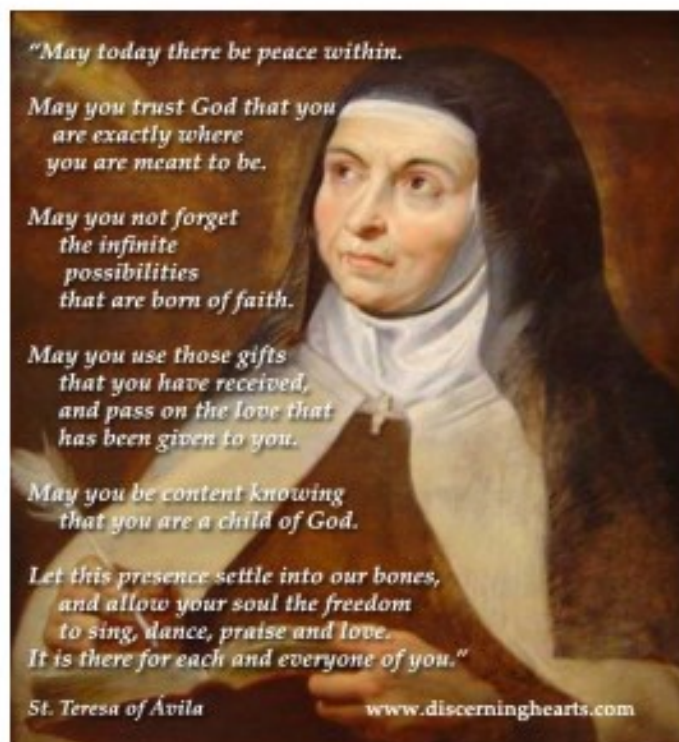


St. Teresa of Avila: Passionate woman, Carmelite mystic & reformer, First woman doctor of the Church

St. Teresa's Bookmark

Nada te turbe, Nada te espante.	Let nothing disturb you Let nothing frighten you
Todo se pasa, Dios no se muda,	All things are passing away. God alone never changes.
La paciencia Todo lo alcanza	Patience obtains all things.
Quien a Dios tiene Nada la falta Solo Dios basta	Whoever has God lacks nothing. God alone suffices

-
- The Realm of the Saints
 - How Teresa revolutionized spirituality
 - The journey toward union with God is also a journey in the healing of the deep Self



What does a 16th century Carmelite mystic have to say to 21st century women of faith?*

The evolution of Teresa's image of Christ and her visions of Jesus are the foundation for her movement from confusion of heart, inferiority, and fear of abandonment to movements of connectedness, mutuality and equality.

The relationship with Jesus in Teresa's life transformed her self-image and may transform ours as well.

John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila are focused on desire—the human desire for God and God's desire to exalt the human person and make her equal.



*"... the Lord urged Teresa deeper into the Inner Mystery in ways that defied her expectations. She felt Jesus beside her even though she did not see him with her eyes, or even, she thought, with her imagination. Yet she saw that it was he who was speaking to her—a human person who shared life with her (accompanied her and witnessed her life) in a deep mutuality of understanding, friendship and love. They were like two people who love each other very much and who even without signs, with only a glance, understand each other perfectly." p 37**

*These points are drawn from an article 'A Discipleship of Equals' by Carmelite Connie Fitzgerald, OCD. This article was recently re-published in a profound new book *Desire, Darkness and Hope: Theology in a Time of Impasse*, a book that contains Connie's most significant articles and sheds new contemplative light on the times in which we are living. I highly recommend it.

You may also enjoy *Saint Teresa of Avila, Passionate Mystic* by Mirabai Starr. Mirabai offers us contemporary translations of the mystical writing of St. Teresa

Below is an excerpt from Connie FitzGerald's article 'A Discipleship of Equals' from *Desire, Darkness and Hope*, a new book that contains her most significant essays and explores their impact on the times in which we are living.

In one of the last experiences Teresa describes in the book of her **Life**, we glimpse the extent to which **she passed over into the perspective of God** regarding both her own self-understanding and her whole vision of reality.

*My soul 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 ...
it seemed to me I saw him clearly in every part of my soul,
as though in a mirror.
And this mirror was completely engraved upon Jesus himself
by means of a loving communication.*

Connie FitzGerald writes:

There is no vision in all of Teresa's writings that thrills me like this imagery. Teresa looked into herself, a mirror, and she saw Christ. There was nothing but this completed imprint of Christ, etched within her, totally filling the mirror.

She looked at Christ and yet she saw herself engraved upon the Lord. Christ, the self-knowledge of humanity, gave her to her self.

We marvel at such mutual indwelling,
such mutual imprinting that speaks not only of radical self-donation
but just as strongly of self-possession.
Teresa's heart had found its dwelling place.
Yet, she herself was a dwelling place.
She was at home in her own house, herSelf!
Each is transfigured into the other.

The mirror is a striking symbol of mystical consciousness or through spiritual literature. It shows us Teresa, the woman Mystic, affectively connected in reciprocal mutuality with God and with the entire universe.

Teresa sees that all things are held in God—good and evil and all loves. And God is, after all, the embrace of human love, of friendship. ... p. 49-50