

St. Therese Catholic Church

St. Teresa of Avila
Fr. Leonard Andrie

April 23, 2020

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Age of Exploration

- Begins 15th century until 17th century – extensive overseas exploration
- **1492 – 1502:** Christopher Columbus opens up the Western Hemisphere to European colonization.
- Deep hunger to discover what is new

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Breaking up of Christendom

- Martin Luther nails 95 thesis to the Church door in Wittenberg (1517) denouncing indulgences and the authority of the pope
- Luther utilizes the printing press to disseminate his extensive writings - by 1523, almost a million copies of his writings are printed.
- Most of Northern Germany becomes Lutheran

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Catholicism in Spain

- Isabel of Spain marries Fernando of Aragon in 1469. Marriage forms the kingdom of Spain.
- Spain had been fighting a war with Islam for 770 years. King and Queen embark on removing Jews and Muslims from Spain.
- **Inquisition:** King and queen initiate inquisition for social and spiritual unity. They gave a grace period to convert or be arrested and confiscate property.

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Age of Exploration and Upheaval

- **Exploration:** Hunger for what is new
 - Teresa will give a newfound love of God (always new)
- **Protestant Reformation:** Outer turmoil with debates and religious wars; great lack of unity
 - Teresa will provide inner peace in a world of turmoil
- **Spanish Inquisition:** Desire for unity (forced conversions) and peace.
 - Teresa will provide unity from a generous life

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- Mystics (Spain)
 - St. Teresa of Avila
 - St. John of the Cross
- Missionaries
 - St. Charles Borromeo (Milan)
 - St. Philip Neri (Rome)
 - St. Francis de Sales (Geneva)
 - St. Peter Canisius (Germany)
 - St. Francis Xavier (India)



<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Teresa-of-Avila>

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- Teresa was born on March 28, 1515 of wealthy parents.
- She was born in part of the town where there was comfort and ease.
- She was extremely attractive and intelligent as a child. People knew she would be a leader.



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- As a child, Teresa was obsessed with the martyrs and saints.
- When she was seven, she convinced her older brother that they should "go off to the land of the Moors and beg them, out of love of God, to cut their heads off there."



- They got to the road leaving the city when their uncle found them and brought them back.

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- **Father:** Rigidly honest, pious, and could be strict
- **Mother:** Loved romance novels (hid books from her husband)
- Teresa was in caught in the middle as father told her never to lie, while her and mother told her not to tell her father



- This is a picture of the Holy Family where Jesus is playing with a dog.

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- Teresa lost her mother when she was fourteen. She turned to the Virgin Mary as a spiritual mother.
- As a teenager, she was attractive and captivating. Her primary concerns were boys, clothes, flirting, and rebelling (unlike teenagers today).
- At age 16, her father was concerned that she remain holy so sent her to the convent.

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- At first, Teresa hated the convent, but eventually grew to like it because she loved God and the convent was actually less strict than her father.
- She becomes ill for the first of many times. She went to her uncle's home (Don Pedro) who introduced her to spiritual writing.
- She returns home to help her father with her siblings, but was thinking of a life dedicated to God. She snuck away to the convent.

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- In 1535, Teresa becomes a nun of the Carmelite Monastery of the Incarnation. In her mind, the convent was safe as she was prone to sin.
- There were 300 women living a cloistered life there at the time. It is a huge religious community.
- While there was a general love for God, many became nuns for less than ideal reasons.

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Carmelite Monastery of the Incarnation



https://www.spain.info/en/que-quieres/rutas/rutas-culturales/rutas_por_la_ciudad_de_avila.html

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Order of Carmelites

- Order of Carmelites has its origins in Mount Carmel. It's a beautiful mountain!
 - Elijah defended the truth about God against the priests of Baal (1 Kgs 18:19-40).
 - Elijah prays and see little cloud that brings rain after a long drought (1 Kgs 18:41-46).

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- **12th century:** Penitents from Europe come to live on Mount Carmel as hermits after the example of Elijah.
- They built a chapel dedicated to Mary and become known as the "Brothers of Saint Mary of Mount Carmel."
- **Elijah:** Passion for the living and true God
- **Mary:** Make Word intimately their own

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- **Patriarch of Jerusalem:** Gives them a rule of life between 1206-1214.
- **Leave Holy Land:** Abandon their place of origin from Saracens conquering the Holy Land (1235).
- **Pope Innocent IV:** Approves as a religious order in 1247.

