

## **LIFE Chapter 14 & 15 Second manner of drawing water [2]**

Two facts in particular preoccupy Teresa as she writes this account:

1. "This prayer is a little spark of the Lord's true love which He begins to enkindle in the soul."
2. "There are many, many souls who reach it but few that pass beyond."

The prayer that Teresa is speaking about here is a great gift of God which she is struggling to explain. However she sees clearly that what people who are experiencing this prayer most need is practical advice. They will not know what is happening but they are very aware that something very real and important is being experienced. They have no control over the experience and they do not know how to react. She is also aware of the tragedy of receiving wrong advice or acting without advice.

- A. "This spark is a great gift, much more so than I can express....I should very much like to advise these souls to be careful not to hide the talent since it seems God desires to choose them to bring profit to many others, especially in these times when staunch friends of God are necessary to sustain the weak." [Three things to note here: the experience must not be hidden, it is given to the individual to benefit many others and it is connected with the present times or some immediate need].
- B. "Those who are aware of this favour within themselves may consider that they are such friends if they know how to respond according to the laws that even a good friendship in the world demands". [This stage marks a growth in one's capacity to relate, both to God and to others, in a more mature and less self-centred way].
- C. "What the soul must do during these times of quiet amounts to no more than proceeding gently and noiselessly". [We must not try to understand or come up with an explanation to satisfy ourselves].
- D. "The will calmly and wisely must understand that one does not deal with God by force and that our efforts are like the careless use of large pieces

of wood which smother this little spark.” [The soul is learning to listen and receive in a new and deeper way and the main obstacle to this listening and receiving is the “self”].

- E. “The idea it should have here is a clear understanding that there isn’t any idea that will make God give us so great a favour but that this favour comes only from His goodness; and it should be aware that we are very near His Majesty and ask for His gifts and pray for the Church and for those who have asked for our prayers and for the souls in purgatory, not with the noise of words but with longing that He hear us.” [A more mature approach to the prayer of intercession].
- F. “The intellect is also stirred to compose prayers of thanksgiving; but the will, calmly, without daring to raise its eyes, like the publican, gives better thanks than the intellect can perhaps express with all its rhetorical artifices”. [Love and humility are a more real response than carefully thought out words: read Luke 18:9-14].
- G. “At this stage one does not have to renounce completely discursive mental prayer or the use of some words, or even vocal prayers if there should be the desire or ability”. [Pray as one can or as one feels drawn to, without force and open to the Spirit].
- H. “It is an important matter for beginners in prayer to start off by becoming detached from every kind of satisfaction and to enter the path solely with the determination to help Christ carry the cross like good cavaliers, who desire to serve their king at no salary since their salary is certain”. [For Teresa this is the real beginning of prayer; the beginning of true discipleship of Jesus Christ].

The person at this stage is beginning to learn what mature, adult love is: “for here in these souls love has now increased, and it is love that is at work” [L15:12]. “It (the soul) is aware of the beginning of a love of God that has much less self-interest” [L15:14]. The most fundamental advice of all is summed up in these words from the Interior Castle: “The important thing is not to think much but to love much; and do that which best stirs you to love” [4M1:7].

Finally the person must learn to trust God more deeply and never cease to pray to God for His help: “He (God) bestows a strong desire to advance in prayer and not to abandon it no matter what trials may come upon one” [L15:14]. “This prayer of quiet is the beginning of all blessings” [L15:15].