

**COMING TO THE FONT
DECEMBER 11, 2021
JOHN OF THE CROSS
(THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE)
THE MOUNTAIN OF PERFECTION**

THE MOUNTAIN OF PERFECTION:

In the *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, John of the Cross sketched the way that leads the perfection of unity with God. This sketch depicts the paths and way which leads to perfection, as well as the ways that do not lead to the mountain, and what lies on the mountain which the soul both receives and experiences.

THREE PATHS:

There are three paths that a soul may choose in its pursuit of virtue and success in this life, but only one of the three paths leads to God, which he describes as the *Honor and Glory of God*.

The first path is directed by the Good things of the earth: Honor, Repose, Taste (Beauty), Liberty, and Science.

The second path is directed by the Good things of heaven: Glory, Security, Joy, Consolation, and Knowledge

The pursuit of either path will not lead one to God, but only in the attainment of the good things of either heaven and earth.

The third path lies between the other two and is lined by the pursuit of Nothing, or sometime better understood as “No Thing.” It is only in the pursuit of no thing, that the soul can pursue God himself. If it sounds strange and odd that pursuing good things will not lead one to God, consider this: What happens when the soul attains what it has pursued? Even in the attainment of something considered to be as good as knowledge or beauty, leaves the soul holding only knowledge or beauty, rather than the source of these things. If we think in the terms of progressing down the spiritual path and climbing the Way of Perfection, these Good things can act as guides and consolations, helping direct the soul toward God. But the soul must not become distracted and satisfied by attaining them. It is only by the pursuit of nothing (no thing) that the soul seeks union, not ownership, of God.

NO WAY

It can seem contradictory that just as the way leading up the ascent of the mountain is directed by nothing, the inner heights are reached through no way. On the mountain there is no way. It is that there is no path that the soul follows, except that the soul goes toward the divine love. In another way, St. John describes that there is no law for the just man as he is a law unto himself. This does not mean, as to some it may sound, that the just man makes his own law. Rather, the just man does not act because he is motivated by the law; if a man looks to the law in order to guide his actions, he is not truly just. The just man acts out of the nature of being just. This is the meaning that he is a law unto himself: the just man acts justly because the expression of his very self is nothing but justice; the soul that is full of love cannot act out of anything but that love, not by an outside definition of how one is to act out of love. In the same way, the soul does

not pursue a way in the upper heights because it seeks to follow God, not a path or way that has been laid out to Him.

WHAT AWAITS ON THE MOUNTAIN

At the pinnacle of the Mountain of Perfection are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

Piety, Counsel, Understanding, Wisdom, Knowledge, Fear of the Lord, Justice, Prudence, Faith, Charity, Hope, Fortitude, Temperance (These are not limited to the formal Gifts of the Holy Spirit, described as those things which are received at Confirmation, but are the gifts that the Holy Spirit offers to the soul).

Here the soul experiences the Perpetual Banquet, Divine Silence and Divine Wisdom.

At the center, the soul finds remaining only the Honor and Glory of God. Thus the soul attains no thing and itself becomes nothing, because only God's Honor and Glory remain. Yet, the soul does not disappear and cease to exist, it remains as its self.