



**THERESIAN
ANNIVERSARIES
2023-2025**

**Reading the writings of Theresse of the Child Jesus
Theresian anniversaries 2023-2025
2024: Manuscripts B and C**



Text 8:
In the Arms of Jesus
(Ms. C, 35v – 37r)

**Reading the writings of Therese of the Child Jesus
Theresian anniversaries 2023-2025
2024: Manuscripts B and C**

**Text 8:
In the Arms of Jesus (Ms. C, 35v – 37r)**

Suggestion for the community meeting:

1. Read the text together
2. One of those present, having prepared a contribution in advance, discusses the text using the commentary (and other aids, if necessary).
3. Community dialogue on the text.

It would be helpful to have made individual readings and reflections on Therese's text before the community meeting.

MANUSCRIT C, 35v-37r

Mother, I think it is necessary to give a few more explanations on the passage in the Song of Songs: "Draw me, we shall run," for what I wanted to say appears to me little understood. "No man can come after me, unless the FATHER who sent me draws him," Jesus has said. Again, through beautiful parables, and often even without using this means so well known to the people, He teaches us that it is enough to knock and it will be opened, to seek in order to find, and to hold out one's hand humbly to receive what is asked for. He also says that everything we ask the Father in His name, He will grant it. No doubt, it is because of this teaching that the Holy Spirit, before Jesus' birth, dictated this prophetic prayer: "Draw me, we shall run."

What is it then to ask to be "Drawn" if not to be united in an intimate way to the object which captivates our heart? If fire and iron had the use of reason, and if the latter said to the other: "Draw me," would it not prove that it desires to be identified with the fire in such a way that the fire penetrate and drink it up with its burning substance and seem to become one with it? Dear Mother, this is my prayer. I ask Jesus to draw me into the flames of His love, to unite me so closely to Him that He lives and acts in me. I feel that the more the fire of love burns within my heart, the more I shall say: "Draw me," the more also the souls who will approach me (poor little piece of iron, useless if I withdraw from the divine furnace), the more these souls will run swiftly in the odour of the ointments of their Beloved, for a soul that is burning with love cannot remain inactive. No doubt, she will remain at Jesus' feet as did Mary Magdalene, and she will listen to His sweet and burning words. Appearing to do nothing, she will give much more than Martha, who torments herself with many things and wants her sister to imitate her. It is not Martha's works that Jesus finds fault with; His divine Mother submitted humbly to these works all through her life since she had to prepare the meals of the Holy Family. It is only the distress of His ardent hostess that He willed to correct.

All the saints have understood this, and more especially those who filled the world with the light of the Gospel teachings. Is it not in prayer that St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. John of the Cross, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis, St. Dominic, and so many other famous Friends of God have drawn out this divine science which delights the greatest geniuses? A scholar has said: "Give me a lever and a fulcrum and I will lift the world." What Archimedes was not able to obtain, for his request was not directed at God and was only made from a material viewpoint, the saints have obtained in all its fullness. The Almighty has given them as fulcrum: HIMSELF ALONE; as lever: PRAYER which burns with a fire of love. And it is in this way that they have lifted the world; it is in this way that the saints still militant lift it, and that, until the end of time, the saints to come will lift it.

Dear Mother, now I would like to tell you what I understand by the odour of the ointments of the Beloved. Since Jesus has reascended into heaven, I can follow Him only in the traces He has left; but how luminous these traces are! How perfumed! I have only to cast a glance in the Gospels and immediately I breathe in the perfumes of Jesus' life, and I know on which side to run. I don't hasten to the first place but to the last; rather than advance like the Pharisee, I repeat, filled with confidence, the publican's humble prayer. Most of all I imitate the conduct of Magdalene; her astonishing or rather her loving audacity which charms the Heart of Jesus, also attracts my own. Yes, I feel it; even if I had on my conscience all the sins that can be committed, I would go, my heart broken with sorrow, and throw myself into Jesus' arms, for I know how much He loves the prodigal child who returns to Him. It is not because God, in His anticipating Mercy, has preserved my soul from mortal sin that I go to Him with confidence and love.

Introduction to the text:

Now we are at the last page of Manuscript C, Therese is finally at the end of her strength, and will leave this manuscript unfinished.

‘To be united in an intimate way’ (Ms. C, 35r): Therese has now passed onto the mystical plane, with this comparison of the iron that desires to be identified with the fire.

‘The more these souls will run swiftly in the odour of the ointments’ (Ms. C, 36r) : « It is through herself being so totally drawn into the flames of the love of Jesus – to the point of being incandescent – that Therese became so attractive. That is how she is still drawing so many men and women to Jesus throughout the world, by demonstrating through her life, as through a clear mirror, all the fascinating and alluring beauty of the Love of Jesus. » (François-Marie Léthel, *Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus, docteur de l’Amour*, Venasque, 1990, p. 114).

‘A soul that is burning with love cannot remain inactive’ (Ms. C, 36r): transcription of a line of Saint Teresa of Jesus.

‘It is only the distress . . .’ (Ms. C, 36r): from this word on, the text is written in pencil. On 8th July, Therese was taken down to the infirmary. She wrote a few more lines, but her weakness prevented her from finishing her manuscript.

‘Was it not in prayer’ (Ms. C, 36r) : prayer is the last word, Therese’s last teaching, because it is the key to everything, the way to union with God, the lever which ‘lifts the world’.

‘I have only to cast a glance in the Gospels’ (Ms. C, 36v), until the very end, Therese retained her sensitive and wondering love of the person of Christ.

‘The traces He has left; but how luminous these traces are! How perfumed! I have only to cast a glance in the Gospels and immediately I breathe in the perfumes of Jesus’ life’ (Ms. C, 36v): cf. *The Living Flame*, Verse 3.

‘Has preserved my soul from mortal sin’ (Ms. C, 36v): Therese is referring here to the solemn declaration of Father Pichon (cf. Ms. A, 70r), but in order to reinforce her last message, which is that, even if she had committed ‘all the sins’ possible, she declares that she would nevertheless go to throw herself into the arms of Jesus.

For community discussion:

1. *What is the text saying?* Understanding the content and initial meaning of Therese's text
2. *What does the text say to us today?* Discern the present-day relevance (social, ecclesial, spiritual. . .) of the text.
3. *What does the text say to me/us?* Consider the personal and community relevance of the text.

The purpose of this process is to allow Therese to speak to us herself, to question and encourage us, and to open us up to her clarifying and confirming our own personal and community path. The questions suggested are only indicative, and could perhaps be used in individual meditation and community sharing.

Questions:

1. Concerning the Song of Songs, 1:4 : what kind of prayer is Therese insisting on here, as she is coming to the end of her last manuscript? What does this verse of the Song express for us?
2. How are we affected by her teaching on prayer? What realities is she stressing? How does this passage illumine our own life of prayer?
3. Therese expresses here in her own way the accomplishment of the spiritual life. Compare Therese's commentary with that notably of Teresa of Jesus in the Seventh Mansions, where we find again a reference to Martha and Mary.



THERESIAN ANNIVERSARIES
2023-2025



DISCALCED CARMELITES

General Curia of the Teresian Carmel

www.discalcedcarmelite.com