

Saint teresa of avila and saint john of the cross essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Saint Teresa was born on March 28, 1515, into a noble family of Avila. At a young age, Saint Teresa was very religiously inclined, captivated by the lives of the saints and ran off a number of times to search for martyrdom. At the age of 19, Saint Teresa left home to join the Carmelite Monastery of the Incarnation in Avila. In the cloister, she practiced spiritual meditation and intense asceticism. In 1555, a more serious turn presented her spiritual pilgrimage, when this subsequent conversion was manifested by rapturous visions and mental prayer.

However, throughout her stay with her own Carmelite order, Saint Teresa felt a growing frustration, and felt obligated to initiate a reform movement with Carmelite nuns who pursued a serious rule. Conversely, Saint John of the Cross was born on June 24, 1542, to an underprivileged family of noble stock, in a small community near Avila. He joined the Carmelite order in 1563 and was ordained a priest four years after. Displeased with the leniency of the order, he initiated the Carmelites' work for reform.

Under the influence and advice of Teresa, Saint John came and carried out reforms into the order. Because of their efforts, the order itself in the end was separated to Discalced and Calced branches, when the stricter faction withdrew in 1578 under the direction of the two Saints. Throughout their blessed activities, Saint John and Saint Teresa not only turned into contemporaries and friends, but as well made several unparalleled reformation in the Carmelite order.

St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross as Reformers In April 1567, during the initial stage of Saint Teresa's quest for development, Carmelite

general Giovanni Battista Rossi commended her, and ordered her together with several of the nuns from the convent of the Incarnation at Avila to set up other convents (Fahlbusch and Bromiley 337). The spreading out of Teresa's work started with the establishment of a convent at Medina del Campo, then followed by other foundations at Malagon, Valladolid, Toledo, Pastrana, Salamanca, and Alba de Tormes.

In the course of Saint Teresa's journey to Toledo in 1569, she met Saint John of the Cross, who founded the first convent of Discalced Brethren. Through John of the Cross, whom Saint Teresa had been working with, suggested the reform of the male Carmelite order (Fahlbusch and Bromiley 337). Since then, Saint John joined Saint Teresa in her reforming endeavors and equaled her effort with Carmelite nuns amongst Carmelite monks. Throughout the 16th century, the spiritualists Saint Teresa and Saint John helped institute a renewed branch of the Carmelites.

Saint Teresa served as prioress at the Incarnation monastery in Avila, a duty she reluctantly assumed. Nevertheless, with the assistance of Saint John of the Cross, who served as a confessor for the nuns, she was able to produce an enormous development for the community's spiritual condition. Along the way, Saint John of the Cross became Saint Teresa's spiritual mentor. On November 18, 1572, Saint Teresa received the favor of the spiritual marriage while receiving Communion from the hands of John of the Cross (Fahlbusch and Bromiley 337).

Until 1577, Saint John continued to work as a partner of Saint Teresa in setting up monasteries around Spain. The reformation process and the

foundations were opposed by many of Carmelite friars; a number of them believed that Saint Teresa's adaptation of the order was too stringent. Nevertheless, the followers of Saint John and Saint Teresa separated themselves from the non-reformed communities by describing themselves the discalced or barefoot Carmelites.

St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross as Writers As contemporaries, Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa of Avila were well-known to disagree on several things with to regards the spiritual life. Even though they were friends, they were known in their time to have troubles with each other once in a while. However, notwithstanding their differences, both Saint John and Saint Teresa had an intense insightful understanding of human psychology, and both were authorities at communicating to their readers a convincing and passionate image of the spiritual journey (Wilson 80). Saint John of the Cross became the spiritual director and protege of his mentor, Saint Teresa of Avila.

Saint Teresa and Saint John wrote for their individual communities of nuns and monks engaged in a dedicated and painstaking life of prayer (Farley 134). Over time, the books *The Interior Castle* of Saint Teresa and *The Dark Night of the Soul* of Saint John of the Cross turned into mystical standards not only for Catholics, but for mystics all over the world. As such, these two saints are without a doubt considered as the greatest Carmelite writers of all time. Conclusion Saint Teresa was an extraordinary person, combining zealous activism and a spiritual observation with a literary career.

Saint John was a poet and a spiritualist, and is regarded by many as one of Spain's greatest lyric poets and the most excellent Western authority on theology. St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila are the founders of the Carmelite path of spirituality. Enlightened from significance in one another, they shared a common intent look upon Christ. Although both were active in the development of Spanish monasticism, yet at present they are better committed to memory for such spiritual classics as Saint John's *The Dark Night of the Soul* and Saint Teresa's *The Interior Castle*.