

05 FORMATION MATERIAL (AUGUST 2026) INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE REVISION OF THE 1991 CONSTITUTIONS



VIDEO BY FR. JAVIER SANCHO FERMÍN, OCD

Dear Sisters, this fifth video addresses the topics of *Prayer and Recreation*, and the importance of both in our lives as Discalced Carmelite nuns. (See the new Table of Contents, Part I, Chapter 3)

Father Javier explains how, for Teresa of Jesus, prayer and recreation are not opposites but complementary. For Teresa, prayer is the heart of consecrated life, the source of friendship with Christ and inner transformation. Recreation is its communal expression, where that friendship translates into concrete sisterhood, shared joy, and mutual service. Both “go hand in hand,” like Martha and Mary, because the true value of life lies in what gives meaning to all things: love, contemplation, and action; silence and speech; intimacy with God and fraternal communion. Here are some key points from the video:

The Importance of Recreation and Sisterhood

- Recreation is not mere rest, but a **space of grace and communion**, where each Sister “re-creates” the others through her presence and words: “the Lord will give to one the grace to entertain the others. In this way, the time will be well-spent.”
- Teresa conceives of the community as **apostolic and fraternal**, inspired by the group of the Twelve plus Jesus: “In this house ... all must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped.”
- Recreation is also a **Gospel witness**: it shows that authentic prayer produces people who are “more approachable, not inaccessible hermits,” and that charity is lived out in the concrete reality of communal life.

The Importance of Prayer

- For Teresa, prayer is a **friendly exchange with the One we know loves us** (Life 8, 5). It is not an ascetic practice, but a living and transforming relationship with Christ.
- Prayer opens us to **the knowledge of God and of ourselves** and is grounded in three conditions: awareness of what is being said, to whom it is being said, and who is saying it.
- It is **existential and communal**: it is not limited to personal recollection but becomes intercession and a witness of life. “It would be a thing hard to bear if we were able to pray only when off in some corner” (Foundations 5, 16).
- Teresa breaks new ground by linking prayer to **emotional security**: it arises from knowing one is loved, not from the effort to love.

For dialogue in community

1. What does it mean for us that Saint Teresa introduced *communal recreation* as an essential part of Carmelite life, and how can we experience that space today as a shared grace?
 2. In recreation, Teresa sought mutual understanding and fraternal correction. How can we make our community gatherings a place of growth in humility and truth?
 3. Teresa defines *prayer* as a friendly relationship with the One we know loves us. How can we cultivate this affective and transformative dimension in our personal and communal lives?
 4. *Authentic prayer*, according to Teresa, is recognized by the fruit of virtues and service. What concrete signs do we see in our community that show that prayer is bearing fruit?
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These questions are intended only to encourage community dialogue about our life.

IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO SUBMIT ANSWERS

The International Commission