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SAINT TERESA AND THE JESUITS

Manuel Ruiz Jurado, S.J.

St. Ignatius and St. Teresa did not personally know each other. When Teresa de Cepeda was born, Íñigo de Loyola was already 24 years old. A little later, when he fell into disgrace with the Major Secretary of the Catholic Kings with whom he was living, Íñigo moved to the court of the Viceroy of Navarre, Antonio Manrique de Lara. He departed from Spain in 1528 and did not come back until 1535 when he spent a few months in his home country for health reasons and in order to fulfill his companions' errands. He never returned to Spain since then.

Teresa lived all the time in Spain until she died in 1582. There is no record of St. Ignatius ever having met or even known her—at Ignatius's death in 1556, Teresa was still at the monastery of La Encarnación in Ávila. She appears, however, to have known the importance of St. Ignatius, for she mentioned him when she wrote in 1577 about the multitude of souls that God draws to Himself through the mediation of other souls. She said:

> How many souls the devil must have lost through St. Dominic and St. Francis and other founders of [religious] orders. And now he loses more through Father Ignatius who founded the Society [of Jesus]! As we read about their lives, it is quite clear that all of them have received such graces from God. How was this done if not for their endeavor not to lose through their own fault such divine betrothals. (Teresa of Ávila, *The Interior Castle*, V, iv, #4.)

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Beginnings of the Relationship of Teresa with the Jesuits[1]

Fr. Diego de Cetina

In 1554, Teresa began to feel the need for special help because of the new phenomenon she was experiencing in her prayer. That same year, a college of the Society of Jesus was founded in Ávila.[2]

It seems that the Jesuits created around them quite early on a reputation of being priests especially trained in spiritual life as well as experts in prayer. The clergyman and scholar Gaspar Daza and the virtuous layperson Francisco de Salcedo, from whom Teresa usually asked for advice, decided that it would be better for her to get access to the Jesuits to ask them for help with her problems. It was then that Teresa endeavored to know the Ignatian spirit more closely through Fr. Diego de Cetina, the first in a series of Jesuit confessors and spiritual directors who guided her life. The year was 1555; Teresa was 30 years old and Cetina was just 24. He had not yet finished his studies and had been in the Society of Jesus for only three years.

In chapter 23 of her *Libro de la Vida*, Teresa tells us about the results of that first encounter with the Ignatian spirituality. Following the advice received from her friends, she gave an account of her whole life to Fr. Cetina with much clarity, and she made a general confession to him. Teresa narrates that she had to overcome obstacles and fears which the enemy had set up against her. She did not want the rest of the nuns to see her dealing "with such holy persons as those of the

[1]This article was translated into English by Antonio Maldonado Correa, S.J., from the original Spanish essay of M. Ruiz Jurado, S.J., "Santa Teresa y los Jesuitas," published in *Manresa 87*, no. 342 (2015), pp. 17–27.

[2]Candido de Dalmases, "Cetina, Diego de," in *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* (Roma-Madrid: IHSI-UPC, 2001), I, 742; Candido de Dalmases, "Santa Teresa y los Jesuitas," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 35 (1966): 348–351; Efren de la Madre de Dios & Otger Steggink, *Tiempo y vida de Santa Teresa*, 3rd ed. (Madrid: BAC, 1996), 153–163.

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Society of Jesus.…" "For I was afraid of my own wickedness," she adds.[3] She thought it would oblige her to give up what she considered to be her own mean acts and "pastimes" (*pasatiempos*).

