

Interior Castle. 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.