



**INTEGRATION OF LECTIO DEVINA, IGNATIUS IMAGINATION AND  
CARMELITE PRAYER**

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# **Integration of Lectio Divina, Ignatius Imagination and Carmelite Prayer**

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# Objectives

- o Understand brief history of the Carmelite Order
- o Identify St. Teresa of Avila's spiritual ideas of prayer, meditation and contemplation
- o Understand the ideas of Lectio Divina
- o Experience the integration of Teresian Spirit into Lectio Divina

# Origins of the Carmelites

- o Mount Carmel in Holy Land - 12<sup>th</sup> century Hermits
  - o Strived to live in the spirit of the prophet Elijah – a life of solitude and prayer
  - o Heard the call of Jesus Christ
    - o ‘leave everything and follow me’
  - o Dedication to the Mother of Jesus as a model
  - o Inspiration from the prophet Elijah –
    - o on fire with the love of God
  - o The Rule of Life by St. Albert of Jerusalem
  - o Based on the life of Jesus, prayer, silence, solitude, community
- o 16<sup>th</sup> century – St. Teresa – Reformed Carmelites
  - o Descalced Carmelites
  - o St. John of the Cross

# History of Carmelite Monks

[www.carmelitemonks.org](http://www.carmelitemonks.org)



- o *"There he came to a cave, where he took shelter. The Lord said: 'Go outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord; the Lord will be passing by.'*
- o *A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord - but the Lord was not in the wind.*
- o *After the wind there was an earthquake - but the Lord was not in the earthquake.*
- o *After the earthquake there was fire - but the Lord was not in the fire.*
- o *After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, 'Elijah, why are you here?' He replied: 'With zeal I have been zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts.' "*

- from First Book of Kings 19

- o The prophet Elijah, living on Mt. Carmel in the Holy Land, experiences God in a deep and personal way. In turn, he instructs the first hermits of Mt. Carmel.



# Carmel has claimed Elijah as its own

- o Elijah the prophet lived under the old covenant
  - o Spirit of Yahweh led Elijah into solitude
  - o Drank from the rivers of living waters
  - o Contemplation
  - o Stood in the presence of the living God

# St. Teresa of Avila

Spanish mystic, writer, Carmelite Reformer

- o Born Avila Spain - March 28, 1515
- o St. Teresa's mother died when she was 15
- o At the age of 16 she was sent to a convent school to be educated
- o Became a nun of the Carmelite Order
  - o At the time the Order was very relaxed / social
- o Illness - Malaria
  
- o Experienced divine visions and inner peace
- o Deep contemplation and felt a oneness with God
- o Age of 48, she decided to found a new Order
  - o Discalced Carmelites
- o Died Oct 4, at age of 67



# Discalced

- o Discalced Carmelites
- o Barefoot Carmelites
- o My interpretation
  - o Take off your shoes
  - o You are in the presences of God
  - o Standing on holy ground
    - o Moses and the burning bush

# St. Teresa – Reformed Carmelites

- o She became a nun of the Carmelite Order
  - o At the time the Order was very relaxed / social
- o Restructured - for a more favorable spiritual life
  - o Cloistered
  - o Silence
  - o Work in solitude
  - o Union with God
  - o Live life and the spirit of its origins

# St. Teresa of Avila

- o “God alone is enough.”
- o Let nothing upset you,  
let nothing startle you.  
All things pass;  
God does not change.  
Patience wins  
all it seeks.  
Whoever has God  
lacks nothing:  
God alone is enough.



# The Spirit of Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition

- o A Longing for union with God
  - o Attentive to the presence of Christ
  - o Affection
    - o “Not to think much but to love much”
    - o Communion with God leading to union with God
  - o Christ Centered
    - o The Way, The Truth, The Life
  - o Contemplation

# Search for God in Silence and Solitude

- Absence of imposed forms of prayer
- Conversation that is free – heart to heart
- Study of the living way that is Christ Jesus
- “Carmelite prayer develops in the depths of the life Christ communicates to the soul”
  - Paul-Marie of the Cross (1997)

# St. Teresa of Avila's spiritual ideas of prayer, meditation contemplation

- o Carmel's spirituality is rooted in Lectio Divina
- o Lectio Divina means – the divine reading
- o Pondering Scripture
  - o Dwelling on a biblical text as a means of seeking communion with Christ
  - o Prayer over scripture

# Elements of Lectio Divina

- o Reading a short text of scripture
  - o Identify a word or line that stands out
  
- o Meditation
  - o Listen to and savor the word or line
    - o let it suggest images, reflections, intuitive thoughts
    - o Ignatian Imagination
    - o Make it personally relevant to oneself in Christ
  
- o Prayer as a personal response to the text
  - o Move from the lips to the mind to the heart
  
