

Video Congress of Holy Women Doctors of the Church

Is St. Teresa of Jesus still a modern woman, a woman who speaks to the man of today? At the Catholic University of Avila we believe so, for being a woman, for being a spiritual teacher and for being a mother. She has a special ability, a charisma received from God to speak, to communicate and transmit what she was, what she lived, and that continues to be valid in the present.

In what way does St. Teresa continue to speak? At the Catholic University of Avila we experience it and observe it through many initiatives involving students, faculty, university staff or even outsiders who participate in university activities and initiatives.

The school of prayer is a time for participants to echo the teachings of St. Teresa and put them into practice to learn how to deal with the one we know loves us.

- We have a prayer group which consists of a weekly meeting
- It is a moment in which I can meet with the Lord, this little time I have to tell him how my day is going, how my journey is going, and he invites me to reflect in some way on my professional practice but also this introspection within my daily life.
- Sometimes we think in the spiritual life that one can advance alone but it requires or is of great help to have people, people who can be your companions, it can be a priest but can also be people who perhaps are no longer materially on earth, but who have already left a written doctrine, such as St. Teresa.
- St. Teresa invites us to put aside all distractions, which we have many - we live with the mobile, computer, constantly - to enter into silence and try to be friends with whom we know who loves us, as Saint Teresa said.
- I believe that we are immersed in a society in which really, for example, values such as respect, I think that today they have been lost and I think that through this type of exercises we reconnect with that sensitivity that the human species has always had and has had throughout evolution and that we really need to have a better world.
- Prayer according to St. Teresa is a fight sometimes against ourselves, against our laziness, against our mental, emotional, digital dispersion, that is what prayer is, it is not a coming to relax, but to come to have a strong internal struggle in that face to face with the Lord.

- St. Teresa is a great wise woman and I have always seen it that way, a great person very close to the Lord and so when we started reading the book "mental prayer according to St. Teresa", the truth is that I saw it as a great opportunity to be a student of this great teacher. The idea of being able to learn from her directly for me was a great privilege.

Poetry is also the language that is able to say with symbols what cannot be easily expressed, the recitation of poetry.

- "I did not see the glorious Saint Joseph so clearly, although I saw that he was there like the visions that I have said are not seen. It seemed to me..."
- What Saint Teresa wrote in her days we can apply to our everyday situations, the teachings she gives us are very broad. For me Santa Teresa is a guide, a woman to imitate, that desire to overcome, despite the difficulties, move forward, walk, start, continue, fight to achieve the goal that often twists us.

The singing of the poems through the music of the university choir touches the heart and makes you want to live what she lived and what inspired those verses.

- My favorite is "I am yours, and born for you" because it reminds me a lot of my family and especially of the things they used to say to me when I was a child, and above all the verse "sovereign majesty, eternal wisdom, goodness good to my soul".
- (Song) "I am yours, I was born for you, that do you want from me?..."

At the same time, we have the opportunity to bring our students and teachers to the life and human warmth of St. Teresa through theater, representing her life, her teachings on prayer. In this way Saint Teresa appears close to us and that enters into a very personal dialogue with each of us and those who attend the performance.

- With the play we performed at the university you have more contact with Saint Teresa, it is as if you had a living Saint Teresa. I played the role of the father of Saint Teresa and it was as if she were my daughter, and well, I thought how unworthy I am to be the father of Santa Teresa! But how nice to see, above all, the most representative scene for me of the play that is "the degrees of prayer in the garden," of St. Teresa.
(theater)

- "That one!
- What do you say, daughter?
- That is the 4th degree of prayer, the rain! In the other previous ways some work is done by the waterer. The rain is a divine irrigation where only the Lord takes part.
- The rain...

- You realize a little of what prayer is, something more important than how I had valued it so far and when you come into contact, seeing St. Teresa at your side, performing, comparing how to water a garden with the degrees of prayer ... In addition, I am an agricultural engineer, the theme of the field or the garden is something that penetrates me, I really liked that experience very well.

