

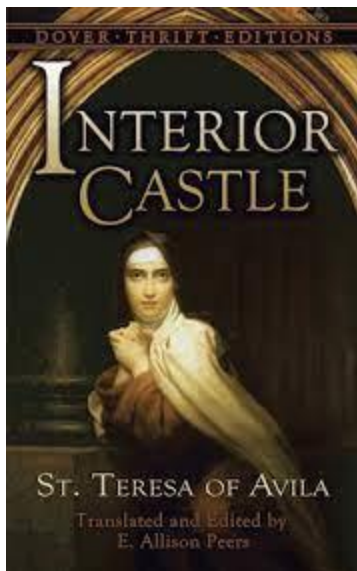
THE INTERIOR CASTLE

ST. TERESA OF
AVILA



SESSION SCHEDULE:

SESSION #	DATE	READING
1	JANUARY 13	INTRODUCTION
2	JANUARY 20	FIRST MANSION
3	JANUARY 27	SECOND MANSION
4	FEBRUARY 3	THIRD MANSION
5	FEBRUARY 10	4 TH MANSION, CH. 1 & 2
6	FEBRUARY 17	4 TH MANSION, CH. 3
7	FEBRUARY 25	5 TH MANSION, CH. 1 & 2
8	MARCH 3	5 TH MANSION, CH. 3 & 4
9	MARCH 10	6 TH MANSION, CH. 1 & 2
10	MARCH 17	6 TH MANSION, CH. 3 & 4
11	MARCH 24	6 TH MANSION, CH. 5 & 6
12	MARCH 31	6 TH MANSION, CH. 7 & 8
BREAK	APRIL 7	GOOD FRIDAY
13	APRIL 14	6 TH MANSION, CH. 9
14	APRIL 21	6 TH MANSION, CH. 10 & 11
15	APRIL 28	7 TH MANSION, CH. 1 & 2
16	MAY 5	7 TH MANSION, CH. 3 & 4



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SESSION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Let's situate ourselves in time, era, and place:

- *The Interior Castle* was begun on Trinity Sunday, 1577 in Toledo, Spain
- This was during the Spanish Inquisition and amidst the Protestant Reformation
- St. Teresa was busy founding new reformed Carmelite monasteries and overseeing others she'd already founded
- She suffered from ill health, especially extreme headaches

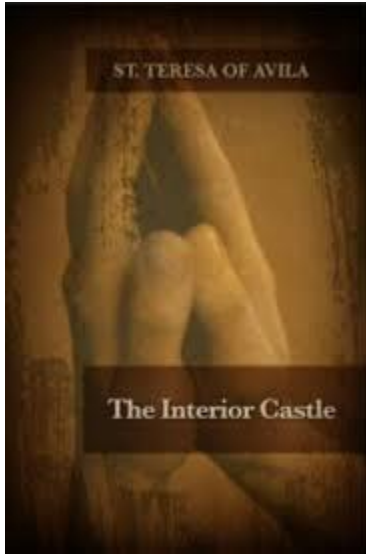
What effects do you think these factors would have exerted on her writing?

Would you be surprised to learn that she wrote this entire masterpiece in two months, half of the time we'll take to study her masterpiece?



General outline of *The Interior Castle*:

- Outside the castle are those who are completely enmeshed with worldly cares and are unaware of spiritual matters such as God and prayer.



- In the First Dwelling Place are those who have discovered prayer. They are still too involved in worldly matters, but have some experience of God.
- In the Second Dwelling Place are those who are receptive to God's grace and seek it through external means such as Scripture, Mass, Adoration, and godly friendships. Spiritual warfare is fought.
- In the Third Dwelling Place are those who persevere in the Spiritual battle. They begin to experience perfect contrition and actively seek to do good and avoid evil. They rejoice with those who rejoice and praise God in all circumstances.

- In the Fourth Dwelling Place are souls who have begun supernatural prayer, infused contemplation.



- ✠ Consolations begin with our efforts and lead to supernatural prayer – not to think much, but to love much. Love is the determination to please God. We begin with the prayer of quiet, surrendering ourselves into the arms of Love. The image Teresa uses is a water trough, where by human effort, water is brought up from the ground.

- ✠ Spiritual delight springs from God and overflows to our human nature. The image Teresa uses is that of a spring welling up from the earth, bringing water to us.



- In the Fifth Dwelling Place, the soul experiences the prayer of union, sure knowledge that the soul is in God and God is in the soul.



✠ Teresa uses the image of the silkworm, with God the cocoon harboring the soul. The silkworm (soul) dies, which is when a soul dies to self, but God creates a butterfly which bursts from the cocoon as a new creation in Christ.

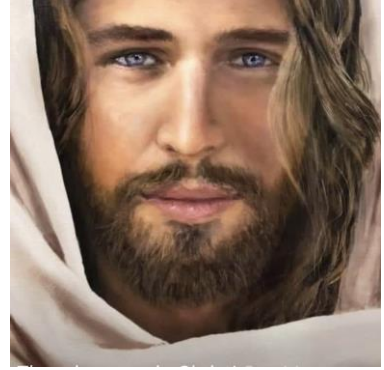
✠ Teresa also uses the image of marriage preparation. The soul prepares by increasing its devotion to God and living that through love of neighbor and the exercise of the virtues, especially

humility.

- ✠ The faculties of the soul are suspended; the soul is “blind and deaf” to the outside world.
- In the Sixth Dwelling Place, the spiritual betrothal between God and the soul begins.
 - ✠ The soul must be purged of all attachments and impediments and join with her Spouse. “There is need for much courage here,” warns St. Teresa; this courage is a grace given by God through many trials, including a spiritual “dark night.”
 - ✠ There are many consolations and supernatural experiences as God shows Heavenly secrets to the soul. Joy will reach fever pitch.
 - ✠ Christ is the One who bestows these blessings; Christ the Lord and Jesus Christ in His humanity. Look at Jesus in His humanity to see how to suffer trials well.
 - ✠ Contemplation is dwelling upon Jesus with a gentle gaze. While distractions are bound to occur, turn away from them and fix your gaze on Jesus.