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- **Women:** Attach themselves to the monasteries of the friars and in 1452 become cloistered nuns.
- **15th – 16th centuries:** Relaxation of disciplines of various communities, including abuses and mitigations that crept in.

A Brief History of the Carmelites
<https://ocarm.org/en/content/ocarm/brief-history-carmelites>



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- **Charism:** Gift from God
 - **Charism:** A particular gift from God to the Church for the world.
 - God gives an individual or group to inspire the founding of a new religious family within the Church
 - Particular way in which members are called to follow Christ. The gift has handed down through the centuries and enriches all called to live it.

–<https://ocarm.org/en/content/ocarm/charism>

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- **Carmelite Charisms:** Total Dedication to Christ
 - **Contemplation:** This is the heart of the Carmelites. Their quality of prayer determine the quality of their communal life and service. They are inspired by virtues of Mary and prophet Elijah.
 - **Fraternity:** Love and accept each person
 - **Service:** Apostolic service in parishes, schools, universities, retreat centers, hospitals, etc.

~<https://ocarm.org/en/content/ocarm/charism>

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Carmelite Sisters of Los Angeles



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/408349891189499014/>

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Discalced Carmelites
of Our Lady of Divine
Providence

Lake Elmo, MN



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- 16th centuries various reasons to cloister:
 - Did not have a dowry for marriage, but enough for the convent
 - Life was safe and secure in the convent
 - Thought of a large Spanish family was terrifying as many women died in childbirth
 - Some women placed there as orphans
- ~Dr. Christopher Blum, *True Reformers*

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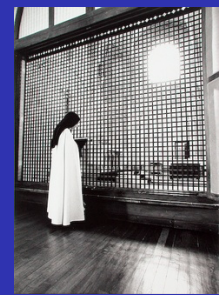
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- The Incarnation convent was in need of reform.
 - Nuns wore fine jewelry
 - Could keep their own possessions
 - Could leave convent fairly freely
 - Parlor hosted a steady stream of visitors, including young men who could slip them poems and love notes

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- This environment was not conducive for Teresa's growth in holiness as she was an attractive and charming young sister.
- Teresa taught mental prayer to visitors to help the convent economically. However, she got involved in flattery, vanity, and gossip.
- **Note:** The evil one uses *good things* (teaching mental prayer) to prevent Teresa from growing in her love for God.



<https://carmelofourladydovecote.wordpress.com/2013/07/13/old-photos-of-carmelite-nuns/>

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- At this time, Teresa stops praying.
 - **Key:** To stop praying is like ending rain needed crops, plants, and flowers. It leads to spiritual death! Remember Elijah and the three year drought!
- Our Lord will come to rebuke her from a life of flirtation and a life without prayer. God wanted her for Himself.

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- Our Lord begins to flood her with graces. She is struck by a work of Christ cruelly tormented. It moves her from fear to love.
- At age 41, a priest convinces her to go back to prayer. She feels herself drawn to prayer, but finds it very difficult. She struggled with prayer for 18 years.



Peter Paul Rubens (Public Domain)

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St. Teresa on Prayer

- "For mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.
- The important thing is not to think much but to love much and so do that which best stirs you to love. Love is not great delight but desire to please God in everything."

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- Unfortunately, during this time of deeper conversion, many were not in step with her.
- **Confessors:** Teresa did not seem virtuous and was questioned why God would give such graces to her.
- **Sisters:** Believed Teresa was skipping parlor to be noticed.

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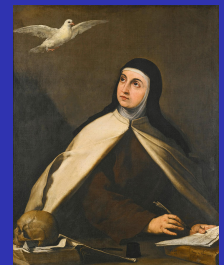
- **Franciscan Priest:** Sympathized with Teresa and sensed God was calling her to reform the 300 sisters. "If God is calling you to do it, then He will do it."
- She senses God calling her to found a new convent dedicated to St. Joseph (patron saint).
- Teresa was met with hostility and ridiculed. She was denounced from the pulpit and told to raise money for the convent she was in.

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- At this time, she composes the famous poem:

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing;
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things.
He who has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.


<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/saint-teresa-of-avila-juanpe-de-ribera.html>

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Goldy: Charming, energetic, loyal, faithful, a real saint maker

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First Step

- Teresa needs to take a first step *in faith* toward establishing a new convent.
- St. Thérèse needed to take the first step of asking her father, the priest, and pope to enter the convent at age 15.
- Mother Teresa had to take the first step of leaving her comfortable life of teaching with the Loretto Sisters to caring for the poor.

