



This
Paltry
Love
Jessica
Powers
1905-88



THE
LIVING
CHRIST
OF ST.
TERESA

I love you, God, with a penny match of love
that I strike when the big and bullying dark of need
chases my startled sunset over the hills
and in the walls of my house small terrors move.

It is the sight of this paltry love that fills
my deepest pits with seething purgatory,
that thus I love you, God--*God*--who would sow
my heights and depths with recklessness of glory,
who hold back light-oceans straining to spill on me,
on *me*, stifling here in the dungeon of my ill.

This puny spark I scorn, I who had dreamed of fire
that would race to land's end, shouting your worth,
of sun that would fall to earth with a mortal wound
and rise and run, streaming with light like blood,
splattering the sky,
soaking the ocean itself, and all the earth.

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poetry **THE HOUSE AT REST** by Jessica Powers,
also known as Sister Miriam of the Holy Spirit OCD,
1984. \$8.95 plus packing & postage: total: \$10.00.
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brook Road, Pewaukee WI 53072-4599.

Issued by the Secretary General for the Carmelite Nuns

What is most original in the *gospel* of Saint Teresa is
found in her doctrine about the person and being of
Christ Jesus. This vision, so original, finds its source in
her practical experience and teaching on prayer, her
spiritual realism, as well as her habit of never separat-
ing daily living from the transcendent. This enabled her
to live and to teach from her intense experience of
Christ¹.

We will examine the theme of the living Christ of
Saint Teresa in the pages which follow by examining:

- Teresa's experience of Christ.
- The saint's understanding of the place of Christ in
forming a truly Christian spirituality.
- The implications of Teresa's Christological vision.

I. Saint Teresa's Experience of Christ

When Saint Teresa began to write about her life, she
was drawing on her strong bond of union with the
Risen Lord. The best X-Ray of her soul at that time
can be found in what she herself wrote in the VI Man-
sions. This information provides us with an indispens-
able tool for a serious and critical hermeneutic
(interpretation) to evaluate the basic contents of her

autobiography. Many who have ignored this fact have failed to come to a true appreciation of Saint Teresa.

In the VI Mansions Teresa describes for us her own experiences: "When our Lord is pleased to give more delight to this soul, He shows it clearly His most Sacred Humanity in the way He desires: either as He was when He went about in the world or as He is after His resurrection. And even though the vision happens so quickly that we could compare it to a streak of lightning, this most glorious image remains so engraved on the imagination that I think it would be impossible to erase it until it is seen by the soul in that place where it will be enjoyed without end"².

But even as she tells us about one of the many imaginary visions which the Lord bestows on her, she is also enjoying other favors. She confides: "It will happen while the soul is heedless of any thought about such a favor being granted to it.... that it will feel Jesus Christ, our Lord, beside it. Yet, it does not see Him, either with the eyes of the body or with those of the soul." And she adds, regarding a *certain person* she knows, that she "knew so certainly that it was Jesus Christ, our Lord, who showed Himself to her in that way that she couldn't doubt it"³. And this *vision* she tells us, in terms that almost provoke doubt, "isn't like the imaginative ones that pass quickly, but lasts many days and *sometimes even more than a year*"⁴.

Teresa's writings are full of descriptions of the profound effects of these visions in her soul. For example, after describing a very sublime manifestation of the Lord, she writes in wonder, "It seems it purifies the soul in an extraordinary way and removes almost entirely the strength of the sensitive part of our nature. It is a great flame that seems to burn away and annihilate all of life's desires"⁵.

Before finishing her autobiography, well before she had reached the peak of her spiritual experiences, she would describe the kind of *stupor* which these visions left in her divinely wounded spirit:

"Everything I see with my bodily eyes seems to be a dream and a mockery. What I have already seen with the eyes of my soul is what I desire; and since it is seen as something far away, this life is a death"⁶. *Here we have the real St Teresa speaking.*

These forceful interior experiences are the background against which she writes the story of her life. It is a life which falls into two great parts, and the passing from one to another is through an experience of Christ: her conversion before an image of a "very wounded" Christ. In chapters one to nine we meet Teresa in her long search for Christ. The rest of her story

she
tells
in the
remaining
chapters
of her
Life.
She
recounts



how the Risen One came out to meet her.

No one doubts nowadays that this twofold division is integral to the structure of the book and the texts themselves practically say as much⁷. In chapter nine something new begins in the life of Teresa, thanks to the Humanity of Christ. She has entered the mystic way. She writes, "I sometimes experienced, as I said⁸, ...when I represented Christ within me in order to place myself in his presence, or even while reading, that a feeling of the presence of God would come upon me unexpectedly so that I could in no way doubt that he was in me or I totally immersed in Him. This did not occur after the manner of a vision. I believe they call the experience 'mystical theology'"⁹. But let us trace with Teresa the extensive path she followed in her search for Christ.

1. See SECUNDINO CASTRO, *Cristologia Tere-siana*, Madrid, Editorial de Espiritualidad, 1978; and his *Ser Cristiano Segun Santa Teresa*, Madrid, Editorial de Espiritualidad, 1981.
2. *Interior Castle* VI:9:3. 3. *Interior Castle* VI:8:2
4. *Interior Castle* VI:8:3. Italics ours. See *Life*, 27:2.
5. *Life* 38:18. 6. *Life* 38:7. 7. *Life* 10:8 and 23:1.
8. A reference to *Life* 4:8; 9:4 and 6. 9. *Life* 10:1.

Saint Teresa's search for Christ

The first indication Teresa gives us of the way God would make himself known to her in the person of Jesus Christ is found in the third chapter of her autobiography. We may guess that this newly-felt presence of the God Man in her soul was related to the emptiness she must have felt after giving up a human love which had just begun to flourish¹⁰. Whatever the case may have been, we know that her experiences with the Augustinian Nuns of Avila -- her conversations with that excellent nun Maria de Briceno on the ideal of religious life, and her readings and meditations on the Passion -- had effected a change in her and she began to think about entering the religious life. The special Christ-centered character of her vocation was plain from the very beginning, as we easily see in the following passage:

"The devil was suggesting that I would not be able to suffer the trials of religious life because I was too pampered. *I resisted this with the thought of the trials Christ suffered and that it would be no great thing if I suffered some for Him*"¹¹. These views of Christ enter into her delicate narration of her religious profession¹².

Teresa's descriptions of the first years of her religious life before she entered into the mystic way already show that from its beginnings her spirituality is a Christ-centered one. "I tried as hard as I could to keep Jesus Christ, our God and our Lord, present within me, and that was my way of prayer. If I reflected upon some phase of His Passion, I represented Him to myself interiorly"¹³.

When she comes to teaching beginners the way of prayer, she never tires of repeating, "The soul can place itself in the presence of Christ and grow accustomed to being inflamed with love for His Sacred Humanity. It can keep Him present and speak with Him"¹⁴. The theme of the humanity of Christ was her special weakness (strong point). Even while showing herself generous in acknowledging the various ways of arriving at sanctity and after stating the usefulness of meditating and reflecting on the whole of creation, according to the spiritual style of each one, she adds her own unmistakable accent on Christ: "This is an admirable method of procedure as long as one often reflects on the Passion and the life of Christ from which has come and continues to come every good"¹⁵.

We find her spirituality of this time crystallized in two passages vibrating with the experiences taking place in her soul. One refers to that small space of time when, through bad direction from her confessors, she left aside her habit of picturing Christ to herself. She writes with some pain, "I had been so devoted all my life to Christ... and I didn't remain long in so extreme a practice... and thus I always returned to my custom of rejoicing in this Lord"¹⁶. The other reference refers to her style of praying, "I could only think about Christ as He was as a man"¹⁷, she says rather laconically (delicately).



Teresa changes before an Image of Christ

The ninth chapter of her autobiography is the key to truly understanding the life of St Teresa. There she records for us a watershed experience of her existence, a conversion she had always desired but had been unable to achieve. Before a statue of Christ which vividly depicted Christ's wounds she felt profoundly moved. Something hard in her began to crumble, and she felt a renewal or re-creation of herself in the deepest centre of her being.