After her interview, Teresa remained comforted and consoled. She made a decision not to distance herself in any way from what Fr. Cetina would command her, and so she complied. When Teresa wrote about this a few years afterwards, she praised the Lord who granted her the grace to obey her confessors, adding: "And nearly all the time [my confessors] have been from these blessed men of the Society of Jesus; although imperfectly, as I say, have I followed them."[4]

To sum up, Fr. Cetina encouraged her quite a lot. He assured her that what was happening to her was clearly the work of the spirit of God, that it was necessary for her to establish her prayer life more firmly, paying more attention to her own practice of mortification since, as she states, "even the name [mortification] I did not seem to understand," and that in no way should she abandon prayer. Fr. Cetina said that she would be blamed greatly if she did not respond to the

[3]Teresa of Ávila, *Libro de la Vida*, c. 23, no. 15 (hereafter referred to as *Vida).*

[4]*Vida* c. 23, no. 18. We draw attention to the words "nearly all the time" (*casi siempre*) for we know quite well that many others heard St. Teresa's confessions or gave advices and help to her. Teresa wrote *El Libro de la Vida* when she had already begun to reform the Carmelite Order and finished it in 1562. In 1576, she spoke about others who were not of the Society of Jesus, such as Friar Pedro de Alcántara, "a holy man of the Discalced of Saint Francis" whom she dealt a lot with, and who was of great value in assuring her regarding the good origin of her spirit, and the inquisitor D. Francisco de Soto Salazar. From the Dominican Fathers, there was Vicente Barrón, Domingo Báñez (who heard her confessions for six years and conversed with her through letters), Diego de Chaves, Bartolomé de Medina (who opposed her at first but, after being well informed by her, assured her greatly later on and much more than all the rest, and who remained a very great friend of hers), the Provincial Juan de Salinas, Lunar, and Diego de Yanguas (*Cuentas de conciencia* [Accounts of Conscience] 53 [4a.]). Nevertheless, she wrote in her letter of 1568 that it is the Jesuits whom she attributes as having "nurtured her soul" and whose "spirit has been planted in her monasteries" (*Cartas* 68-6U, 3).

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graces the Lord was granting her because the Lord probably wanted to do great good to other persons through her. "He went further," she recounts, "for he seemed to have prophesied of that which our Lord afterwards did with me."[5]

Fr. Cetina directed her through the path of humility and, little by little, it seemed to her that she "became another [person]." As for her way of prayer, he told her to take a passage of the Passion each day, to take advantage of its example, and to pay attention to the humanity of Christ, resisting other recollections and consolations to which she was not to yield until he gave her further directions in the matter. Yet, although Teresa continued to change many things with her life, her confessor never pressed her—on the contrary, he made light of it all, and this helped Teresa try harder all the more since he left her to her own devices. He led her by the way of the love of God, and so as she was left free and not compelled, she herself did so out of love.

It seemed to her that she was improving even in resisting the gifts and enjoyments the Lord sent her for she realized how her previous efforts mattered so little; she was now much more surrounded by the Lord with sweetness as to be unable to flee from him. Centered on the humanity of Christ, she began to grow fonder of more penance.

Fr. Cetina's counseling would not last long—he left Ávila and was sent to continue his studies probably a few months later. He had time before leaving Ávila, however, to make arrangements for St. Francis of Borgia to visit Teresa so she could speak to him about her prayer. She recalled very well this meeting in her *Life:* The saint listened attentively to her narration of her problem in prayer. He answered that what she had done until then— following the advice of her confessor—was all right, but that she ought no longer to resist what seemed to her was the spirit of God, and that she should let herself be taken over by His Majesty, not looking for it on her own.[6] She remained exceedingly consoled when he assured her that the state of her soul was from

[5]*Vida* c. 23, no. 16.

[6]*Vida* c. 24, no. 4.

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God. She showed, by the way she narrated the encounter, the spiritual veneration she felt before the holy Duke.

Fr. Juan de Prádanos

After the departure of Fr. Cetina, Teresa remained disconsolate and fearful. She did not think she could find another one like him. Nevertheless, she looked for a new Jesuit confessor and found Fr. Juan de Prádanos. At 27 years old, he was also a young Jesuit and had been in the Society for only three years. He arrived in Ávila as vice-Rector of the College on the same year (1555),[7] the second Jesuit who guided Teresa in her special state. She thought of herself as a novice, weak on the initiated path.

