

# St. Teresa of Avila

## Prologue



Teresa of Ávila – is one of the patrons of the Claretian congregation.

Born at Avila in Spain in the year 1515. She joined the Carmelite order and she made great progress in the way of perfection and enjoyed mystic revelations. She undertook the reform of the order and in this she had to endure great trials, but overcame them all by her indomitable spirit. She wrote works which are renowned for the depth of their doctrine and which showed her own spiritual experiences. She died at Avila in the year 1582.

## Lessons Learnt from Teresa of Avila

Teresa lived in an age of exploration as well as political, social and religious upheaval. It was the 16th century, an age of turmoil and reform. Her life began with the culmination of Protestant reform, and ended shortly after the Council of Trent. She was beautiful, talented, outgoing, adaptable, affectionate, courageous and enthusiastic reformer. She was totally a holy Carmelite nun and womanly women.

She is a great model for all of us. The “door of faith” (Acts 14:27) is always open for us...She said, “Prayer is the doorway to great graces; if this door is closed, I do not see how God can bestow any graces”.

She also said, “Whoever wants God wants nothing. Patience obtains everything! God alone suffices”.

Towards the end of her life she exclaimed” Oh, My Lord, How true it is that whoever works for you is paid in troubles.

The interior castle, the conception of the love of God, the way of perfection is some of the masterpieces of her literary works.

The interior castle, which is the spiritual exercise of saint Theresa of Avila, tells us that the human soul with its original dignity assumes the virtue of humility to be before God as his beloved son or daughter. It makes actually war within, conquers its passions, and resists the evil. Then, with fear of God, the seeker puts trust and confidence on God and begins to sit for prayer and meditation. The effect of prayer is union with God. It is not human efforts alone but God comes to help in our sincere efforts.

Thereafter, there is spiritual marriage between the believer and the creator. The believer acknowledges his wound of love, the rapture in his relationship with God and neighbors and decides to do restitution to the betrayal that brought so much of damages to oneself and to others. At last, the believer enjoys silence, sweetness and love of the creator. As a result, the disfigured face of god is once again rediscovered in the life of the believer.

## **Prayer**

Almighty God, Our father, You sent saint Teresa of Avila to be a witness in the church to the way of perfection. Sustain us by her spiritual doctrine and kindle in us the longing for true holiness. Amen

Fr. Joseph Santiago, cmf