



ADVENT

John of the Cross

1542–1591

Memorial—December 14



A Doctor of the Church, John is also one of its great mystics and poets. Born Juan de Yepes de Alvarez in Spain, he was raised by his mother and entered a Carmelite monastery in 1563. He was ordained in 1567. Finding the Carmelites very lax, he joined with St. Teresa of Avila to reform the order. In 1568, he entered the first reformed house for men, taking the name John of the Cross. He encountered severe opposition and was even imprisoned for nine months in a monastery cell, where he began writing poems. *The Dark Night of the Soul* is his most famous work. Only after his death was John recognized as co-founder of the Discalced Carmelites. He is the patron saint of mystics and poets.