Fr. Prádanos treated the saint with great prudence and gentleness; he started to guide her towards a greater perfection.[8] Soon he realized that Teresa was very keen on clinging to some friendships and that she did not see any sin in that. Quitting them was difficult for her to do because it seemed to her to be ingratitude. The spiritual director thus advised her to ask the Holy Spirit for light in order to see what was better, commending herself to Him with the recitation of the "Veni Creator." Soon she felt a rapture in which she heard these words: "I no longer want that you hold conversation with men, but with angels." Those words were fulfilled, for Teresa could no longer form friendship with anyone henceforth except those who, she believed, love God and who strive to serve Him. "From that day on," she said, "I had the courage to leave all things to God, who in one moment—and it seems to me but a moment—was pleased to change His handmaid into another person." She felt that God's grace had liberated her in an instant from that which she had fought for such a long time to get rid of and could not do so with her own efforts, and which at times

[7]He held the office of vice-Rector for three or four months (ms. ARSI, *Cast* 13. 33v. 39v.). He was still in Ávila in 1558 (*Cast* 13, 200), and in 1562 he was already at Medina del Campo (*Cast* 132; cf. de Dalmases, "Santa Teresa y los Jesuitas," 352–358).

[8]*Vida* c. 24, no. 6; *Cartas* 76-12Ñ.

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made her become weak in her health. Now, without any pain, she felt very grateful to the Lord who proved to be a "powerful and true Lord of everything."[9]

In this case, we note that Fr. Prádanos applied the teaching of St. Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises* on getting rid of disordered affection.[10] Guided by these Fathers of the Society of Jesus, Teresa may have thus imbibed the spirit of St. Ignatius through the *Spiritual Exercises*. She showed great appreciation for the spiritual direction of the Jesuits. Indeed, did Teresa make the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* on this occasion?

In 1919, the Bollandists published the first volume of the *Histoire de sainte Thérèse* in which they stated that

> while the holy Mother Teresa of Jesus followed with docility the *Spiritual Exercises* of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius of Loyola was getting ready to appear before the Lord. Almost at the end of his noble existence he could survey with his eyes the two hemispheres and sing the "Nunc dimittis," while seeing his sons extending, more each day, the empire of the Cross…but among the conquests that St. Ignatius handed over to the Church, the most unknown to him was without any doubt the one that was taking place in that corner of a convent of his beloved country. If he would had been allowed to know it and foresee its fruits, his whole soul would have vibrated with joy, and with a trembling hand he would have imparted his blessing on the heir of his zeal, of his love for the Church, and of his apostolic spirit.[11]

[9]Cf. *Vida* c. 24, nos. 7–10.

[10]The title of the *Spiritual Exercises* is "Spiritual exercises which have as their purpose the conquest of self and the regulation of one's life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment" (*SpEx*, 21). In Annotation no. 1 of the *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius advises that "we call Spiritual Exercises every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all inordinate attachments, and, after their removal, of seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of our life for the salvation of our soul" (*SpEx*, 01).

[11]Bollandists, *Histoire de sainte Thérèse* (Paris: Retaux-Bray, 1888), 149; cf. Victoriano Larrañaga, *La espiritualidad de san Ignacio de Loyola. Estudio comparativo con la de santa Teresa de Jesús* (Madrid: A.C.N. de P. Casa de San Pablo, 1944).

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Teresa could have begun to practice, at least partially, the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius at the time of Fr. Cetina's counseling because she would make allusion to them later on as a person who knew them. Fr. Francisco de Ribera, her biographer, attests to a report he heard "that this Father [Cetina] gave her part of the *Exercises*."[12] Indeed, from what we know of the time during which he dealt with Teresa and about the activities she performed under his direction, we can infer that he restricted himself to preparing her above all in the first week of the *Exercises* (devoted to purification) for laying solidly the foundation of her spiritual life in humility, in mental prayer, and in examinations of conscience—leading her up, well prepared, to the general confession.

