QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING & REFLECTION

The Transformation of Thought, Desire, and Action (pp. 71-100)

1. What, according to St. Therese, is the greatest good that any person can wish for?

2. In what ways did nature and the created world point St. Therese toward heaven?

3. List at least three ways that St. Therese's family helped bring her closer to God.

4. What was the role of the liturgy and the sacraments in Therese's spiritual formation?

5. List two spiritual struggles of St. Therese as outlined in this chapter.

6. According to St. John of the Cross, how does growing in holiness transform the emotion of fear?

7. List the six classes of goods in which St. John says we should rejoice. Briefly describe each class.

8. What are the four degrees of harm that can arise from taking inordinate joy in temporal goods?

9. What are the four "traits" or sins that correspondingly arise from each of those degrees of harm?

10. Describe what happens to those who deny themselves inordinate joy in temporal things. How is that possible?

11. The Church often describes the family as a "school of faith." That was certainly true for St. Therese. Reflect on your own upbringing. In what ways did it prepare you for your journey to God? In what ways did it fall short of giving you the preparation you needed?

12. Name at least two ordinary, created things or people that have helped you see God. Describe how they accomplished that.

13. Do you ever struggle with taking inordinate joy in earthly goods? Which ones? Why do you think this is a struggle for you?

14. Reflect upon the four traits that correspond to the four degrees of harm that come from inordinate joy in earthly goods. Do you see any of these traits in yourself? What damage is that doing to your relationship with God?

15. What – good or bad – do you want now that you never used to want? What don't you want now that used to want?