- In the Seventh Dwelling Place, God removes the scales from the soul's "eyes" and she can see clearly Who God is. She is in tune with the Blessed Trinity and is constantly aware of the Presence of God, even while going about normal daily routines. The grace of perfect spiritual union is given here. Teresa uses the image of a raindrop entering a stream which enters the sea – the soul is in God and God is in the soul.



- ✠ The purpose of these great favors is to bring forth from the soul many good works, done with deep love for God and neighbor.
- ✠ Concentrate on serving those in whose company God has placed you.
- ✠ Work in the time and place in which God has placed you. Your works need not be "great," but they must be done with great love.

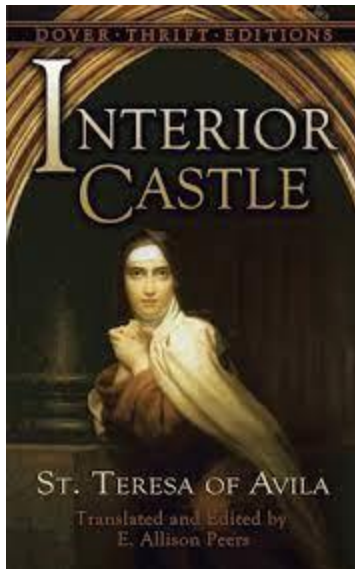
PROLOGUE

- Note Teresa's reliance upon God's mercy
 - ✠ to "do this work for me."
 - ✠ "If the Lord wants me to say something new, His Majesty will provide."
 - ✠ She will gain if He says something to help others; and/or she will gain by suffering a greater headache.
- Note that this Doctor of the Church submits to write this "under obedience," and submits unconditionally to their learned opinion of her work.
- Note that she does not write so that she can become a celebrated author;
 - ✠ she writes because her superiors thought her nuns needed a treatise on prayer
 - ✠ she writes so that the nuns will "praise Him a little more."
 - ✠ she insists that anything of value comes from God; anything worthless comes from her.

What is your reaction to her humility? Do you admire it? Would you pursue it?

Do you find her use of symbolic imagery helpful (at least, thus far)?

Do you expect (or hope) to reach the Seventh Dwelling Place? Why or why not?



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SESSION TWO: THE FIRST DWELLING PLACE

- St. Teresa considers the beauty and the dignity of the soul. Have you ever thought about your soul? Did/do you think it would be beautiful? They are made in the Image and Likeness of God, after all.
- St. Teresa says it is a “shame” and “extreme stupidity” to consider only our bodies and not our souls. Why does she believe this?
- It would be wonderful for you to receive consolations and favors from God, but it can be profitable to *not* receive them. How so?
- “His Majesty can reveal His grandeurs to whomever He wants” echoes Jesus’ parable in Matthew 20:1-16 about the rich landowner who pays the workers who came late in the day the same wage as those who began work at dawn. “Am I not free to do as I wish with my own money?” How do you feel about this?
- How does God show His glory through St. Paul the Apostle and St. Mary Magdalene?



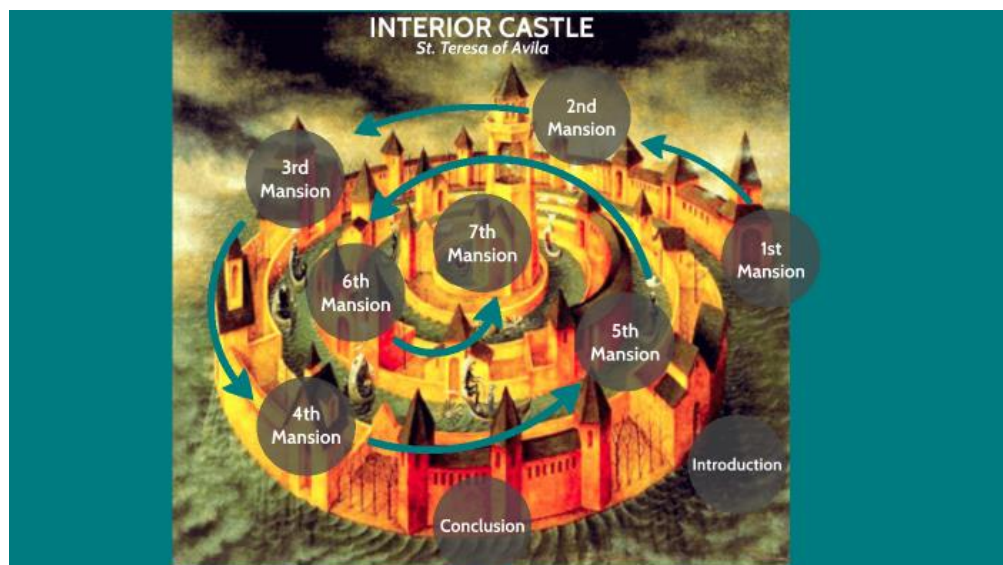
- How do you understand her description of the souls in the courtyard? How can they enter their interior castle?
- Did you know that all of the good works you do while in the state of mortal sin do not attain any glory for you? Does this knowledge make you want to avoid mortal sin more strenuously?
- Souls that “through their own fault” withdraws from the Fountain of Life and plunges their roots into filthy water will be known by the filthy work they do.
- How is it that we are to pray?

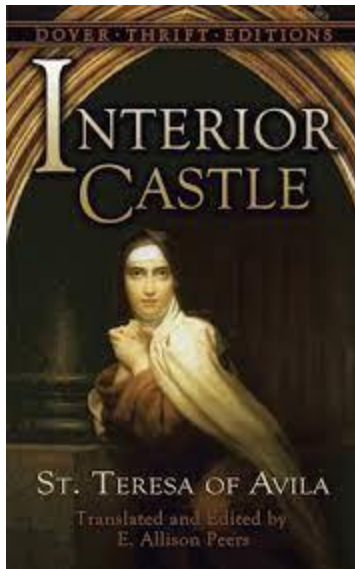


- Why is it that the shining splendor of God cannot be seen in a soul in the state of mortal sin?
- St. Teresa says she gained two blessings from this knowledge: (1) an intense fear of offending Him (the Gift of the Holy Spirit of Fear of the Lord); and (2) a mirror of humility (a virtue). Do you consider these as “blessings”?
- St. Teresa’s book on prayer she wants to write about “what the Lord does in a soul,” rather than a

“how-to” prayer book about what we do when we pray. Do you think her viewpoint about God’s working in your soul is a valid book on prayer?