From Teresa's account of the next spiritual direction (the one by Fr. Prádanos), we can deduce that she was already initiated into spiritual discernment, and that perhaps Fr. Prádanos accompanied her in the process of election and of reforming her life. At this point in the narration of her life, she stops to explain the discernment of spirits[13] by saying: "Yet, Satan has many devices; and thus there is nothing more certain than that it is safer to be afraid, and always on our guard, under a learned director, from whom nothing is concealed."[14]

There are, however, other clues of the influence of the *Spiritual Exercises* which we can detect in the *Way of Perfection* [*Camino de Perfección*],

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[12]Francisco de Ribera, *La vida de la Madre Teresa de Jesús*, lib. I, c. IX (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1908), 125.

[13]In chapter 25, no. 2 of her *Life*, she writes: "I should like to explain the delusions which may happen here…how those locutions which come from the good Spirit differ from those which come from an evil spirit; and, further, how they may be just an apprehension of the understanding—for that is possible—or even words which the mind addressed to itself" (compare with *SpEx*, 32). With fine intuition and penetration, Teresa elaborates on the differences between divine locution and human locution: "It seems to me that there is as much difference between these two locutions as there is between speaking and listening…for when I speak, as I have said, I keep on formulating with my understanding what I am saying; but if I am spoken to by others, I do nothing else but listen, without any toil" (*Vida* c. 25, no. 5).

[14]*Vida* c. 25, no. 14.

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written by the saint between 1562 and 1565. Discussing how their houses ought to be, she says:

> It seems very wrong, my daughters, that great houses should be built with the money of the poor; may God forbid that this should be done; let our houses be small and poor in every way. Let us to some extent resemble our King, who had no house save the porch in Bethlehem where He was born.…

She had also written a little before that: "These arms [of holy poverty] must appear on our banners and at all costs we must keep this rule—as regards our house, our clothes, our speech, and (much more important) our thoughts."[15] Indeed, such phrases and expressions remind us of the contemplations on Jesus's birth in the *Spiritual Exercises* and of the Ignatian meditations on the Call of the King and the Two Standards.[16]

The spiritual direction of Fr. Prádanos lasted until the year 1558 or 1559. In the year 1557, when St. Francis Borgia went through Ávila (for the second time?), Teresa once again asked him for advice.[17] She explained to him her problem on how to harmonize contemplation with action. She clearly understood that her will was devoted entirely to God, unable to be or to operate in any other thing, and yet the other two faculties (of mind and memory) are free to be able to busy oneself in business and works of the divine service. Borgia told her that what she described was quite possible and that it used to happen to him many times. She understood that it was "a great gift to whom the Lord grants it, for it unites the active life with the contemplative." She knew that the Lord granted this favor to Borgia for he spoke from experience.[18]

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[15]Cf. *Camino de perfección* 2, 9 and 2, 8.

[16]Cf. *Ejercicios espirituales* nos. 98, 116, 144–147.

[17]She herself says that she dealt with Borgia twice (*Cuentas de conciencia* 53, 3).

[18]*Camino de perfección* 31, 5. A few years before (1554), Borja could have heard Fr. Jerónimo Nadal talking about this doctrine: "Societas praetendit in omnibus rebus habere orationem Deumque invenire et devotionem" (the Society endeavors in all things to pray and to find God and devotion); he gave

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The first mystical vision of Christ that Teresa had is dated to 1559 (on the 29th of June).

Fr. Baltasar Álvarez

Fr. Prádanos's successor in the spiritual direction of St. Teresa was Fr. Baltasar Álvarez, another young Jesuit who had arrived in Ávila as minister of the College at the age of 25 or 26 and with only one year of priestly ministry and three years as a Jesuit under his belt.[19] He was the one who directed her for many years—Teresa asserts that "he heard her confessions for 6 years,"[20] years that were perhaps the most difficult and decisive in her spiritual and foundational experience.