10. *Life* 2:9. 11. *Life* 3:6. Italics ours. See *Cristologia Teresiana*, pp. 29-32. 12. See *Life* 4:3.

13. *Life* 4:7. She repeats these words almost to the letter in two other places. See *Life* 9:4 and 6.

14. *Life* 12:2. See *Life* 12:1 and 3; 13:11 and 22.

15. *Life* 13:13. 16. *Life* 22:3-4. 17. *Life* 9:6

As even a brief review of her story would show us, this was the beginning of something new which would unfold throughout the rest of her life. Teresa had experienced her second and definitive conversion. The first being when she chose the religious life.

As is well known, Teresa's developing consciousness even in her early childhood had been characterized by a strong attraction to the sacred, to the eternal and even to martyrdom and the enclosed life. At the onset of puberty and her discovery of human love, these sentiments suffered a temporary eclipse although, as she assures us convincingly, her heart never lost its respect for God and reverent fear of him. She returned to *la verdad de cuando niña -- the truth of childhood* at her first conversion when she decided to enclose herself in the convent. She did so in thanksgiving to Jesus who had suffered so much for her.

Yet despite the intense religious experiences which marked the first years of her religious life, Teresa's spiritual ascent stalled. She was caught in a conflict between her own affective desires and the increasingly demanding and challenging imperatives of her own conscience. The conflict was felt with full force in an intimate friendship she had developed with someone whose identity is unknown to us. It was not a question of a relationship that was seriously wrong. Rather, it was one that caused her to hold back something in her response to the voice of God. As soon as she began to enjoy this friendship, Christ made his presence known.

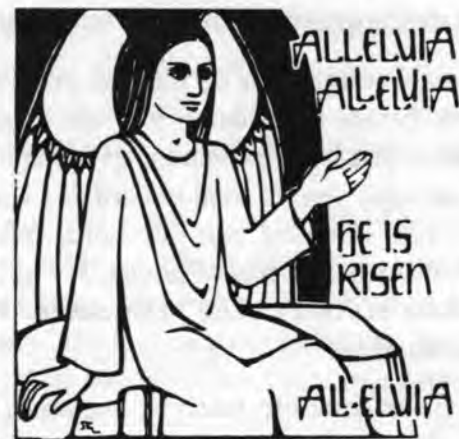
"With great severity, Christ appeared before me, making me understand what He regretted about the friendship. I saw Him with the eyes of my soul more clearly than I could have with the eyes of my body. And this vision left such an impression on me that, though more than 26 years have gone by, it seems to me it is still present. I was left very frightened and disturbed, and didn't want to see that person any more"¹⁸.

But she went on seeing that person and suffered an interior division that lasted for years. Describing those years she writes, "I should say that it is one of the most painful lives, I think, that one can imagine; for neither could I enjoy God nor did I find joy in the world"¹⁹.

Even though she tried to deceive herself into believing that her vision of Christ had been a hallucination, that outraged gaze, calling out for her love, haunted

her. Christ had entered into the very depths of her heart, a heart now torn by its own fickleness. Her affectivity was her chief weakness, and that is why she has a need to write after her second conversion, "I have never again been able to tie myself to any friendship or to find consolation in or bear particular love for any other persons than those I understand love Him and strive to serve Him"²⁰.

But Teresa's heart was still very much torn by her friendships the day she came upon the statue of Christ. The image of her disfigured and humiliated Lord wounded her deeply and impressed on her how much Christ had suffered for love. "I was utterly distressed in seeing Him that way.... I felt so keenly aware of how poorly I thanked Him for those wounds that, it seems to me, my heart broke"²¹. **The entreating gaze of Christ changed Teresa's soul.** Shortly thereafter it was enough for her to think of Christ and she would feel herself immersed in God²². Thus the first part of Teresa's personal *story of salvation* came to a conclusion in Christ. It should be added that, in her mind, her life from then on was on the right road.



Teresa and the Risen Lord

"After two years.... being in prayer on the feast day of glorious St Peter, I saw or, to put it better, felt Christ beside me; I saw nothing with my bodily eyes or with my soul, but it seemed to me that Christ was at my side -- I saw that it was He, in my opinion, who was speaking to me"²³. Thus with the description of the first of her intellectual visions, Teresa begins telling us of her many paschal encounters with Christ.

18. *Life* 7:6. 19. *Life* 8:2. 20. *Life* 24:6.

21. *Life* 9:1. 22. See *Life* 10:1. 23. *Life* 27:2.

Soon this overpowering Presence of his, stronger than her own self-awareness, would be accompanied by the progressive revelation of his Figure. "One day, while I was in prayer, the Lord desired to show me only his hands.... After a few days I also saw that divine face which it seems left me completely absorbed!"²⁴. And finally, "One feast day of Saint Paul, while I was at Mass, this most Sacred Humanity in its risen form was represented to me completely, as it is in paintings"²⁵.



These mystical events are not mere incidentals in the life of St Teresa, and to minimize them would be to misrepresent her. In the way Christ affects her through them, they are part of the very core of her spirituality. But to follow their development in detail would be impossible"²⁶.

We have already alluded to the fact that some of them lasted a year or more. And they would go on, increasing in intensity and grandeur. As she would write in the VII Mansions:

"It may seem that this experience was nothing new since at other times the Lord had represented Himself to the soul in such a way. The experience was so different that it left her indeed stupefied and frightened... You must understand that there is the greatest difference between all the previous visions and those of this dwelling place"²⁷.

Teresa herself was unable to record all the times she saw the Lord. She would instead encapsulate them in sacred formulas in ways that might be compared to the famous summaries of the Easter appearances of Christ in the Acts of the Apostles. One time she tells us,

"The Lord almost always showed Himself to me as risen, also when He appeared in the Host -- except at times when He showed me His wounds in order to encourage me when I was suffering tribulation. Sometimes He appeared on the cross or in the garden, and a few times with the crown of thorns; sometimes He also appeared carrying the cross on account, as I say, of my needs and those of others. *But His body was always glorified*"²⁸.

She also sums up for us the effect which these intense experiences left in her soul: "The vision of Christ left upon me an impression of His most extraordinary beauty, and the impression remains today; one time is sufficient to make this imprint. How much deeper it becomes as the Lord grants this favor more often!"²⁹.

When she wrote these lines, she had not yet entered into the VII Mansions where experiences of Christ would far exceed anything she had previously known. Throughout all of these experiences, the personality of Teresa would continue to be reshaped by the beauty of the image of Christ. Hers was always a song of the Humanity of Christ.

Teresa's experiences and perceptions of Christ were to become more and more ineffable. She had always wanted to picture the Lord within herself, something she could never do despite her efforts. At the end of the book of her *Life* she would finally be able to write,

"Once while I was reciting with all the Sisters the hours of the Divine Office, my soul suddenly became recollected; and it seemed to me to be like a brightly polished mirror, without any part on the back or sides or top or bottom that wasn't totally clear. In its center Christ, our Lord, was shown to me, in the way I usually see Him. It seemed to me I saw Him clearly in every part of my soul, as though in a mirror. And this mirror also -- I don't know how to explain it -- was completely engraved upon the Lord Himself by means of a very loving communication I wouldn't know how to describe"³⁰.

24. *Life* 28: 1.

25. *Life* 28:3.

26. See *Cristologia Teresiana*, pp. 50-64.

27. *Interior Castle* VII:2:2.

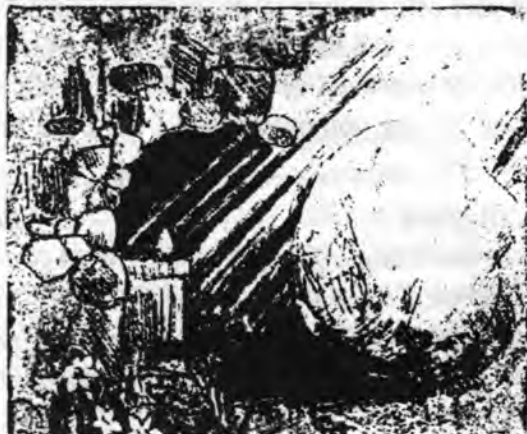
28. *Life* 29:4. Italics ours. As do the N. T. writers, Teresa sees the life of Jesus from the viewpoint of his Resurrection. 29. *Life* 37:4. 30. *Life* 40:5.

