

PREFACE TO
THE SECOND EDITION



When my publishers told me they were planning a second edition of *When the Well Runs Dry*, and I began to reread the text with a view of updating it, I was happily surprised to discover how much it still rings true to my experience almost twenty years later. The sensation was that of a man married twenty years, rummaging about in the attic and coming upon the letters he wrote to his wife long ago—and realizing that he still meant every word he wrote in the honeymoon days. For me, the joy is in rediscovering the way the experience described in the book centered my life at that time—and in realizing that it still does.

In reflecting on how much revision I should attempt, I recalled a saying from my early years: “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” Since *Ave Maria*’s purpose is to introduce a new generation of pray-ers to a book that has been a bestseller for them, it seemed wise to provide that new generation with the same book that has helped many of their elders. Certain changes, though, seemed likely to make the book more helpful to the current generation of readers. Primarily, three principal changes suggested themselves to me:

- 1) to update the footnote references: for example, using the more recent and more accessible Rodriguez and Kavanaugh translation of John of the Cross's (and Teresa of Avila's) writings, instead of the translation of Allison Peers, on which I was weaned, and which I came to love;
- 2) to use inclusive language, which I was unaware of at the time of the original book;
- 3) to insert section subheadings in the various chapters, so that the reader could more easily follow the flow of my thinking.

These are the principal changes I have made. I should also acknowledge the changes at Ave Maria. Eugene Geissler, the great gentleman with whom I dealt twenty years ago, and who is acknowledged in the original preface, has since retired. But he has worthy successors in Frank Cunningham, an old friend and now the publisher, and Robert Hamma, the editorial director. I also wish to thank another old friend from my seminary years, Fr. Bill Barry, S.J., for his truly gracious and perceptive foreword to the new edition.

Finally, I must thank all my directee "victims" of the past twenty years, who number in the hundreds. The ultimate test of the book is whether it also rings true to their experience. In fact, one happy discovery for me is that the book has proved a very helpful diagnostic tool in my work of direction. I often ask my directees to read all, or certain parts of it to see if it speaks to their experience. When it does they, and I, can be confident that they are on the right track in their life of prayer.

I hope that will be your experience too, and that you will pray for the diagnostician.

San Jose Seminary
Quezon City, Philippines
October 1, 1997 (Centenary of the Little Flower)