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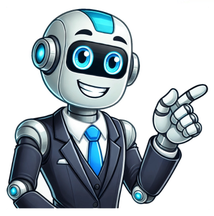

Livro da vida teresa de ávila

“O leitor tem em mãos, diante dos olhos e do coração, uma obra-prima que retrata o itinerário espiritual de uma mulher de 47 anos.” - Frei Betto Até a chegada dos manuscritos de Santa Teresa, a igreja católica vivia sob os preceitos do teocentrismo. O que fez esta mulher letrada (uma raríssima exceção para a época), autodidata e visionária foi tirar Deus do centro do universo para colocá-lo no cerne da alma; em outras palavras, trouxe à tona a figura do homem moderno, que vive em busca de si mesmo e está pronto para experiências místicas. Livro da vida é o clássico mais lido pelos espanhóis depois de Dom Quixote, de Cervantes. Em notável prefácio, escrito especialmente para esta edição, Frei Betto descreve Teresa da seguinte maneira: “Feminista avant la lettre, esta monja carmelita do século XVI, ao revolucionar a espiritualidade cristã, incomodou as autoridades eclesiásticas de seu tempo, a ponto de o núncio papal na Espanha, Dom Felipe Sega, denunciá-la, em 1578, como ‘mulher inquieta, errante, desobediente e contumaz’”. Esta edição traz também uma esclarecedora introdução de J. M. Cohen, especialista em literatura de língua espanhola e um dos mais notáveis homens de letras da Inglaterra no séc. XX. Completam o volume as notas e as indicações de leitura feitas pelo tradutor brasileiro Marcelo Musa Cavallari. A autobiografia de uma mulher que conta, entre outros feitos, a experiência de seu contato direto com Deus, numa prosa que mistura conversa de freira, romance de cavalaria e teologia mística. Apresentação de Frei Betto e introdução de J. M. Cohen. Até a chegada dos manuscritos de Santa Teresa, a igreja católica vivia sob os preceitos do teocentrismo. O que fez esta mulher letrada (uma raríssima exceção para a época), autodidata e visionária foi tirar Deus do centro do universo para colocá-lo no cerne da alma; em outras palavras, trouxe à tona a figura do homem moderno, que vive em busca de si mesmo e está pronto para experiências místicas. Livro da vida é o clássico mais lido pelos espanhóis depois de Dom Quixote, de Cervantes. Em notável prefácio, escrito especialmente para esta edição, Frei Betto descreve Teresa da seguinte maneira: "Feminista avant la lettre, esta monja carmelita do século XVI, ao revolucionar a espiritualidade cristã, incomodou as autoridades eclesiásticas de seu tempo, a ponto de o núncio papal na Espanha, Dom Felipe Sega, denunciá-la, em 1578, como 'mulher inquieta, errante, desobediente e contumaz'". Esta edição traz também uma esclarecedora introdução de J. M. 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SaintTeresa of ÁvilaOCDSaint Teresa of Ávila by Eduardo BalacaVirgin, Doctor of the ChurchBornTeresa Sánchez de Cepeda Dávila y Ahumada28 March 1515Ávila or Gotarrendura, Crown of CastileDied4 October 1582(1582-10-04) (aged 67)[a]Alba de Tormes, Crown of CastileVenerated inRoman Catholic ChurchAnglican Communion[web 1][1]Lutheranism[web 2]Beatified24 April 1614, Rome by Pope Paul VCanonized12 March 1622, Rome by Pope Gregory XVMajor shrineConvent of the Annunciation, Alba de Tormes, SpainFeast15 OctoberAttributesCarmelite religious habit, biretta, quill, dove (as an attribute of the Holy Spirit), heart with a christogramPatronageSpain, sick people, people in religious orders, chess, people ridiculed for their piety, lacemakers; Požega, Croatia; Talisay, Cebu, Malalag, Davao del Sur, Carles, Iloilo, PhilippinesControversyHer reforms met with determined opposition and interest from the Spanish Inquisition, but no charges were laid against her. Her order split as a result.Theology careerNotable workCamino de PerfecciónEl Castillo InteriorTheological workEraCatholic ReformationTradition or movementChristian mysticismMain interestsTheologyNotable ideasMental prayer, Prayer of Quiet Part of a series onChristian mysticism Theology and philosophy Apophatic Ascetical Cataphatic Catholic spirituality Hellenistic Mystical theology Neoplatonic Henosis Practices Monasticism Monasticism New Silence Asceticism Mendicant Spiritual direction Meditation Meditation Lectio Divina Invoking of Mystic Saints Active asceticism Contemplation Hesychasm Jesus Prayer Quietism Stages of Christian perfection Hesychia Divinization Catharsis Theosis Kenosis Spiritual dryness Religious ecstasy Passive asceticism Abstinence Esoteric Charismatic Esoteric People (by era or century) Antiquity Ancient African Origen Thomasines Gregory of Nyssa Pseudo-Dionysius Desert Fathers Paul of Thebes Anthony the Great Arsenius the Great Poemen Macarius of Egypt Moses the Black Syncletica Athanasius John Chrysostom Hilarion John Cassian 11th · 12th Bernard of Clairvaux Guigo II Hildegard of Bingen Symeon the New Theologian 13th · 14th Dominican Dominic de Guzmán Franciscan Francis of Assisi Anthony of Padua Bonaventure Jacopone da Todi Angela of Foligno English Richard Rolle Walter Hilton Julian of Norwich Margery Kempe Flemish Beatrice of Nazareth Lutgardis Hadewijch John van Ruysbroeck German Meister Eckhart Johannes Tauler Henry Suso Female Beatrice of Nazareth Bridget of Sweden Catherine of Siena Mechthild of Magdeburg Marguerite Porete 15th · 16th Spanish Ignatius of Loyola Francisco de Osuna John of Ávila Teresa of Ávila John of the Cross Others Catherine of Genoa 17th · 18th French Margaret Mary Alacoque Pierre de Bérulle Jean-Jacques Olier Louis de Montfort Charles de Condren