In 1560, Teresa had a vision of the Risen Christ, the transverberation of her heart, and the vision of hell on the vigil in which she decided to embark on the reform of the Carmelite order. In 1562, she received the Brief of the foundation of San José de Ávila. The inauguration of the first convent of the Reform brought oppositions and difficulties along with it. Nevertheless, in 1563 she wrote the Constitutions that were approved by Pius IV in 1565.

It was also not easy for Fr. Baltasar Álvarez to carry out his mission[21] in the midst of so many people who considered Teresa's experience to be a deceit of the devil. He himself submitted her to

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as examples of this union of active and contemplative life St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier (*Monumenta Nadal* 5, 77).

[19]Probably in 1558 or 1559 (Manuel Ruiz Jurado, "Álvarez, Baltasar," in *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* [Rome-Madrid: IHSI-UPC, 2001], I, 91–93 and "Un místico controvertido: el P. Baltasar Álvarez, S.I. [A Controverted Mystic: Fr. Baltasar Álvarez, S.I.]," *Manresa* 85 [2013]: 161–163; cf. Juan Flors, ed., *Baltasar Álvarez: Escritos espirituales* [Baltasar Álvarez: Spiritual writings] [Barcelona: 1961]).

[20]*Cuentas de conciencia* 53, 3.

[21]Speaking in Salamanca with Francisco de Ribera about several books of spirituality, Fr. Álvarez said, "All these books did I read to understand Teresa de Jesús" (de Ribera, *La vida de la Madre Teresa de Jesús*, lib. I, c. 11).

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hard trials and examinations to test whether the spirit that guided her was of God. Teresa herself suffered and even came to endure temptations of leaving him, yet each time such a temptation came up, she felt an interior reproach more painful than the sufferings inflicted by the confessor. On one occasion the Lord told her that she was not obedient if she was not ready to suffer, that she should set her eyes on what Jesus suffered so that everything would become easier.[22] In spite of everything, however, Teresa would say in her *Life* that Fr. Álvarez "was the one who, I believe, did me the most good…and I had a great affection for him.…"[23] She wrote concerning him,

> My confessor, as I said, was a very holy father of the Society of Jesus.… He was a most discreet man, and of deep humility.… By the providence of God this Father consented to persevere with me and hear me: so great a servant of God that he would endure everything for His sake. So he used to tell me that if I did not offend God, nor deviate from the instructions he gave me, there was no fear that He would fail me. He encouraged me always, and quieted me. He always enjoined me not to hide anything from him; and so I never did. He used to say that, so long as I did this, the devil…could not hurt me; on the contrary, the Lord would obtain the good from the evil it wanted to do to my soul. He did his utmost to lead my soul to perfection.… He consoled me with much compassion, and if he had more trust in himself, I would not suffer so much, for God showed him the truth about everything and I believe the Sacrament itself gave him light.[24]

The difficulties of Teresa became an open conflict when she tried to found a Reformed Carmelite convent in September of 1560. She communicated her purpose as the Lord's wish.[25] Fr. Álvarez did not

[22] *Vida* c. 26, no. 3.

[23] *Vida* c. 26, no. 3.

[24] *Vida* c. 28, nos. 14.16. The saint attributed Fr. Baltasar Álvarez's lack of trust in himself to his great dependence on the judgment of his superiors who were quite aware, like so many other persons of Ávila, of the things that were said about Teresa. We shall see how much his attitude changed from the time he had as superior Fr. Dionisio Vázquez to the time Fr. Gaspar de Salazar arrived in Ávila.

[25] *Vida* c. 32, nos. 11.

