

## The spiritual maxims of the Holy Mother, St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila)

1. Untilled ground, however rich, will bring forth thistles and thorns; so also, the mind of man.
2. Speak well of all that is spiritual, such as religious, priests, and hermits.
3. Let thy words be few when in the midst of many.
4. Be modest in all thy words and works.
5. Never be obstinate, especially in things of no moment.
6. In speaking to others be always calm and cheerful.
7. Never make a jest of anything.
8. Never rebuke any one but with discretion, and humility, and self-abasement.
9. Bend thyself to the temper of whomever is speaking to thee: be merry with the mirthful, sorrowful with the sad: in a word, make thyself all things to all, to gain all.
10. Never say anything thou hast not well considered and earnestly commended to our Lord, that nothing may be spoken which shall be displeasing unto Him.
11. Never defend thyself unless there be very good reasons for it.
12. Never mention anything concerning thyself which men account praiseworthy, such as learning, goodness, birth, unless with a hope of going good thereby, and then let it be done with humility, remembering that these are gifts of God.
13. Never exaggerate, but utter thy mind in simplicity.
14. In all talking and conversation let something be always said of spiritual things, and so shall all idle words and evil-speaking be avoided.
15. Never assert anything without being first assured of it.
16. Never come forward to give thine own opinion about anything unless asked to do so, or charity requires it.
17. When any one is speaking of spiritual things do thou listen humbly and like a learner, and take to thyself the good that is spoken.
18. Make known to thy superior and confessor all thy temptations, imperfections, and dislikes, that he may give thee counsel and help thee to overcome them.
19. Do not stay out of thy cell, nor go forth from it without cause, and when thou goest forth beg of God the grace not to offend him.

20. Never eat or drink except at the usual times, and then give earnest thanks to God.
21. Do all thou doest as if thou didst really see His Majesty: a soul makes great gains thereby.
22. Never listen to, or say, evil of any one except of thyself, and when that gives thee pleasure thou art making great progress.
23. Whatever thou doest, offer it up to God, and pray it may be for His honor and glory.
24. In thy mirth refrain from immoderate laughter, and let it be humble, modest, kindly, and edifying.
25. Imagine thyself always to be the servant of all, and look upon all as if they were Christ our Lord in person; and so shalt thou do Him honor and reverence.
26. Be ever ready to perform the duties of obedience, as if Jesus, in the person of the prior or superior, had laid His commands upon thee.
27. In all thy actions, and at every hour, examine thy conscience; and, having discerned thy faults, strive, by the help of God, to amend them, and by this way thou shalt attain to perfection.
28. Do not think of the faults of others, but of what is good in them and faulty in thyself.
29. Desire earnestly always to suffer for God in every thing and on every occasion.
30. Offer thyself unto God fifty times a day, and that with great fervor and longing after God.
31. Call to mind continually throughout the day the matter of the morning meditation: be very careful herein, for it will do thee much good.
32. Lay up carefully what our Lord may say to thee, and act upon the desires He may have filled thee with in prayer.
33. Always avoid singularity to the utmost of thy power, for it does great harm in a community.
34. Read often the rules and constitutions of the order, and observe in sincerity.
35. In all created things discern the providence and wisdom of God, and in all things give Him thanks.
36. Withhold thy heart from all things: seek God, and thou shalt find Him.
37. Do not show signs of devotion outwardly when thou hast none within, but thou mayest lawfully hide the want thereof.
38. Let not thine inward devotion be visible unless in great necessity: St. Francis and St. Bernard used to say, "My secret is mine."

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39. Never complain of the food, whether it be well or ill dressed; remembering the gall and vinegar of Jesus Christ.

40. Speak to no one at table, and lift not thine eyes to another.

41. Think of the table of heaven, and of the food thereon - God Himself: think of the guests, the angels: lift up thine eyes to that table, longing for it.

42. In the presence of thy superior - thou art to see Jesus Christ in him - utter not a word that is not necessary, and that with great reverence.

43. Never do anything that thou canst not do in the presence of all.

44. Do not compare one person with another: it is a hateful thing to do.

45. When rebuked for anything receive the rebuke with inward and outward humility, and pray to God for the person who gives the rebuke.

46. When one superior bids thee do a certain thing, do not say that another superior has given a contrary order; but obey in what thou art commanded, and consider that the intentions of all are good.

47. Be not curious about matters that do not concern thee; never speak of them, and do not ask about them.

48. Keep in mind thy past life and present lukewarmness, to bewail them, and what is still wanting to thee for thy going into heaven, that thou mayest live in fear, which is a source of great blessings.

49. What those in the house bid thee do, do always, unless it be against obedience; and answer them humbly and gently.

50. Ask for nothing particular in the way of food or raiment, unless there be great need.

51. Never cease to humble and mortify thyself in all things, even unto death.

52. Habitually make many acts of love, for they set the soul on fire and make it gentle.

53. Make acts of all the other virtues.

54. Offer every thing to the Father Everlasting, in union with the merits of His Son Jesus Christ.

55. Be kind to all and severe to thyself.

56. On the days kept in honor of the saints consider their virtues, and beg the like of God.

57. Be very exact every night in thy examination of conscience.

58. The morning of communion remember in thy prayer that thou art about to receive God, notwithstanding thy wretchedness; and in thy prayer at night that thou hast received Him.

59. Never when in authority rebuke any one in anger, but only when anger has passed away; and so shall the rebuke bring forth good fruit.

60. Strive earnestly after perfection and devotion, and by the help thereof thou shalt do all things.

61. Exercise thyself much in the fear of our Lord, for that will make the soul contrite and humble.

62. Consider seriously how quickly people change, and how little trust is to be had in them; and cleave fast unto God, who changeth not.

63. As to the affairs of thy soul, labor to have a confessor who is spiritual and learned, make them known unto him, and abide by his judgment throughout.

64. Each time of communion beg some gift of God, by the compassion wherewith He has entered thy poor soul.

65. Though thou hast recourse to many saints as thine intercessors, go specially to St. Joseph, for he has great power with God.

66. In time of sorrow and of trouble cease not from the good works of prayer and penance which thou art in the habit of doing, for Satan is striving to make thee uneasy, and then to abandon them; on the contrary, do thou apply thyself thereunto more earnestly than before, and thou shalt see quickly our Lord will come to thy succor.

67. Never make thy temptations and imperfections known to those in the community whose progress is the least, for that will hurt thyself and the others, but only to those most advanced in perfection.

68. Remember that thou hast but one soul; that thou canst die but once; that thou hast but one life, which is short, and peculiar to thyself; that there is but one blessedness, and that for ever; and thou wilt despise many things.

69. Let thy desire be the vision of God, thy fear the loss of Him, thy sorrow His absence, and thy joy in that which may take thee to Him; and thy life shall be in great peace.