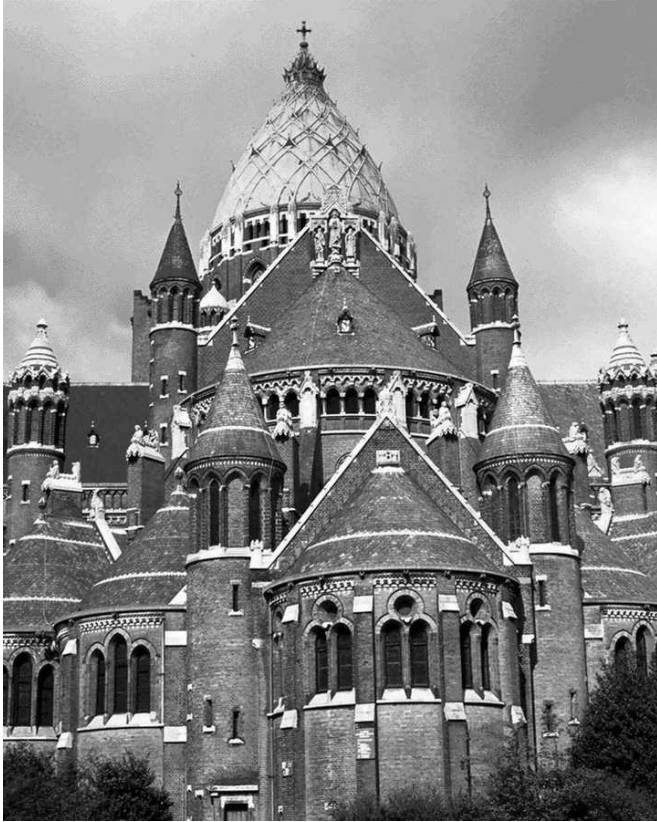


The Citadel Within



Meditations on St. Teresa of Jesus'

"The Interior Castle"

written by Paul Buis

Table Of Contents

Introduction	2
First Meditation (I:1)	3
Second Meditation (I:2)	4
Third Meditation (II:1).....	5
Fourth Meditation (III:1-2).....	6
Fifth Meditation (IV:1-3)	7
Sixth Meditation (V:1-2).....	8
Seventh Meditation (V:3-4)	9
Eighth Meditation (VI:1)	10
Ninth Meditation (VI:2-3).....	11
Tenth Meditation (VI:4-6).....	12
Eleventh Meditation (VI:7)	13
Twelfth Meditation (VI:8-9)	14
Thirteenth Meditation (VI:10-11).....	15
Fourteenth Meditation (VII:1).....	16
Fifteenth Meditation (VII:2).....	17
Sixteenth Meditation (VII:3).....	18
Seventeenth Meditation (VII:4).....	19
References	20
Copyright Notice	20

Introduction

The Citadel Within is a series of meditations on St Teresa of Jesus' spiritual masterpiece **The Interior Castle**.

These meditations are meant to provide a structure for prayerful reflection to accompany the meditative reading of **The Interior Castle**. May you find the depth of St Teresa's images and teaching come to life for you as you meditate with her spiritual masterpiece.

First Meditation (I:1)

“O God, we ponder Your love within Your temple...Walk through Zion, walk all around it; count the number of its towers. Review all its ramparts, examine its castles, that you may tell the next generation that such is our God, our God forever and always. It is He who leads us.” (Psalm 48: 10,13-15)

Castle of Crystal

Within the walls of crystal clear,
The King of kings is known to dwell:
Omnipotence so very near;
Eternity held in His cell.

His throne room in the center keeps
The fount of life and love, which flows
From Source to soul -- mercy's grace seeps --
Yielding His life where'er it goes.

The drawbridge opens with the prayer
Whose deep yearning draws the bridge down.
Reflections focus with great care
On Beloved who bears the crown.

In His Image, the spires rise:
From mortals meek to heaven's skies.

May the King of the citadel draw us into His palace in our
prayer and reflection.

Second Meditation (I:2)

“Thus says the Lord: The heavens are my throne, the earth is my footstool. What kind of house can you build for me; what is to be my resting place? My hand made all these things when all of them came to be, says the Lord. This is the one whom I approve: the lowly and afflicted man who trembles at my word.” (Isaiah 66:1-2)

The First Rooms

Across the bridge the handmaid steals
In search of Him who dwells therein.
In the first rooms dim light reveals
Her wretchedness of self and sin.

The crystal walls reflect contrast:
The handmaid to Divinity;
Her state to Beauty Unsurpassed --
The mirror of humility.