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dare to say no to her, although in the light of natural reason it did not seem to him that the intent could go forward. He told Teresa to work out the issue with her Superior and to abide by his decision[26]— a very Jesuitic answer that would be said perhaps with a smile! The Provincial of the Carmelites, upon listening to Teresa, gave his consent.

To the township and many persons of Ávila it seemed an absurd thing to do. There was persecution, ridicule, and insults, and the difficulties increased so much that the Provincial changed his mind and did not allow Teresa to carry out the foundation. As a consequence, Fr. Álvarez ordered her not to think about it anymore. She remained silent for five or six months, taking no further steps with regard to her plan, neither thinking nor speaking of it. Not even once did the Lord speak to her about it, she did not know why. Nevertheless, she could not rid herself of the conviction that the monastery would be established. The sufferings she endured were so great and intense.

In 1561, Fr. Dionisio Vázquez, who had been Superior of the Jesuits in Ávila, was changed and replaced by Fr. Gaspar de Salazar. Teresa attributes the change to the Lord's providence, for she wrote: "His Majesty brought a successor…who was a very spiritual man, of great courage, keen intelligence, and profound learning, at a time when I was in dire straits." The new Rector told her confessor that since there was nothing to fear, he should not lead her along so narrow a path but allow the Spirit of the Lord to work in her. Thus, through the influence of Fr. Salazar, Fr. Álvarez began to change his attitude. He ordered Teresa to deal with this Father "with total freedom and clarity."[27]

The Rector came to see Teresa, and Fr. Álvarez enjoined her to consult him in all freedom and openness. As soon as she started to have dealings with him, Teresa noticed that he was "a pure soul, holy, and with a special gift from the Lord for the discernment of spirits." He gave her great consolation. She liked his more valiant style.

[26]*Vida* c. 32, nos. 12–13.

[27]*Vida* c. 32, no. 9.

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Regarding the issue of the foundation of the monastery, she realized how much the attitude of her confessor Fr. Álvarez had changed. He now gave her permission to continue the project with all her might. Teresa thus devoted herself in all earnest to procure everything possible, saying that "she was very attentive not to do anything against obedience."[28] Nonetheless, it happened that her Provincial sent her at that time and under obedience to Toledo, to accompany Doña Luisa de la Cerda.[29] With the absence from Ávila, she had a chance to busy herself with everything concerning the foundation of the reformed convent and its conditions.

The house Teresa established was small and poor. Following divine inspiration, she placed it under the obedience of the Bishop and not under the obedience of the fathers of the Carmelite Order. The petition for the Brief authorizing the foundation was thus sent to Rome, and Teresa received it around the time when the Provincial allowed her to return to Ávila, to her convent of San José. Following the counsel of St. Pedro de Alcántara, the foundation was without income, and this brought great joy to Teresa.[30]

In the autumn of 1562, Teresa departed from Toledo (where she stayed in the house of Doña Luisa de la Cerda) and returned to Ávila[31] at the advice of Fr. Pedro Domenech, her Jesuit confessor in Toledo, who considered her doing so to be more conducive to achieving greater perfection. There in Ávila, God willed that, by special circumstances, she would meet St. Pedro de Alcántara and a gentleman, a great servant of God, who were both instrumental in convincing the bishop of Ávila to accept the foundation.

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[28] *Vida* c. 32, no. 11.

[29] Teresa was greatly comforted in going to Toledo because she said that "there was a house of the Society of Jesus in the place where I was going, and so I thought I should feel fairly safe under the direction of those fathers" (*Vida* c. 34, no. 2).

[30] *Vida* c. 35, nos. 7–10; c. 36, nos. 2.20.

[31] de Dios & Steggink, *Tiempo y vida de santa Teresa*, 151.