- ❖ You must enter into yourself. Do you know how to do this?
- ❖ You must have the desire to reach the innermost chamber, where God dwells. Do you know how to do this? Do you expect this book to help you?
- ❖ You ought to spend time in the rooms of self-knowledge and humility. St. Teresa likens humility to a bumblebee, always busy, gathering pollen from different flowers. What does this imagery suggest to you?
- ❖ Why does St. Teresa advise us not to spend time dwelling on our sins and miseries?
- ❖ How do we fight against the wiles of the devil in this First Dwelling Place, especially if “until he’s done the harm, we don’t recognize him”?
- St. Teresa states that true perfection is in the twin commandment given by Jesus. What is this “true perfection”?
- What are the vile creatures St. Teresa says are in the courtyard and who slither into the First Dwelling Place?
 - ❖ Jesus tells us in Mark 7:21-22.
 - ❖ St. Paul tells us in Romans 1:29-31





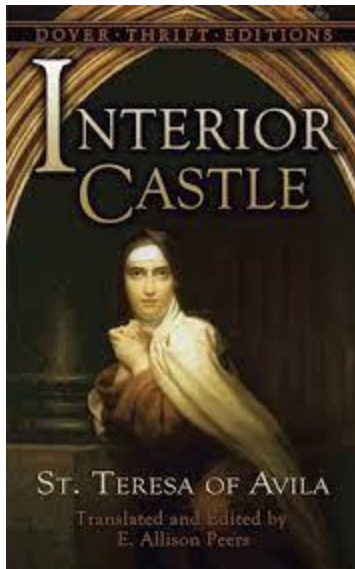
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SESSION THREE: THE SECOND DWELLING PLACE

- While souls in the Second Dwelling Place pray more than those in the First, what is their danger? What is their advantage?
- How do souls in the Second Dwelling Place hear the voice of God?
- What is the spiritual warfare like in the Second Dwelling Place?
- What are the best weapons in this warfare?
- What happens if a soul were to fall? What might cause it to fall?
- How does a soul recover from a fall?





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SESSION FOUR: THE THIRD DWELLING PLACE

- While “blessed be the man who fears the Lord,” St. Teresa also indicates a certain “security of conscience” “if he doesn’t abandon the path he began on.” What do you make of these statements?
- St. Teresa advises us to:
 - ✠ Remember that God lives in us always;
 - ✠ Boast of His mercy;
 - ✠ Approach His mercy and trust in His merits
- Even then, we can’t take our salvation as assured, as she urges us to consider the holy King David who begat Solomon in an unholy manner. Never feel so holy that you think you can’t or don’t sin.
- Do not entreat the Lord for consolations; it is enough to serve Him with humility. (See Luke 17:7-10 – “we were unprofitable servants; we did what we were obliged to do.”)



- God rewards us according to our deeds and the determination of our wills. This involves a nakedness of sorts, detachment from the things of this world. Don't "go away sad" like the rich young man of Matthew 19:22.

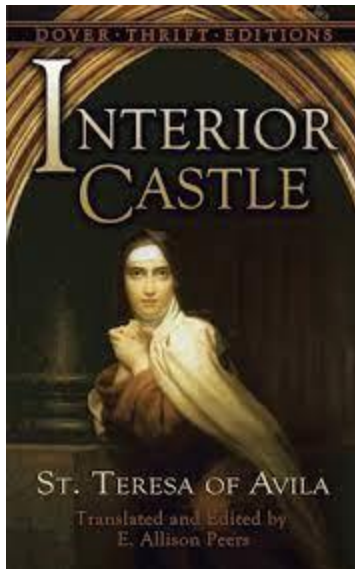


- St. Teresa stresses humility:
 - ✠ Out of dryness, you may draw humility.
 - ✠ Where humility is truly present, God will give you a peace and conformity.
 - ✠ Humility is the ointment for our wounds.
 - ✠ The journey must be undertaken with great humility.
 - ✠ With humility present, this stage is a most excellent one.
 - ✠ Distress is a great mercy from God and very beneficial for humility.
 - ✠ If humility is lacking, we will remain here our whole life.
- We are fonder of consolations than of trials, but God knows best what we need. Do you think you can struggle

through trials without humility? Why is humility such an indispensable trait for those treading the path of perfection?

- Test ourselves before the Lord tests us:
 - ✠ Are we truly detached from things of this world which distract us from God?
 - ✠ Do we wallow in misery if we lose something we love, or have our honor disputed, or have to suffer in some way? Or do we unite our suffering to that of the Crucified?
 - ✠ Test and know whether you are master or slave of your passions.
 - ✠ Doing our own will often bring us trouble; find someone further along the path of perfection and submit yourself to them.





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SESSION FIVE: THE FOURTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 1

- “*Cor dilatasti cor meum*” means “when you opened my heart.” Our hearts are opened to consolations and spiritual delights.
 - ✠ A consolation = joy, peace, satisfaction which arises from contemplation, prayer, or spiritual reading. We prime the pump and God causes the consolation to flow.
 - ✠ A spiritual delight = expands the heart when God reaches out and touches you. This sometimes takes you by surprise, as when He decides to enfold you in His arms, you’re suddenly in the midst of a bear hug. There’s little you can do other than to marvel at it.
- Mind and intellect are not the same:
 - ✠ The mind can be like wild horses, difficult or impossible to rein in. Our imagination is part of the mind.
 - ✠ The intellect is a faculty of the soul; the intellect can be absorbed and



recollected in prayer even while the mind is off and running. Ignore the wild horses and concentrate on your prayer.

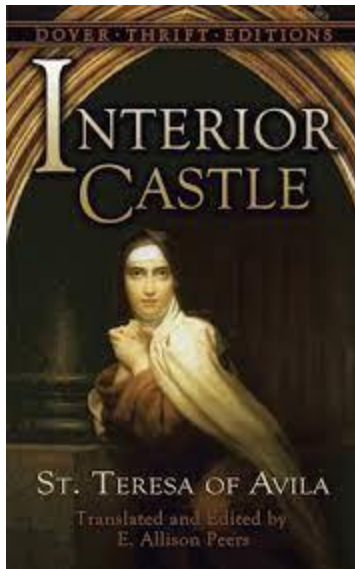
- ✠ When your intellect is “suspended,” your interior faculties of the soul are absorbed in prayer. This is what she means when she says that there is no pain during suspension. It’s only when your faculties are not absorbed in God that you feel the pain of your galloping thoughts.

