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Quote: Sophie Lespinasse-Milan, *Danced spiritual life of Teresa of Avila and current witnesses*, Wink from Mireille Nègre, online seminar n°12, Dance and Spirituality/Christianity, International Council of Dance, 22/11/2025.

"Dance spiritual life of Teresa of Avila and current witnesses"

Wink from Mireille Nègre

Teresa of Avila touched my heart.

Her spirituality was a revelation to me. In my mind, her writings come right after the Gospel. Her inner dwellings, the whole castle she conceived...

That's exactly how I felt when I first read her.

I felt a deep connection with her. In her, I encountered a common sense that felt self-evident. This woman of unparalleled mystical power, brimming with spontaneity, endowed with a dazzling sense of humor, and her strength of conviction fascinated me. Her joy and enthusiasm comforted me.

Carmel gave me a strength I have felt nowhere else.

Prayer became my homeland.

God spoke to me of dance during prayer.

In the secret of my heart, God said to me: "Dance!" "These words awakened in me the desire to offer God a dance as a form of prayer.

I felt every part of my body ready to unfurl and propel me into the choir of the chapel, to pray with my body.

In dancing, one does more than pray with one's body; one becomes prayer itself. One catches fire! In dancing, I literally step outside myself, like a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis, delighted to unfurl its still-fragile wings for the first time.

The body is the dancer's instrument. We are called to use it in such a way that it becomes the song of the soul.

The human person becomes the receptacle of sudden visits, of what they cannot grasp but which suddenly fills and delights them. Thus, touched by grace, they bear the



responsibility of not letting the message left by these visitations of a secret presence go unheeded.

We must accept the need for great work. The task is to bring to the outside world the invisible, inner visits of a realm beyond ourselves.

Dance is not simply the execution of grand leaps or jumps.

It extends far beyond that, while being, oh so much, prior to any vocabulary, since it is of sacred origin.

*Dance is within, though also without.
It is in the fluttering of butterflies in the air.
In the flow of rivers.
It is in the dance of the stars and the seasons.
The saraband of stars and comets.
The ballet of constellations.
The rhythm of births.
Just as it is in the offering of the grain of wheat that dies and bears fruit.
It is a passage from one world to another...*

I had believed that, like Teresa of Avila, I could dance for God in the choir of the Carmelite chapel, but the slightest spontaneity in a dance gesture was forbidden to me. Torment gnawed at my inner life through a debate that could have taken root within the Church itself.

Upon leaving the Carmel, like Teresa of Avila, I would have liked to found a religious order. It would have been religious and artistic, for dancer-artists practicing a form of praise of God through dance.

I pray constantly for artists, my brothers and sisters in Art.

The Church also needs the sensitivity of artists.

All those who create beauty, God invites them to be His witnesses of Truth and Peace.

Dancing God, to remember that Art is first and foremost a gift from God.

The day will come when, cleansed of all suspicion, dance will be understood, accepted, and recognized as a means for Christians to celebrate their faith and express their joy.

When inspiration strikes, one must persist, not resist, and bring it to life.

This is my motto, inspired by Teresa of Avila.

I have always loved working alone.



International Dance Council, official partner of UNESCO
Dance and Spirituality Program, Dance and Christianity Group
Seminar n°12 of November 22nd, 2025
"Danced Spiritual Life of Teresa of Avila and Current Witnesses"
Wink form Mireille Nègre, by Sophie Lespinasse-Milan,
en collaboration avec Mireille Nègre (08'05'')



Ultimately, I prefer the work of preparation and refinement because, on stage, one is always somewhat forced to cheat, to mask the mistakes one makes. That is why I prefer working in solitude and being able to correct myself without having to cheat. That is why I love recordings. If I work behind the scenes, it is still meant to be seen, not to remain hidden!

In this often disenchanting world, bad news floods our newspapers and our screens, with thunderous repercussions. But the good news is brewing deep within each of us, like a silent birth.

*Dance with the angels,
dancefully,
musically,
joyfully,
poetically.*

*I invite you all,
everyone,
to dance for
Peace.*

Credits (07'50'')

Wink from Mireille Nègre
Consoling Melody for Piano
composed and performed by Mireille Nègre
Principal Dancer of the Paris Opera,
international star, author, illustrator, musician,
consecrated Virgin after ten years of religious life in a Carmelite convent.

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An Anthology of Quotes from Mireille Nègre
selected by Sophie Lespinasse-Milan (voice and editing)
reviewed and supplemented by Mireille Nègre (final voice)
and Marie-Hélène Burdiat

Teresa of Avila Dancing, imagined and drawn by Mireille Nègre.

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Photo of Mireille Nègre ©Marie-Paule Nègre

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Excerpt from a collection compiled by Sophie Lespinasse-Milan since 2012



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Final image (08'00'')

" Danced Spiritual Life of Avila & Current Witnesses"
Presented for the first time on November 22, 2025,
during seminar no. 12 of the Dance and Christianity group.

Dance and Spirituality Program
of the International Dance Council,
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