Within these rooms the vermin reign:
Their honor, pride, and vain pleasures;
The humble, with grace, will sustain
Their search for Beloved's treasures.

The proud are cast down to their place
To be lifted by Mercy's grace.

May Mercy reflect our reality clearly, so that we may find the
safe way of humility.

Third Meditation (II:1)

“How long will you set upon a man to shatter him, all of you, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence? They only plan to thrust him down from his eminence. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken...Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.” (Psalm 62:3-6,8)

The Second Rooms

Within the second rooms await:
The will with its agenda set;
The heart with its attachments great;
The mind where guilt and worries fret.

Surrendering the will to God,
Trusting the course He'll choose is best,
And knowing the heart's frail and flawed,
Allows it to release and rest.

Into His hands, the handmaid pours:
Her heart's treasures with all their weight;
Her mind's worries with their feigned horrors --
She seeks His rest where storms abate.

As she strives forth, His call she hears;
With persistence, His presence nears.

May the sound of the Lord's calling in our lives give us the hope to persevere through the trials of detachment and surrender to God's will.

Fourth Meditation (III:1-2)

“Now someone approached him and said, 'Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?' He answered him, 'Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments'...The young man said to him, 'All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to (the) poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Amen, I say to you, it will be hard for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.'” (Matthew 19:16-17,20-23)

The Third Rooms

In the third rooms, life is ordered;
Within God's hands -- all has a place:
Each word is weighed; each act measured --
Virtues have strengthened by God's grace.

Yet, in this place, balance is flawed;
Some small setback upsets it all.
When some favor's withdrawn by God,
This fragile one suffers a fall.

The handmaid, with humility,
Finds His hand veiled in trial's wave;
She embraces her poverty,
Trusting He will triumph and save.

She moves beyond love by measure;
To seek His love -- her heart's treasure.

May the Lord grant us His gift of humility, that we may be able to embrace our poverty, and seek His will for us without measure.

Fifth Meditation (IV:1-3)

“Answer when I call, my saving God. In my troubles, you cleared a way; show me favor; hear my prayer...Know that the Lord works wonders for the faithful; the Lord hears when I call out. Tremble and do not sin; upon your beds ponder in silence. Offer fitting sacrifice and trust in the Lord. Many say, 'May we see better times! Lord, show us the light of your face!' But you have given my heart more joy than they have when grain and wine abound. In peace I shall both lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me secure.” (Psalm 4:2,4-9)

The Fourth Rooms

In the fourth rooms, a waterway,
Pumps consolation from the third.
Love from the heart flows as we pray
To Him for whom the heart is stirred.

At times, the Master of the spring,
Pours out His love straight from the source.
The heart wells up with joy to sing;
Heaven's delight flows through the course.

The maiden, with humble surprise,
Absorbs the love poured out for her.
In gratitude, she lifts her eyes
With joyful praise for her Master.

The waters pool in her heart;
Like spring run-off, they flood each part.

May the Lord grant us the grace and ability to surrender ourselves completely into the arms of His love, with humility and thanksgiving.

Sixth Meditation (V:1-2)

“Draw me after you, let us make haste. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will exult and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine; rightly do they love you.”
(Song of Songs 1:4)

The Fifth Rooms

In the fifth rooms, the maiden spins
A silk cocoon in which to die.
This fat silkworm, ugly with sins,
Enclosed with hope that she will fly.

In her Cocoon, the worm's transformed
By grace to a white butterfly!
Her fat is gone; her wings have formed
With strength to soar in heaven's sky.

Her former ways, like heavy leaves,
Replaced with the nectar of prayer;
Thoughts of its frail, slow crawl now grieves
This newborn creature of the air.

With wings, in her exile, she stays;
Yearning to soar in heaven's rays.

May the Lord draw us into His chamber and help us to prepare to receive His seal. May He transform us in preparation for the works of His will which He has in mind for us.

Seventh Meditation (V:3-4)

“Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God...No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit...So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him...We love, because he first loved us...And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.” (1 John 4:7,12-13, 16,19,21)

Flight From The Fifth Rooms

In these rooms, Maiden Butterfly,
Laments her wings wet with weakness.
With humble prayer, she strives to dry
Her wings in breeze of Love's kindness.

Lacking the strength to reach the throne,
She begs the King to grant His will.
The nectar of His will alone
Strengthens her soul beyond her fill.

She lifts off, from her weakened state,
On Love's currents, she flies to serve.
Trusting the Wind will guide her straight,
With great care, she strives not to swerve.