- Consolations involve human effort; you must pump the handle to get water.
- Spiritual delight bubbles up naturally as from an underground spring; no human effort is necessary.



- *Cum dilatasti cor meum* = when you opened (expanded) my heart – the heart overflows and fills your whole spiritual being, with even the body participating in a flood of tears or laughter for pure joy.
- The test of such a prayer is your deeds – are you more or less humble; do you love more or less; do you obey or balk at obedience? Do we demand consolations and delights from the Lord, as if He owed us anything?
- We can be saved without these spiritual delights; the Lord knows best what we need.
- Do the images St. Teresa uses help you to understand what she is saying about the spiritual life?
- Which portion of this Fourth Dwelling place is hardest for you to grasp?
- Which portion speaks most to your heart?





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SESSION SIX: THE FOURTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 2

- St. Teresa emphasizes that this type of prayer, of *infused recollection*, or the *prayer of quiet* is a gift from God. The Good Shepherd whistles so gently yet so strongly that the soul is called into the Fourth Dwelling Place without any conscious effort to get there.
- “My soul in stillness waits...Oh, Lord, my hope is in You.” (Psalm 42, 46, 62, Exodus 14:14). The soul waits humbly, aware of the Presence of the Lord. Simply rest in His Presence. Don’t “think” or “imagine” anything; simply wait for Him to bring you into the *prayer of quiet*. Whether He does or not is up to Him; you have gained in any case by resting in Him.
- Do you find waiting in silent stillness difficult? He is worth the wait!





➤ Signs that the *prayer of quiet* has been granted:

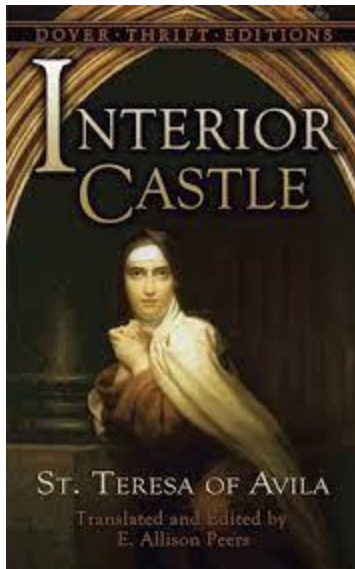
- ✠ Capacity for love increases
- ✠ Greater fear of offending God because you love Him all the more
- ✠ Trials are suffered patiently
- ✠ The difference between Creator and creature is more fully grasped
- ✠ An improvement in all the virtues
- ✠ The soul is absorbed, but does not “languish,” nor are there effects in the body of this kind of prayer.

➤ Because you are closer to God, you must avoid offending Him or you will lose this beautiful *infused recollection*. God will withdraw His favors from one who offends Him.

➤ The devil tries harder to estrange a soul with *infused recollection* than for other souls, for such souls draw others to God and benefit Holy Mother Church.

Are you ready for this spiritual combat?





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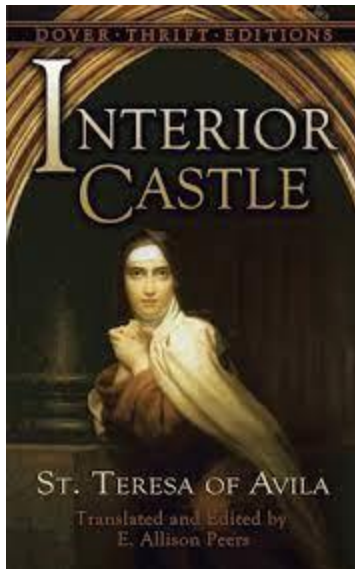
SESSION SEVEN: THE FIFTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 1

- St. Teresa emphasizes that this type of prayer, of *union with God*, begins here in the Fifth Dwelling Place. Each person will experience it in varying degrees, according to their interior disposition.
- What does St. Teresa mean when she says of this Dwelling Place: “Many are called; few are chosen”?
- Do you find the idea of this union with God intimidating? Inviting? Attractive?
- To attain this type of prayer, humility and practice of the virtues are necessary. Even so, we must beg the Lord for the grace of this type of prayer.
- A soul will be rapt in its absorption in God; the faculties are “asleep” and the person is unaware of the “outside world.” Union with God lasts no more than ½ hour.



- Signs that the *prayer of quiet* has been granted:
 - ✠ Capacity for love increases such that you are painfully aware of your concern for the souls of all people; you earnestly desire their conversion so that they may come to know God and enter Heaven
 - ✠ Greater desire to suffer for the sake of the souls in need of conversion and in reparation to the outrages against God
 - ✠ There is no doubt in the soul that God has been in union with it; many years later, the exact experience and the certainty that this was a union with God remains with the soul
- St. Teresa quotes the *Song of Songs*: “He brought me into the wine cellar” to illustrate that God brings you into this union with Him; you cannot attain it with any of your efforts. Humility and simplicity of heart will draw Him to you.
- The devil cannot interfere when you are in union with God. Praise God!
- Does the imagery of the wine cellar speak to your heart? Does it help you to understand the prayer of union with God?





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SESSION EIGHT: THE FIFTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 2

- St. Teresa now uses another imagery: that of the silworm.

- ✦ The warm weather brings the silkworm “seed” to life, just as the Holy Spirit’s fire brings us to life.

- ✦ The worms nourish themselves until they are grown, just as we are nourished by the Eucharist, the Mass, the sacraments, and Sacred Scripture.

- ✦ Silkworms create a cocoon in which they die; God creates the cocoon of the prayer of union in which we die to self. St. Teresa exhorts us to rid ourselves of self-love and self-will; attachments to worldly things; and to perform penance, prayer, works of mercy and obedience so that we may die to self and emerge as a new creation.