John Eudes John of St. Samson Others Mary of Jesus of Ágreda Anne Catherine Emmerich Veronica Giuliani Francis de Sales 19th Dina Bélanger Catherine Labouré Mélanie Calvat Maximin Giraud Bernadette Soubirous Conchita de Armida Luisa Piccarreta Mary of the Divine Heart Thérèse of Lisieux Gemma Galgani 20th Padre Pio Therese Neumann Marthe Robin Alexandrina of Balazar Faustina Kowalska Sister Lúcia of Fátima Edgar Cayce Simone Weil Alfred Delp Thomas Merton Charles de Foucauld Edvige Carboni Elena Aiello Contemporary papal viewsAspects of meditation(Orationis Formas, 1989) Reflection on the New Age (2003) Literature and media Lingua ignota Ordo Virtutum Scivias Ascent of Mount Carmel Dark Night of the Soul Spiritual Canticle Way of Perfection Book of the First Monks The Interior Castle Abbey of the Holy Ghost A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation From Willow Creek to Sacred Heart The Glories of Mary The Imitation of Christ The Ladder of Divine Ascent Philokalia Revelations of Divine Love The Story of a Soul Theologia Germanica Devotio Moderna Fatima in Lucia's Own Words Calls from the Message of Fatima The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima Sol de Fátima The Cloud of Unknowing On the Consolation of Philosophy The Mirror of Simple Souls Sister Catherine Treatise Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii The Vision of Adamnán Divine Comedy Inferno Purgatorio Paradiso Fatima vte Teresa of Ávila[b] OCD (born Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda Dávila y Ahumada;[c] 28 March 1515 – 4 or 15 October 1582),[a] also called Saint Teresa of Jesus, was a Carmelite nun and prominent Spanish mystic and religious reformer. Active during the Counter-Reformation, Teresa became the central figure of a movement of spiritual and monastic renewal, reforming the Carmelite Orders of both women and men.[2] The movement was later joined by the younger Carmelite friar and mystic Saint John of the Cross, with whom she established the Discalced Carmelites. A formal papal decree adopting the split from the old order was issued in 1580.[web 3] Her autobiography, The Life of Teresa of Jesus, and her books The Interior Castle and The Way of Perfection are prominent works on Christian mysticism and Christian meditation practice. In her autobiography, written as a defense of her ecstatic mystical experiences, she discerns four stages in the ascent of the soul to God: mental prayer and meditation; the prayer of quiet; absorption-in-God; ecstatic consciousness. The Interior Castle, written as a spiritual guide for her Carmelite sisters, uses the illustration of seven mansions within the castle of the soul to describe the different states one's soul can be in during life. Forty years after her death, in 1622, Teresa was canonized by Pope Gregory XV. On 27 September 1970 Pope Paul VI proclaimed Teresa the first female Doctor of the Church in recognition of her centuries-long spiritual legacy to Catholicism.[3][web 4] Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda Dávila y Ahumada was born on 28 March 1515.[4] Her birthplace was either Ávila or Gotarrendura.[5] Her paternal grandfather, Juan Sánchez de Toledo, was a marrano or converso, a Jew forced to convert to Christianity or emigrate. When Teresa's father was a child, Juan was condemned by the Spanish Inquisition for allegedly returning to Judaism, but he was later able to assume a Catholic identity.[6] Her father, Alonso Sánchez de Cepeda, was a successful wool merchant and one of the wealthiest men in Ávila. He bought a knighthood and assimilated successfully into Christian society. Young Teresa of Ávila and brother run away from home to travel to Africa by Arnold van Westerhout Previously married to Catalina del Peso y Henao, with whom he had three children, in 1509, Sánchez de Cepeda married Teresa's mother, Beatriz de Ahumada y Cuevas, in Gotarrendura.[7] A brother, Lorenzo de Cepeda y Ahumada, was the father of Teresa de Ahumada.[8] Teresa's mother brought her up as a dedicated Christian. Fascinated by accounts of the lives of the saints, she ran away from home at age seven, with her brother Rodrigo, to seek martyrdom in the fight against the Moors. Her uncle brought them home, when he spotted them just outside the town walls.[9] When Teresa was fourteen years old, her mother died, leaving her grief-stricken. This prompted her to embrace a deeper devotion to the Virgin Mary as her spiritual mother. Teresa was also enamored of popular fiction, which at the time consisted primarily of medieval tales of knighthood and works about fashion, gardens and flowers.[10][web 5] Teresa was sent to the Augustinian nuns' school in Ávila.[11] After completing her education, she initially resisted the idea of a religious vocation, but after a stay with her uncle and other relatives, she relented. In 1534, aged 20,[12] much to the disappointment of her pious and austere father, she decided to enter the local easy-going Carmelite Convent of the Incarnation, significantly built on top of land that had been used previously as a burial ground for Jews. She took up religious reading on contemplative prayer, especially Osuna's Abecedario espiritual ("Third Spiritual Alphabet," 1527), a guide on examination of conscience and "spiritual self-concentration and inner contemplation, known in mystical nomenclature as oratio recollectionis".[13] She also dipped into other mystical ascetical works such as the Tractatus de oratione et meditatione of Peter of Alcantara.