

Interior Castle: Reading Journey

1st Dwelling

Point of departure: beauty and dignity of human person.

Limitations of human condition, reality of sinfulness.

Importance of self-knowledge {see V 13:15}

“Fix one’s eyes on Jesus Christ” – our constant companion on this journey

Invitation to enter the castle – door of entry prayer: no preconditions to entry.

2nd Dwelling

Responding to the call of Christ – spiritual combat. Journey: enter into oneself
> fight for inner freedom [from sin, temptation, evil, etc.] > transcendence:
union with Christ and life of service.

Learning to live a “Christian” life – sustained commitment to the following of Jesus Christ.

3rd Dwelling

Limits to what can be achieved by human efforts. Love is put to the test.

Call to radical self-giving – “rich young man” – crisis – call to radical decision making.

Growth in virtues: Love, Justice, Truth, Humility, Fear of the Lord, Silence, Obedience, etc.

4th Dwelling

All is changing – beginning of adult love.

Dynamics of relationship changing {Tabor: in synoptic Gospels}

“not about thinking much but loving much and what most awakes love do it”

4M1:7 [also Foundation Chapter 5]

5th Dwelling

Chapter 1 No. 2 Carmelite Life?

God's grace is taking over – entering deeply into sacramental life of Church especially Eucharist.

Holy Week – Last Supper > Dying and rising with Christ – death to old self.

Abandoning one's own will into the hands of the Father [Jesus in garden].

6th Dwelling

Total transformation of the person. Living adult Christianity

All is gift that God gives to those he chooses. This whole book is a treatise on growth and healing – both are a work of God brought to fulfilment in this dwelling place.

7th Dwelling

Human and Christian maturity

1. Trinity: person enter into mystery of Trinity [cc14 29th May 1571 & cc 60]
2. Spiritual Marriage – point of arrival of whole process [cc 25 18th Nov. 1572]
Inseparable from Eucharist
No. 5 & 7 biblical references
3. Person who has died and risen with Christ – effects. Total transformation in Christ. Forgetfulness of self. Suffering: fruit of love, to be with Christ for the sake of Christ, not for the sake of suffering.
4. Purpose: works, mission of Church
Teresian prayer: human formation > social formation > spiritual formation
Love for others:
 - a. Friendship in community [controversial in Teresa' time]
 - b. Freedom: no friendship without freedom
 - c. Jesus is the measure of human love – only love that is like His is true love

Interior Castle: 6th Dwelling Place

That this "I" may now die and The Other live in me who is greater than I and for me better than me, that I may serve Him; that He may live and give me life; that He may reign and I be his slave, that my soul does not desire another freedom. How can it be freedom if one is distant from the Most High?

Life lived from age 43 – 57 [V 16 – 21, 23 – 40] but now seen and understood from the perspective of 7M.

Chapter 1: Enter into Night; trials, struggles, vulnerability, etc.

Chapter 2 – 6: Struggles within the spiritual life

Chapter 7 [key chapter] Humanity of Christ

Chapter 8 – 10: Fruits of Chapter 7 and preparation to enter Centre [7th dwelling place]

Chapter 11: Final purification, Dark Night.

1. Highest mysticism in the most precarious of human situations. The soul is wounded with love, feels a very strong pull towards silence and solitude so as not to disturb this love. Must face interior and exterior trials and sufferings in order to be prepared to enter 7th dwelling place.
2. God calls, even in the midst of deepest absence. The soul wounded with desires [the desires are the driving force of the whole 6th dwelling place].
3. Story of love. Jesus is the Word – words that Jesus puts in the heart to help us live. [V19:9 - first words spoken to Teresa by the Word]
God speaks in many ways: Scriptures, Liturgy, Christ, Prayer, Life experience, etc.
{mystical experience, mystical words, visions, etc. Principles:
 - a. According to Bible/Word of God
 - b. According to teaching of Church
 - c. Never forgotten, lasting impact on person's life
 - d. Change one's life, always positive/good effects
 - e. For the sake of the person or others or mission of Church