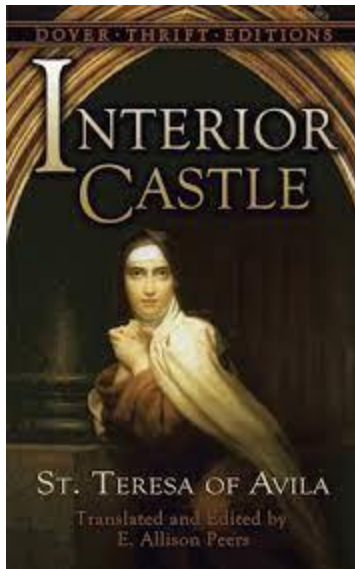
- ✦ A butterfly emerges from the cocoon, just as we are transformed by the prayer of union.

- Do you find this imagery of union with God helpful?



- To attain this type of prayer, humility and practice of the virtues are necessary. Even so, we must beg the Lord for the grace of this type of prayer.
- A soul will be absorbed in God; the faculties are “asleep” and the person is unaware of the “outside world.” Union with God lasts no more than half an hour.
- Signs that the *union with God* has been granted:
 - ✠ Strong desires for penance, solitude, and evangelization.
 - ✠ Readiness to pick up your cross and follow Him, urging others to accompany you.
 - ✠ A very deep peace which nothing takes away.
 - ✠ An earnest desire for eternal beatitude, but complete surrender to God’s Will as to whether you live or die.
 - ✠ Great sadness when God’s name is taken in vain or used blasphemously.
 - ✠ God’s “seal” has been placed upon your soul, as long as you remain still and consent, like wax softened so that it may be imprinted with a seal.
- Do you feel drawn to the prayer of union with God? You know the “cost” and you know the “benefits.” Is it worth it to you?





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SESSION NINE: THE SIXTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 1

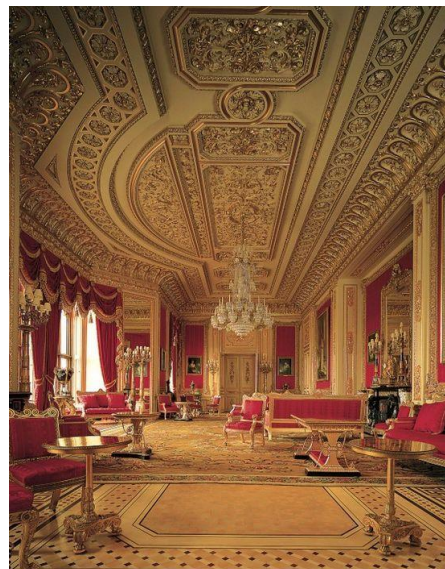


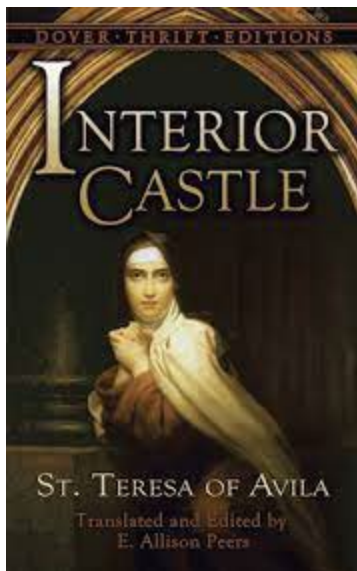
- Love of God and love of neighbor are the keys to entering the Sixth Dwelling Place.
- ✦ Self-love gives way to love of neighbor and is pleasurable.
- ✦ Love of God is uppermost in your heart and brings you joy.
- ✦ Humility and pursuit of the virtues is habitual and easy.
- ✦ Worldly cares are taken care of while in a state of prayer.
- ✦ Desire to be with God is intense; only the desire to do His Will and surrender to Him allows

you to continue living, as your soul aches to be with Him always. You're ready for eternal beatitude.

- Perseverance in pursuit of the virtues, in loving your neighbor, and in private devotions cannot flag.
- Suffering is most intense when you see that God has been offended, but other suffering arising from physical maladies, outside forces, or demonic interference are also present, but only briefly.
- Although these are high ideals, they are not unattainable. God allows everyone to reach these heights. Do you ask him for the grace to be holy?

- The experience of your transformation in the prayer of union helps one to die to oneself, but still an effort must be made on our part to die to worldly attachments.
 - ✠ Self-love must be put to death.
 - ✠ Lack of charity must end.
 - ✠ Seeking honor must end.
 - ✠ Judging people (and not just their actions) must end.
- Perfection in love of neighbor is the surest sign that we have entered the Sixth Dwelling Place. Can we reach perfection in love of neighbor if we do not love God? Can we love God if we do not love our neighbor?





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SESSION TEN: THE SIXTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 2



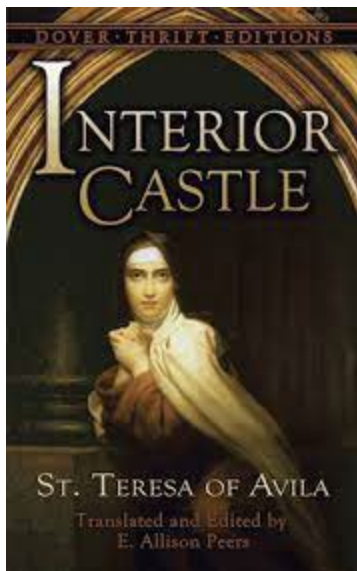
➤ The prayer of Ecstasy advances the soul further into the Sixth Dwelling Place. St. Teresa offers signs of true and signs of feigned rapture.

- ✠ Locutions are not essential to the service of God; He gives His favors to whom He Wills.
- ✠ The devil harms many souls by tricking them into believing that his locutions come from God. How is it that he harms many by deceiving one?
- ✠ Do not think that you are better than others just because you receive this favor from God; for Jesus spoke with the Pharisees and tax collectors.