[13] Her zeal for mortification caused her to become ill again and she spent almost a year in bed, causing huge worry to her community and family. She nearly died but she recovered, attributing her recovery to the miraculous intercession of Saint Joseph. She began to experience bouts of religious ecstasy.[7] She reported that, during her illness, she had progressed from the lowest stage of "recollection", to the "devotions of silence" and even to the "devotions of ecstasy", in which was one of perceived in "perfect union with God" (see § Mysticism). She said she frequently experienced the rich "blessing of tears" during this final stage. As the Catholic distinction between mortal and venial sin became clear to her, she came to understand the awful horror of sin and the inherent nature of original sin. Around the same time, she received a copy of the full Spanish translation of Augustine of Hippo's autobiographical work Confessions, which helped her resolve and to tend to her own bouts of religious scruples. The text helped her realize that holiness was indeed possible and she found solace in the idea that such a great saint was once an inveterate sinner. In her autobiography, she wrote that she "was very fond of St. Augustine [...] for he was a sinner too".[14] Around 1556, friends suggested that her newfound knowledge could be of diabolical rather than divine origin. She had begun to inflict mortifications of the flesh upon herself. But her confessor, the Jesuit Francis Borgia, reassured her of the divine inspiration of her thoughts. On St. Peter's Day in 1559, Teresa became firmly convinced that Jesus Christ had presented himself to her in bodily form, though invisible. These visions lasted almost uninterruptedly for more than two years. In another vision, the famous transverberation, a seraph drove the fiery point of a golden lance repeatedly through her heart, causing her an ineffable spiritual and bodily pain: I saw in his hand a long spear of gold, and at the point there seemed to be a little fire. He appeared to me to be thrusting it at times into my heart, and to pierce my very entrails; when he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out also, and to leave me all on fire with a great love of God. The pain was so great, that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain, that I could not wish to be rid of it ...[d] The account of this vision was the inspiration for one of Bernini's most famous works, the Ecstasy of Saint Teresa at Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome. Although based in part on Teresa's description of her mystical transverberation in her autobiography, Bernini's depiction of the event is considered by some to be highly eroticized, especially when compared to the entire preceding artistic Teresian tradition.[e] The memory of this episode served as an inspiration throughout the rest of her life, and motivated her lifelong imitation of the life and suffering of Jesus, epitomized in the adage often associated with her: "Lord, either let me suffer or let me die."[15][page needed] Teresa, who became a celebrity in her town dispensing wisdom from behind the convent grille, was known for her raptures, which sometimes involved levitation. It was a source of embarrassment to her and she bade her sisters hold her down when this occurred. Subsequently, historians, neurologists and psychiatrists like Peter Fenwick and Javier Álvarez-Rodríguez, among others, have taken an interest in her symptomatology. The fact that she wrote down virtually everything that happened to her during her religious life means that an invaluable and exceedingly rare medical record from the 16th century has been preserved. Examination of this record has led to the speculative conclusion that she may have suffered from temporal lobe epilepsy.[16][17] Over time, Teresa found herself increasingly at odds with the spiritual malaise prevailing in her convent of the Incarnation. Among the 150 nuns living there, the observance of cloister, designed to protect and strengthen spiritual practice and prayer, became so lax that it appeared to lose its purpose. The daily invasion of visitors, many of high social and political rank, disturbed the atmosphere with frivolous concerns and vacuous conversation. Such intrusions in the solitude essential to develop and sustain contemplative prayer so grieved Teresa that she longed to intervene.[web 6] The incentive to take the practical steps inspired by her inward motivation was supported by the Franciscan priest, Peter of Alcantara, who met her early in 1560 and became her spiritual adviser. She resolved to found a "reformed" Carmelite convent, correcting the laxity which she had found at the Incarnation convent and elsewhere besides. Doña Guiomar of Ulloa, a friend, was granted permission for the project.[18] The abject poverty of the new convent, established in 1562 and named St. Joseph's (San José), at first caused a scandal among the citizens and authorities of Ávila, and the small house with its chapel was in peril of suppression. However, powerful patrons, including the local bishop, coupled with the impression of well ordered subsistence and purpose, turned animosity into approval.