When Teresa was writing these last pages of her autobiography, she was living fully in the VI Mansions. It was from those spiritual heights and only from them that she was able to contemplate the spiritual landscape at her feet.

This exalted experience was a foretaste of what would follow as St Teresa entered in the VII Mansions where the Lord would reveal himself to her in the most sublime way in the very center of her being and conclude with her there her spiritual transformation or marriage³¹. She writes, "The Lord appears in this center of the soul, not in an imaginative vision but in an intellectual one, although more delicate than those mentioned, as He appeared to the apostles without entering through the door and said to them "pax vobis"³².

Visions were not the only kind of paschal encounter with Christ that Teresa experienced. The visions had, in fact, been preceded by locutions, and they would continue throughout the rest of her life³³. For a long time Teresa had heard mysterious words, tender yet powerful, whose origin was unknown to her. In the VI Mansions she identifies these as having come from the very lips of Jesus. "She understood very clearly that it was this same Lord who often spoke to her in the way mentioned. For until He granted her this favor I am referring to, she never knew who was speaking to her, although she understood the words"³⁴.

And she describes them in the following way: "There are many kinds of locutions given to the soul. Some seem to come from outside oneself; others, from deep within the interior part of the soul; others, from the superior part; and some are so exterior that they come through the sense of hearing, for it seems there is a spoken word"³⁵.



Although sometimes the other Divine Persons spoke to her³⁶, and even some of the blessed in heaven, most of the time she heard Christ in his Sacred Humanity speaking to her³⁷.

II. Jesus Christ and our Spiritual Life

St Teresa alludes to an opinion regarding the place of the Sacred Humanity which was current in her time and which she considers both dangerous and not in keeping with the teaching of Holy Scripture. To clear up this matter she dedicated the twenty-second chapter of the *Life* and again chapter seven of the VI Mansions in her *Interior Castle*. These chapters are treasure troves because she not only expresses clearly her thought on the above matter, but she also outlines her thought regarding Jesus Christ, physical realities, and Christian life itself. Here lies the key to her thought. And she so clearly declares her independence of the widespread mystical doctrine of her age which was infected with some pagan neoplatonism.

In both books she claims attention emphasizing the importance of the topic to be discussed. In the title of chapter 22 of her *Life* she distances herself from the commonly held theory by declaring "...how the humanity of Christ must be the means to the most sublime contemplation and tells about a mistaken theory she once tried to follow." The title in the parallel chapter in her *Interior Castle* is even more blunt: "...tells what a great mistake it is, however spiritual one may be, not to practice keeping the humanity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ present in one's mind"³⁸. Teresa wanted no one to miss the transcendent importance of her teaching on this point.

31. See *Spiritual Testimonies* 31 (Avila, Nov. 18, 1572); *Interior Castle* VII:2:1-7.

32. *Interior Castle* VII:2:3.

33. See *Spiritual Testimonies* 65 (Palencia, 1581)3-4.

34. *Interior Castle* VI:8:2.

35. *Interior Castle* VI 3:1.

36. See *Interior Castle* VII:1:8 which seems to contradict what she says in *Spiritual Testimonies* 59 (Seville, 1576): 23.

37. See *Spiritual Testimonies* 59 (Seville, 1576): 23.

38. *Interior Castle* VI:7 title. See *Life* 22:4-5; *Interior Castle* VI:7:5-6 and 14.

The spirituality of her times held that beginning with conversion, the believer ought to strive towards religious maturity through an ascetic imitation of Christ and with the help of prayer which, as meditation, would have as its preferred object the life of Christ. Saint Teresa agreed with her opponents on this point and she had no difference with them in affirming that mystical graces are entirely gratuitous. But she dissociated herself entirely from their idea that the proper psychological preparation for the mystic act was the voluntary suspension of the normal activity of the human faculties or potencies and the deliberate voiding of the understanding by abstracting from all images and corporal forms, including the Humanity of Christ³⁹.



This was the heart of the argument, for according to Teresa, even were it desirable sometimes to prescind from some corporal forms, she could not admit that it would ever be permissible to treat the Sacred Humanity in that way. In other words, Teresa disagreed with some others both regarding the preparation for the mystical act and its content. For Teresa it must always have the Humanity of the Risen Christ (and with Him the other persons of the Trinity) as its object, and not the abstract and incorporeal⁴⁰. She taught that the way to maturity of Christian life and the deepest mystical experiences consisted precisely in what the others regarded as an obstacle: the corporeality of Christ or his Sacred Humanity.

She herself had tried to follow that opinion for a time,⁴³ and had found that her religious experiences began to wither or atrophy. As she puts it ingenuously, "I realized clearly that I was proceeding badly.... the mind wandered here and there. My soul, it seems to me, was like a bird flying about that doesn't know where to light; and it was losing a lot of time and not making progress in virtues or improving in prayer"⁴⁴.

And she boldly declares, "I really believe that anyone who reaches the experience of union without passing beyond will think what is said in these books is the best practice, I believe I would never have arrived at where I am now because in my opinion the practice is a mistaken one"⁵¹.

Her thought is clear: the spiritual life must revolve in its entirety around Jesus Christ. We have already referred to her teaching for beginners: "They should put themselves in the presence of Christ and, without tiring the intellect, speak with and delight in him"⁵². Nor is that practice enjoined on beginners only, for it is meant for all. "This method of keeping Christ present with us is beneficial in all stages and is a very safe means of advancing in the first degree of prayer, of reaching in a short time the second degree, and of walking secure against the dangers the devil can set up in the last degrees"⁵³.

Saint Teresa writes, "Who is so proud and miserable - as I am - that he will not, after having labored the whole life with as many penances, prayers, and persecutions as can be imagined, feel greatly enriched and well paid when the Lord allows him to remain at the foot of the cross with St John?"⁵⁶

Teresa does not forbid meditating on other things such as creation, the last things, etc. But even here she adds her Christ-centered caution: "This is an admirable method of procedure as long as one often reflects on the Passion and life, of Christ from which has come and continues to come every good"⁵⁸.

It is certain that the spiritual persons referred to were themselves Christ-centered and that they did not consider the Humanity of Christ a hindrance to our mystical ascent. Rather they thought it was our weakness and inclination to earthly things that created the need to leave behind the visible (Jesus of Nazareth) and go on to the invisible (Word of God).

39. See *Life* 22:2 and 8; *Interior Castle* VI:7:12.
 40. "We are not angels but we have a body. To desire to be angels are on earth... is foolishness. *Life* 22:10.
 43. See *Life* 22:3-4; *Interior Castle* VI;7:15.
 44. *Interior Castle* VI:7:15.
 51. *Life* 22:2. See *Life* 22:10 and 13 and 18; *Interior Castle* VI:7:7. 52. *Life* 13:11.
 53. *Life* 12:3. 56. *Life* 22:5. 58. *Life* 13:13.

Teresa had no use for this indirect downplaying of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ... "I cannot endure it," she exclaims⁵⁹. "It is mistaken"⁶⁰. "At no time do I recall this opinion I had without feeling pain-- it seems to me I became a dreadful traitor-- although in ignorance"⁶¹.

Oh, what a bad road I was following, Lord!"⁶². "I have so learned my lesson from experience that I think ... you should not believe anyone who tells you something else"⁶³. She constantly re-echoes the lament already cited in the title of this chapter from the *Interior Castle*: What a great mistake it is, however spiritual one may be, not to practice keeping the humanity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ present in one's mind.

