

# ST. TERESA'S METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER

## 1. GENERAL PREPARATION

- Conviction of mental prayer's importance and determination to persevere in its practice each day
- Detachment from all created things, accomplished by choosing for yourself suitable active means of mortification and submitting to the trials which God allows in your life.
- Practice of Charity toward your neighbor
- Humility
- Practice of recollection and short aspirations during the day
- Regular program of spiritual reading

## 2. IMMEDIATE PREPARATION

- Examination of conscience, act of contrition, and sign of the cross
- *"represent the Lord Himself as close to you and behold how lovingly and humbly He is teaching you"*
- *"if you are joyful, look at Him as risen," "if you are experiencing trials or are sad, behold Him on the way to the garden," etc.; then let Him look at you [skip to step 5, if you can]*

## 3. SELECTION OF MATERIAL

- Read from a book, study a picture or crucifix, etc.
- The source should be provocative of conversation with Christ
- Gospels are often the best source, especially mysteries of the Passion
- If there is something pressing in your life, this should be the day's topic; put aside the book or image

## 4. CONSIDERATION

- If using a book, read slowly until something catches your interest as a topic; don't read too much
- The intellect goes in search of reasons for better understanding of what has been read, reasoning step by step, in order to gain insight
- Notice that Christ is considered in the third person, i.e., "He"

## 5. CONVERSATION (core of the meditation)

- Move from the consideration to the conversation as soon as possible (the consideration is like laying a fire in the fireplace, while the conversation is like the actual fire)
- Place yourself in the presence of Christ and try to be *"inflamed with love for His sacred humanity"* rather than to do a lot of thinking
- Talk from the heart with Christ, addressing Him in the second person, i.e., "You"; ask for your needs, complain of your labors, be glad with Him in your enjoyments and try to speak to Him, not with written prayers but with words that conform to your desires and needs
- *"make many acts to awaken love, many resolutions to render God much service"*; employ affections, e.g., love, gratitude, sorrow, hatred of sin, adoration, joy, desire, surrender, etc.
- If you can, sometimes *"just remain there in His presence with the intellect quiet"*
- *"If a person is able he should occupy himself in looking at Christ who is looking at him, and he should speak, and petition, and humble himself, and delight in the Lord's presence, and remember that he is unworthy of being there"*
- If the conversation begins to falter, return to the consideration to stimulate new thoughts for additional conversation (this is like adding a new log to the fire)

## 6. CONCLUSION

- Express gratitude for the conversation
- Examine the meditation to see how you have cooperated with the graces given during this time of prayer, and express the appropriate affections
- Make specific resolutions concerning things which arose in prayer