

# Saint Teresa of Avila

## Catholic Church

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Newsletter

### Feast Day—500th Birthday of St. Teresa of Avila

by Fr. Edward Smith

*This year is a wonderful and exciting one for our Parish, and the Universal Catholic Church.* This year we celebrate the **500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Birth of Saint Teresa of Avila.** She was born on March 28, 1515 in Avila, Spain. In her 67 years of life, Saint Teresa would have a profound influence on the Carmelite Order, as well as on the spirituality of the whole Roman Catholic Church. Her greatest spiritual works were the Way of Perfection, the Interior Castle, and her autobiography entitled the Life of Teresa of Avila. She was canonized a Saint in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV, and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church on September 27, 1970 by Pope Paul VI.

**To honor Saint Teresa of Avila, the Patroness of our Parish, there are a number of very exciting events planned this year. Here is a list of just some of the upcoming events:**

**1. Parish Picture Directory** – It has been many years since the last picture directory was created for our Parish. Therefore, what could be more appropriate as a Parish family, then to have a “family portrait” done? Every Parish family is

greatly encouraged to make time to have their picture taken, so that all our wonderful parishioners can be included. Every family that is photographed will receive a *free* copy of the Parish directory.

**2. Dream Vacation Give-away** – Saint Teresa of Avila Parish will be raffling off a voucher for a 1 week (7 nights) stay anywhere in the world that Endless Vacation Rentals services. The winner of the voucher must use the prize before 4/21/16. Transportation to and from the vacation is not included. Tickets will cost \$10.

**3. St. Teresa Night at the Lake Erie Crushers** – Friday, July 24, 2015 will be a fun filled evening for our Parish families, as we will gather to watch an exciting baseball game and fabulous fireworks. All families will have the opportunity to purchase box seat tickets for \$8. Come and cheer on the Lake Erie Crushers as they play the Traverse City Beach Bums, and celebrate our patroness.

**4. Outdoor Saint Teresa of Avila Shrine** – After consulting with the Parish Council, Finance Council,

and Parish Staff, it was determined that a wonderful and unique way of celebrating the historic 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Saint Teresa of Avila is to construct an outdoor Shrine for our patroness. The Shrine will be built in the grassy area between the Church and Parish Office. This beautiful Shrine will allow people to sit quietly and pray, giving thanks to God for the gift of creation and the gift of Saint Teresa of Avila. Personalized paver stones will be available for purchase, so that your family might always be connected to this exciting project. The Shrine will be blessed and consecrated by The Most Reverend Richard G. Lennon, Bishop of Cleveland, at our Feast Day Mass on Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:00AM.

**This anniversary year will truly be a celebration of our patroness and our Parish family. This is our chance to celebrate an historic event in the life of our faith. Please don't miss out on being a part of all the festivities. We will never have this opportunity again to praise God for blessing us with such a good and holy patroness. Saint Teresa of Avila, pray for us!**

*The Rev. Edward J. Smith*

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*God withholds Himself from no one who perseveres.*

# Get to Know St. Teresa—Trivia Questions

1– What order of nuns did St. Teresa reform during her lifetime?

2– What illness caused Teresa to be in a coma for 4 days, after which she was paralyzed for 3 years?

3– St. Teresa of Avila is the patron saint of what illness?

4– St. Teresa is the founder of the Discalced Carmelites. What does *discalced* mean?

5– St. Teresa of Avila is also known by what other name?

6– How old was Teresa when her father sent her to the convent to be educated?

7– Prior to Teresa’s reform, the Carmelites often accepted

women not on their spiritual nature but on a material item they could offer the order. What was that?

8– God told Teresa that his “friends” always find that they are mistreated by others. What was Teresa’s good natured reply?

Learn more at [www.catholic.org/saints](http://www.catholic.org/saints)  
Answers on back page.



## St. Teresa of Avila: Her Life of Prayer

In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI provided a role model for evangelization, writing, “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”

Pre-eminent among role models for our time is St. Teresa of Avila, who shines as a teacher and witness to prayer. The Church celebrates the 500th anniversary of the Carmelite mystic’s birth beginning on March 30, 2015.

Through her writings, St. Teresa teaches prayer by testifying to her own inner journey. Her instructive approach becomes even more convincing as she admits shortcomings, which began early on in her monastic life. She wrote, “Since I thus began to go from pastime to pastime, from vanity to vanity, from one occasion to another ... I was then ashamed to return to the search for God by means of a friendship as special as that found in the intimate exchange of prayer.”

Finally moved to conversion at the sight of an image of Jesus in his passion, St. Teresa re-

turned to prayer. But challenges remained. She suffered a lifetime of trials, including illness and, in the *Spiritual Testimonies*, recounted a particularly poignant episode: “When I had begun prayer, I had such a bad headache I thought it would be almost impossible to pray. The Lord said to me: ‘In this way, you will see the reward that comes from suffering, for since you did not have the health to speak to me, I had spoken with you and favored you.’”

Prayer, like anything else, requires effort, time, and practice. In *The Way of Perfection*, St. Teresa teaches that daily prayer requires discipline but leads to the greatest satisfaction. She wrote:

*“Imagine the Lord himself as close to you. Believe me, you should remain with so good a friend as long as you can. If you grow accustomed to having him present at your side, and he sees that you do so with love and that you go about striving to please him you will not be able to get away from him; he will never fail you; he will help you in all your trials; you will find him everywhere.”*

In 1970, Pope Paul VI named St. Teresa of Avila a doctor of the Church, explaining, “We are undoubtedly before a soul in which extraordinary divine initiative was active and was perceived and described by Teresa simply.”