[18] In March 1563, after Teresa had moved to the new convent house, she received papal sanction for her primary principles of absolute poverty and renunciation of ownership of property, which she proceeded to formulate into a "constitution". Her plan was the revival of the earlier, stricter monastic rules, supplemented by new regulations including the three disciplines of ceremonial flagellation prescribed for the Divine Office every week, and the discalceation of the religious. For the first five years, Teresa remained in seclusion, mostly engaged in prayer and writing.[citation needed] Church window at the Convent of St Teresa In 1567, Teresa received a patent from the Carmelite General, Rubeo de Ravenna, to establish further houses of the new order. This process required many visitations and long journeys across nearly all the provinces of Spain. She left a record of the arduous project in her Libro de las Fundaciones. Between 1567 and 1571, reformed convents were established at Medina del Campo, Malagón, Valladolid, Toledo, Pastrana, Salamanca, and Alba de Tormes. As part of the original patent, Teresa was given permission to set up two houses for men who wished to adopt the reforms. She convinced two Carmelite friars, John of the Cross and Anthony of Jesus to help with this. They founded the first monastery of Discalced Carmelite brothers in November 1568 at Duruelo. Another friend of Teresa, Jerónimo Gracián, the Carmelite visitator of the older observance of Andalusia and apostolic commissioner, and later provincial of the Teresian order, gave her powerful support in founding monasteries at Segovia (1571), Beas de Segura (1574), Seville (1575), and Caravaca de la Cruz (Murcia, 1576). Meanwhile, John of the Cross promoted the inner life of the movement through his power as a teacher and preacher.[19] In 1576, unreformed members of the Carmelite order began to persecute Teresa, her supporters and her reforms. Following a number of resolutions adopted at the general chapter at Piacenza, the governing body of the order forbade all further founding of reformed convents. The general chapter instructed her to go into "voluntary" retirement at one of her institutions.[19] She obeyed and chose St. Joseph's at Toledo. Meanwhile, her friends and associates were subjected to further attacks.[19] Several years later, her appeals by letter to King Philip II of Spain secured relief. As a result, in 1579, the cases before the inquisition against her, Gracián and others, were dropped.[19] This allowed the reform to resume. An edict from Pope Gregory XIII allowed the appointment of a special provincial for the newer branch of the Carmelite religious, and a royal decree created a "protective" board of four assessors for the reform.[19] During the last three years of her life, Teresa founded convents at Villanueva de la Jara in northern Andalusia (1580), Palencia (1580), Soria (1581), Burgos, and Granada (1582). In total, seventeen convents, all but one founded by her, and as many men's monasteries, were owed to her reforms over twenty years.[20] Her final illness overtook her on one of her journeys from Burgos to Alba de Tormes. She died in 1582, just as Catholic Europe was making the switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, which required the excision of the dates of 5–14 October from the calendar. She died either before midnight of 4 October or early in the morning of 15 October, which is celebrated as her feast day. According to the liturgical calendar then in use, she died on the 15th. Her last words were: "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."[21]Avila, Saint Theresa's statue This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources in this section. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (October 2020) (Learn how and when to remove this message) She was buried at the Convento de la Anunciación in Alba de Tormes. Nine months after her death the coffin was opened and her body was found to be intact but the clothing had rotted. Before the body was re-interred one of her hands was cut off, wrapped in a scarf and sent to Ávila. Gracián cut the little finger off the hand and – according to his own account – kept it with him until he was captured by Barbary corsairs when sailing from Messina to Rome, from whom he had to redeem it with a few rings and 20 reales.[22] The body was exhumed again on 25 November 1585 to be moved to Ávila and found to be incorrupt. An arm was removed and left in Alba de Tormes at the nuns' request, to compensate for losing the main relic of Teresa, but the rest of the body was reburied in the Discalced Carmelite chapter house in Ávila. The removal was done without the approval of the Duke of Alba de Tormes and he brought the body back in 1586, with Pope Sixtus V ordering that it remain in Alba de Tormes on pain of excommunication. A grander tomb on the original site was raised in 1598 and the body was moved to a new chapel in 1616. The body still remains there, except for the following parts: Rome – right foot and part of the upper jaw Lisbon – hand Ronda, Spain – left eye and left hand (the latter was kept by Francisco Franco until his death, after Francoist troops captured it from Republican troops during the Spanish Civil War) Museum of the Church of the Annunciation, Alba de Tormes – left arm and heart Church of Our Lady of Loreto, Paris, France – one finger Sanlúcar de Barrameda – one finger The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa by Bernini, Basilica of Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome On August 28, 2024, it was made the canonical recognition of Teresa's body. The postulator general of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, Father Marco Chiesa, announced that those present at the scene were able to see that "it is in the same condition as when it was last opened in 1914."