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Convent of St. Joseph

- **Miracle:** Convent of St. Joseph convent gets approved by town, superior, and bishop (1562).
- **12th Century Rule:** Rough habits, live only on alms, feet shod with peasant sandals (disclated – unshod) Carmelites, days dedicated to prayer, spent most of day in cell.
- **Five Years:** Heaven on earth; God was doing more work in her soul

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Convent of St. Joseph (Avila, Spain)



<https://masquemuallias.com/2015/06/06/la-fundacion-del-convento-de-san-jose-a5762-sanjose/>

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- Superior General of Carmelites visits convents and troubled by their worldliness.
- Comes to St. Joseph and pleased with what sees. Invites Teresa to take the spirit of St. Joseph and found other convents.
- **15 Years:** In 1567 (age 51), Teresa travels up and down Spain founding new convents.

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- She faced many obstacles as she traveled throughout Spain to reform convents:
 - Weather (hot sun, ice, snow)
 - Thieves
 - Dirty inns
 - Ridicule from brothers and sisters

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- Falls into a creek and says, "If this is how you treat your friends, I see why you have so few of them."
- She felt that if Christ had so few friends, He must be close to them.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Rock_Creek

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- Teresa reformed 17 convents of women.
- She reformed 11 convents of Carmelite men.
- She is called to reform the Monastery of the Incarnation.



<https://cloisteredlife.com/directory/covington>

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- Monastery fallen on hard times with financial difficulty.
- Divided between wealthy nuns with dowries and servant girls without any.
- Provincial of Spain knew something had to be done. He wasn't particularly fond of St. Teresa. Kill two birds with stone by making her prioress of the Incarnation Monastery.

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- Nuns rebelled and fell back on their constitutional rights, i.e., elect our own prioress.
- Provincial and Teresa go to the convent and the doors are locked. Open doors and met with jeers.
- Manages to sleep there that night and calls a chapter meeting the next day.

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- She does not go to prioress chair, but her choir stall from 10 years prior. She knelt down and prayed.
- Leaves the chapel, comes back and places a statue of Our Lady on the chair of the prioress.
- Wins over a small nucleus of sisters.

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- Obtains the help of St. John of the Cross who lived outside the walls in a little hut.
- Wins over the convent in a year. At end of three year term as prioress, voted to stay.
- **True Reform:** Prayer, humility, and generous service. She was very approachable.

~Dr. Christopher Blum, *True Reformers*

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St. Teresa's Cell as Prioress of Incarnation



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/pauliew/5083269210/in/photostream/>

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Approaches End of Life

- As St. Teresa approached the end of her life, she expressed happiness that her hour had arrived.
- "My Lord, it is time to move on. Well, then, may your will be done. O my Lord and my Spouse, the hour that I have longed for has come. It is time to meet one another."

~Catholic Online

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- St. Teresa died on October 4, 1582. When she passed, 500 men and women lived under the strict descaled rule. She was canonized in 1622. Her feast day is October 15.
- Her body was exhumed several times, each time smelling sweet and unspoiled.
- "Like Jesus, she was the mystery of paradoxes: Wise, yet practical, intelligent, yet much in tune with her experience, a mystic, yet an energetic reformer; a holy woman, womanly woman."

~Franciscan Media

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Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* (1647-1652)

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- Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria (Rome)
- St. Teresa has a vision of an angel with a great golden spear
- Angel has a sweet angelic look on his face and body is graceful. His clothing is light (heavens).
- **Baroque Art:** Appeals to our senses
- St. Teresa is consumed by her great love of God



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- St. Teresa left us a treasury of spiritual writings, including *The Way of Perfection* and *Interior Castle*.
- With the help of St. John of the Cross, she purified religious life in Spain in a period when Protestantism was gaining ground in Europe.
- Pope Paul VI proclaimed her a Doctor of the Church in 1970. She and St. Catherine of Siena were the first women to be honored.

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- St. Teresa's reform of religious life in Spain spread north to France.
- Three novices and two professed sisters leave the Carmel on Poitiers and arrive in Lisieux. They found a Carmelite monastery in 1838.
- Mother Geneviève of Saint-Therese ran the prior from 1842 to 1886. She is considered the "foundress" of the Carmel in Lisieux.

