



TASTE Reflection Questions
January 23, 2025

Introduction to Contemplative Prayer
Karen Schroeder

*And remember, I am with you always,
to the end of the age. ~ Matthew 28:20*



1. Karen said that there are two types of prayers 1) **VOCAL** prayers which we learn, even as children and 2) **MENTAL** prayer which includes **MEDITATION** and **CONTEMPLATION**. Meditation engages all of our interior faculties, It is also called the prayer of recollection. Karen offered suggestions for meditative prayer such as a) setting aside a regular time for meditation, b) finding a quiet place, c) close your eyes and quiet your mind remembering you are in God's presence and He is in you, d) choose a scripture from the readings at the Mass of the day, from a mystery of the Rosary or from the Liturgical season.

- Which of these suggestions have you incorporated into your meditative prayers?
- What new ones would you like to add?

2. Karen asked us, "How do we go from meditation to contemplation?" She said, "We don't, it takes **DIVINE ACTION**. We can prepare for the gift of contemplation, and we can pray to receive it as well, as God wants to give it to us." She then said that St. John of the Cross defines contemplation as "nothing else but a secret, peaceful, and loving infusion of God, which, if admitted, will set the soul on fire with the Spirit of love."

- Were you aware that there is a difference between meditation and contemplation?
- What does St John of the Cross' definition mean to you? Have you personally experienced this?

3. Karen gave us a **VISUAL** (see second page) that Fr. Ted Cantala OCD gave her, which looks like a cross between a ladder and hour glass and has **SEVEN LEVELS** that correspond to the seven mansions or dwelling places of St.Teresa's Interior Castle. The 7 levels include: 1) Fear of the Lord, 2) Piety, 3) Knowledge, 4) Fortitude, 5) Counsel, 6) Understanding and 7) Wisdom.

- Have you dealt with dryness, darkness, and feelings of abandonment in your prayer life?
- How did you deal with it? How would you deal with it now?

4. Karen offered some suggestions for when **DISTRACTIONS** enter our prayer life. We can: a) take them directly to God in prayer and ask for guidance, b) gently reign in repetitive thoughts, and c) reframe distractions as dryness / purifications – dismissing them if we can, and d) offer up our struggles with distraction and gain some merit.

- Have you attempted any of these suggestions for dealing with distractions? What was the result?
- Which one(s) are you looking forward to trying out in the future?