➤ The surest sign that these visions and locutions are from God are:

- ✠ The authority and power of the experience. The soul sees clearly the Lord who is governor of her castle.
The soul is left without distress, disturbance, and anxiety. One word from the Lord is sufficient to calm its fears.
- ✠ The soul has great quiet, delight, devout and peaceful recollection and a great desire to praise and thank God.
- ✠ The experience is recalled in perfect detail even years later; not a word is forgotten.
- ✠ If the vision or locution is from the imagination or the devil, these signs will not be present: the certitude, the peace, the authority of the revelation, nor the interior delight of the experience. It will be recalled with fuzzy, bleary, dreamlike "precision". The devil cannot counterfeit God's signs.
- ✠ Why is it important to seek the counsel of a learned confessor or spiritual director who has knowledge of such experiences?
- ✠ Why does one need courage to receive these favors from the Lord?
- ✠ In one kind of rapture, the soul, even though not in prayer, is suddenly transported by God, who stills all the external sense and interior faculties, and shows it a Heavenly mystery. This remains impressed on the memory such that it is never forgotten.
- ✠ Did St. Teresa's comparison help you - that of seeing a rich treasury so full of wondrous things that afterwards, you could not recall a single thing but only the impression of how rich the treasury was? Although the soul, after rapture, can recall everything, it cannot put into words the wonders it experienced.
What is the difference between rapture/ecstasy and extreme ecstasy?
- ✠ ■ The doors between the Sixth and Seventh Dwelling places are not closed, but open. Those in the Sixth Dwelling Place are very close to the spiritual marriage bestowed in the Seventh Dwelling Place.



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SESSION ELEVEN: THE SIXTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 3



➤ The flight of the Spirit advances the soul further into the Sixth Dwelling Place. St. Teresa advises that great courage is necessary to endure the flight of the Spirit. Why is courage needed?.

- ✝ The devil tricks many souls into believing that tears in prayer indicate a high degree of holiness. What is the harm he causes?
- ✝ God suspends the senses and floods the soul with knowledge. This experience is never forgotten. What are some of the benefits of this flight of the Spirit?



➤ The surest signs that this flight of the Spirit is from God are:

✠ It leaves the soul in peace, calm, virtue, humility, and self-knowledge.

The soul is unable to resist the flight of the Spirit.

✠ The soul is determined to praise and thank God at all times.

✠ The soul is very secure in its interior that this experience comes from God; there is no doubt that it came from imagination or the devil.

✠ The soul suffers much as it sees its venial sins into which it falls often. Why is this suffering of the soul considered as a benefit?

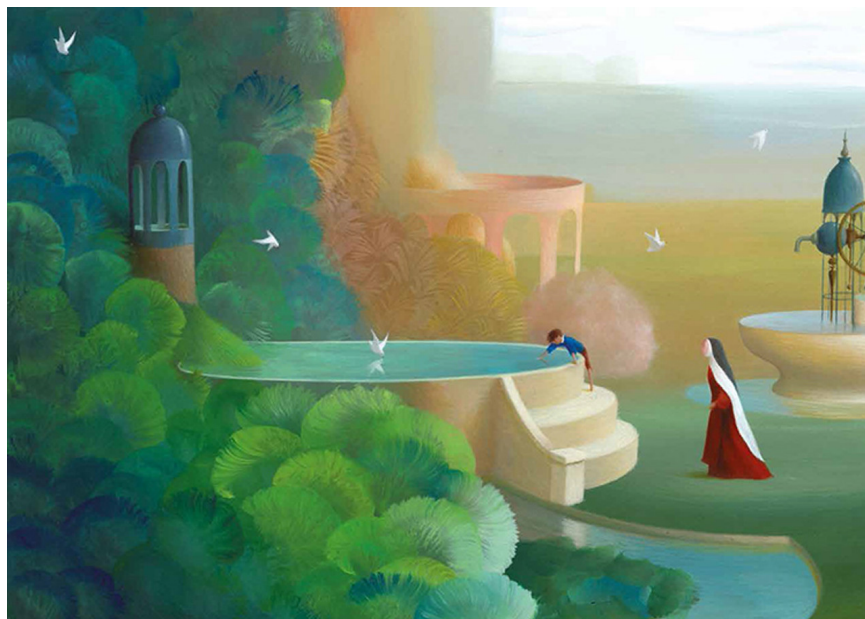
✠ The soul, while desiring most ardently to remain with the Lord always, away from the body, nonetheless submits to God's Will in remaining in the body so as to serve Him as He decrees and not as the soul wishes. Do you find this desire to die odd?

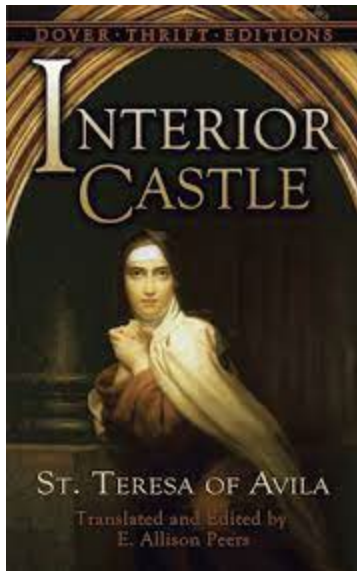
✠ Rather than indulging yourself in false tears, set your soul to work in pursuing a virtuous life. When God sends tears in prayer, He is watering your spiritual garden, through whom many will benefit.

✠ How is this flight of the Spirit and tears in prayer both painful and delightful?

✠ St. Teresa speaks of a "strange prayer." What do you suppose this is? Could it be the Holy Spirit praying for us as we don't know how to pray?

✠ This "strange prayer" is beneficial, and the soul knows that it comes from God. Why does such a soul want to withdraw from the world?





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SESSION TWELVE: THE SIXTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 4



➤ St. Teresa speaks of the prayers of accompaniment (intellectual vision) and focus on the humanity of Jesus Christ. In one, the soul knows the Divine God to be present at one's side continually; in the other, the soul meditates on the Passion of Our Lord. Are these prayers a safe way for the soul to progress in the spiritual life?

✝ How does a soul suffer in this prayer of accompaniment and focus of Jesus' Humanity?