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Teresa had received the authorization from Rome not only to found convents but also to write the Constitutions, which she had already written in substance and, with a few more touches, considered finished. She presented the Constitutions to the General of the Order and to the Provincial in 1567. The General not only approved them but also ordered that they be followed in all the convents to be founded by Teresa, and that the Fathers of the Society should preach to her nuns and even hear their confessions, if they were willing to do so. On the occasion of this good news, she wrote the following paragraph in which she pondered the good things received from the Jesuits: "And thus, if your honor knows their rules, you will see that in many things in our Constitutions we are like them."[32]

In the year 1566, Fr. Álvarez left Ávila for his new assignment in Medina del Campo. Teresa would seek his support for her foundation in that city (1567)[33] and would always rejoice in being near the place where her former confessor happened to be. She would continue to admire him as a holy person, and in 1580 she would weep disconsolately upon hearing of his death.[34]

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[32]*Cartas* 68-6U, 2–3. Applying stringent criteria, I compared the Teresian Constitutions (particularly chs. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 9) with the *Summary of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* published in 1560 and the *Common Rules S.I.* and found many similarities. Outstanding among these are the similitudes in the case of the examinations of conscience, the preparation of the points for meditation and for the prayer the following day, the food and common attire, the prohibition of private money, the detachment from worldly things, the "rule of touch," the spiritual conversation or "account of conscience" to the superiors, love as the basis of obedience to the superior, etc.

[33]*Fundaciones* [Foundations] 3, 1.

[34]On April 8, 1580, a few months before Fr. Baltasar Álvarez's death, Teresa wrote from Toledo to Doña Isabel Osorio in Madrid: "Let your honor know that he is one of my best friends. He was my confessor for some years. Let your honor try to speak to him, because he is a saint" (*Cartas* 0-4B, 4). Cf. *Cartas* 79-6K, 3; 81-3ª, 8; 81-6U, 3; Luis de la Puente, *Vida del P. Baltasar Álvarez* (Madrid: Atlas, 1958), c. 53.

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It can be said that from 1567 onward Teresa became a "monja andariega" (a "wayfarer nun") who would go on touring the roads of Spain, from foundation to foundation, until her death in 1582. Although she hardly found a place to stay in long enough to have the time for spiritual direction, she had as principal guide at this time Fr. Gracián de la Madre de Dios, a former pupil of the Jesuits.[35]

We mentioned before (especially in footnote #4) that many other priests had an influence on Teresa and were her confessors on different occasions. Wherever her travels and foundations took her, she would choose to be heard in confession by Jesuits[36] or Dominicans. Yet Teresa's acknowledgement that her confessors had almost always been Jesuits ("casi siempre han sido de estos benditos hombres de la Compañía de Jesús")[37] was reaffirmed more clearly and forcefully in a letter she sent to Don Cristobal Rodriguez de Moya on June 28, 1565 regarding persons she admits to her reformed convents:

> Not every spiritual person satisfies me as being suited for our monasteries, but those who have had these [Jesuit] Fathers as confessors do. Almost all who are in our houses are their daughters. I don't remember any that I have accepted who were not. They are the ones who suit us. For since these Fathers have nurtured my soul, the Lord has granted me the favor of having their spirit planted in these

[35]*Fundaciones* 23, 2. She writes about Gracián on the fourth of October: "he is one of the great servants of God I have dealt with, and of most honesty and cleanness of conscience.… After all, his whole life has been nurtured in the Society, as your honor may know" (*Cartas* 74-10A, 4).

[36]On the same occasion (1576) in which St. Teresa gave an account of the Dominicans who conversed with her, she also mentioned the following Jesuits at an earlier time: Fr. Antonio de Araoz, Fr. Francis Borgia (she says she dealt with him twice), Fr. Gil González (who at that time was Assistant General of the Society), Juan Suárez, Baltasar Álvarez, Gaspar de Salazar, Jerónimo Ripalda (then Rector of Burgos), Pablo Hernández (consultor of the Inquisition at Toledo), Martín Gutiérrez, and others of the Society of Jesus "who were known for being spiritual persons, and whose advice she sought in places where she went to, to establish foundations" (*Cuentas de conciencia* 53, 3).