- f. Pure gift: person can do nothing to bring them about and they are not a sign of holiness or reward for good life.}
- 4. Experience of love, forgiveness, absolution, etc. Explains radical love – what it means to be loved radically.
- 5. Total giving of self because of love. Liberty of the children of God.
 - No. 3 Image of water – the floodgates of God are opened. Need for courage.
 - No. 10 Fruits: Knowledge of the grandeur of God/self-knowledge and humility/little esteem for earthly things.
- 6. Difficulty of allowing oneself to be loved. Inner battle: silence [wanting to die] or service [wanting to live and serve]. Vocation, pastoral commitment. Joy of communicating what one is living.
- 7. Humanity of Jesus. Held by the hand of the humanity of Jesus. Living the fullness of human life.
 - a. Jesus human and divine: V22:1, 6M7:7,9,14
 - b. Liturgy 6M7: 11-13, live the liturgy in one's personal prayer
 - c. Eucharist [essential to understanding Teresa] 6M7:14
 - d. Mary 6M:14
- 8. Conscious of the presence of God on this journey. Christian arrives at the fullness of life of Grace through the humanity of Christ. [see V27]
- 9. Life is mystery. Jesus known through experience and the effects of a real encounter with Christ.
- 10. God/Christ known through love – the truth sets us free. see No. 5 [also V40: 1 – 4]
- 11. Dark Night. Love cannot be known without knowing what is not love. Absence of God. Understanding the mystery of evil. Silence of God before the cross of his Son. Very difficult experience of final purification. Greatest of pain – most beneficial effects: contempt for the world, detachment from creatures, fear of offending the Lord,

“I believe all of us will answer YES: and very rightly so, for His Majesty give strength to the one He sees has need of it. He defends these souls in all things; when they are persecuted and criticized he answers for them as He did for the Magdalene – if not through words, through deeds...May He be blessed for ever, and may all creatures praise Him, Amen”

Seventh Dwelling Place: Chapter 3

In the opening paragraph Teresa sets the scene: “this little butterfly has already died, with supreme happiness for having found repose and because Christ lives in it. Let us see what life it lives, or how this life differs from the life it was living. For from the effects, we shall see if what was said is true.”

In this Chapter the focus is on the person who has changed and matured, who has been transformed in Christ and is living a “new life”. We will know this is true by the effects and so Teresa concentrates on the effects. Let us look at some of these effects.

1. **Forgetfulness of self** [no.2]. Now the ego, false self, self-interested self, has disappeared and the person now lives a life totally centred on “procuring the honour of God”. We are reminded of the words spoken by our Lord to Teresa on the occasion of the spiritual marriage [Nov. 18th 1572] “My honour is yours and yours Mine”.
Note the clarification in No. 3; “Don’t think by this that a person fails to remember to eat or sleep and to do all that he is obliged to in conformity with his state in life. We are speaking of interior matters”.
2. **Desire to suffer** [no.4]. Note how important the word “desire” is in this chapter! This paragraph needs careful reading – the characteristics of this desire to suffer are: deep peace, total self-giving to the will of God, not disturbed if things go differently to what is expected and total trust in God. “If He desires the soul to suffer, well and good; if not, it doesn’t kill itself as it used to”.
3. **Love of enemies** [no.5]. We are familiar with this command from the Gospels and we are also aware that it is impossible to fulfil the command by human effort alone. Here the fulfilment of this command is pure grace of God, it is total gift. When the person is persecuted they experience this “deep interior joy” and all the other effects she mentions.
4. **Desire to serve** [no.6]. She tells us that this is the effect that surprises her most: “For not only do they not desire to die but they desire to live very many years suffering the greatest trials if through these they can help that the Lord be praised, even though in something very small”.

5. **No fear of death** [no.7]. This is something Teresa suffered greatly from earlier in her life. [see Life 38:5].
6. **No desire for consolations or spiritual delight** [no.8]. The reason for this is that “since the Lord himself is present with these souls and it is His Majesty who now lives”.
7. **God’s particular care in communicating with us** [no.9]. She tells us that if knowledge of this effect was the only gain then all the trials would have been worth it. God is constantly communicating these “touches of love, so gentle and penetrating”.
8. **No experience of dryness or interior disturbance** [no 8 & 10]. This is total gift of God and coming from the depths of the soul, where God Himself dwells. “So in this temple of God, in this His dwelling place, He alone and the soul rejoice together in the deepest silence”. Neither human weakness nor the devil can deceive a person here.
9. **All raptures taken away** [no. 12] Another effect that “amazes” Teresa. This is important: raptures, visions and all extraordinary experiences are not signs of holiness, they are means that God might or might not use. Now we are seeing the real signs of holiness.
10. **Gratitude to God and knowledge of their own miseries** [no 14]. The attitude of the Publican – read Luke 18: 9 -14.
11. **The Cross is not lacking** [no. 15]. The presence of the cross does not make the person lose peace. It is the sure sign that the person is living the life of Christ.

Points for reflection and discussion:

The Nature of Christian holiness: The fullness of union and communion between God and the human being - The new way of living and acting of the Christian who has arrived at this state - The way that God communicates with and through this person.

A mature Christian understanding of: Detachment, suffering, inner freedom, peace, service, etc.

No 13: Pray and reflect upon this paragraph; the scriptural references and the imagery.