His love is strength for service wrought;
His will's perfect as we are not.

May the Lord grant us the grace to love one another with His love.

Eighth Meditation (VI:1)

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’” (Matthew 27:45-46)

The Sixth Rooms

In the sixth rooms, the Maiden flies
Upon the Breeze where'er she goes;
Talk of her beauteous wings decries
Her humble ways -- His beauty shows.

If, carelessly, she folds her wings,
The faithful Breeze would soon rescind
His lift -- the downward spiral stings
Fidelity of wing to Wind.

She hits the ground - her wings injured;
Maiden's a wreck in her weakness.
This Breeze-less night must be endured,
To purify her in meekness.

All night, she holds her crumpled wings;
Abandoned in her sufferings.

May the Lord grant us the grace of patient endurance, so that
we may endure the dark night of the soul.

Ninth Meditation (VI:2-3)

“My beloved put his hand to the latch, and my heart was thrilled within me. I arose to open to my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, upon the handles of the bolt. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone. My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer. The watchmen found me, as they went about in the city; they beat me, they wounded me, they took away my mantle, those watchmen of the walls. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am sick with love.” (Song of Songs 5:4-8)

Wing-Tip Wounds

At dawn's first light, her wings are healed;
She lifts off, reaching greater heights.
The presence of the Wind's revealed --
Her wings tear in the Updraft's might.

The wing-tip wounds have cut quite deep;
Yet Maiden's flight is undeterred.
She asks for neither balm nor sleep;
A deeper love of Wind has stirred.

The Wind whispers His Word up here;
The Maiden listens with great care.
Though Wind and wing have drawn so near;
The meadow's sounds still fill the air.

The presence of the Wind is known;
He spoke with her as they have flown.

May the Lord lift us nearer to Himself, and speak tenderly to us through the wounds of His love.

Tenth Meditation (VI:4-6)

“Behind and before you encircle me and rest your hand upon me. Such knowledge is beyond me, far too lofty for me to reach. Where can I hide from your spirit? From your presence, where can I flee? If I ascend to the heavens, you are there; if I lie down in Sheol, you are there too. If I fly with the wings of dawn and alight beyond the sea, Even there your hand will guide me, your right hand hold me fast.” (Psalm 139:5-10)

Enraptured

As Maiden flies upon the Breeze,
The Dove swoops; she's caught in His beak.
Upon His wings, she soars with ease;
Her senses blur -- she cannot speak.

The light of Truth sears through the veil
Of dim vision -- faith comes alive!
The mortal mind, still weak and frail,
Infused with wisdom can now thrive.

With these gifts, there's a higher price:
Complete surrender of the soul;
A limitless self-sacrifice --
So the creature may be made whole.

She clings her wings about her Dove;
As she's enraptured in His love.

May the Spirit grant us the courage and grace of complete self-surrender and confidence in His merciful love so that we may trust Him so completely, that He may do with us whatever He wills.

Eleventh Meditation (VI:7)

“Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice! Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually! Remember the wonderful works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered.” (Psalm 105:3-5a)

Held In Her Place

As she returns back to her place:
A lowly creature prone to sin,
Held near Beloved by His grace --
Her weight of flesh wells up within.

Her flaws and weaknesses remain,
Yet grace has wrought humility;
Her self's surrendered to His reign --
He strengthens her fragility.

She waivers with uncertainty,
As she recalls her sinful bane;
She clings to His humanity --
Sharing His passion and His pain.

She seeks to shelter at His side:
Her Master, Majesty, and Guide.

May the Master grant us His strength to shoulder the heavy cross of our frail humanity set against the backdrop of His Divinity.

Twelfth Meditation (VI:8-9)

“And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him...And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:15-16,30-32)

Her Companion

It blazes through the crystal walls --
The glory of His Countenance!
His Divine Presence all-enthalls
Her in the gleam of His Monstrance.

Though vanished, He remains with her:
In silent presence at her side;
In love's movements that lift and stir;
In nearness known with ev'ry stride.

His visage, etched in memory,
Propels her to fulfill His will;
Striving, with greater purity,
To serve Him with great care and skill.

She does not seek Beloved's face;
Trusting His will keeps her in place.

May the Beloved accompany us on the way and grant us the
grace to receive Him as we should.

Thirteenth Meditation (VI:10-11)

“Like a swallow or a crane I clamor, I moan like a dove. My eyes are weary with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; be thou my security! But what can I say? For he has spoken to me, and he himself has done it. All my sleep has fled because of the bitterness of my soul...The Lord will save me, and we will sing to stringed instruments all the days of our life, at the house of the Lord.” (Isaiah 38:14-15,20)

Death Knell

Suspended by a sudden pierce:
A bayonet stabbing deep in
Her soul -- the pain's mortally fierce;
It drains life from her paling skin.

