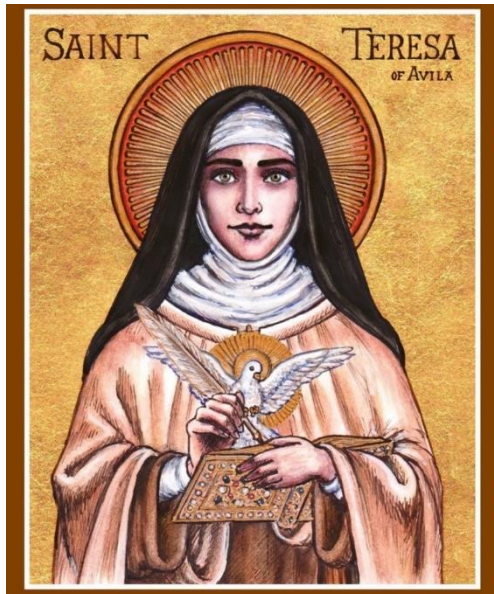


## Module DC34: Some Themes from the writings of Teresa of Avila

This module looks at the following five topics:



Unit 1 – Teresa as a writer

Unit 2 - 'Some things about prayer': An introduction to Teresa's teaching on prayer

Unit 3 – Teresa of Avila and Asceticism

Unit 4 – Teresa and the Humanity of Christ

Unit 5 – Teresa of Avila and her sense of Church

The writings of Teresa of Avila that are most widely read must be *The Book of her Life* (1562), the *Way of Perfection* (1566), the *Interior Castle* (1570) and the *Foundations* (begun in 1573, resumed in 1576 and completed 1580-2), but there are other writings that have survived complementing these works such as the collection of her *Spiritual Testimonies* which cover the years from 1560 to 1581 or her *Soliloquies*, outpourings of spontaneous prayer of unknown date.

She has a *Meditation on the Song of Songs*, though she only covers a few verses of this, probably written in 1566. There are 31 poems surviving, though she would have composed many more as this was a custom amongst the nuns for feast days or when they were travelling to make a new foundation.

She has two works that are legislative: her *Constitutions* (1563 and the only writing to be published in her lifetime) and *On Making a Visitation* (1576) and two pieces that are spiritual but semi-humorous too: *Response to a Spiritual Challenge* (1572?) and a *Satirical Critique* (1576).

In addition to this some 468 of the thousands of letters she wrote have survived, an invaluable resource that opens up Teresa's life and character in ways we would not know from her other writings. It is very fortunate that we still have all these writings, particularly when we consider the difficulties some of them, especially the *Life*, had to survive at all.