

Lives
of
Saints

St Teresa of Avila

1515 - 1582

Feastday: 15th October



"Let nothing
disturb you.
Let nothing
frighten you.

All things pass away:
God never changes.

Patience obtains
all things;
Whoever has God
lacks nothing;
God alone suffices."

St Teresa of Avila

S . D . C .
S O C I E T A S
D O C T R I N Æ
C H R I S T I A N Æ

www.sdcmek

I was born in exciting times! New voyages told about new lands, but the Church was experiencing divisions.

My family had a strict father and a jovial, life-loving mother. I felt like we were in a tug-of-war and thought of myself as a naughty sinner. As a child I had a passion for adventure. With my brother Rodrigo I once escaped from home to go to the land of the Moors, the notorious unbelievers of the time, in order to become martyrs for the love of God. Our uncle spotted us out of our city of Avila and took us back home.

My teenage life was average with my mischievous mind full of boys and pretty clothes. Even my father gave up on me! When I was sixteen he placed me in a convent to discipline my rebellious nature. When later I came to choose, I didn't want marriage and preferred convent life.

At the new Carmelite convent, instead of romantic novels, I read more spiritual books. For 18 years I prayed hard and took great care to love Jesus and keep him present within me. But I came to realise that several nuns were in the convent not as a result of a vocation, but for an easy, comfortable life. I was told that I was very charming and should enjoy the world. This flattery was really keeping me away from God – even in the convent!

God himself was trying to lift me up. I fell ill, and at one point I was almost dying. When I recovered I didn't devote myself to prayer. Though over 40 now, I was still nervous at prayer and distracted with my 'wild' intellect and by frequent visits by friends. Later I was to reflect and write at length about these experiences.

Over three years and through various trials, God helped me to overcome these faults, and I became determined to found a new reformed convent of simple poor life and prayer. I named it after St Joseph. I had to travel a lot and it took great courage because many opposed me fiercely and I suffered great hardships and misunderstandings. But God consoled me, and many sisters joined me. Later on also friars, like the saintly John of the Cross joined our new order. You could read a lot more about this in my autobiography which my confessor asked me to write.

My books and my reflections about prayer life became very well known not only in Spain but in many other countries. In 1582 God called me to himself on October 4th.

I am called the founder of the Discalced Carmelites. The Church declared me a saint in 1622, and in 1970 a Doctor of the Church.