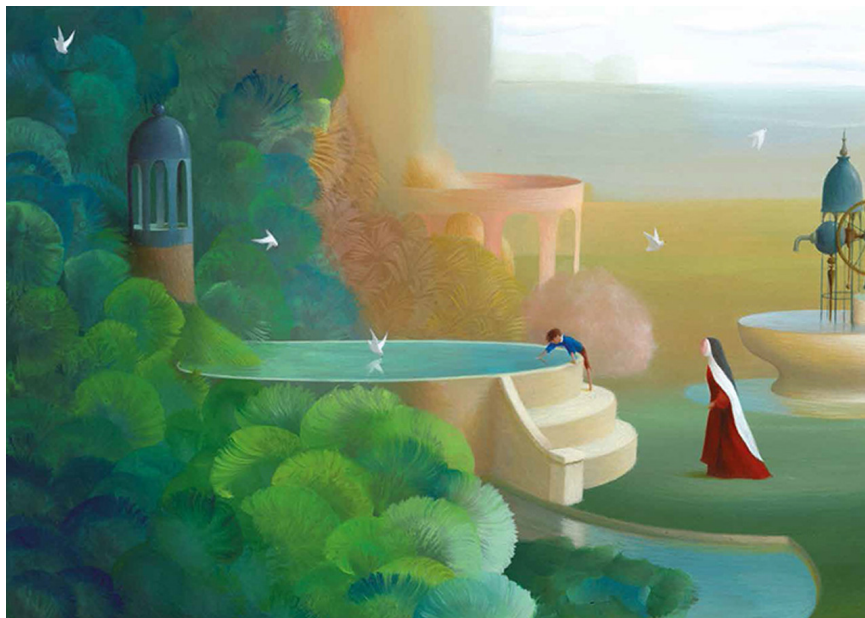
Which saints does St. Teresa mention by name as those who suffered in these kinds of prayer?

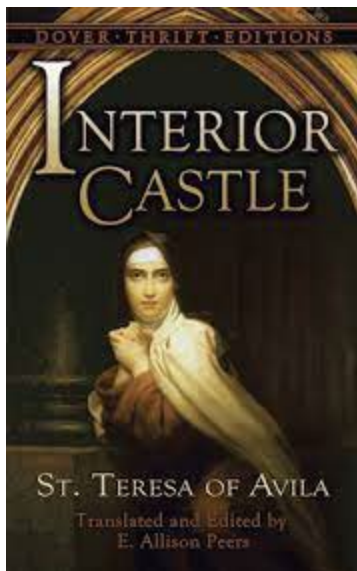


➤ The reason that this prayer of accompaniment and meditation on Jesus' Humanity leads to spiritual progress are:

- ✠ The soul knows that God is as near as our own heartbeat and can therefore be praised, thanked, and petitioned at any moment every day.
- ✠ The soul is keenly aware of their sins, of commission or omission, and the occasions of sin which must be avoided.
- ✠ The soul desires to be occupied in praise and thanksgiving to God at all times.
- ✠ Though rapt in the continual Presence of God, the will and the intellect must dwell on the humanity of Jesus, particularly His Passion, or the lives of the saints. Why must this be so?
- ✠ Why is contemplation of the Paschal Mystery so beneficial?
- ✠ The soul, while desiring most ardently to remain with the Lord always, away from the body, nonetheless submits to God's Will in remaining in the body so as to serve Him as He decrees and not as the soul wishes.
- ✠ The intellectual vision can last as long as "more than a year." Is this surprising to you?
- ✠ What is St. Teresa's opinion of this intellectual vision? Who receives it? How and why do they receive it? Ought they to tell others about it? If so, who?

How does St. Teresa gauge holiness? What marks a holy person, or a person on the path of perfection?





THE INTERIOR CASTLE ST. TERESA OF AVILA

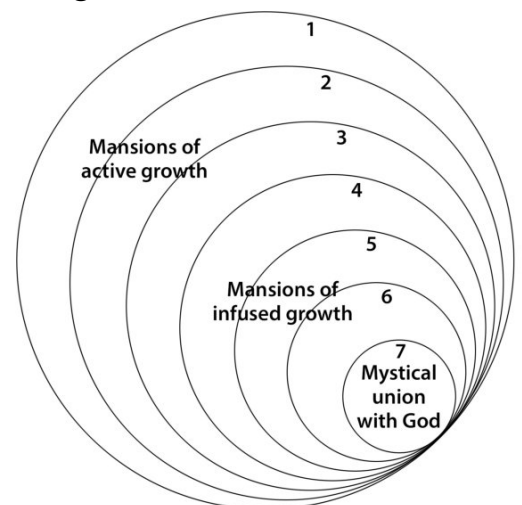


SESSION THIRTEEN: THE SIXTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 5

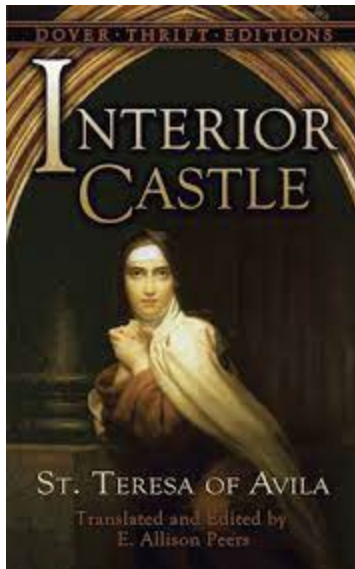


➤ St. Teresa speaks of the prayers of imaginative vision and focusing on the humanity of Jesus Christ. In one, the soul knows intimately secrets about the Incarnation and Paschal Mystery; in the other, the soul meditates on the Passion of Our Lord. Are these prayers a safe way for the soul to progress in the spiritual life?

- ✠ How does a soul suffer in this prayer of imaginative vision and focus of Jesus' Humanity?
- ✠ Why is this a dangerous type of prayer to request? St. Teresa gives seven reasons.



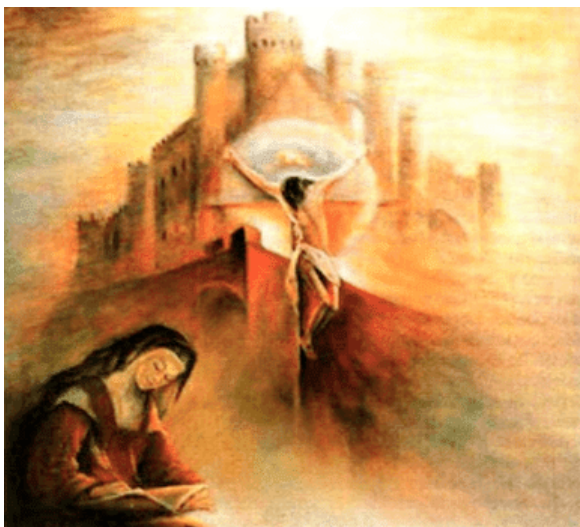
- Did St. Teresa's imagery help you to understand this type of prayer?
- What is it about this type of prayer which is so frightening? Here she makes a comparison with the conversion of Saul to St. Paul.
- Some of the benefits of this prayer are humility and fortitude in virtue.
- What are some questions you have about this chapter?



