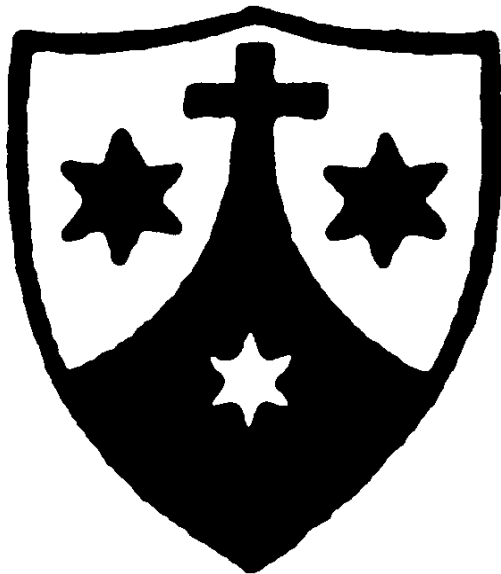


**Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites
Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Community of the Sacred Heart
Frederick, Maryland**

Travel with Teresa

“The image of The Way can very well summarize the lesson of her life and her work.” – Pope Francis

**An Advent Day of Recollection
At the Basilica of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
December 12 2015**



**To Celebrate the Five Hundredth Anniversary
of the birth of
St. Teresa of Avila**

Extracts from the Message of Pope Francis to the Bishop of Avila, 15 October 2014

On 28 March 1515 in Ávila, a baby was born who in time would become known as St Teresa of Jesus. On the fifth centenary of her birth, I give thanks to God for the gift of this great woman and to encourage the faithful to learn the history of this distinguished Foundress, as well as to read her books which continue to tell us who and how Mother Teresa was and what she can teach us men and women of today.

The image of The Way can very well summarize the lesson of her life and her work.

The holy writer and master of prayer was, at the same time, Foundress and missionary on the streets of Spain. Her mystic experience did not separate her from the world nor from the concerns of the people. On the contrary, it gave her new impetus and courage for daily work and duties. She experienced the difficulties of her time — which was so complicated — without giving in to the temptation to bitter complaining, but rather, accepting it in faith as an opportunity to take a step on the journey. For “at all times God is ever ready to bestow good favors upon those who serve him in earnest” (Foundations 4, 5). For the reformer Saint, the path of prayer passes by the way of fraternity in the bosom of the Mother Church. Her providential response to the problems of the Church and of the society of her time was to establish small communities who, by imitating the “Apostolic College”, followed Christ, living the Gospel in a simple way and supporting all the Church with a life made prayer. For this reason “sisters”, were “brought here” (The Way of Perfection 8, 1) and this was the promise: “that Christ would be in the midst of us; (Life 32, 14).



“It is time to walk!” (Anna de san Bartolomeo, Últimas acciones de la vida de santa Teresa). These were the words St Teresa of Ávila said shortly before her death, which summarize her life and become for us, especially for the Carmelite Family, for her fellow citizens and for all the people of Spain, a precious legacy to be treasured and enriched.

Dear Brother, with my cordial greeting, I say to all: “It is time to walk”, to set out on the paths of joy, of prayer, of fraternity, of time lived as grace! Let us be taken by the hand of St Teresa as we go through the journey of life. May her footsteps always lead us to Jesus.

Extracts from the Message of Pope Francis to the Bishop of Avila

The Saint also travelled the path of prayer, which she defined as “being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with Him who, we



know, loves us” (Life 8, 5). When times are “difficult”, “the friends of God should be strong” in order to support the weak (Life 15, 5). To pray is not a means of escape, nor even to place oneself in a bubble or to isolate oneself, but to go forward in a friendship; and the more this friendship grows, the more one comes into contact with the Lord, the “true Friend” and faithful “companion” on the journey, with whom “everything can be borne”, because, always, “He helps, He strengthens, He never fails” (Life 22, 9). In order to pray, “it is not so essential to think much as to love much” (Interior Castle IV, 1, 7). God is able to lead souls to himself through many roads, but prayer is “a safe way” (The Way of Perfection 21, 5). Leaving it means getting lost (cf. Life 19, 6). This counsel of the Saint is of perennial relevance. Thus, go forth along the path of prayer, with determination, without stopping, until the end! Live the faith of “for ever, ever, ever” (Life 1, 4); in a world without hope, demonstrate the fruitfulness of a “heart with love fast bound” (Poems 5); and in a society with so many idols, witness that “God alone suffices” (Poems 9).