She defends her position by appealing to scripture,⁶⁴ to tradition with examples from the saints⁶⁵, and to the liturgy⁶⁶. She argues from the general requirements of Christian life,⁶⁷ and from her own experience⁶⁸. She points out the sad results of abstracting from the Sacred Humanity: spiritual lethargy as the soul is left "in the air",⁶⁹ the loss of benefits of the example of Christ,⁷⁰ a decrease in love for the Eucharist,⁷¹ a decrease in devotion to Our Lady and the saints,⁷² as well as a loss of that humility which is the foundation of all spiritual growth⁷³.

Teresa's experience was that the further one journeyed along the mystical way, the more one walked in the presence of the Humanity of Christ, as she writes in chapters 8 and 9 of the VI Mansions. "For you to see, sisters, that what I have told you is true and that the further a soul advances the more it is accompanied by the good Jesus, we will do well to discuss how, when His Majesty desires, we cannot do otherwise than walk always with Him. This is evident in the ways and modes by which His Majesty communicates Himself to us and shows us the love He bears us. He does this through some very wonderful apparitions and visions",⁷⁴ she writes, and goes on writing for two chapters in her efforts to persuade us of this truth.

And in the VII Mansions this presence of Christ took on for her its most sublime expression. There, after visions of the Trinity, she received the grace of spiritual marriage with the Risen Savior, and encountered the Sacred Humanity in the depths of the Mystery of the Trinity. The human dimension of Jesus will

never vanish from sight on the religious journey of Teresa. She tells us of the presence of the Lord in this final stage of Christian life, "Such a person walks continually in an admirable way with Christ, our Lord, in whom the divine and the human are joined and who is always that person's companion"⁷⁵.



III. Teresian Christology and Spirituality

Teresa never wrote a formal, systematic Christology yet it should be clear from what we have studied, that she had a very concrete and developed understanding of the mystery of Christ which gave her spirituality its special shape. Teresa's Christology was in its main outlines the classic Christology of the Church, but in the unique way in which she approached the full mystery of Christ's Being through his humanity, she transcended the limitations of the theology of her own age and comes close to the paths marked out for it in ours.

59. *Life* 22:1. 60. *Life* 22:3. 61. *Life* 22:3.

62. *Life* 22:6. See *Interior Castle* VI:7:7 and 9.

63. *Interior Castle* VI:7:5.

64. See *Life* 22:6-11; and *Interior Castle* VI:7:7 & 9.

65. See *Life* 22:7.

66. See *Interior Castle* VI:7:11. Saint Teresa proves herself here a convincing debater in the way she marshals her arguments.

67. See *Life* 22:9-10; *Interior Castle* VI:7:6 and 13.

68. See *Life* 22:-6-11; *Interior Castle* VI:7:6 and 12.

69. See *Life* 22:9; *Interior Castle* VI:7:15.

70. See *Life* 22:6. 71. See *Interior Castle* VI:7:15.

72. See *Interior Castle* VI:7:6 and 13.

73. *Life* 12:4-5; 22:1 1; and *Interior Castle* VI:7:13.

74. *Interior Castle* VI:8:1. 75. *Interior Castle* V:7:9.

In contrast to theologians of her day who seemed to "fragment" Christ and separate the human and divine in him, she confessed the unity of his being and operations. Like the evangelists, she contemplated Christ from the viewpoint of his Resurrection, a point whose significance is not lost in modern Christology. Whenever she saw Christ, she saw his glorified humanity. The Jesus of Teresa is the Risen Lord who is both the Word of God and the Jesus of Nazareth.

From the adoration of all that Christ was Teresa moved on to full acceptance of the corporeality of mankind and all that implies, in opposition to the "angelism" of the traditional schools of mysticism⁷⁶.

Teresa's only thoughts of God were of the God who in the Gospels reveals himself in Christ. Her ascent to the Mystery of God was a close reflection of the New Testament. Teresa moved from Jesus of Nazareth to the One and Triune God without leaving aside the Sacred Humanity -- she never abstracted from Christ in all the mysterious reality of his Person -- her references to his Humanity are not references to his human aspect only. Teresa knows that Jesus is the absolute good of God⁷⁷ in whom the Father is well-pleased and to whom all mankind is called to seek its delight⁷⁸.

This theological vision of Christ is the grandiose fountain from which the life and personality of Teresa flow. Simple strokes outline the principles of her spirituality. It is fundamentally Christocentric⁷⁹ and as a consequence evangelical. It is anchored in pure faith without seeking mystical experience, yet all the while yearns for total immersion in Christ, whose Love is foretasted in revelation, in the Eucharist and in prayer.

Her goal is to follow Christ. Hers is a spirituality that opens out in mystery even though not seeking mystical favors. *St Teresa confides that God pours Himself out in the life of anyone who responds to his love without reservation.* Following Christ ends in ineffable experiences.

Her spirituality has a healthy well balanced expression. It accepts fully the reality of human corporeality⁸⁰ and totally rejects the dualism presupposed by neoplatonism and allied ways of thinking. This is, without doubt, one of the most fundamental results of her understanding of the mystery of Christ and of the union between the divine and human in him.

It is an ecclesial spirituality that is both strongly personal and leads to a lived participation in the mystery of Christ.



Saint Teresa's understanding of the mystery of Christ was both the fruit of the great currents of Sixteenth-Century Spain and a rejection of them in not a few points. In fact in many ways her theological vision fits better with today's so-called new Christology than with the theories of her own time. □

76. Scholars have debated and continue to debate just what authors Teresa contests in her own writings. It is certain that at least some Franciscan Recollects are among those with whom she disagrees.

77. Tired of marshaling arguments against her adversaries, our Saint concludes by stating that if it is necessary to leave behind the interior representation of the Humanity of Christ in order to reach mystical union, she would do without mysticism. (See *Interior Castle* VI:7:15). Teresa's centering on Christ is unconditional and absolute.

78. See Life 22:6. Teresa means to say that if the Father finds his pleasure in Jesus of Nazareth, how could there be a moment in our spiritual life when we should be made to turn elsewhere.

79. We use the words Christ-centered and Christocentrism to refer to Jesus Christ and not merely -- as some have used it -- in reference to the Word of God.

80. Teresa puts it beautifully: "They think that since this work is entirely spiritual, any corporeal thing can hinder or impede it" (Life 22:1). See also, *Life* 22:10 and *Interior Castle* VI:7:12.

Article was shortened and graphics added by editor.

**Our
Lady
of the
Angels**

Gavin
Boyd
OCDS
Halifax



For seraphic hearts in lyrical adoration, Lord, shafts of the Light of Glory illumine Your Sacred symbols: in prayer grace multiplies, Your Rays of Mercy give eternal life; so Heaven's festivals increase, the visions of Your princes deepens magnificently, in jubilation they honour Your Mystical Rose, her regal inspiration for their fidelity -- the martyrdom of the seven swords.

Leadership for paradisaal praise of Your Glory comes from her, her privileged hymns before Your Majesty, the highest honours of fairest love, exalted above Angelic hymns. All Yours is the echo, in eternal spring-time, heard distantly by pilgrims.

Through the Rose's intercession we seek You, the Splendour of the Way, the Truth and the Life for Your embrace of Kingly Mercy, the pledge of dying in Divine Love.

Sublime indeed are Your songs for the Mystical Rose, surpassing Angelic homage and the praise of the Saints, in mysteries of exalted union, in inaccessible light, beyond the images of our canticles.

Through Your Grace, and for endless years of Your favour, lead us to the choirs in the Heavenly festivals, the ineffable hierarchical harmony, the music of procession to the ivory palaces, to Your house of many mansions.

There, in Heaven's opening, Your Princess has been seen; there our treasure is, our hope of fairest love's intercession, for Your light in travel on the path of life, for entry into Your mystery of union with the Father, the celebration of Your victory with the Heavenly hosts, for the fulfillment of faith in beatitude, for the completion of the Angelic missions.