- o Contemplation
  - o Seeing or experiencing the text as mystery
  - o Transcendence
  - o Spiritual integration

# Contemplation

- o Contemplation is an infused experience of the presence of God - (according to Teresa)
- o Contemplation is “seeing beyond believing”
  - o (Augustine)
  - o Cannot be acquired by effort – infused Grace
  - o Gift from God

# Lectio Divina and Teresian Spirit

## Lectio Divina

- o Reading
- o Meditation
- o Prayer
- o Contemplation

## Teresian Spirit

- o Attentiveness to repetitious reading the Word on the lips
- o Dwell on the Words of God in the mind – images, reflections, intuitive thoughts
- o Prayer places the Word in the heart
- o Contemplation – God's Grace

## Experiential Exercise

### Matthew 2: 13- 15; 19 – 23

- o This scripture is chosen because
  - o The story is similar to the unrest in our global world
  - o Depicts difficult decisions
  - o Seeking a place to flee and to live safely
  - o Human uncertainties
  - o Difficulties of survival ; the marginalized ; homelessness
  - o Strengths / faith / courage / role models
  - o
  - o We face parallels of these struggles with our clients

# Scripture -

- o Close your eyes, if you are comfortable, Listen to the Scripture
- o Identify the words or lines that stand out and touch you (attentive)
- o We will read the scripture 3 times with a pause between each reading
- o During the pause savor the words that have touched you, imagine the scene, experience the presence of God, reflect on your own life (meditation)
- o Let the words touch your heart in prayer

## Matthew 2: 13- 15; 19 – 23 “The Flight into Egypt”

- o After they had left, the angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph with the command: “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you otherwise. Herod is searching for the child to destroy him” Joseph got up and took the child and his mother and left that night for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet. . . .
- o But after Herod’s death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt with the command: “Get up, take the child and his mother, and set out for the land of Israel. Those who had designs on the life of the child are dead.” He got up, took the child and his mother, and returned to the land of Israel. . . .
- o Because of a warning received in a dream Joseph went to the region of Galilee. There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way what was said through the prophets was fulfilled: “He shall be called a Nazorean.”

o What words or lines touched you?

o 1.

o 2.

o 3.

o What parallels / images / life experiences were touched?

o 1.

o 2.

o 3.

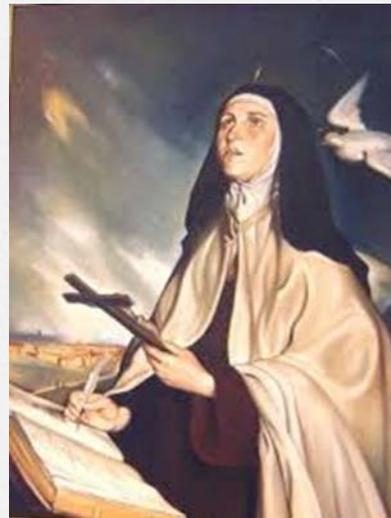
o What touched your heart?

# Reflective Questions

As SW we often face struggles with our clients and their families

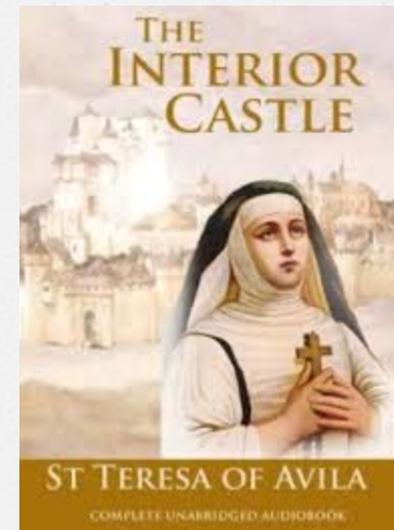
- o How can we respond as Joseph did – listening to the circumstances, to our heart, to what we hear in prayer? How do we deal with our fear and uncertainty?
- o How can we respond with wisdom, discernment, adaptability, protecting, yet not depreciating others?
- o How can we respond as Mary – trusting God, pondering all these things – ‘your will be done’?
- o How can we believe
  - o ‘God alone is enough’? (St. Teresa)
  - o “All will be well, and all will be well and all will be well”? (Julian Of Norwich)

- o Intimate experience of God
- o To taste in our hearts and experience in our minds
- o The power of Divine Presence



# Her Greatest Work

- o In 1580 she wrote
- o Interior Castle - the 7 mansions
  - o describing the various stages of spiritual evolution leading to full prayer;



*"Christ has no body on earth but ours,  
no hands but ours, no feet but ours.  
Ours are the eyes through which the  
compassion of Christ  
looks out upon the world,  
ours are the feet with which he  
goes about doing good,  
ours are the hands with which he  
blesses his people."*

*--St. Teresa of Avila*



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