We cannot undertake this journey alone, but together. For the reformer Saint, the path of prayer passes by the way of fraternity in the bosom of the Mother Church. Teresa says to us today: pray more in order to truly understand what is happening around you and thus to act better. Prayer conquers pessimism and generates good initiatives (cf. Interior Castle VII 4, 6). This is Teresian realism, which requires work instead of emotions, and love instead of dreams; the realism of humble love in the face of anxious asceticism! At times the Saint shortens her letters saying: “We are on the path” (Letter 469, 7.9), to express the urgency of continuing the task begun until the end. When the world is aflame, one cannot waste time on affairs of little importance. If only everyone were infected by this holy haste to go out to journey along the paths of our time, with the Gospel in hand and the Spirit in the heart!

**Advent Day Retreat: Travel with Teresa
Commemorate and Celebrate the Fifth Centenary
of the Birth of St. Teresa of Avila**

Led by Carmelite Father Thomas-Mary Gilbert

Everyone will receive a CD of the Conferences given by Father Frank Sacks at last year's Advent Day

Everyone will receive a Booklet of Intercessory Prayers.

Reconciliation opportunities in the Basilica from 12 until 2 pm

9:00 am Arrival, in the Museum Theater for registration, companion booklets and schedules

9:30 am In the Basilica for Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with Morning Prayer followed by silent prayer
Father Thomas-Mary presiding

11:00 am In the Guadalupe Room: Welcome and introduction

Readings by member of different OCDS communities: selected from Teresa's writings

Fr. Thomas-Mary's First Conference:

"Travel with Teresa: the Way of Witness – the charism of foundations"

11:45 am Personal reflection

Fellowship rooms for impromptu discussions

Quiet places for prayer and reflection throughout the campus

12:00 pm Lunch: Provided in the Guest's Dining Room: Hot and cold beverages available

Fellowship rooms for impromptu discussions

Quiet places for prayer and reflection throughout the campus

Visit Museum Exhibits and Gift Shoppe

1:00 pm Holy Hour in the Basilica with Fr. Thomas-Mary:
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Mid-Day Prayer, led by a member of the community
Silent prayer
Benediction and Reposing of the Blessed Sacrament

2.00 pm In the Guadalupe Room:
*Readings by member of different OCDS communities: selected
from Teresa's writings*
Fr. Thomas-Mary's Second Conference:
*"Travel with Teresa: the Way of Perfection – the charism of
contemplative prayer"*

3.00 pm Fellowship rooms for impromptu discussions
In the Basilica, Silent prayer

3.30 pm In the Basilica: Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet
led by members of the community

4.00 pm Departure



Travel with Teresa: The Way of Witness – the Charism of Foundations

The Foundations: Chapter 24

Continues with the foundation of St. Joseph of Carmel in the city of Seville.

6. Although we hurried along on our journey, we did not reach Seville until the Thursday before Trinity Sunday, after having endured scorching heat. Even though we did not travel during siesta time, I tell you, Sisters, that since the sun was beating on the wagons, getting into them was like stepping into purgatory.



Sometimes by thinking of hell, at other times by thinking that something was being done and suffered for God, those Sisters journeyed with much happiness and joy. The six souls who were with me were of the kind that made me think I was daring

enough to go off with them to the land of the Turks and that they had the fortitude, or better, our Lord gave them the fortitude, to suffer for Him; for this was the subject of their desires and conversations. They were very experienced in prayer and mortification. Since they had to remain so far away, I chose those who seemed to me to be the most apt. And this was all necessary because of the trials that were suffered. Some of the hardships and the greatest, I won't mention because another person might be involved.

7. One day before Pentecost, God gave them a severe trial by sending me a very high fever. I believed that their cries to God were enough to prevent the sickness from getting worse. Never before in my life had I experienced a fever like this without its growing worse. It made me think I had sleeping sickness so withdrawn did it make me. They threw water on my face, but being so hot from the sun, the water provided little refreshment.

