

## THE “OTHER” SAINT TERESA



She teaches us how to pray.

She was a Carmelite nun, now a saint and a Doctor of the Church, but she lived 300 years before our parish patron, Therese of Lisieux followed her teachings to dazzling heights.

She is Teresa of Jesus, St. Teresa of Avila, 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish mystic, reformer of the Carmelite order and great teacher of prayer in her books, “The Way of Perfection” and “Interior Castle.” Her feast is celebrated tomorrow, October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Born in 1515, she entered religious life at 21 and went on to found 17 convents and monasteries for nuns and friars before her death in 1582. Her lifetime of experiences in prayer has made her a model for anyone who wants to live a simple life with God in the midst of a complex world.

To seek God is already to pray, Teresa said, describing a person-to-person encounter in which what we say or how we say it does not matter as much as realizing Who we are with -- God Himself – and conversing with Him

The meeting of the humble soul with the all-merciful God is the foundation of the spiritual life, the Good Soil, Teresa tells us. The interior prayer of recollection in which we meditate on Jesus and converse with Him, comes first and all else follows.

We must go frequently and alone to Jesus, Teresa said, and speak with Him as we would with a friend, a brother, a father, a spouse... sometimes one way, sometimes another. We don't need to think much, she said, but to love much.

Not to breathe is to die physically. Not to pray is to die spiritually, Teresa teaches us. With love, humility and detachment, focusing on what God wants, not what we want, we can stay close to God, uniting our efforts with His.

In this state of recollection, Teresa says, God can give us the gift of contemplation, uniting our soul with His Divine Person. And in a darkness and dryness of longing for God and fearing we are not worthy will come the first inkling that God is there in that darkness, like the far-off whistling of the shepherd that tells a “lost” sheep that it is not really lost at all.

Turn to Christ frequently throughout each day, Teresa urges, talk to Him and look at Him looking at you.

What does He see?

**Written by:** Parishioner Ed Donnelly

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### **The Bookmark of St. Teresa of Avila**

Let nothing disturb you.  
Let nothing dismay you.  
All things pass.  
God never changes.  
Patience attains all it strives for.  
He who loves God finds he lacks nothing.  
God alone suffices.