

Book Review

Christi Thekkumpuram CMC, *Deep Calls to Deep: A Daring Ride to Interiority for the Youth*, Trivandrum: Carmel International Publishing House, 2023; pages 392; ISBN: 978-93-912968-6-5.

The book under review is originally a dissertation for doctorate in Theology with a specialization in Youth Ministry submitted and successfully defended at the Faculty of Pastoral Theology in the Pontifical Salesian University, Rome. Under successful life, one usually thinks of a life with a long list of activities as achievements. What someone has done counts here more than what someone has become interiorly. This is all the more valid especially of the young in general, who are usually fascinated by *doing* rather than by *being*. Activities rather than contemplation capture their minds. The beauty of interior life is hence foreign to the youth. The “blind and uncritical dependence” on the mass media communication makes the youth, linger on superficial lives. India can boast of an ancient tradition of spirituality and contemplation. The dimension of interiority becomes uninteresting and unwanted. The religious and spiritual milieu of India is traditionally oriented to silence, solitude and interiority. In the Indian religions in general, especially, in Hinduism and Buddhism, and in the major religions there such as Islam and Christianity, there are numerous elements supporting interiority. Nevertheless, the present status of interiority among the youth is not that supportive, but rather challenging owing to manifold factors. The present book of the author Sr Christi is an attempt to inspire the youth of India for a life of interiority with the help of the classical work *The Interior Castle* of a great Catholic mystic of the Middle Ages, the Carmelite St Teresa of Avila. It is very fitting and praiseworthy that Sr Christi, being a religious in the Carmelite family, has undertaken this venture. By means of this research, she does justice to her own religious genius on the one hand and contributes substantially to the youth ministry in general and Indian youth in particular.

In her book, *The Interior Castle*, St Teresa introduces the readers to the beauty of the interior world she has experienced personally. She wrote the book for an intense growth in the intimacy with God. From this book of St Teresa of Avila, Sr Christi extracts several elements of human,

psychological and moral interiority. She explains how St Teresa of Avila depicts interiority as an inner journey through six mansions culminating in the seventh mansion with the spiritual marriage of the soul with God.

The author develops her theme of research in four parts in fifteen chapters. Part I is on interdisciplinary approach to interiority. In five chapters, the author deals with the anthropological understanding of interiority, psychological perspectives of interiority, moral insights of interiority, biblical vision of interiority and ecclesiastical aspects of interiority. In Part II, the author exposes in four chapters the work of St Teresa of Avila with a short biographical sketch of the saint, brief outline of the book *The Interior Castle*, Teresian expressions of interiority and the progress of spiritual interiority of a soul in the mansions. Part III is on the multiple dimensions of interiority in the classic. The author brings out in three chapters the anthropological, psychological and moral dimensions of interiority in the book of the saint. Part IV deals with the transformative education of interiority in the Indian Youth Ministry. In this part, she describes in three chapters, borrowing the Teresian terminology, the “silkworm phase” of the youth as infusion of interiority, “cocoon phase” of the youth in internalization and finally the “butterfly phase” of the youth in enchanting the world. In the General Conclusion, the author proposes five recommendations to enrich the Indian youth ministry with the aspects of interiority. There is a long bibliography of thirty-nine pages, including the primary sources and relevant Church documents.

The author, Sr Christi, deserves praise and recognition for having interpreted the personal spiritual journey of a sixteenth-century saint for the spiritual benefit and integral growth of today’s youth in India. Sincere congratulations on this great work! I wish the book wide readership and serious reflections.

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