

## **The Elizabeth of the Trinity School of Prayer**

*Lord teach us to Pray Series*

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To conclude these **four conferences on prayer**, I propose that we review all that we have studied by using Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity, canonized by Pope Francis, as an illustration.

Before we do, let's find out who this **young Carmelite** is. She was the **daughter and granddaughter of an officer**. The first seven years of the life of Elisabeth Catez were characterized by great bursts of anger often impossible to control.

Her first confession, however, was a real conversion. From that moment on, she engaged in a struggle against her dominant defects: **anger and sensitivity**.

Her **spiritual combat** will continue until the age of 18. It was evident that with her temperament, Elisabeth would become either a saint or a demon. She became a saint!

A sudden and profound change took place within her one day after receiving communion. She had the impression that the word of **Carmel** was echoing in her soul. It was then, at 17 years old, that her spiritual adventure began. She tried to escape from this sad, seductive world but one does not enter into Carmel like that. Her mother was against it. She could do nothing else but wait for **God's chosen hour**.

So, she began to **socialize** going to parties and other gatherings of all kinds. She was happily mingling with the society in which she lived, but she always fled from sin. In Dijon where she lived, she devoted herself to parish life especially caring for children.

She really liked Francine's pies. Francine was the best pastry chef in Dijon. Elisabeth would laugh heartily talking about the heavy meals that would fill stomachs for three days straight! Remember, Dijon is in Burgundy is where good food and good wine is most appreciated.

But in the midst of these worldly festivities, Elisabeth's **heart** remained **nostalgic** for the Carmel. She liked being alone with Christ. The spiritual battle she led against her defects, the triumph over her nature, and simply because she had changed her focus, resulted in the first manifestation of God's **mystical graces** in her life which would gradually, overtime, transform her life. Then there was her **profession in Carmel** and finally the last six months of her life spent in the infirmary would allow her to make **giant strides**.

In January 1899, at the age of 19, Elisabeth lived her **first divine experiences** during a retreat. This is what she said:

**The degree of prayer where God does everything and we do nothing, where He unites our soul so intimately to Himself that it is no longer we who live but God who lives in us.**

**I recognized moments of sublime ecstasy where the Master often raised me both during this retreat and afterwards. Not only ecstasies but sublime rapture during which the soul forgets everything seeing only its God.**

She goes on to say: **Ordinary prayer now seems hard and painful. What an effort one has to put forth to gather together the powers. It seems so difficult.**

These few lines seem to **sum up our spiritual path**. Perhaps you have received the grace of ecstasy that Elisabeth speaks of? She told us that these moments are brief, fleeting while **ordinary prayer**

consists mostly of **dryness**. This explains why we have so much trouble persevering in prayer. If not raptures, maybe you experience union with God which is so important since we were created for it. Elisabeth followed Teresa of Avila's school of prayer and the way of perfection Teresa described. Let me invite you to slowly read Teresa's **Way of Perfection** to encourage the desire to be united with God to grow within you; to experience feeling inhabited by God. 6.41