



Dear pilgrim,

The Carmelite tradition calls us to be pilgrims of hope—not through distant lands, but within the depths of our hearts. This inner journey is one of faith, silence, and trust in God's loving presence.

Hope is not wishful thinking; it is a courageous act of belief in God's promises, even when the path is unclear. In the Carmelite way, we journey together—in prayer, community, and love.

St. Teresa of Avila, a guide in the spiritual life, reminds us:

“Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly... even though your eyes do not yet behold the Promised Land, hope on and hope ever.”  
*(Exclamations of the Soul to God, 15)*

Let her words encourage you to walk in trust. God is near. Love is leading you. And no journey is ever taken alone.



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[ocarm.org](http://ocarm.org)



**Carmelites**

Curia Generalizia dei Carmelitani  
Via Giovanni Lanza, 138  
00184 Roma, Italia

 [seggen@ocarm.org](mailto:seggen@ocarm.org)

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PILGRIMAGE OF  
HOPE: WALKING  
WITH ST. TERESA  
OF AVILA



## St. Teresa of Avila: A Companion on the Pilgrim's Path

Born in 1515 in Avila, Spain, Teresa's life was marked by a profound desire for closeness to God. Entering the Carmelite convent at 20, she struggled with prayer but eventually discovered a deep, transformative intimacy with Christ. Through her writings—*The Interior Castle*, *The Way of Perfection*, and *The Book of Her Life*—she shared the wisdom that prayer is “an intimate sharing between friends.”

Despite facing trials and long periods of spiritual dryness, Teresa persevered. She reformed the Carmelite order and founded 17 convents dedicated to contemplative prayer. Her teachings offer practical guidance for integrating prayer into daily life, grounding us amid the challenges of the modern world.

### Prayer and Everyday Life

Teresa believed that life and prayer are inseparable. She encourages us to begin right where we are—bringing our struggles, joys, and imperfections before God. “Prayer in my opinion,” she writes, “is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.”

#### 1. Be Yourself

Teresa's first lesson is to pray as we are, not as we think we should be. This authenticity allows us to connect with God honestly, without pretence. Prayer does not demand perfection but a willingness to show up—even when life feels overwhelming.

#### 2. Make an Effort

While prayer is a gift, Teresa emphasizes the need for “determined determination.” She assures us that anyone who persists in prayer will grow closer to God, even if the path is unclear. Perseverance, not perfection, is the goal.

#### 3. Recollection

Teresa introduces the “prayer of recollection,” a moment of drawing our scattered thoughts inward to be present with God. This quiet interior practice helps transform ordinary moments into sacred encounters. She urges: “Get used to this practice! Get used to it!” Whether on a bus, in a quiet room, or walking through life's demands—pause. Become aware that God is near, gazing at you with love.

## Overcoming Challenges in Prayer

The path of prayer is not always smooth. Teresa's honesty about her own struggles is a gift to us:

*Dryness:* Teresa experienced years of spiritual dryness and reminds us that this is part of the journey. God's presence is not always felt, but always real. We are invited to trust.

*Distractions:* When the mind wanders, Teresa advises us to gently return to God. Prayer, she says, is “not about thinking much, but about loving much.”

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## The Eucharist: A Source of Strength and Intimacy

For Teresa, the Eucharist was central to her spiritual life—a wellspring of grace, strength, and communion. She wrote, “If when [Jesus] went about in the world the mere touch of his robes cured the sick, why doubt, if we have faith, that miracles will be worked while He is within us?”

Receiving the Eucharist was for her a moment of profound union. She encouraged her sisters to practice recollection after Communion—resting in God's love and listening for His gentle voice. The sacrament nourishes us for the road ahead, reminding us that Christ walks with us always.

## Pilgrims Anchored in Hope

Life's journey is marked by longing, trials, and transformation. In the Carmelite tradition, this journey is not only external—it is above all interior. We are invited to walk in faith, seeking God in silence, prayer, and community.

Like St. Teresa, we draw strength from deep communion with God. In fraternity, we support one another—sharing the path, carrying each other's burdens, and encouraging growth in love. For the Carmelite, every moment becomes part of a sacred pilgrimage toward union with God.

## A Prayerful Invitation

Let us embrace the cross—not as a burden, but as a sign of the hope that carries us forward. Inspired by St. Teresa of Avila, may we discover that life itself can become a prayer—a journey of trust and transformation in God.

“In the measure you desire Him, you will find Him.”  
– St. Teresa of Avila