

December 14, 2023



Daily Reflections

KINDLED IN LOVE

By Julie Mussché

The Core of Contemplation

“Contemplation is nothing else but a secret, peaceful and loving infusion of God, which if admitted, will set the soul on fire, with the Spirit of love.”

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

Reflection

It is no wonder that St. John had a devotion to the Suffering Christ on the cross: he experienced distress and hardship at many points throughout his 49 years on earth. Losing his father at an early age, John’s childhood was disrupted by extreme poverty and chaos.

Once things stabilized, John was able to attend school and, through a number of introductions and persistence, he matriculated at a Jesuit school, found his vocation as a Carmelite, and eventually studied at the University of Salamanca.

Following his ordination, John encountered Teresa of Avila. This serendipitous collision of mystical souls provides a wonderful example of *Anam Cara*. Initially, Teresa helped to form John spiritually, and later, John companioned Teresa as her spiritual director. The synergy of their friendship enthused and helped to guide the reform of the Carmelite Order.

John ended up being jailed by his brother Carmelites for executing the reformation of the order. He was isolated and tortured, and it is during this time of significant suffering that John underwent his Dark Night of the Soul. His poem of this title beautifully captures the transformative journey of the dark night. John eventually escaped captivity and continued with the reforms and serving God until his death.

In celebration of John, courageous reformer, mystic, and poet, Happy Feast Day!



Le Puy, France
Photo by Julie Mussché

For Pondering

- How do you define spiritual courage or tenacity?
 - Who are the saints or people that represent these virtues to you?
-

For Prayer

The Dark Night of the Soul (Verses I-IV)

I.

*In a dark night,
With anxious love inflamed,
O, happy lot!
Forth unobserved I went,
My house being now at rest.*

II.

*In darkness and in safety,
By the secret ladder, disguised,
O, happy lot!
In darkness and concealment,
My house being now at rest.*

III.

*In that happy night,
In secret, seen of none,
Seeing nought myself,
Without other light or guide
Save that which in my heart was burning.*

IV.

*That light guided me
More surely than the noonday sun
To the place where He was waiting for me,
Whom I knew well,
And where none appeared...*

The Dark Night of the Soul by St. John of the Cross.
Translated by David Lewis. London: Thomas Baker, 1908.

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