

## Course Overview

St. John of the Cross is one of the most inspiring figures in the history of Christianity: a saint of profound faith, a compelling mystic, and an immensely gifted poet. German theologian Karl Rahner once said, "The Christian of the future will be a mystic or he will be nothing at all." John of the Cross is perhaps the most famous of the incredibly faithful group of Christians known as mystics. A gentle and compassionate figure, John was not only a Carmelite priest but also an eloquent poet and author as well.

In this class, you will explore the life and works of St. John of the Cross. In doing so, you will understand the rich history of the Christian mystical tradition. As you encounter St. John of the Cross through his writings, you will gain a deep appreciation for this great mystic and Doctor of the Church who aimed to inspire Christians to pray and love as God intended.

In *John of the Cross: Poet and Mystic*, you will meet the young Juan de Yepes, who, raised by a single mother and taught by the Jesuits, eventually came to be a Carmelite known as John of the Cross. John's conversion is a powerful story of doubt, passion, struggle, and ultimately enduring faith. As you journey through John's story from his encounters with Teresa of Avila to his nine-month imprisonment in Spain, you will encounter a truly fascinating saint.

You will also explore John's poems and writings, which tell of his profound encounters with God. These mystical experiences have served as a basis of faith for many who follow him in the mystical tradition. As you encounter the deepest hopes, fears, and emotions of St. John of the Cross, you will come to know personally this Carmelite friar and Doctor of the Church whose gentle compassion continues to inspire us.

### Abbreviations:

"The Ascent of Mount Carmel" A

"The Dark Night" N

"The Spiritual Canticle" (Second Version) CB

"The Living Flame of Love" (Second Version)..FB

"Sayings of Light and Love" Sayings