[23][24] When the body was publicly exposed in May 2025, memes on social media questioned the incorrupted state of the corpse.[25] Statue of Saint Teresa of Ávila in Mafra National Palace, Mafra In 1622, forty years after her death, she was canonized by Pope Gregory XV. The Cortes exalted her to patroness of Spain in 1627. The University of Salamanca had granted her the title Doctor ecclesiae (Latin for "Doctor of the Church") with a diploma in her lifetime,[dubious – discuss] but that title is distinct from the papal honour of Doctor of the Church, which is always conferred posthumously. The latter was finally bestowed upon her by Pope Paul VI on 27 September 1970,[3] along with Catherine of Siena,[26] making them the first women to be awarded the distinction. Teresa is revered as the Doctor of Prayer. The mysticism in her works exerted a formative influence upon many theologians of the following centuries, such as Francis of Sales, Fénelon, and the Port-Royalists. In 1670, her coffin was plated in silver. Teresa of Avila is honored in the Church of England and in the Episcopal Church on 15 October.[web 7][1] In 1626, at the request of Philip IV of Spain, the Castilian parliament[f] elected Teresa "without lacking one vote" as copatron saint of Castile.[27] This status was affirmed by Pope Urban VIII in a brief issued on 21 July 1627 in which he stated: For these reasons [the king's and Cortes's elections] and for the great devotion which they have for Teresa, they elected her for patron and advocate of these kingdoms in the last Cortes of the aforementioned kingdoms ... And because ... the representatives in the Cortes desired it so greatly that their vote be firm and perpetual, we grant it our patronage and the approval of the Holy Apostolic See.—Rowe 2011, pp. 77–78 More broadly, the 1620s, the entirety of Spain (Castile and beyond) debated who should be the country's patron saint; the choices were either the current patron, James Matamoros, or a pairing of him and the newly canonised Saint Teresa of Ávila. Teresa's promoters said Spain faced newer challenges, especially the threat of Protestantism and societal decline at home, thus needing a more contemporary patron who understood those issues and could guide the Spanish nation. Santiago's supporters (Santiaguistas) fought back and eventually won the argument, but Teresa of Ávila remained far more popular at the local level.[28][page needed] James the Great kept the title of patron saint for the Spanish people, and the most Blessed Virgin Mary under the title Immaculate Conception as the sole patroness for the entire Spanish Kingdom. "It is love alone that gives worth to all things." The Spanish nuns who established Carmel in France brought a devotion to the Infant Jesus with them, and it became widespread in France.[29][web 8] Though there are no written historical accounts establishing that Teresa of Ávila ever owned the famous Infant Jesus of Prague statue, according to tradition, such a statue is said to have been in her possession and Teresa is reputed to have given it to a noblewoman travelling to Prague.[30][web 9][web 10][web 11] The age of the statue dates to approximately the same time as Teresa. It has been thought that Teresa carried a portable statue of the Child Jesus wherever she went; the idea circulated by the early 1700s.[31][page needed] Teresa of Ávila, by Rubens. This is the portrait of Teresa that is probably the most true to her appearance. It is a copy of an original 1576 painting of her when she was 61. The autobiography La Vida de la Santa Madre Teresa de Jesús (The Life of the Holy Mother Teresa of Jesus) was written at Avila between 1562 and 1565, but published posthumously.[32] Editions include: The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus ... Written by herself. Translated from the Spanish by D. Lewis, 1870. London: Burns, Oates, & Co The Autobiography, written before 1567, under the direction of her confessor, Fr. Pedro Ibáñez, 1882 The Life of Saint Teresa of Avila by herself. J. M. Cohen, 1957. Penguin Classics Life of St. Teresa of Jesus. Translated by Benedict Zimmerman, 1997. Tan Books, ISBN 978-0-89555-603-5 The Life of Teresa of Jesus: The Autobiography of Teresa of Avila. Translated by E. Allison Peers, 1991. Doubleday, ISBN 978-0-385-01109-9 The Book of Her Life, translated, with notes, by Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD and Otilio Rodriguez, OCD, 2008. Introduction by Jodi Bilinkoff. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, ISBN 978-0-87220-907-7 The Book of My Life. Mirabai Starr, 2008. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications, ISBN 978-1-59030-573-7 The Way of Perfection (Spanish: Camino de Perfección) was published in 1566. Teresa called this a "living book" and in it set out to teach her nuns how to progress through prayer and Christian meditation. She discusses the rationale for being a Carmelite, and the rest deals with the purpose of and approaches to spiritual life. The title was inspired by the devotional book The Imitation of Christ (1418) which had become a favourite expression of Teresa much before she wrote this work, as it appeared at several places in her autobiography, The Life of Teresa of Jesus. Like her other books, The Way of Perfection was written on the advice of her counsellors to describe her experiences in prayer during the period when the Reformation was spreading through Europe. Herein she describes ways of attaining spiritual perfection through prayer and its four stages, as in meditation, quiet, repose of soul and finally perfect union with God, which she equates with rapture. Editions The Way of Perfection. Translated and Edited by E. Allison Peers, Doubleday, 1991. ISBN 978-0-385-06539-9 The Way of Perfection, TAN Books, 1997. ISBN 978-0-89555-602-8 Way of Perfection, London, 2012. limovia.net ISBN 978-1-78336-025-3 El Camino de Perfección (The Way of Perfection), written also before 1567, at the direction of her confessor. The Interior Castle, or The Mansions, (Spanish: El Castillo Interior or Las Moradas) was written in 1577, and published in 1588.[33][34] It contained the basis for what she felt should be the ideal journey of faith, comparing the contemplative soul to a castle with seven successive interior courts, or chambers, analogous to the seven mansions. The work was inspired by her vision of the soul as a diamond in the shape of a castle containing seven mansions, which she interpreted as the journey of faith through seven stages, ending with union with God.[35] Fray Diego, one of Teresa's former confessors wrote that God revealed to Teresa: ... a most beautiful crystal globe, made in the shape of a castle, and containing seven mansions, in the seventh and innermost of which was the King of Glory, in the greatest splendour, illumining and beautifying them all. The nearer one got to the centre, the stronger was the light; outside the palace limits everything was foul, dark and infested with toads, vipers and other venomous creatures."[36] Christia Mercer, Columbia University philosophy professor, claims that the seventeenth-century Frenchman René Descartes lifted some of his most influential ideas from Teresa of Ávila, who, fifty years before Descartes, wrote popular books about the role of philosophical reflection in intellectual growth.[37] She describes a number of striking similarities between Descartes's seminal work Meditations on First Philosophy and Teresa's Interior Castle.[web 12] The first English translation was published in 1675. Fr. John Dalton (1852). John Dalton’s translation of The Interior Castle contains an interesting preface and translations of other letters by St. Teresa. Benedictines of Stanbrook, edited by Fr. Zimmerman (1921). The translation of The Interior Castle by the Benedictines of Stanbrook also has an excellent introduction and includes many cross-references to other works by St. Teresa. E. Allison Peers (1946). E. Allison Peers’ translation of The Interior Castle is another popular public domain version translated by a professor and scholar of Hispanic studies. Fr. Kieran Kavanaugh (1979). This translation also stays true to the text and contains many useful cross-references. An updated study edition contains comprehensive notes, reflection questions and a glossary. The Interior Castle – The Mansions, TAN Books, 1997. ISBN 978-0-89555-604-2 Mirabai Starr (2004). Described as "free of religious dogma, this modern translation renders St. Teresa's work a beautiful and practical set of teachings for seekers of all faiths in need of spiritual guidance". Starr’s interpretive version of The Interior Castle eliminates Teresa’s use of words such as "sin", which results in a translation which is more paraphrased than accurate translation and departs significantly from the original's meaning. The Interior Castle – Modern update of the spiritual guide by Teresa of Avila. by M.B. Anderson, Root Classics (publisher), 2022. ISBN 978-1-956314-01-4.[g] St. Teresa's mystical experiences have inspired several authors in modern times, but not necessarily from Teresa's Christian theological perspective. She is mentioned in Elizabeth Goudge's play, The Brontës of Haworth (in Three Plays, Duckworth, London, 1939), as one of the authors included by Emily Brontë when she and her sister Charlotte are packing to go to Brussels. In the play, Emily is depicted as very interested in mysticism, and is also packing a book by Saint John of the Cross, and another by John Ruysbroeck (John of Ruusbroec or Jan van Ruusbroec: 1293/94-1381: a medieval mystic from the Low Countries). The 2006 book Eat, Pray, Love by Elizabeth Gilbert recognizes St. Teresa as "that most mystical of Catholic figures" and alludes to St. Teresa's Interior Castle as the "mansions of her being" and her journey as one of "divine meditative bliss".[38] The 2007 book by American spiritual author Caroline Myss Entering the Castle was inspired by St. Teresa's Interior Castle, but still has a New Age approach to mysticism.[39][40] St. Teresa also inspired American author R. A. Lafferty in his novel Fourth Mansions (1969), which was nominated for the Nebula Award for Best Novel in 1970. Brooke Fraser's song "Orphans, Kingdoms" was inspired by St. Teresa's Interior Castle. Jean Stafford's short story 'The Interior Castle' relates the intense preoccupation of an accident victim with her own brain, which she sees variously as a jewel, a flower, a light in a glass and a set of envelopes within envelopes. Jeffrey Eugenides' 2011 novel The Marriage Plot refers to St. Teresa's Interior Castle when recounting the religious experience of Mitchell Grammaticus, one of the main characters of the book. Teen Daze's[41] 2012 release The Inner Mansions refers to St. Teresa's Interior Castle in the album's title as well as in the first track. "... have mercy on yourselves! If you realize your pitiable condition, how can you refrain from trying to remove the darkness from the crystal of your souls? Remember, if death should take you now, you would never again enjoy the light of this Sun".