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SESSIONFOURTEEN: THE SIXTH DWELLING PLACE,PART 6



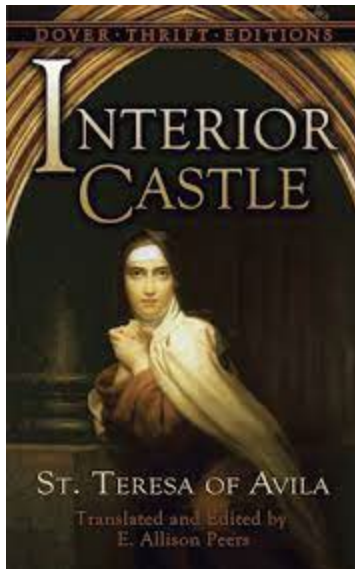
➤ St. Teresa expounds on the benefits and dangers of prayer in this Sixth Dwelling Place. How do you feel about advancing in your spiritual life via the path of this prayer?

✝ The Lord grants the favor of this deep prayer when the soul is afflicted; when a trial is coming; or so that the soul can delight in the Lord.

✝ Even though this favor is sublime and very secret, Teresa attempts to speak about it. Has she succeeded in helping you to understand something of this deeply painful prayer?



- St. Teresa states that the prayer brings the soul into "God Himself" and not Jesus in His Humanity. What do you think that would be like?
- What is it so "frightful" about this type of prayer?
- She speaks about walking in Truth, which is to say, humility. The majesty of God and the offenses we habitually offer Him are clearly seen in this intellectual vision. The depths of Truth teach us the great difference between Creator and created, and the lack of love we show each other and the Lord. Why does God give this knowledge?
- What causes the great pain in the soul in this prayer? If it's so painful, how does a soul benefit from it? Would anyone pursue something so painful?
- St. Teresa compares this prayer to the experience of the souls in Purgatory and in Hell. What is the difference between the experiences in Purgatory and Hell?
- What are some questions you have about this chapter?



THE INTERIOR CASTLE ST. TERESA OF AVILA



SESSION FIFTEEN: THE SEVENTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 1



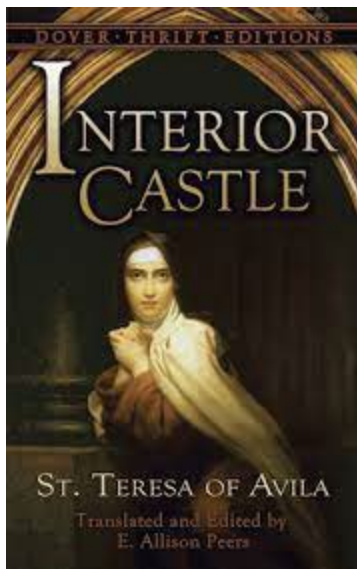
➤ The Lord brings the spirit into the very center of its being and unites Himself with the spirit.

✙ St. Teresa differentiates the *soul* from the *spirit*. The *soul* is the part which animates the body, as St. Thomas Aquinas taught. Therefore, the *soul* is like Martha, busy doing what is necessary. The *spirit* is like Mary, sitting at the feet of Christ and drinking in His love for her.

✙ This is why Teresa speaks of a *spiritual union* since God is pure Spirit and unites with the *spirit*.



- St. Teresa makes the case of the importance of praying for those in the state of mortal sin. No person can make this judgment: we cannot judge a person's soul - only God can. Therefore, when you pray for those in mortal sin, please do not have a certain person in mind.
- She speaks of the sublime favor of the company of the Holy Trinity. She understands at a deeper and clearer level how they can be three in one, but she cannot explain it. Why do you suppose that is?
- In this section, St. Teresa is speaking about spiritual betrothal, which is not spiritual marriage. In a betrothal (engagement), the two can separate, even were they like two candles whose flame, wick, and wax become one but can later be separated. In the spiritual marriage, it is as rain falling into a stream, and the stream flowing into the ocean. You cannot separate water from water.
- She quotes from St. Paul: "He that becomes united to the Lord becomes one Spirit with Him," (1 Cor 6:17) and "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil 1:21) She speaks of the butterfly dying most happily as it is united with Jesus completely. What is your reaction to these images?
- In Jesus' High Priestly prayer in the Gospel of John, Jesus prays for the apostles to be one with the Father as the Father is one with Him, and He prays for all those who will believe in Him, for He is in them. (John 17:21, 20, 23) Is this something you want?
- What are some questions you have about this chapter?



THE INTERIOR CASTLE ST. TERESA OF AVILA



SESSION SIXTEEN: THE SEVENTH DWELLING PLACE, PART 2



➤ The seven effects of a spiritual marriage are:
(1) forgetfulness of self; (2) desire to suffer for the glory of God; (3) deep interior joy in persecution and love for the persecutors; (4) desire to serve; (5) detachment from worldly things; (6) no fear of the devil's deceptions; and (7) a deep peace in being continually in God's Presence.

Does this sound like Heaven on earth to you?

Why does God sometimes allow a great disturbance in the soul in this state? What is the greatest remedy for such a situation?



- What is the greatest favor God could give? Why does He give favors?
- St. Teresa advises us to "bend the soul its will" to God's Will. Are we a stiff-necked people? Or do we bend our will to God's Will?
- A proverb from St. Teresa: "Look for virtue not in corners away from the din, but right amidst the occasions of sin." What does this mean to you?
- She counsels us to "fix our eyes on the Crucified and everything will become small for you." She also says that to be spiritual is to be a "slave of God" with humility as your foundation and the virtues as the building stones so that God can build great things on that solid foundation.
- She urges us on to ever deeper prayer not for our benefit, but to be able to serve God better. Do you find strength for service in your prayer life?
- Do you agree with St. Teresa that it is better to serve where we are, humbly, than it is to envision attempting an impossible service? She says that the Lord doesn't look at the greatness of the work, but at the love with which it is done.
- What are some questions you have about this chapter?