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Carmelite Monastery

- Fr. Sauvage, priest of Lisieux, requests Carmelites of Poitiers to found the Carmel of Lisieux in 1838.
- Chapel is completed in 1852.
- Pauline Martin enters in 1882.



<https://www.carmelislisieux.fr/carmelites-de-lisieux/histoire-du-carmel-de-lisieux/fondation-du-carmel-de-lisieux.html>

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- Mother Geneviève had a close relationship with the Martin sisters.
- Mother Geneviève passed away on December 5, 1891. She was 86.
- Thérèse mentions Mother Geneviève three times in *Story of a Soul*.

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A Day at Carmel

- **Prayer:** Six and half hours a day
 - Two in silent prayer
 - Four and half in Mass and choral service
- **Work:** Five and half hours of manual work (mostly alone)
- **Other:** Two hours of recreation and meals in the refectory

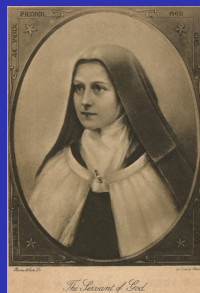


St. Therese - Laundry

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- Thérèse enters the Carmelite monastery in 1888. She was just 15.
- She takes the name Thérèse of the Infant Jesus in memory of Teresita de Jesús, the niece of Thérèse d'Avila, who had entered the cloister at the age of 9 years.
- Thérèse receives the veil in January 1889.



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- In 1893, Pauline (Mother Agnès of Jesus) was appointed prioress of the community.
 - She was the "little mother" chosen by Thérèse when their mother died. Pauline was by Thérèse's bedside recording her sister's thoughts in her final months.
- Mother Agnès was reelected as prioress in 1902, again in 1909, and entrusted as prioress for life in 1923. She died on July 29, 1951.

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Note written by Mother Agnès to her family on September 30:

Beloved Parents, my dear Leonie, Our Angel is in Heaven. She breathed her last at 7 o'clock, pressing the crucifix against her heart and said, "Oh! I love you!" She had just raised her eyes to heaven, what did she see...



Mother Agnès of Jesus

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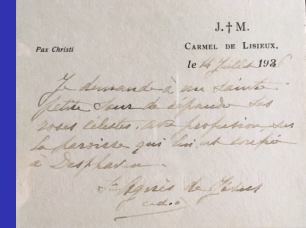
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Parish Office

Pax Christi July 14, 1946

I am asking from my saintly little sister to pour out her celestial roses with profusion, on the parish which is entrusted to her in Deephaven.

~Mother Agnès of Jesus



July 16, 1946

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St. Teresa of Avila



La Petite Thérèse

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St. Teresa	St. Thérèse
16 th century	19 th century
Avila, Spain	Lisieux, France
Lost mom at 14	Lost mom at 4
Strongly influenced by her father	Strongly influenced by her father
Fragile health	Fragile health
Almost died young	Almost died young

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St. Teresa	St. Thérèse
Struggled with prayer for 20 years	Struggle with emotions from age 4 to 13
Found consolation in the humanity of Jesus	Found consolation in the child Jesus
Had recourse to spiritual directors	Often had recourse to priests for spiritual help
Reformed the Carmelite Order (start with self)	Reformed Catholic Spirituality (self and "little way")
Suffered persecutions with reform	Suffered "pin pricks" from sisters in convent

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St. Therese Parish

St. Teresa	St. Thérèse
For mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.	Prayer is, for me, an outburst from the heart; it is a simple glance darted upwards to Heaven; it is a cry of gratitude and of love in the midst of trial as in the midst of joy!
For St. Teresa and St. Thérèse, prayer is about friendship with God (sharing), gratitude, and love.	

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• Both Saints teach us:

1. Love for our parents (respect)
2. Perseverance in prayer
3. Love for Jesus (in His sufferings)
4. Spiritual support (priest, friends, etc.)
5. Conversion (begins with me)
6. Suffering unites us with Jesus
7. Devotion to our Lady and St. Joseph

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St. Theresa of Avila

"Christ has no body now, but yours. No hands, no feet on earth, but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ looks with compassion into the world.

Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world."

~Attributed to St. Theresa



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/405675878921341893/>

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Closing Prayer

Let nothing disturb you,
 Let nothing frighten you,
 All things are passing:
 God never changes.
 Patience obtains all things.
 He who has God lacks nothing;
 God alone suffices.

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