[42] This line appears dubbed over the musical introduction to "New Life".[43] In Mark Williamson's ONE: a memoir (2018), the metaphor of the Interior Castle is used to describe an inner world of introspective reflection on past events, a set of "memory loci" based on the ancient system of recall for rhetorical purposes. Relaciones (Relationships), an extension of the autobiography giving her inner and outer experiences in epistolary form. Her rare poems (Todas las poesías, Munster, 1854) are distinguished for tenderness of feeling and rhythm of thought. The Complete Poetry of St. Teresa of Avila. A Bilingual Edition – Edición y traducción de Eric W. Vogt. New Orleans University Press of the South, 1996. Second edition, 2015. xl, 116 p. ISBN 978-1-937030-52-0 "Meditations on Song of Songs", 1567, written nominally for her daughters at the convent of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Conceptos del Amor ("Concepts of Love") and Exclamaciones. Las Cartas (Saragossa, 1671), or her correspondence, of which there are 342 extant letters and 87 fragments of others. The first edition of Teresa's letters was published in 1658 with the comment of Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Roman Catholic bishop of Osma and an opponent to the Company of Jesus.[44] The Complete Works of St Teresa of Jesus, in five volumes, translated and edited by E. Allison Peers, including 2 volumes of correspondence. London: Sheed and Ward, 1982. The prayer Nada te turbe (Let nothing disturb you) is attributed to Teresa, having been found within her breviary:[web 13] Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing make you afraid. All things are passing. God alone never changes. Patience gains all things. If you have God you will want for nothing. God alone suffices.[45] —Teresa of Ávila See also: Christian contemplation The ultimate preoccupation of Teresa's mystical thought, as consistently reflected in her writings, is the ascent of the soul to God. Aumann notes that "the grades of prayer described in The Life do not correspond to the division of prayer commonly given in the manuals of spiritual life", due to the fact that "St. Teresa did not write a systematic theology of prayer".[46] According to Zimmerman, "In all her writings on this subject she deals with her personal experiences [...] there is no vestige in her writings of any influence of the Areopagite, the Patristic, or the Scholastic Mystical schools, as represented among others, by the German Dominican Mystics. She is intensely personal, her system going exactly as far as her experiences, but not a step further."[47] Teresa describes in the Interior Castle that the treasure of heaven lies buried within our hearts, and that there is an interior part of the heart which is the centre of the soul.[15] In her autobiography she describes four stages,[48] in which she uses the image of watering one's garden as a metaphor for mystical prayer:[h] The first, Devotion of the Heart, consists of mental prayer and meditation. It means the withdrawal of the soul from without, penitence and especially the devout meditation on the passion of Christ (Autobiography 11.20). The second, Devotion of Peace, is where human will is surrendered to God. This occurs by virtue of an uplifted awareness granted by God, while other faculties, such as memory, reason, and imagination, are not yet safe from worldly distraction. Although a partial distraction can happen, due to outer activity such as repetition of prayers or writing down spiritual things, the prevailing state is one of quietude (Autobiography 14.1). The third, Devotion of Union, concerns the absorption-in-God. It is not only a heightened, but essentially, an ecstatic state. At this level, reason is also surrendered to God, and only the memory and imagination are left to ramble. This state is characterized by a blissful peace, a sweet slumber of at least the higher soul faculties, that is a consciousness of being enraptured by the love of God. The fourth, Devotion of Ecstasy, is where the consciousness of being in the body disappears. Sensory faculties cease to operate. Memory and imagination also become absorbed in God, as though intoxicated. Body and spirit dwell in the throes of exquisite pain, alternating between a fearful fiery glow, in complete unconscious helplessness, and periods of apparent strangulation. Sometimes such ecstatic transports literally cause the body to be lifted into space.[49] This state may last as long as half an hour and tends to be followed by relaxation of a few hours of swoon-like weakness, attended by the absence of all faculties while in union with God. The subject awakens from this trance state in tears. It may be regarded as the culmination of mystical experience. Indeed, Teresa was said to have been observed levitating during Mass on more than one occasion.