Commentary on the poem Our Lady of the Angels

Throughout the history of the Church there have always been seraphic hearts in lyrical adoration; their praise of the Divine Glory has been united with the choirs of Heaven, forming a great hierarchy of songs. All this honour given to God draws us to prayer as we become aware of its great beauty, its sighs, its longings, and the depth of its meaning. Through its homage there is gratitude to the Divine Mercy, moved by extreme emotions in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord.

Our Lord's Heart is the greatest of His Sacred symbols. This Divinely chosen representation of His Love becomes especially illumined for seraphic hearts. This happens, we may say, through shafts of the light in which the blessed see the Divine Majesty.

While this Light is received in its fullness in Heaven it also penetrates like distant lightning into the faith of seraphic hearts. Faith is thus rewarded, and inspired, but retains merit through loyal dedication in times of darkness.

In the Discalced Carmelite Order we honour especially the mysteries sequences of flashes of the Light of glory and experiences of desolation through which Saint Teresa of Avila was prepared for union with the Sacred Humanity of Our Lord. She lived in the rays of His Mercy, coming from His Sacred Heart, as represented in His image as the Merciful Saviour, before this image came into our devotions, to inspire our trust and to convey the hidden wisdom that these rays have been shining on the Church since its foundation.

Rays of the Divine Mercy flood souls with grace. The Divine Love is impetuous, and responds to the prayers of the seraphic hearts. The symbolism of the rays of Divine Mercy offers us a beautiful redemptive discovery, related to the significance of flames associated with Our Lord's Sacred Heart. These flames signify intense Divine emotions which we have to learn about through meditation on the splendour of those emotions, the Infinite Love which they express, and therefore, the splendour of the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Exalted Divine language will be heard in our future beatitude, but our task here is to focus prayerfully on the hidden wisdom of faith, with its central message of Mercy, dramatized in the life of Our Lord. In the Di-

vine plan faith has the virtue of humble commitment and is rewarded by discoveries of its hidden wisdom. What is hidden, for discovery in profound and tearful gratitude, is the richness of the Saviour's Mercy, reflected in the intense emotions of the father welcoming his prodigal son and above all in the brief dialogue between Our Lord and the dying thief. This dialogue indicated supreme magnanimity at the entrance to the Father's mansions, implying swift cancellation of a sad debt.

Souls are flooded with grace for eternal life. The greatest source of this grace is the Blessed Sacrament: there can be no higher food than this at the feast in the Heavenly Kingdom, yet it is given to us in advance of our arrival, thus expressing above all a kind of transcendent and profoundly compulsive liberality, which we have to try to understand by reflecting constantly on the Divine emotions surging in Christ's Sacred Heart. A law of eternal reciprocity, written in our hearts, is intended to become more and more active in response to the movements of the Saviour's Great Heart. High reciprocity, in seraphic hearts, touches the Divine emotions, as we see in the endearing poetry of the prayers of the Saints. Through the longings of their seraphic hearts we are drawn to deeper devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, to enlightenment and consolation in the rays of Kingly Mercy.

Heaven's festivals increase: this rejoicing among the Angels and Saints becomes greater as lost sheep are mercifully rescued, and as seraphic hearts form larger choirs, offering the sacrifices of love. In all this the vision of the Angels is deepened magnificently as they see the unfolding splendour of Divine action in the Church, drawing on the infinite reparatory value of Christ's passion and revealing Wisdom beyond our comprehension.

Exquisitely spontaneous Angelic praise of the Mystical Rose is part of the Heavenly rejoicing. From Her regal fidelity, seen in vision, we may well believe the loyal Angels drew inspiration for their own fidelity. Her queenship, after the martyrdom of the seven swords, can thus be seen to be founded on a sublime spiritual maternity. The Angels, accordingly, can no doubt join with St Bernard's prayer in its Heavenly form, honouring the Mystical Rose as our life and our sweetness, after the fulfillment of our hope.



The Angelic gratitude must be expressed in praise that is fitting for loyal hearts, following the lyrical leadership of the Mystical Rose. Her songs in praise of the Divine Glory must be lyrics which no Angels or Saints can sing, but which must lead the Heavenly choirs. All this can be considered in view of the references to praise of the Divine Glory which are prominent in the last few Psalms, and it can be understood that the Mystical Rose's lyrical adoration must be at very exalted level, with a sublimity unattainable by the Blessed and the Angels. Her hymns in honour of the Holy Trinity must be highly privileged, representing supreme completions of themes in the Psalms and of greater, more joyful, and more mysterious themes beyond our comprehension.

The privileged hymns of the Mystical Rose can be considered the highest-honours-of-fairest-love. Recognition of such honours was implicit in the Angel Gabriel's greetings at the Annunciation, which indicated profound reverence for Our Lady's exalted union with the Holy Trinity: in that union She was already totally united with the Divine Will, and accordingly the Angel's declaration was a prediction based on knowledge of that union and of the Divine decision to make it uniquely fruitful. Mary's assent was to the specific revelation of the Divine will, and this assent was a supreme act of faith and of commitment to the plan of redemption, and to the martyrdom of the seven swords. The honours of fairest love were greatly elevated by that assent, and further elevated, with supreme heroism, at the death of Christ. Then, after Our Lady's assumption, those honours became intimately linked with the vast reach of Divine Providence throughout the world.

The highest honours of fairest love can be sung only by Our Lady: these privileged hymns could not be conceived in any heart lower in the Heavenly hierarchy. At those other levels, we may well believe, there are echoes, as hearts go out to Her, recognizing in those echoes the theme of the Psalms: my delight is to do Your will, that is to answer, perfectly, the Infinite Love of God.

Through faith, as St Paul indicates, we draw near to joyful Angelic gatherings, and we can understand that these are united loyally to the highest honours of fairest love. The beauty of these honours, heard and seen distantly, must be revealed progressively in the Splendour of Truth as this is unfolded for the Blessed and the Angels. The Light of Glory received by the Mystical Rose is we believe reflected to the entire Heavenly court while the Holy Trinity receives the highest honours of fairest-love. Anticipating this vision we pray, therefore, to be drawn to the Lord in His own splendour, the splendour of creation and redemption, the splendour of Divine Life in the Church, the splendour of Infinite Love seeking and saving the faithful.

Our prayer is inspired by a vast history of rescues - the rescues of Kingly Mercy, beginning with St Mary Magdalen. In this history we are intended to receive great inspiration from the conversion of St Paul, which was extraordinary not only because of Our Lord's dramatic confrontation but also because of his rapid elevation to an advanced level of the spiritual life. This rescue seems to be understandable mainly as an extreme expression of Divine Love for Our Lady, in sorrow after the Ascension of Our Lord and the outbreak of a bitter persecution against the Church. She was given that leading persecutor as a new spiritual son.

All the Divine rescues set persons on the splendid way that leads to final flights of the spirit, in depths of Divine Love. The splendour of the way, the truth, and the life is thus a splendour of liberation, for transition to the life of Heaven. Higher than the entire history of redemptive rescues however is the supreme and mysterious history of Divine union with Our Lady. We can understand that there must be exquisite Divine responses to the highest honours of fairest love. The Divinely lyrical affection must be highly exalted, expressing especially profound emotions in the Heart of the Saviour, with noble sensibilities beyond our comprehension. A reference to these can be seen in the ancient prayer, "Glorious things are said about You, O Daughter of Sion".

The beatitude of the Mystical Rose, in inaccessible light, attracts our devotion for deeper trust in the Divine Mercy. A Divinely chosen symbol of this Mercy is the-ocean, and we can understand that a kind of dominion over this ocean has been given, through Infinite



Love, to the Mystical Rose, as the Mother of Mercy. She is profoundly associated with all the movements of the Lord's oceanic Mercy, and in Her exalted hymns She undoubtedly praises the glorious splendor of the Lord's Kingship which is established through His Mercy.

Thinking of the Mystical Rose's praise can inspire our prayer to join the Lord's choirs in the festivals of-Heaven. This is a prayer to attain our blessed destiny, through trust that honours the Divine Mercy, in trials and consolations, and that is guided by the great theme in the last Psalms --the law Divinely written in loyal hearts, in the language of Divine Love: praise of the Divine Glory, in lyrical adoration, is to continue in, final flights of the spirit, for entry into the choirs celebrating the festivals of Heaven.

