

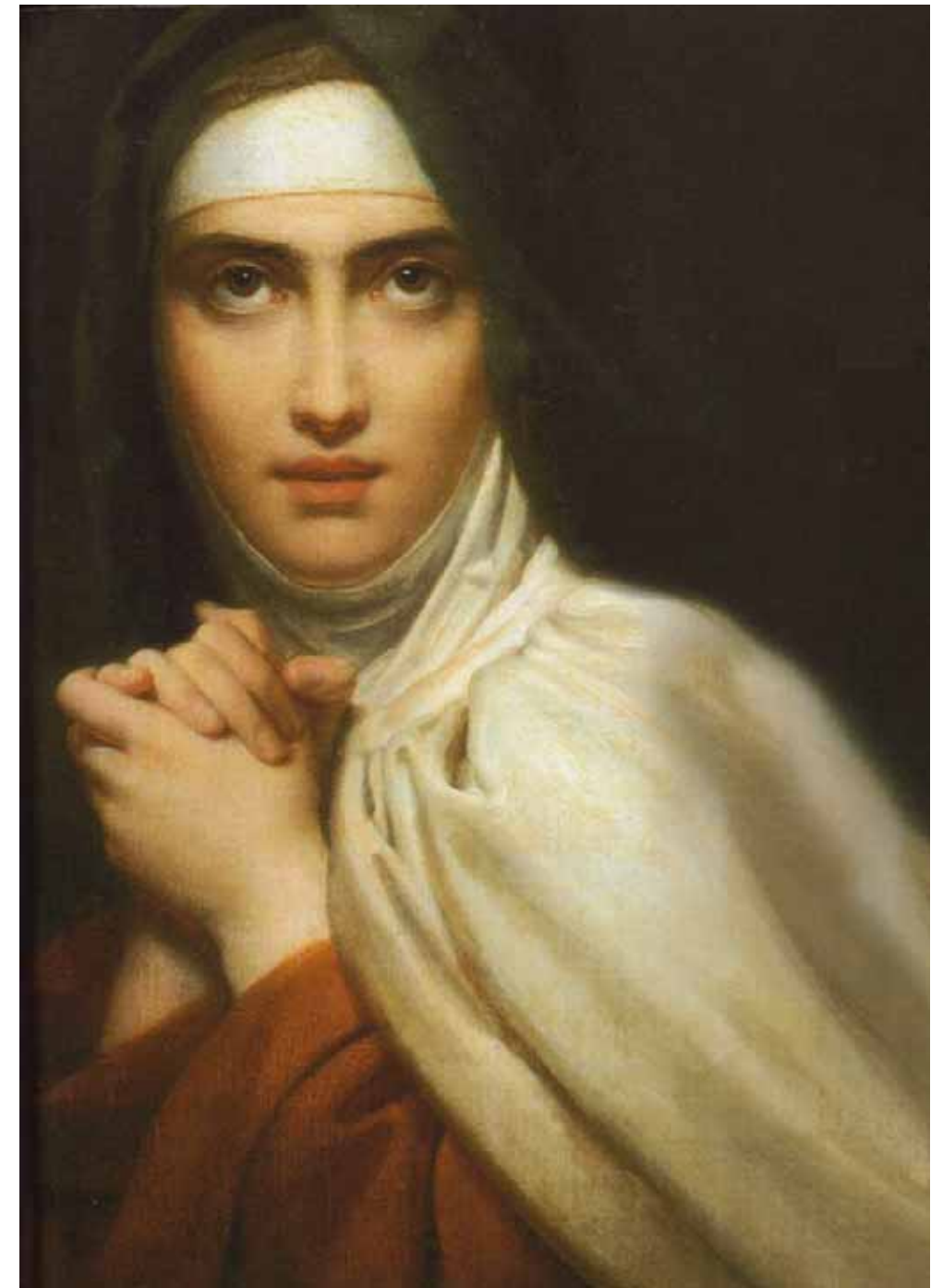
Saint Teresa of Avila

1515 - 1582

PARADISE

In a book about her life, Saint Teresa of Avila described a vision of Paradise: “One day, while I was in prayer, Jesus was so kind as to show me his hands: they were so beautiful that I do not know how to describe them. I was left so troubled, as always since the very beginning of these supernatural happenings, it was something new to me. A few days from then I saw His divine face and I was left completely enraptured. I could not even make sense of it to myself because the Lord showed Himself to me little by little, given that He had to give me grace in order to see Him entirely. However, I understood that it suited my natural weakness to happen this way. May He be forever blessed! No, a creature so miserable and vile like me, could not have resisted such glory, if that God of bounty that I knew had not prepared me little by little. Perhaps it will make you think. My Father, how could I not want to contemplate two hands and a beautiful face. But these glorified beautiful bodies glow of such glory and such an elevated supernatural beauty that the sight of them muddles all reason. I remained full of fear, completely unsettled and altered, although next I did not haste to feel very secure, and the effects of the fear I mentioned disappeared. The very sacred

Humanity of Jesus Christ appeared to me complete and whole on the Feast of St. Paul, while I was assisting at Holy Mass. He was in that form that one gets used to seeing in depictions of the resurrection, but yet of an incomparable beauty and majesty, as I had already written in detail after the formal command that I had been given. I did it with much affliction because these are things that amount to nothing when you just speak of them. However, I still have done it in the best possible way, so I have no reason to repeat myself. I will only say that through this pleasure of seeing Heaven and such ecclesiastic beauty of these glorious bodies that have forever an immense blessedness, especially in contemplating the Humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. If He is like this on Earth, where He shows Himself in proportion to our natural weakness, what will be in Heaven where one will enjoy Him in all of His splendor?...It is a light that does not wane, a candidness full of sweetness, a splendor infused that deliciously enchants the eyes without tire, as does the clarity in which one sees the sublime reality. It is a light so different from ours that shines from the sun, that in comparison the sun seems very dim, this light so bright that after seeing it one cannot even open his eyes. It is as if on



one side you see a very clear water flow over a crystal illuminated by the sun and on the other side a very muddy water converge between the dust under the cloudy sky. Not yet has sun or light had any resemblance to that light. Besides, our forms of light seem rather artificial and that one only natural: light without sunset, that nothing can disturb it because it is eternal, of such force that nobody could even imagine it, not even a great genius that contemplated it for life.”

