervened, there was nothing more to know or doubt.

She did not act like some learned men ... who haven't even begun a life of prayer ... They are so rational and feel that no one but they can understand the grandeurs of God. They could learn something of humility from the most Blessed Virgin!

8. O Blessed Lady, how perfectly we can apply to you what takes place between God and the bride in the **Song of Songs**.... As for other souls, each can understand based on his God given understanding that he is receiving favors, similar to what the bride says: **He set charity in order within me.** Souls that receive this favor do not know where they were or how they could have pleased the Lord...

9. O soul, do not be anxious when His Majesty brings you here and speaks so lovingly to you as He does to the bride in the **Song of Songs** ... By these words He shows He is happy with her... He will help you ... be more pleasing to Him.

He sees the soul lost to itself, transported to love Him. Love's force has taken away the **intellect** that the soul may love more ... His Majesty will not fail to give Himself to the one who has given Him all.

10. It seems His Majesty embellishes His **gifts** with this **gold.** He wants to see how many **carats** the soul's love is. These gifts are given in a thousand different way that only the soul can speak of.

The **soul** is the **gold**. It doesn't move during this time as if it were gold. Divine Wisdom, happy to see it like this, there are so few who love Him with this strength, makes a thousand **designs** in the **gold** with **inlays of precious stones and enamels**.

11. What does the soul do? Beyond what the bride says: *He set charity in order within me* ... it cannot be known. The soul does not know how or what it loves.

The King's most intense love, which brought the soul to this high state, must have **joined this soul's love to itself** in such a way that the **intellect** does not deserve to understand; but **these two loves** (God & soul) **become one again**.

The intellect loses sight during the **union** which never lasts long. It is during this union that God **sets love in order** in such a way that the soul now knows how to **please His Majesty** ...

The intellect does not understand. But when it sees the soul with the **enamel and inlays of precious stones and pearls of virtue**; it understands, is amazed and can say: *Who is this that is as bright as the sun?*

O true King... in a moment You can give riches and place them in a soul to be enjoyed forever. **How well ordered love is in this soul!**

12. I have met some persons in this stage of prayer... One of them, within three days, the Lord had given her such blessings ... that I would not have believed such blessings possible...

Few are those to whom our Lord grants these favors without their having undergone **many years of trials**... But one must not place limits on our Lord ...

When the favors are from God, the **virtues** grow so strong and **love** becomes so enkindled that there is no concealing the two... These souls always bring **profit** to other souls.

13. *The King set charity in order within me*, set it in order so well that the love the soul had for the **world** is taken away; the soul's love of **itself** turns to disregard; its love for its **relatives** is such that it loves them solely for God;

its love for its **neighbors** and its **enemies** is **unbelievable** unless experienced — a very strong love;

its love of God is boundless. Sometimes this love for God impels it so much that its lowly nature cannot endure the love. The soul sees it is growing weaker and about to die, it says; *Sustain me with flowers; surround me with apples for I am dying with the sickness of love.* AMEN

