



Saint Teresa of Avila

Teresa was born in 1515 in Avila in Castile, Spain . When Teresa was seven years old, she tried to run away with her brother, Rodrigo, to Africa, to tell the people there about Jesus. They didn't get very far. Their uncle brought the children back home and Teresa's brother blamed her for the idea of running away. Sadly their mother died when Teresa was 14.

When Teresa was 15, her father had her move into a convent. In those days it was common for young girls from wealthy families to go to a convent to be educated.

When Teresa was 20, she became a nun. However, Teresa found it hard to pray at this convent because the families of the girls who were going to school at the convent would visit and stay for dinner chatting loudly to each other.

Teresa prayed a lot about living a simpler life, and when she was 40 years old, she started a new convent. The sisters in this new convent all agreed they would live simply and spend their days studying and praying.

The sisters in this new convent wore sandals instead of shoes and habits made of coarse fabric. Teresa wanted the sisters to change their way of thinking. She didn't want them to be worried about clothing and fashion, thinking that if they changed what they wore on the outside, it would help them change on the inside.

The nuns in this convent had to be silent, devoting themselves to studying and praying about God. They believed that if you talk too much, sometimes it is difficult to listen to God.

Her new convent was called Saint Joseph and 13 nuns lived there. Altogether Teresa founded 17 convents, all with the same rules and philosophy .

Teresa knew that prayer was very important and she wrote many books about prayer. She wrote that letting God into your heart was like planting seeds in your life. When we pray and help others, we let the seeds grow.

Teresa is called a Doctor of the Church because the books she wrote were important in helping people learn to pray and become friends with God.

Teresa died in 1582 when she was 67 years old and her feast day is October 15.