

Readings for Thursday Oct 15, 2020

Remembering TERESA OF AVILA

REFORMER AND CONTEMPLATIVE (15 OCT 1582)

Psalm 42: 1-7

1 As the deer longs for the water-brooks, *
so longs my soul for you, O God.

2 My soul is athirst for God, athirst for the living God; *
when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?

3 My tears have been my food day and night, *
while all day long they say to me,
"Where now is your God?"

4 I pour out my soul when I think on these things; *
how I went with the multitude and led them into the
house of God,

5 With the voice of praise and thanksgiving, *
among those who keep holy-day.

6 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul? *
and why are you so disquieted within me?

7 Put your trust in God; *
for I will yet give thanks to him,
who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

1 Samuel 3:1-18

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!'^{*} and he said, 'Here I am!' and ran to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. The Lord called again,

‘Samuel!’ Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, ‘Here I am, for you called me.’ But he said, ‘I did not call, my son; lie down again.’ Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, ‘Here I am, for you called me.’ Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, ‘Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”’ So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ And Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’ Then the Lord said to Samuel, ‘See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. On that day I will fulfil against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I am about to punish his house for ever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God,^{*} and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering for ever.’

Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, ‘Samuel, my son.’ He said, ‘Here I am.’ Eli said, ‘What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.’ So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, ‘It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him.’

Mark 1:35-39

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, ‘Everyone is searching for you.’ He answered, ‘Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.’ And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

The Collect for Teresa of Avila

O God, by your Holy Spirit you moved Teresa of Avila to manifest to your Church the way of perfection: Grant us, we pray, to be nourished by her teaching, and enkindle within us a keen and unquenchable longing for true holiness; through Jesus Christ, the joy of loving hearts, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.

TERESA OF AVILA

REFORMER AND CONTEMPLATIVE (15 OCT 1582)

Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada (later known as Teresa de Jesus) was born in Avila, Spain, 28 March 1515, one of ten children whose mother died when she was fifteen. Her family was of partly Jewish ancestry. Teresa, having read the letters of Jerome, decided to become a nun, and when she was 20, she entered the Carmelite convent in Avila. There she fell seriously ill, was in a coma for a while, and partially paralyzed for three years. In her early years as a nun, she was, by her account, assiduous in prayer while sick but lax and lukewarm in her prayers and devotions when the sickness had passed. However, her prayer life eventually deepened, she began to have visions and a vivid sense of the presence of God, and was converted to a life of extreme devotion.

In 1560 she resolved to reform the monastery that had, she thought, departed from the order's original intention and become insufficiently austere. Her proposed reforms included strict enclosure (the nuns were not to go to parties and social gatherings in town, or to have social visitors at the convent, but to stay in the convent and pray and study most of their waking hours) and discalcing (literally, taking off one's shoes, a symbol of poverty, humility, and the simple life, uncluttered by luxuries and other distractions). In 1562 she opened a new monastery in Avila, over much opposition in the town and from the older monastery. At length Teresa was given permission to proceed with her reforms, and she travelled throughout Spain establishing seventeen houses of Carmelites of the Strict (or Reformed) Observance (the others are called Carmelites of the Ancient Observance). The reformed houses were small, poor, disciplined, and strictly enclosed. Teresa died 4 October 1582. (She is commemorated on the 15th--why not the 14th, I wonder--because the Pope changed the calendar from the Julian to the Gregorian system, a difference of 10 days, on the day after her death.)

Teresa is reported to have been very attractive in person, witty, candid, and affectionate. She is remembered both for her practical achievements and organizing skill and for her life of contemplative prayer. Her books are read as aids to the spiritual life by many Christians of all denominations. Her [*Life*](#) is her autobiography to 1562; [*The Way of Perfection*](#) is a treatise on the Christian walk, written primarily for her sisters but of help to others as well; The [*Book of Foundations*](#) deals with establishing, organizing and overseeing the daily functioning of religious communities; [*The Interior Castle*](#) (or *The Castle of the Soul*) deals with the life of Christ in the heart of the believer. Most of these are available in paperback. 31 of her poems and 458 of her letters survive. Her feast day in the Roman Catholic Church is 15 October. The Lutheran Church (ELCA) commemorates her on December 14 together with St. John of the Cross.

Christ has no body now but yours
No hands, no feet on earth but yours
Yours are the eyes through which He looks
compassion on this world
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.