Earth is reduced to shadows dim,
And heaven lies beyond her reach;
Her soul is stranded between them --
A broken spirit held in breach.

She yearns for God amidst the flames;
Like Purgatory's final phase.
Though purifying burns and maims,
Her faith's unshaken -- God WILL raise!

This long moment soon comes to past;
She crosses through the gate at last!

When this deepest of purifications comes to us in this life;
may we be joined to our Beloved in His passion as He is
pierced by the lance.

Fourteenth Meditation (VII:1)

“He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him...If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (John 14: 21,23)

The Truth Revealed

Having been tried and purified,
Her spirit stands before the Throne
Of Truth, who takes her as His bride;
She truly lives for God alone.

The cloud of unknowing descends,
Like morning mist on the valley;
Her intellect, as it ascends,
Beholds the Truth of Trinity!

The Father, who spoke just one Word --
His Son, Jesus -- to save the lost;
The Spirit, whose Presence hovered,
At creation and Pentecost.

The glory of the Triune One
Pours through her soul like blazing sun.

May the Lord grant us the grace to live for Him alone, so that
the glory of the Trinity may dawn upon us in this life and
shine eternally upon us in the next.

Fifteenth Meditation (VII:2)

“Then I heard something like the sound of a great multitude or the sound of rushing water or mighty peals of thunder, as they said: ‘Alleluia! The Lord has established his reign, (our) God, the almighty. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory. For the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready. She was allowed to wear a bright, clean linen garment.’ (The linen represents the righteous deeds of the holy ones.) Then the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These words are true; they come from God.’” (Rev 19:6b-9)

Espoused

The Bridegroom takes her to His side;
The Lamb begins the wedding feast.
She stands, with wonder, as His bride --
The Greatest has chosen the least!

His embrace exudes endless peace,
With greater love than she has known.
His awesome Presence cannot cease;
His life and love become her own.

At this reception, she remains:
A bride whose dress reflects His rays;
A faithful spouse who shares His pains;
A life partner who lives His ways.

The emptied self He overflows
With life and love that only grows.

May the Lamb call us to His side to become one with Him in
life and love.

Sixteenth Meditation (VII:3)

“How good it is, how pleasant, where the people dwell as one!...Like dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion. There the Lord has lavished blessings, life for evermore!” (Psalm 133:1,3)

Intimacy

The bride shares one life with her King:
One blood in their fidelity;
One body in their suffering;
One soul in their will's unity.

Divinity shines through her soul:
Though weaknesses remain in place,
Her brokenness in Him is whole;
Humility exudes His grace.

The Divine rain showers essence
Of love and peace on her heart's field,
That basks in light of His Presence --
Love's wheat bears its hundred-fold yield.

Their union IS a citadel;
As one in life and love they dwell.

May the King grant us the strongest grace to live in union with
Him in this life, continuing into the next.

Seventeenth Meditation (VII:4)

“No more shall men call you 'Forsaken', or your land 'Desolate', But you shall be called 'My Delight', and your land 'Espoused'. For the Lord delights in you, and makes your land his spouse. As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; And as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you.” (Isaiah 62: 4-5)

Castle of Crystal

With detachment, He excavates
The heart; preparing, first, the site.
With humble prayer, she meditates --
The footings are poured at first light.

The Cornerstone's laid carefully:
Virtue's fieldstones are firmly set
In Truths' mortar -- humility;
Morning sun strengthens what is wet.

The walls of peace are raised to shield,
The crystal citadel within;
From here, His fortitude will wield,
His grace to combat death and sin.

The King sends forth His sentry slave:
To serve the poor who dwell nearby;
In little ways, to heal and save;
With the King's love, she heeds their cry.

This castle's not built on the air;
It's built on loving, humble prayer.

May the Master Builder raise the crystal citadels of our souls
to be His finest dwellings, shielded with peace and founded on
loving, humble prayer. Amen.

References

Scripture quotations are adapted from several Catholic editions

from *The Collected Works of St Teresa of Avila Volume Two*, translated by Keiran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez Copyright © 1980, by Washington Province of Discalced Carmelites, ICS Publications 2131 Lincoln Road, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002-1199 U.S.A.

Copyright Notice

© Paul Buis, 2004, Replication not permitted without permission

Visit our website www.littleway.ca for information on booklets of meditations which are written by the author.