(theater)

- We have to finish this hermitage first, it's our favorite game...
- But it is more important to go to heaven and I know how to do it, now we have to go.
- Where to?
- Far away, to the land of the Moors!
- What for?
- So that they cut off our heads Rodrigo, like the martyred saints of this book!

- We represented when they left to the land of Moors. They wanted the Moors to cut off their heads to go to God.
- St. Teresa wanted to go to the land of the Moors to be in heaven!

The world of children also participates in this possibility of contact with Saint Teresa, through drawings, contests that we have launched to publicize and make children think about who is Santa Teresa as a doctor, has shown that children also love her, they begin to know, and approach the figure of "her saint", the saint of Avila. But perhaps the activity in which our Saint seems closer, more familiar, more human is in the visits to those women who have followed in her wake, the Discalced Carmelites. A colloquium experience in the parlor of a Carmel is by far the most intense experience that shows the

perennial relevance of Saint Teresa, joy, humor, deep thought, the gaze into eternity, the heart full of God and that message that remains in the heart of the visitor, which is close to the daughters of Saint Teresa, is an experience that we repeat with our students, our teachers.

- A couple of weeks ago, we went with 60 young people in two groups and you had to see their faces, their eyes like plates, gigantic, wide open, looking at women who were behind a fence, happy to lack what the rest of us believe is necessary.
- The truth is that the day I came to see them I was very impressed by the words they told me. What everyone always thinks: why are you there, what has made you be there? Everyone thinks “they are cloistered nuns, they almost don’t talk to you”, and it is completely the opposite. The truth was also a way to feel closer to Saint Teresa because in the end they follow in her footsteps, and it helps to have a closer image of Saint Teresa.

St. Teresa was undoubtedly a strong woman, because she was humble. Don Alvaro de Mendoza, Bishop of Avila, who helped her so much in the foundation of St. Joseph and other foundations, said: “I swear by my life that sometimes I do not understand Mother Teresa but I believe in her wholeheartedly. I have seen her commit herself in such a way that she achieves what she starts”. She was tremendously positive, not at all victimizing, cheerful, with a great sense of humor, she was alarmed to see a sad nun and looked at melancholy as a real plague. "Sadness and melancholy I do not want them in my house". Or who has not heard her saying: "a saint who is sad is a sad saint"? I would also like to highlight and emphasize her feminism. With her being and doing, she answers and overthrows the radical feminism of our times, a vindictive feminism that ignores the true feminine essence.

- And for Young women today, especially for women of all ages, she is a great real model, showing us how Jesus - and growing closer to Him and serving His Church, is not a means of limiting our freedom, but of increasing our freedom. That's where we find our real joy, when we fix our hopes and our desires on eternity, on Christ, and when we find our gifts, we find the way to use them to serve his Church.

- St. Teresa teaches us that the path that made her an exceptional woman and a person of reference through the centuries, the path of prayer, is open to all who humbly open themselves to the action of the Spirit in their lives, and that the sign that we are advancing on that path, is to be ever more humble, more solicitous to the needs of our brothers, better children of the holy people of God.

Why is Teresa still relevant today? Teresa has understood like no one else a universal experience of being human and that is that the desires of the human heart have infinite dimensions and, ultimately, that thirst refers us to a source that can only be God. Only God satisfies the human heart. She who had such a rich affectivity, so overflowing, understood in herself and was able to make others understand and continues to make us understand that happiness cannot be found if we do not seek and find God. Why does this message of Teresa's continue to be the object of study, this experience of hers, so alive, so close? Because what she expresses through language, prayer, dialogue with God and her readers, her daughters who enter into dialogue with visitors, is something that overflows the channels of expression, that is, the reality that Teresa communicates to us is inexhaustible, and therefore can always be deepened through studies, academic conferences, university chairs. This is also an experience that reveals the perennial actuality of Teresa, the experience to which she refers us.

St. Teresa is still alive, still speaks to the man of today, and continues to have a message of full actuality.