



Meditation for October 14, 2020

Teresa of Avila [Transferred]

*As the deer longs for the water-brooks, *
so longs my soul for you, O God. [Psalm 42.1]*

*Christ has no body now, but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth, but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which Christ looks with
compassion into the world.
Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good.
Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world.*

- Teresa of Avila

Teresa of Avila, who died in 1582, was named a Doctor of the Church in 1970 because her writings on the spiritual life – especially her letters, *The Way of Perfection* and *Interior Castle* -- have been so influential. She suffered from serious illness for years at a time, but at the same time she travelled through Spain for twenty-five years with indefatigable energy establishing convents for the reformed order of Discalced Carmelites. She combined unusual administrative skills, a passion for missionary work, remarkable insight into the human heart, and the ability to use language that ordinary people can understand.

Teresa found both comfort and unease from her visions, always aware that she—like everyone—was susceptible to egocentric self-aggrandizement. She was passionate in affirming the absolute and unconditional love of God, which she found in both private prayer and missionary work. Her spiritual advice is both lofty and practical, at times extremely ascetic and at others surprisingly worldly.

We find in Teresa of Avila someone who is a role model for balancing the solitude and uncertainty of living with covid-19. She teaches us that reaching out and turning inward are one motion, and taking care of ourselves and of each other one task: the act of welcoming God in any way that God chooses.

Here are some of the most well-known quotations of Teresa of Avila:

Let nothing disturb thee; Let nothing dismay thee. All thing pass; God never changes.

Accustom yourself continually to make many acts of love, for they enkindle and melt the soul.”

Pain is never permanent.

More tears are shed over answered prayers than unanswered ones."

It is true that we cannot be free from sin, but at least let our sins not be always the same."

Remember that you have only one soul; that you have only one death to die; that you have only one life. . . . If you do this, there will be many things about which you care nothing."

"How is it, Lord, that we are cowards in everything save in opposing Thee?"

Be gentle to all, and stern with yourself."

To reach something good it is very useful to have gone astray, and thus acquire experience.