



1515-2015

“I WAS BORN FOR YOU”¹

Guidelines for our Teresian Studies on *The Book of Her Life*

1. **READ TERESA AGAIN**
2. **DISCERN WITH TERESA**
3. **CELEBRATE**

In this section we would like to offer some key ideas for a more in-depth study of the Teresian texts, which can be used in any personal or community study.

By way of Lectio Divina we would like to suggest a possible practical plan that is pedagogical and clear. It is to allow the text and Teresa's own voice to question us today. The primary intention for this study is not pastoral; rather, it is for our own renewal.

This plan could be suitable for community meetings.

READ TERESA AGAIN **Steps to Follow...**

(Each community is free to use these steps, by selecting just some of them or organizing themselves in another way. The steps are a pedagogical suggestion.)

1. **Question Myself before beginning:**
From what context am I reading the text? Where am I vocationally and spiritually at this particular time? What is my interest in this? With what anxieties do I approach the text?

2. **Invoke The Holy Spirit:**
In the spirit of Teresa de Jesus, we ask for light and wisdom of heart, to give us a better understanding... always humbly allowing ourselves to be enlightened and, like Teresa, to want to learn. We do not read to be informed but rather to be renewed.

3. **Contextualization:**
Someone from the community takes it upon himself to situate the text in context: when does this happen in Saint Teresa's life, what is the social and ecclesial environment, the Carmelite situation. What is Teresa responding to? What does she bring to this of herself; what is original, as a woman?

4. **Reading as a Community:**
Read out loud, pausing occasionally: by reading the same passage together we bring Teresa's words to life and are reminded of what she wanted to say to us.

5. **Silence:** Allow for brief periods to allow the text to resonate within . You might like to under- line some aspect or word/s that resonated (others listen in silence).

6. **Evocation-Resonance:**
What aspects struck you in this reading, emerging from what Saint

Teresa said of God, of herself, of others? What key words did you encounter in the text? Underline two or three.

7. **What Does the Text Say of Us?:** *"This history is my history"*
The idea is to make real the experience described by Saint Teresa. In what way does the text speak to me and my life? What does it say about me? Is what Saint Teresa says done in your community? What suggestions come up? What does this text suggest, condemn, and reveal about our society and the modern world? Our responses should be specific and concrete. What does Saint Teresa suggest to us?

8. **Prayer:**
Let us conclude as Teresa would have done, praying spontaneously and sincerely, 'in spirit and in truth'. There should be an opportunity for anyone who wishes to pray out loud.

DISCERN WITH TERESA **Criteria To Bear in Mind...**

Teresa's writings confront us with life, entice us to experience, challenge us to take part in a real adventure, i.e., not something theoretical or imaginary. Her writings can be read using these

key ideas, and enlightened by some of the following approaches:

1. **Pastoral:** A pastoral application.
2. **Experiential, Mystagogical, Prophetic:** Teresa's initiation to the experience.
3. **Biblical & Liturgical:** read the events of her life from the perspective of the Word of God.
4. **Christocentric & Biblical:** an invitation to keep one's eyes fixed on Christ.
5. **Ecclesial:** an experience of communion with the Church.
6. **Communitarian:** a sense of fraternity, relating with everyone and everything.
7. **Apostolic & Missionary:** *"For this.., the Lord has brought us together "...*
7. **Inculturation:** a valid message for us and for every culture.

CELEBRATE

If the community would like to get more out of the text or to use it from a more pastoral perspective, we offer in a separate section titled **We Will Celebrate**, (that was sent to Presidents,) eight ways to share, celebrate and discuss the contents of each text.

¹Poem 2: Teresa praises Her Lord for the gift of life