

St. Teresa of Ávila



1515-1582

Feast Day:
October 15

Teresa was born in a part of Spain called Ávila. When she was younger, she enjoyed being with friends and having fun. She wanted to love Jesus, but she worried she wasn't good enough.

Teresa's father sent her to a convent (a place where nuns live). But the convent was a bad place. The sisters there did not take their religious vows seriously.

Teresa prayed for almost 20 years. She felt like Jesus wasn't answering her. She almost gave up. But a priest encouraged her to keep trying. Then she finally started to feel like God was listening. When she prayed, she would start to cry. She would feel like she couldn't hear, see, smell, or even touch anything. Sometimes her body would even levitate (rise up off the ground). She didn't like it when these things happened to her where people could see.

But a lot of people were interested in what she had learned from God about praying. She wrote books, most famously *Inner Castle*, about what she had learned. Teresa decided to start a new convent. Her convent would be focused on prayer and living simply. A lot of young ladies joined.

Long after she died, Pope Paul VI named her a Doctor of the Church. This is a very special title that means her writings helped form Catholic doctrine.

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