In the Psalms we have an opening of the Heavens, for a brief vision of the ivory palace where the Queen, is greeted with music. This palace, we can understand, is the Father's House, which has many mansions all prepared for the Saviour's friends. Because of all that has been entrusted to the Queen we seek the intercession of her fairest love, her maiden companions, her sons, and the Heavenly hosts honouring her fidelity. For the Blessed, and for the Angels, she is the Mother of Mercy, given in Divine Mercy to loyal Angelic princes as well as to the redeemed. At the Crucifixion of Our Lord when she was given St John, as a son, representing the human race, all the Guardian Angels became involved in her, Merciful Maternity. This, we may well believe, was linked in some mysterious way with Angelic joy at the inspiration long given to Heavenly hosts by visions of the future Empress of the jewelled city. □

Photos were added and some editing was done to fit our Carmel Clarion.

Letting Go of Life's Wounds and Burdens is a Key to Happiness: But How Do We Do It?

By Elaine Dillhunt

A middle-aged man says, "I saw the guy who fired me 20 years after it happened and I wanted to punch him in the nose."

A 60-year-old widow says, "I never forgave my mother for being drunk all the time while we were growing up. I left home when I was 18 and never saw her again even though I heard that she had quit drinking."

Why Try to Heal Life's Hurts?

To continue carrying hurts is to choose to hurt. Just as we would seek help and healing immediately if we suffered a gunshot wound or a dog bite, we need to seek healing when we suffer equivalent wounds to our emotions. Not doing so can damage our spiritual, emotional and even physical well-being. Holding on to hurts is like carrying red-hot coals inside us that can be fanned into flames at the least expected moment.

Jesus tells us to let go of our grudges and do good to those who hate us. Psychologists today give us similar advice. They tell us that we have the power to lighten the burdens we carry, and forgiving is one way of doing that. Some medical scientists say that feeding the wounds of emotional hurts precipitates heart disease, cancer, digestive problems, high blood pressure and mental breakdown. Some doctors see a link between cancer and the tendency to hold resentment and nurse our hurts.

Studies show that the human mind and the immune system are closely linked. If you are holding on to memories of hurtful, perhaps evil experiences in your life, you could very well be hampering your body's ability to fight infection and disease (causing disease in the body's normal functioning).

Our spiritual lives are affected too when we allow past hurts to be part of who we are. Because people have hurt us, we keep our distance from those who could love us --and from those who need our love. When hurts are not healed, we find it difficult to see Christ in those around us and to be Christ for those around us. Relationships are overshadowed with memories of past hurts and, in blocking relationships with

others, we block Christ who wants to relate to us through others. Each of the Church's sacraments begins with a brief rite of reconciliation; unless we are reconciled (healed), the sacrament cannot be fully effective.



Seven Healing Steps

Here are seven suggestions for the healing of those memories that keep you from living life fully today.

1) Admit that you hurt. Often it's hard to admit we're hurting. "I'm O.K.," we stoically tell ourselves. "She can't hurt me," we tell others, and "Big boys and girls don't cry."

Admitting you're hurting is one of the first steps toward healing. Running away from pain is the source of all emotional illness, says M. Scott Peck in *The Road Less Traveled*. To be emotionally healthy, we must embrace the pain of life's hurts.

"The more we are in touch with reality and cope with it, no matter how painful it may be," says Father Martin Padovani (in *Healing Wounded Emotions*), "the better mental and emotional well-being we enjoy..." Jesus says, "Pick up your cross and follow me." The hurts of our life are crosses to pick up, to face and to embrace. Denying our hurt feelings is the way to give them control over us and our behavior.

Part of taking a realistic look at our hurt is looking at the "payoff" we get from holding on to it. Does it allow us to maintain a false "poor me" stance? Is it a protective shield saying, "Don't touch; I'm fragile"? Is it a way of escaping the risks of ever loving again?

A friend once told me, "If I let go of the anger and bitterness that have filled me for so long, I'm afraid there will be nothing left but an empty shell. That anger is all I have to let me know I'm alive."

But the wisdom Jesus offers us is that, when we let go of hurts, there's something better that can fill the void --something that is life-giving and --sustaining. It's what sustained him when people he loved turned away, when those he trusted betrayed him, when he hung alone on the cross. It's God's healing, unconditional, overflowing love for each of us.

2) Know you are loved. The second step in healing a hurt is becoming aware of how much you are loved. Dennis and Matthew Linn, who have coauthored eight books on healing life's hurts, conduct healing retreats and workshops all over the country. Before one of their retreats in the Midwest recently, I talked with them about their personal experiences with healing and what they tell others as they travel around the country.

Dennis Linn is convinced that *we can face hurts only to the extent that we feel loved*. Oftentimes, he says, people have not allowed expressions of love to enter their awareness. "We have all been loved and cared for or we wouldn't be alive," he says. And we need to let these experiences soak in.

In my own personal experience, I have found that, if we have a day in which we get four or five affirmations and one cutting remark, most of us tend to remember (and feel hurt about) the cutting remark and forget the affirmations. Sometimes when I give workshops on human relations, I ask participants to recall and list some of the ways they've been loved, to experience again how it felt to be hugged by a grandson, or surprised by friends with a birthday party, or told, "I love you."

If we let the light of the realization that we are loved shine through the darkness of our hurts, we can begin to let go of the hurts. God values us "more than many sparrows," Scripture says, and carries us as an eagle carries its young. In love, God offers us Jesus in order to be united with us. As we let this awareness in, we allow new healing tissue to form around life's wounds. As we open our eyes to the many ways God's love is manifested in the life-giving beauty and events of our lives, and in the love that others have for us, we begin to risk living in a present awareness of love instead of with past hurts. I sometimes think the primary task of this life is to become convinced of God's great love for us. Perhaps that's the resurrection, the rebirth that awaits us.



3) Don't automatically blame yourself for the things you suffer. If Jesus taught us anything, he taught us that pain, suffering and death precede resurrection and freedom from pain. He was mocked, scourged, spit upon --through no fault of his own-- and we can expect the same.

Some of our healing is dependent upon knowing that usually it's not our fault when tragedy strikes or when others hurt us. If we have enough self-esteem, we won't take on blame, for example, if another person treats us cruelly. I've found in my teaching experience that people hurt others because they've been hurt --usually by someone other than their victim. Pseudo-healers are all too quick to ask what you did to "cause" or incite the hurt. Feeling guilty about another's behavior or even about a health problem is not a way to heal your hurts --nor is telling yourself that you "shouldn't" feel hurt or angry.

It's O.K. to be angry at misfortune or with someone who has hurt you. When slapped by the guard of the high priest, Jesus confronted him for the injustice: "Why do you strike me?" (John 18:23). The Linn brothers say that feeling anger at being emotionally hurt is as healthy a reaction as feeling pain from a physical hurt. Those who love themselves, they say, get angry when they're hurt emotionally, whereas people who don't love themselves assume the passive victim role, get depressed and even suicidal. So it's helpful when you're hurting to remember that Jesus before you was an innocent victim and yet was not everybody's doormat.

4) Share your story of hurt. Tell the story of your hurt in the warm presence of a trusted friend or a journeying companion as a way of healing the wounded emotion. In *The Wounded Healer*, Father Henri Nouwen describes the healing power of a person who knows what it's like to be hurt, a person who has been

wounded. If you can tell your story to a "wounded healer" and allow yourself to be comforted by that person, it's another step toward letting go of it.

We all know some people who sound like a "broken record" as they neurotically repeat and re-lick their wounds. They may need to control this habit. Here, however, we are talking to those who don't share their hurts at all. If you are one of these, know that it is not healthy to keep it all inside.



