



## **Who is St. John of the Cross for Me? He is My Spiritual Director**

It was all started with curiosity about his thick book. It that puzzled me what would be interesting in this content. St. John of the Cross is known as a mystic and his unfathomable written poems are profound expressions of human yearning: yearning for something that can satisfy the soul, that can fill up the emptiness, that can enable the vacuuming of the dirtiness and unwantedness in the being that ruins the pureness of the soul.

My curiosity was unveiled when I started reading the book titled "When Gods Die," written by John Welch, O. Carm. I came to love his three major poems: The Dark Night, The Spiritual Canticle, The Living Flame of Love. It is similar to the person who is in love, he/she sees the whole self in him or in her and they become inseparable in thoughts.

So, I found my whole self in his writings. In Living Flame of Love, St. John describes "the experience of one whose humanity has been transformed in union with God" (When Gods Die, Chapter 4 p. 45). I was mesmerized by the idea of being transformed in union with God. It meant a lot to me. As a religious sister, for a couple of years I had this manner I called "undesirable behavior." I was deeply moved and begun to realize as someone who desires only union with God, that I have to be transformed. I began my inner journey. It was painful. Each day I experienced an excruciating pain, the worst I had ever known until I defined my transformation mentally and in my inner being. The one who has a desire to love God is able to transform. The stanzas of The Ascent of Mount Carmel "describe the way to the summit of mountain, another image for union of the soul with God through love" (When Gods Die, Chapter 5 p. 72).

It is impossible for the soul to be in union with God without love. The reflection on the Ascent of Mount Carmel says; "On this journey during the night, two mysteries are being met: the self and God."

During this night, in the process of my transformation where I personally encounter God, is where I am aware of the gratification of my appetite is the cause of the ruin of my soul. A relationship with God requires a discovery of the true self appropriation. In my intense encounter with the Lord, I was confronted with my real self. I never allowed before myself to be open on my painful past. I was trying to hide it for all these years.

To establish a relationship with the Lord is very costly. It digs deeper into my being than I thought was necessary to win friendship with the Lord. I allowed myself to be transformed by God, to be attached only to Him in the analysis of human desire a person is related to a creature in a manner which is only appropriate for a relationship with God" (When Gods Die, Chapter 5, p. 74). I came to understand that my existence is solely in union with God and His real presence when my heart and mind are empty, free from any form of disordinate attachment. God dwells there.

St. John of the Cross was an amazing spiritual writer. He writes from the chamber of his being the yearning of His soul to reach the summit of



contemplation. I consider him my spiritual director without any physical presence but through his writings. He came alive to me. He simplifies the complicated notion of how to get into union with God, to empty oneself, to let God dwell in the space of one's heart and being. My spiritual director, awakening my dull senses to what is substantial in union of the encounter with Lord, is allowing me to be in the desert— a place where life is almost impossible. Deprivation of one's appetites, vast silence, heat and dryness are symbols of God's testing. The soul needs nothing but God who quenches the thirst and hunger. Only He can satisfy. My spiritual director taught me that discernment is to allow God to intervene in my choices and be part of my decision. It is a form of contemplation because contemplation will not end after meditation. My soul is contented to have my spiritual director. He guides my soul to be brave, to comprehend as well as I can the essence of being in union with God. In struggles of the night, the senses are shut down and the appetites are no longer recognized where God is the control of everything.

Thank You... spiritual director St. John of the Cross.

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