

*The Interior Castle* is the image most developed by St. Teresa. It forms the basis of all her teachings. She uses it to illustrate the entire spiritual process, serving as a means of explaining the structure of human persons (body, soul, and spirit), and their relationship with God, Who is both transcendent and immanent. It serves as well to comment on the biblical text of the indwelling of God in the soul: “The Kingdom of God is within you.” (Lk. 17:21) “And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.” (Jn. 14:21) “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and We will come to him and make our dwelling with him.” (Jn.14:23)

Teresa uses the castle and its many rooms to describe the dwelling places. “At the center of the castle is God’s dwelling place. The gate of entry is prayer.” (General Introduction, pg. xxvi)

The single most important teaching of Teresa is the “Humanity of Christ” as first described in Chapter 22 of her *Life* and repeated years later in *The Interior Castle* (Ch. 7 of the Sixth Dwelling Place). “After reading both texts one can only conclude that Teresa, ... has a decisive message about the radical centrality of the humanity of Christ for the entire Christian life ... When Teresa speaks of the humanity of Jesus, she is thinking of the Jesus of salvation history – the historical Jesus ... At the same time, the humanity of Christ is integrated into the mystery of his Person in which both divine and human are joined, constituting the mysterious framework of his being and history.” (Interpretive notes, pgs. 296-297)

Teresa’s castle is a real symbol. It represents human interiority, human struggle, and the call to transcendence. To remain in the castle ... Teresa is convinced that it requires struggle. (Interpretive Notes, pg. 49)

Excerpts from Sessions One and Three

(Quotes from *Interior Castle Study Edition*, ICS Publications, second edition, 2020)

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*Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites*

FORMATION II – YEAR B

# The Interior Castle

*The Seven Dwelling Places*