The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) fits beautifully into this picture. This sacrament is a source of healing grace for many Catholics and an opportunity to unload the pain of hurt. In telling our story to a priest, being repentant about our failure to forgive the one who offended us, and expressing a desire for reconciliation --even with those who may have died since they hurt us-- we find healing. God's loving forgiveness of us expressed in this sacrament enables us to forgive those who have hurt us, to understand the pain that may have motivated their treatment (or mistreatment) of us, and to release finally the hurt that has enslaved us. By taking our hurt to this sacrament, we open the way for God to do the healing.

There are other ways of promoting healing by walking with trusted companions in a supportive climate. For example, more and more people today are finding peace of mind through spiritual direction or psychological counseling. Many rely on help in the form of psychotherapy or by joining support groups as a way of getting in touch with and healing their life's hurts. In cases where our hurts have been suppressed for a long time, it may be helpful to seek out a qualified therapist to help us bring them to consciousness so that healing can begin.

5) Turn to Jesus for healing. For Christians, Jesus is the greatest healer we know and the most trustworthy friend we have. He is the healer of wounds *par excellence*. Throughout the Gospels we see him healing people over and over again. The physically, spiritually, emotionally wounded go to him for his healing touch, word, glance, prayer. "What do you want?" he asks. "If you want to, you can heal me."

And Jesus answers, "Of course, I want to." Of course, Jesus wants to heal us: We have only to ask. Since he came that we might "have life and have it to the full," we are assured that he desires our healing.

When I go to Jesus for healing, I've found it effective first to share with him how I feel: how I hurt, how I may even harbor feelings of revenge, how awful it is carrying the hurt alone. Jesus does not judge or scold; he listens with compassion and empathy. When you use this method, you allow Jesus to hurt with you, to be angry at the sin with you.

Next, you go back to the experience of the hurt with Jesus at your side. Relive the terror, the fright, the confusion, the pain, the panic in Jesus' presence. Ask him to be with you as you experience the angry words, the aching heart, the dull stare of the hurt again. Walk through the agony with Jesus.

Then begin to listen to what he has to say to you. Review Jesus' own response to abuse and suffering. Perhaps he'll speak to you through Scripture; perhaps in the quiet of your heart. If you're open to his word, knowing that he is the great healer, Jesus will tell you what you need to know or do to be healed.

Once when I was using this method of healing and was at this stage, Jesus said, "You know I love you." That felt good. Then Jesus said, "And I love her, too" (the person who had hurt me).

"If you love the likes of her," I cried, "I don't want your love." I thus became aware of how hard it is at times for me to forgive.

Sometimes Jesus needs to make us aware of our own sinfulness before he can heal us. This was an opportunity for me to remember how much God loves me even when I'm at my worst. In so doing, I came to forgive the person who had hurt me.

6) Be patient and persistent. Healing takes time. We need to have the persistence of the Canaanite woman whom Jesus first ignored and then refused to respond to after her plea to heal her daughter (Matthew 15:21-28). She wouldn't take no for an answer and through a mixture of wit and boldness convinced Jesus to heal the child. Or consider the patience of the blind man (Mark 8:22-26), whom Jesus asked after his initial attempt to heal him: "Do you see anything?" "I see people looking like trees and walking." Jesus' second laying on of hands restored his sight completely.

Or emulate the humility of Peter. Three times he answered Jesus' question, "Do you love me, Peter?" (John 21:15-17), until his endurance paid off.

Sometimes Jesus might want us to take a more active role --more responsibility-- for our own healing as in the story of the man born blind (John 9). "He wants me to go wash in the pool of Siloam? What kind of healer is this?" The man must have asked himself. But he did what Jesus said and was healed.

I find that sometimes by hanging in there and letting go of little hurts it becomes easier to let go of the big ones. Once I prayed and prayed to be free of a hurtful memory with seemingly no results. Then I experienced a lesser hurt for which I was planning retaliation. When the opportunity came, I chose instead to speak a kind word to the person who had hurt me. Soon after that I realized I had been healed of the hurt I'd been carrying for years.

Proverbs (25:22) tells us we can heap red-hot coals on our enemies' heads by loving them. A student of mine once interpreted this as an invitation to vengeance. "By being nice to the people who have hurt me I'll make them squirm," he said. "I'll make them sorry they ever hurt me."

I think, rather, we "destroy" the enemy in the sense that we no longer have an enemy when we remove the self-diminishing red-hot coals of hatred and bitterness we've carried for so long. The rest of the passage from Proverbs says, "And the Lord will reward you." The Lord rewards loving behavior, not vengeance.

Because it's not always easy to let go of deep-seated feelings or grudges, it's good to recall that love is often a decision more than a feeling. We can make decisions

that transcend our feelings and trust that in time our feelings will fall in line.

"How can we love someone who has hurt us?" we ask. If we behave as if we love the person, says spiritual writer Father John Powell, some day we'll discover that we do love them. By behaving as if we love our enemy (even though all the while we may be remembering the hurt), someday we'll discover that we have been healed.



7) Discover the healing power of centering prayer. Another action that can heal hurts is of a very different nature a more passive yet intense kind of action. It is to practice the kind of prayer in which we let go of everything (words, thoughts, prayer techniques, images, everything) and simply go very quietly to the center of our being where God is. In this healing prayer we are simply aware of our oneness with God. It's called centering prayer.

Father Thomas Keating says there are some hurts that are so deep that only this kind of prayer can heal them. Keating uses the analogy of a surgeon putting us to sleep to fix what needs fixing. So God uses centering prayer (in which we are so unaware of anything except the nearness of God that it's similar to sleep) to heal some of our deepest --perhaps even unconscious hurts.

As we put aside all hurts, concerns hopes, fears, joys, plans, thoughts and feelings, we are in intimate union with God and God's healing presence at the core of our being. If we take the time (perhaps 20 minutes once or twice a day) to be with God in this kind of centering" prayer, we will find that our life is happier, our burdens are lighter, our hurts are healed.



How Do You Know When You're Healed?

Most spiritual writers say that when you are grateful for the experience that hurt you, you know that you're healed. Not that you would ever be grateful for the untimely death of a child or for having suffered physical abuse, but, rather, you are grateful for the growth, the greater capacity to love and understand and to feel with others.

When you can think of the hurt with feelings of gratitude, peace and even joy rather than with feelings of anger and pain, you know you are healed. "When we can forgive our offender as completely and unconditionally as God forgives us, then we no longer experience the past hurts as painful times but as times of growth," say the Linn brothers in their best-selling book *Healing Life's Hurts*.

God brings good out of evil: We know that from the life of Jesus. God is waiting and wanting to bring good out of the hurt you've experienced.

Forgetting is not one of the signs of being healed. You may be healed of the hurt, but still remember it. Whoever said that "to forgive is to forget" was oversimplifying.

We need to remember. To remember our pain and healing is to remember that God brings good out of evil. Remembering helps us know we really are capable of loving our enemies. Remembering puts us in contact, again, with the healing Jesus. We want to exchange these Spirit-filled memories for the destructive memories that kept the hurting wound open. Embracing these new memories is like embracing the **Risen Jesus** who tells us that after the pain there's new life.

□

This article had appeared in St. Anthony Messenger in 1990. The photos and minor changes by the editor.

PERE JACQUES: RESPLENDENT IN VICTORY, by Francis J. Murphy, ICS Publications, 2131 Lincoln Road NE, Wash DC 20002-1151. 224 pages, paperback, \$10.95.

Lucien-Louis Bunel (1900-1945), better known as Pere Jacques, was a Carmelite priest, an educator of youth, a man of deep prayer, and an angel of mercy in the death camps of World War II. He died as a result of his efforts to harbor Jewish youths from the Nazi holocaust. He has been honored as a rescuer, one of the "Righteous Among the Nations," by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the State of Israel, and proposed for canonization within the Catholic Church. This book tells his dramatic story and included major excerpts from his writings.



Père Jacques: Resplendent in Victory

SECRETARIAT OF STATE

From the Vatican,

N. 446.345

January 21, 1999

Dear Father Griffin,

The Holy Father has asked me to acknowledge the kind gift of your book, *Saint Joseph in the Third Millennium*. He very much appreciates your efforts to spread devotion to Saint Joseph as the head of the Holy Family and the Patron of the Universal Church.