[49] The Interior Castle is divided into seven mansions (also called dwelling places), each level describing a step to get closer to God. In her work, Teresa already assumed entrance into the first mansions by prayer and meditation. The purgative stage, involving active prayer and asceticism:[web 14] The first mansion begin with a soul's state of grace, but the souls are surrounded by sin and only starting to seek God's grace through humility in order to achieve perfection. The second mansions are also called the Mansion of the Practice of Prayer because the soul seeks to advance through the castle by daily thoughts of God, humble recognition of God's work in the soul and ultimately daily prayer. The third mansions are the Mansions of Exemplary Life characterized through divine grace and a love for God that is so great that the soul has an aversion to both mortal and venial sin and a desire to do works of charitable service to man for the ultimate glory of God. The prayer of acquired recollection belongs to the third mansion.[50] The illuminative stage, the beginning of mystical or contemplative or supernatural prayer:[web 14] The fourth mansions are a departure from the soul actively acquiring what it gains as God increases his role. In this mansion, the soul begins to experience two types of supernatural prayer, namely the Prayer of Supernatural (or passive) Recollection and The Prayer of Quiet;[web 14] The fifth mansion is The Prayer of Union, in which the soul prepares itself to receive gifts from God; Unitive stage:[web 14] The sixth mansion is the betrothal (engagement) of the soul with God can be compared to lovers. The soul spends increasing amounts of time torn between favors from God and from outside afflictions. The seventh mansion is the spiritual marriage with God, in which the soul achieves clarity in prayer The first four grades of Teresa's classifications of prayer belong to the ascetical stage of spiritual life. These are vocal prayer, meditational or mental prayer, affective prayer, and acquired or natural recollection.[51][52][web 15] According to Augustin Poulain and Robert Thouless, Teresa described four degrees or stages of mystical union, namely the prayer of quiet, full or semi-ecstatic union, ecstatic union or ecstasy, and transforming or deifying union, or spiritual marriage (properly) of the soul with God.[51][53] While Augustin Poulain and Robert Thouless do not mention the Prayer of Supernatural (or passive) Recollection as a separate stage,[51][53] Aumann discerns infused contemplation as a separate stage in the fourth mansion of the Interior Castle.[52][web 15] Together, these "five grades are infused prayer and belong to the mystical phase of spiritual life".[52][web 15] Thomas Merton disagrees on a fine-cut distinction between acquired contemplation and the prayer of quiet, noticing the Carmelite tendency of systematization, whereas Teresa herself was just describing her personal experiences.[54] Commenting on Teresa's writings and the scholarly discussions on the precise stages, Thomas Merton comments: "with all these divisions and distinctions, comings and goings and varieties of terms, one tends to become impatient with the saint".[55] Aumann synthesizes Teresa's writings into nine grades of prayer:[52][56][web 15] Threefold classification The Life Interior Castle Nine grades Ascetic Devotion of the Heart First mansions 1. vocal prayer 2. mental prayer or prayer of meditation 3. affective prayer Second and third mansions 4. prayer of simplicity, or acquired contemplation or recollection Illuminative Devotion of Peace Fourth mansions 5. infused contemplation or recollection 6. prayer of quiet Unitive Devotion of Union Fifth mansions 7. prayer of (simple) union Devotion of Ecstasy Sixth mansions 8. prayer of conforming or ecstatic union Seventh mansions 9. prayer of transforming union. Mental prayer is a form of prayer "performed without aid of any particular formula."[57] It is distinguished from vocal prayers, "prayers performed by means of a given formula",[57] Prayer is mental when the thoughts and affections of the soul are not expressed in a previously determined formula.[web 16] According to Teresa of Ávila, mental prayer is meditational prayer, in which the person is like a gardener, who, with much labour, draws the water up from the depths of the well to water the plants and flowers.[58][59] According to Teresa of Avila, mental prayer can proceed by using vocal prayers in order to improve dialogue with God.[60] According to Lehodey, mental prayer can be divided into meditation, more active in reflections, and contemplation, more quiet and gazeful.[61] For Teresa of Avila, in natural or acquired contemplation, also called the prayer of simplicity[i] there is one dominant thought or sentiment which recurs constantly and easily (although with little or no development) amid many other thoughts, beneficial or otherwise. The prayer of simplicity often has a tendency to simplify itself even in respect to its object, leading one to think chiefly of God and of his presence, but in a confused manner.[51] In the words of Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, acquired contemplation "consists in seeing at a simple glance the truths which could previously be discovered only through prolonged discourse": reasoning is largely replaced by intuition and affections and resolutions, though not absent, are only slightly varied and expressed in a few words. Similarly, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, in his 30-day retreat or Spiritual Exercises beginning in the "second week" with its focus on the life of Jesus, describes less reflection and more simple contemplation on the events of Jesus' life. These contemplations cons