

# St. Teresa of Jesus, First Woman Doctor of the Church

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Saint Teresa of Jesus, the first woman doctor (a title given for her writings) of the Catholic Church, is popularly known as St. Teresa of Avila (Spain). It is spiritual genius, like the following prayer, which should be posted in your room and read often in your daily crosses and walk with the Lord:

Let nothing perturb you.

Nothing frighten you.

All things pass.

God never changes.

Patience achieves everything.

Whoever has God lacks nothing.

God alone suffices.

St. Teresa lived in 16th century Spain from 1515-1582. Always sickly, in fact confined to bed once for three years, she reformed the Carmelite Order and founded 17 convents for women nuns

and monasteries for men, working with St. John of the Cross, who like our recently proclaimed saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, suffered the dark night of the soul, still serving God but without spiritual consolations.

St. Teresa of Avila wanted to be a martyr for Christ. She and her brother at young ages, set out, with some raisins, to be martyred by the Moors, whom we call Muslims today, while preaching Jesus Christ. They got only outside the walls of Avila and were seen by an uncle who took them home.

At age 16, she lost her close sister to marriage, and now without a chaperone, Teresa, who was becoming more attractive, was sent away to a convent to live.

Being good and worldly at the same time, she found these nuns not cloistered, allowed to receive guests in the parlor, to go home for a while, not at all dedicated to the wishes of the Lord, who taught Teresa through inner locutions what she would do, as the leader of the Carmelite reform movement.

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From the inner locutions of Jesus, she was left spiritually strong, and even when rebuked by the Lord, always at peace. Those from Satan left her uneasy, guilty, disturbed in spirit and no inner peace at all.

Thus, it became easier for her to determine when it was the devil, whom she did not fear, and laughed at his clumsy attempts at deceiving her.

The late great Mother Angelica of EWTN television fame saw Satan in her cell (room) but ignored him and went back to sleep. What fortitude!

Both women totally conquered the guiles of Satan, with the Lord's help.

A statue of St. Joseph went with St. Teresa whenever she traveled. Her devotion was constantly rewarded by St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus and guardian of our one, holy, apostolic, catholic (universal) church.

St. Teresa's written work "Interior Castle" is rich in mystical theology. She couldn't write what she believed, so she prayed to one to guide her pen - the Holy Spirit.

St. Teresa's heart was so filled with God that on one occasion, she had a vision of an angel pierce her heart with a lance, which then caused a burning suffering for life. When she died, her heart was removed and the spiritual scar from the lance was there for all to see.

Just as she had a great love for St. Joseph, Our Lady's spouse, she also from the age of 13, when her mother died, turned in her distress to an image of Our Lady and with many tears besought her to be a mother to her.

The first convent she founded as prioress was named after her great patron St. Joseph. Four nuns went with her to start the reform St. Teresa was led to do by God.

They prayed at least two hours a day, worked hard and trusted God's providence for their daily needs, like food. God always found a way, through others, to help them. They lived mainly on bread, cheese and fruit.

Before all else, St. Teresa knew that the true spirituality, which we should all realize, results in obedience to the will of God in humility, holiness and peace of soul.

One day, when she was thinking she should have done more terrific penances like one of the nuns, Jesus told her "No daughter. That's wrongheaded. You're following a good, safe path. Do you see all the penances she performs? I prize your obedience more."

Her obedience led to a great harvest of young women wanting to live as she had encouraged, in her great reform of the Carmelite order.

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Her largeness of heart is St. Teresa's most enduring quality. Her thoughts were on God and His church, but also on the needs of humanity. She was moved with compassion for all in need.

Crossing a swollen stream in a cart, with water coming into it, Teresa became very ill. At the Archbishop's urging, she set out for her home convent in Avila, but died on the way at another convent she founded.

Her death was September 20, 1582. To this day, her great prayer at the beginning of this article is recited by many. Hopefully, you will believe every word in your heart.

She once said, "Fix your eyes on the Crucified and nothing else will be of importance." This great mystic and religious woman, who was canonized a saint in 1622, was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI in 1970, the first woman in church history to receive this honor.

Here is a link to "[Food For Thought](#)," on [Noahsarkfound.org](#): Contains 32 articles, most by me, which can be easily downloaded and circulated by you to others. These articles get you to re-think—and often confirm—what you believe, answer many questions in your mind, and open your heart to increase your prayer life to God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—to lead you, and your family to the truth! A quick glance at the articles' titles will lead you into one, then hopefully another and another.

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