His Holiness will remember your intentions in his prayers. To you and your associates he cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State _____



CARMELITE PROPER OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS, of The Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, and of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. Rome, Institutum Carmelitanum, 1993. Hard cover, pp 492, \$25.00 postpaid. Use Clarion Address. _____

EDITH STEIN:

Her Life in Photos and Documents, by Sister M. Amata Neyer, OCD.

Translated by

Waltraud Stein, PhD

This book contains over 100 photos and documents from her early childhood until her death at Auschwitz.

ICS Publications, 2131 Lincoln Road NE, Washington DC 20002-1151, 1999, paper, \$19.95. _____



SAINT RAPHAEL KALINOWSKI: An Introduction to His Life and Spirituality, by Szcze-pan Praskiewicz, OCD,

translated by Thomas Coonan, Michael Griffin OCD, and Lawrence Sullivan OCD
ICS, paper, 80 pages, \$8.95.

Too little known outside his native Poland. Joseph



Kalinowski (Raphael of St Joseph OCD) was born in 1835 and became by turns an engineer, a military officer, a leader in the Polish rebellion against Russian domination, an exile in Siberia and a Discalced Carmelite priest before his death in 1907. He is remembered as a man of boundless charity in the Siberian prison camps, a skilled confessor and spiritual director, and a tireless promoter of Marian devotion and of unity between the Eastern and Western Churches. In 1991, he became the first Discalced Carmelite friar canonized since St John of the Cross. This booklet includes a biography, a synthesis of his spiritual message and, for the first time in English, selections from his writings. _____

NEVER FORGET: Christian and Jewish Perspectives on Edith Stein, Edited by Waltraud Herbstrith OCD,

translated by Susanne Batzdorff,
ICS Publications,
1999, paper,
320 pages, \$11.95.

Edith Stein (1891-1942) an eminent philosopher and advocate for women who went on to become a Discalced Carmelite nun, died like so many millions of others of Jewish ancestry in the Auschwitz concentration camp, a victim of genocide. Today she is increasingly recognized as one of the towering figures of our times.

The Catholic Church's decision to beatify and canonize Edith Stein as a martyr has inspired many. Yet it ; has also raised important concerns, especially within the Jewish community, about the significance of this action, and of Edith Stein's life and death, for Jewish-Christian relations.

The essays in this volume, translated by Edith Stein's niece, Suzanne Batzdorff, explore the broad spectrum of Jewish and Christian opinions on the controversy. Also included are the reactions of Edith Stein's own surviving family members, along with warm remembrances by former students, friends, and acquaintances.

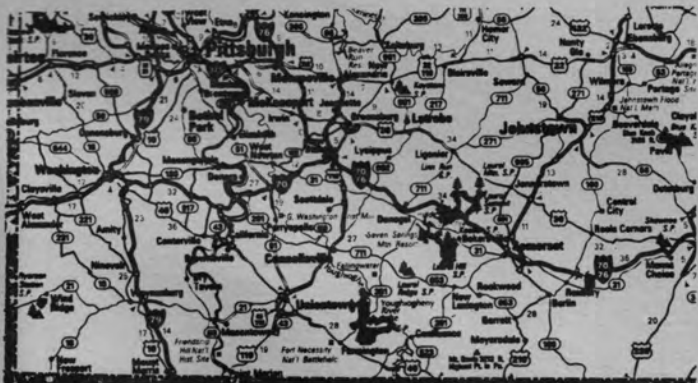




Hubertus, Wisconsin -- Father Jude Peters, OCD, was recently elected Provincial of the Washington Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Father Jude has been Prior of Holy Hill, Discalced Carmelite Monastery, and National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians since 1993.

He was born on July 30, 1957, the son of Mrs Jeanne Peters and the now late Doctor Robert Peters, in Uniontown PA. He attended St Mary Parish, where he was taught by Sister Mary Modesta, a sister of our Frs Giles Dzuban and the late Fr Stephen Dzuban. This was also the home parish of our late Fr John Prah. He has two brothers and three sisters, several in-laws and a whole host of nieces and nephews.

Jude also attended the Uniontown Area Senior High School. Upon graduating from St Francis College in Loretto, with a degree in religious studies, Jude was employed as a teacher of religion at Geibel High School, in Connellsville, and Bishop McCort High School, in Johnstown.



As a student at St Francis in Loretto Jude read the life of St Therese, and when he wandered across the highway into the Carmelite nuns' chapel in Loretto, he "felt at home." He completed his theological studies at the Catholic University of America, Washington DC. He was professed on May 1, 1983 and ordained on April 1989.

Father Jude was assigned to Holy Hill and became Shrine Director. Later he served as president of the newly founded National Association of Shrines and Pilgrimage Apostolate. He also has served as a retreat director, confessor to our cloistered Carmelite Nuns, and also spiritual assistant for the Secular Order of the Discalced Carmelites.

The Very Reverend Father Jude Peters OCD will begin his new duties as Provincial in June. One of his tasks is to appoint his delegates for the Secular Order.



Holy Hill
Shrine of Mary

**From Fr. Aloysius Deeney OCD, General Delegate
Dear Secular Order Members, 14 January, 1999**

It has been a long time since the last letter on this homepage. Many things are happening and have happened since that first letter. The biggest news is that we have, as part of the staff, a Secular Order member who is here full time. She is Irma Franco Estrada. She is from Mexico and for many years served on the National Council of the Secular Order. Among the areas of her expertise is the area of formation.

The Secular Order in the Mexican Province is very well organized with regards to its formation program. This is due in large part to Irma's contributions to that area. I am also in the process of obtaining a second person to form part of the staff. These developments are the direct result of the recommendations of the Congress of the Secular Order held in Rome in October of 1996.

We have written a letter to the Provincials asking that after the Provincial chapters are held this spring each Provincial send to the Secretariat the name and address of the new (or renewed) Provincial Delegates for the Secular Order. Once we receive these we then hope to obtain the mailing addresses of the various National or Provincial Councils of the Secular Order. When we have this information we will then make it available here on the Order's homepage. One of the reasons for this is that I frequently get E-mail messages from various parts of the world asking for a contact with the Secular Order.

In the fall of the year 2000 we will have another (World) Congress of the Secular Order. The exact dates have yet to be determined, but it will be in the beginning of September and will be held in Avila, Spain. One of the most important items on the agenda will be a study of the *Rule of Life* with a view to revisions that need to be made. This also was one of the requests of the Rome Congress, voiced by many of the delegates. As soon as we have the names of the Provincial Delegates and the addresses of the National or Provincial Councils, we will be able to organize and communicate the necessary information about the Avila Congress.

If any of you who read this on the homepage have information about the National or Provincial Councils, especially addresses of Central Offices, it would be most helpful if you communicated that to us by E-mail. Our E-mail address is Ocdsec@pcn.net.

Since taking on the responsibility for this Secretariat I have had the opportunity to visit a few different regions of the Secular Order's presence in the world. I have been to Mexico, Scotland, (where the first National Congress of the Scottish region was celebrated), Warsaw, the regional Congress in California, one day at the Italian national Congress, and Australia. Although my trip to Australia proved to be quite different from what I had planned it to be.

The topics that seem to come up in all the places that I have visited were as follows. The subject of the *Rule of Life*, plus the areas of discernment of vocations to the Secular Order and realistic programs of formation that take into account in a real way the fundamental lay vocation of the members of the Secular Order. It is in these areas that we all need to focus our attention. In some places of the world the Secular Order is flourishing with new members, a great spirit of study of our Saints, and a strong desire to participate in the life of the Order and the local Church. In other parts of the world, the Secular Order seems to have lost direction. It is certainly our hope in this Secretariat that, with a clearer understanding of the Seculars' identity expressed in the *Rule of Life* and realistic programs of formation, the Secular Order will be a real source for the whole Church of the richness that our Carmelite spirituality has to offer.

Father Aloysius Deeney, OCD, General Delegate

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