Articulating the current value of her teachings, the Holy Father said, “Her message comes to us children of the Church at a time marked by a great effort at reform and renewal of liturgical prayer. It comes to us who are tempted by the great noise and business of the outside world to yield to the frenzy of modern life and to lose the real treasures of our souls in the effort to win earth’s seductive treasures. It comes to us, children of our time, when we are losing, not only the habit of conversation with God, but also the sense of the need and duty to worship and call on him.”

Following the example of her life, I am sure that St. Teresa would like us to celebrate her birth by witnessing to the joy of God’s life within us, through a vibrant and spiritually nourishing prayer life.

## Pope Francis Speaks on the 500th Anniversary of St. Teresa of Avila's Birth

On March 30th, the 500th anniversary of St. Teresa of Avila's birth, Pope Francis praised the Spanish mystic and reformer for her witness of self-gift to God, as well as her particular relevance during this Year for Consecrated Life.

"How much goodness does the testimony of her consecration — born directly from her encounter with Christ, her experience of prayer as continuous dialogue with God and her community life, rooted in the motherhood of the Church — do for us!" the Pope said. St. Teresa of Avila, "shines as a sure and attractive model of total self-giving to God."

Born March 28, 1515, in Avila, Spain, St. Teresa is known as a mystic and reformer. Entering the Carmelite order in 1535, she became disillusioned by the laxity of monastic life within the cloister and committed herself to reforming the order. She is considered one of the founders of the Dis-

calced Carmelites. During her lifetime, St. Teresa wrote several important works on the spiritual life, such as *Interior Castle* and *The Way of Perfection*. Canonized 40 years after her death, in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV, she was declared as one of the first female doctors of the Church in 1970 by Pope Paul VI.

Describing her as "primarily a teacher of prayer," Pope Francis said that "the discovery of Christ's humanity was central to her experience." For St. Teresa, prayer arose in all occasions, not simply in times and places of seclusion. Moreover, she believed that "continuous prayer" — even when distracted or preoccupied — had value. "The saint asks us to be steadfast and faithful [to prayer], even in times of dryness, personal difficulties or urgent needs that call us. The concrete proposals and methods of prayer left by St. Teresa offer us a great treasure to renew prayer

today," the Pope said.

Pope Francis went on to describe St. Teresa as a "tireless communicator of the Gospel" at a time when the Church was in the midst of difficulties. Instigator of the "Teresian reform" of the laxities demonstrated by the Carmelite cloister in which she lived, she demonstrated a "missionary and ecclesial dimension that has always marked the Carmelites and Discalced Carmelites," he said. "Even today, the saint opens new horizons for us, she calls us to a great undertaking, to see the world with the eyes of Christ, to seek what he seeks and to love what he loves."



### Praying Like St. Teresa of Avila

Not all advice from the 16th century is helpful today, but St. Teresa of Avila's instruction on contemplative prayer is as relevant for Christians now as when she wrote it 500 years ago. On the occasion of the quincentenary of Teresa's birth, it's worth our taking time and reflecting on the great saint and mystic, and how she encourages us to seek God in prayer.

In our own day and age, many souls are searching for deeper intimacy with Christ, but contemplative prayer has often been neglected or misunderstood. As the Lord begins working in our hearts, prayer becomes second nature, though we advance because of the Lord's divine pleasure, not by mastering a

technique, so that the movement of prayer begins with him and ends with him, and it only makes progress because of him.

Living in union with God in prayer leads to a deeper understanding of him and his mission for us. Christians united to Christ will come to know better their vocation in life, how he wants them to live for him, and what he wants them to do. For busy parents, St. Teresa can teach them how to use prayer for the grace to say "Yes" to daily challenges.

For those consumed by work, St. Teresa can teach them how prayer can allow a person to sit quietly with the Lord and listen to him.

For those who are retired, St. Teresa can

teach how to be more aware of God's presence in all the world around us. Above all, Teresian prayer is about focusing in love on the presence of Jesus within all of us. We must make room for God to do something beautiful inside us, by removing all the distractions this world offers us. If we can do that, then we give Christ the room he needs to do great things with us in our lives.

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Trivia Answers

- 1- Carmelites
- 2- Malaria
- 3- Headaches
- 4- Shoeless
- 5- St. Teresa of Jesus
- 6- 16 years old
- 7- Money
- 8- "That must be why you have so few friends."

Feast Day and Other Parish Events

Parish Pictorial Directory

Portraits being taken May 27–30  
Schedule portrait sitting by May 18.

Dream Vacation Giveaway

Tickets will be on sale for \$10. Drawing  
will take place Monday, July 6, 2015.

St. Teresa Night at Lake Erie  
Crushers

Friday, July 24, 2015  
\$8 box seat tickets.

Feast Day Mass with  
Bishop Richard Lennon

Sunday, October 18 at 11:00 a.m.

Please don't miss out on  
being a part of all the  
festivities!

Flea Market

Saturday, June 6, 2015  
8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.  
St. Teresa's Parking Lot  
(Rain Date is June 27)

Bible Study

Thursdays, May 21, June 4 & 18,  
July 2 & 16, August 6 & 20

Religious Formation

Will resume in September 2015

Eucharistic Adoration

Wed. from 8:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Volunteer at Food Pantry

2nd, 3rd & 4th Saturday/month  
9:00 am–1 pm

Parish Life Center Is for  
Rent

For information visit our website  
or call our office at  
440-934-4227.

For monthly Parish Committee meeting dates, visit our website at  
[www.stteresaparish.com](http://www.stteresaparish.com) or watch the bulletin for current dates/times.