8. I don't want to fail to mention the bad inn at which we stayed when I was in this condition. We were given a small room with just a bare tile roof. It had no window, and when the door was opened, the sun poured in everywhere. You must remember that the sun in that region is not like it is in Castile, but much more annoying. The bed on which they made me lie down was such that I would have fared better on the ground. One part was so high and the other so low that one didn't know how to stay in it; it was like lying on sharp stones. What a thing sickness is! For when we're healthy, it's easy to put up with all kinds of inconveniences. Finally I decided it would be better if I got up and we left. It seemed better to me to suffer the sun in the field than in that little room.

Travel with Teresa: The Way of Perfection – the Charism of Contemplative Prayer

The Way of Perfection: Chapter 29

6. What I'm trying to point out is that we should see and be present to the One with whom we speak without turning our backs on Him, for I don't think speaking with God while thinking of a thousand other vanities would amount to anything else but turning our backs on Him. All the harm comes from not truly understanding that He is near, but in imagining Him as far away.

This alone is what I want to explain: that in order to acquire the habit of easily recollecting our minds and understanding what we are saying, and with whom we are speaking, it is necessary that the exterior senses be recollected and that we give them something with which to be occupied. For indeed we have heaven within ourselves since the Lord of heaven is there.

We must, then, disengage ourselves from everything so as to approach God interiorly and even in the midst of occupations withdraw within ourselves. Although it may be for only a moment that I remember I have that Company within myself, doing so is very beneficial. In sum, we must get used to delighting in the fact that it isn't necessary to shout in order to speak to Him, for His Majesty will give the experience that He is present.

7. May the Lord teach this recollection to those of you who don't know about it, for I confess that I never knew what it was to pray with satisfaction until the Lord taught me this method. And it is because I have always found so many benefits from this habit of recollection that I have enlarged so much upon it.

I conclude by saying that whoever wishes to acquire it -- since, as I say, it lies within our power -- should not tire of getting used to what has been explained. It involves a gradual increase of self-control and an end to vain wandering from the right path; it means conquering, which is a making use of one's senses for the sake of the inner life. If you speak, strive to remember that the One with whom you are speaking is present within. If you listen, remember that you are going to hear One who is very close to you when He speaks.

You will experience the benefit, either sooner or later. Once this recollection is given by the Lord, you will not exchange it for any treasure.

Spiritual Testimonies: 30

1. If our Lord hadn't granted me the favors He did, it doesn't seem to me I would have had the courage for the works that were done or the strength to support the trials suffered and the statements and judgments made against me.

The Virgin Mary is present in a special way

Our Carmelite charism is contemplative prayer which is an unstructured intensely personal form of prayer. This is our vocation, our particular call - Teresian contemplative prayer, the inner life, the life of solitude - the most individual personal God-to-me experience possible this side of heaven. This charism like all charisms is for the benefit of the church and the world, not simply for our own benefit.



The Virgin Mary is present in a special way, most of all as a model of faithfulness in listening to the Lord and in service to Him and to others. We are a Marian Order. We belong to the Blessed Mother. She is our Queen and our Sister. Mary is Mother, Owner and Protector of Carmel.

The very first words we speak as Carmelites are a declaration to Mary: **“I confidently entrust this, my promise, to the Virgin Mary, Queen of Carmel.”**

“The goal of this life is twofold. One part we acquire by our own effort and the exercise of the virtues, assisted by divine grace. This is to offer to God a pure and holy heart, free from all stain of sin. We attain this goal when we are perfect and “in Carith” that is hidden in that love of which the Wiseman speaks: “love covers all offences”. Wishing Elijah to reach this goal, God said to him, “Hide in the wadi Carith”.

The other goal of this life is granted to us as the free gift of God, namely, to taste somewhat in the heart and to experience in the mind the power of the divine presence and the sweetness of heavenly glory, not only after death but already in this mortal life. This is “drink of the torrent” of the pleasure of God. God promised this to Elijah in the words: “And there you shall drink of the torrent”.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”