[37]*Vida* c. 23, no. 18.

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> monasteries. And so, if you are familiar with their Rules, you will see that in many things in our Constitutions we are like them.[38]

We do not ignore the fact that St. Teresa also had problems and difficulties with some Jesuits who disagreed with her, in particular Fr. Juan Suárez, Provincial of Castile, on account of his opposition to the "prayer of silence" advocated by Fr. Baltasar Álvarez and for having attributed to her influence and to her revelations the expressed wish of Fr. Gaspar de Salazar to leave the Society of Jesus and join her discalced Carmelites. Nevertheless, she kept her great esteem and love for the Society. She refuted the false attributions and endeavored to untangle such snarled relationships, even before the General of the Society, so that truth should prevail. She said that "of much interest it must be to the devil that we should be unfriendly, and he is in such a hurry."[39] She continued to trust in so many Jesuits with whom she was acquainted and in the Society of Jesus itself, as she "has its interests at heart and would lay down her life for them."[40] Just before she passed away, she wrote to the Prioress of Burgos, taking pleasure in the fact that Fr. Gaspar Sánchez, S.J. would be going there as Rector, and

[38] *Cartas* 68-6U, 3. The English translation here is by Kieran Kavanaugh, *The Collected Letters of St. Teresa of Avila* Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies Publications, 2001), 56–57. It is remarkable that she affirms that "they [the Jesuits] have nurtured my soul" (ellos habian creado mi alma). Although she is aware that the Society cannot officially and juridically take charge of women religious, she does not want to lose contact with them and the frequent counseling she receives from them (ibid., 3–4). Indeed, she is thankful and well disposed towards the Jesuits until the end of her life. With regard to the Rector of the Jesuits in Burgos, she wrote on August 27, 1582: "About the Rector going there, I rejoice. Show him much grace and go sometime to confession with him, and ask him for sermons" (*Cartas* 82-8U, 4). In September of that same year of her death, she wrote to Mother Catalina de Cristo in Soria: "Concerning the Teatinos [Jesuits], I have been happy to see your reverence making preparations for what might you do for them that is necessary…" (*Cartas* 82-9K, 10).

[39] *Cartas* 82-5N, 3; cf. 78-2L, 19.80; 5C, 7–8; 81-6U, 3; 82-3K, 3.

[40] *Cartas* 78-2A, 8.

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counseled her to "show him much gratitude and occasionally go to confession with him, and ask him for sermons."[41]

Summary

The spirit of the Society of Jesus which St. Teresa says has been planted in her convents can be found as well in the Constitutions she wrote for her reformed Carmelite Order. If we are to describe its salient features, they are the following:

1. The central importance of the love of Christ in the mysteries of his humanity, so ardently defended by the saint.[42]

2. The peculiar way to find solutions to the problems of the contemplative life when the person must be engaged in businesses or activities in the service of God.[43]

3. The spiritual intuition by which the saint grasps the relation between ridding oneself of disordered attachments (so as to dispose the soul to the graces of God) and discovering his divine Will.

4. The clear awareness of the vanity of the world, and her freedom of spirit to seek, with all realism, the glory of God.

5. The frequent use of reflection, examinations of conscience, interior analysis, and application of spiritual discernment.

[41] *Cartas* 82-8U, 4. Please recall the instructions given by the Carmelite General Rubeo de Ravenna to Teresa that the Jesuits should preach to her nuns and even hear their confessions, if they were willing to do so. See footnote 32 of this article.

[42] *Vida* 22.

[43] *Cuentas de conciencia* 54, 5.

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6. The place allotted to obedience, to priestly and ecclesial mediation, in the exercise of discernment.

7. The concrete and trustful love for the "Holy Roman Catholic Church"[44] in all its reality ('warts and all') as seen in the light of the faith.

[44]*Moradas*, Introducción, 4; cf. *Vida* c. 33, no. 5.

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