



The Book of Her Foundations

St. Teresa of Avila

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Introduction

Slide 1

- ▶ St. Teresa wrote her extraordinary story ***The Book of Her Life*** under **obligation** to her **confessors** and **spiritual directors** hopeful that they would come to **understand** and **enlighten** her about the path along which the Lord was leading her.....her narration grew into something more than plain history and became a **witness to the realities of the interior life** and their **transforming power**.
- ▶ The **story of Teresa's life** evolved into a **story of God's mercy**...she became obsessed with a desire to **serve 'His Majesty'** ...in her Foundations she tells that she was **tormented** when the Franciscan missionary Alonzo Maldonado came to St. Joseph's. Recently returned from Mexico, he brought to the monastery grille his tale of the **millions** who had **never heard of Jesus Christ**. In Teresa's mind there could be no fate worse...she thought that the **greatest service** one could render the Lord was to **bring souls to Him**...

Introduction

Slide 1 - a

- ▶ 1567, the prior general of the Carmelites, Giovanni Baptista Rossi ...made his visitation to the Carmelite houses in Spain...Teresa arranged to meet with him ...to explain ...her compelling desires...the meeting turned out to be a happy one for both...he wanted Teresa to found other similar monasteries...this much consoled Teresa but she felt helpless ...at the time of her death **seventeen** of her little Carmels for women had been founded:
- ▶ For women: **Medina del Campo** (1567); **Malagon** and **Valladolid** (1568); **Toledo** and **Pastrana** (1569) **Salamanca** (1570); **Alba De Tormes** (1571); **Segovia** (1574); **Beas** and **Seville** (1575); **Caravaca** (1576); **Villanueva de la Jara** and **Palencia** (1580); **Soria** (1581); **Granada** and **Burgos** (1582).
- ▶ For men: **Durelo** (1568) and **Pastrana** (1569).

Origin & Composition

Slide 2

- ▶ On **August 25, 1573 in Salamanca**...Teresa **began** composing the **story of her foundations**. The idea for this new book seems to have derived from the Jesuit Jeronimo Ripalda.... who urged Teresa to **enlarge her story** and write as well the history of **the seven monasteries** she had already founded...and about the **first monasteries of her friars**-- Insisting that '**it would be of service to our Lord,**' an irresistible argument for Teresa...
- ▶ In **February 1570**, the **Lord appeared to her pressing her to make as many foundations as she could and also to write about them**...in the end, **only the thought of obedience** to her confessor provided her with the strength needed to begin...
- ▶ Once Teresa had completed chapter 19, her responsibility of obedience to Father Ripalda was fulfilled...Father Gracian entered the scene next and firmly insisted that Madre Teresa finish her story...In the **closing lengthy chapter** which recounts the foundation of Burgos, with all of its troubles, **Teresa's handwriting clearly demonstrates her state of exhaustion**...

The General Content

Slide 3

- ▶ ...the work is a **narrative of the happenings involved in each foundation**...she **expands** her account so as to turn again to **the theme of prayer**...
- ▶ **Chapters 4 through 8** constitute the longest interruption to the history of the foundations itself...she gives some **pertinent counsels** to **prioresses** flowing from her own observation of **what had been happening spiritually in her monasteries**:
 - the need...at times...to set aside contemplation for ...active works of service (**ch. 5**);
 - ...bodily weakness caused by austerities (**ch.6**);
 - melancholy (**ch.7**);
 - a safe method of procedure ...visions and revelations (**ch.8**)
 - ...discretion in government and mortification (**18, 6-13**).
 - And **throughout**...shorter instructions and motherly exhortations concerning the spiritual life...many biographical sketches and anecdotes...

The General Content

Slide 3-a

- ▶ **Two principle concerns** weighed on Teresa's mind...she must be completely truthful and the glory and praise must go to God... who she learns is deeply involved...even in the minutest details...Teresa, herself a lover of solitude, now entered more visibly this historical process...for all who must live the active life that **'it is not the length of time spent in prayer that benefits one; when the time is spent as well in good works, it is a great help in preparing the soul for the enkindling of love. (5,17)**
- ▶ ...Teresa was **thrown into the world of people, money, and property**, and all the unwelcome conflicts these are liable to bring forth...to **find God... among the pots and pans**...was the **art she was forced to master**...to **ward off the devil**...her methods were **prayer**, the **practice of Christian virtues** like charity, humility and obedience.
- ▶ In addition she made inquiries of ...others to discern what might be for **God's greater service**...once clear ... she threw herself into the task with determination...God wants no more than our **determination** so that **He may do everything Himself (28,19)**...The **essential point** is that through Jesus Christ she feels liberated, free of worries about all interference...**in the end Jesus is always victorious**, He never fails those who seek to serve Him (**18,1; 27,11, 20**)

The Order of Carmel

Slide 4

- ▶ Carmelites are called the **children of the Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel**, a special and ancient order of our Lady...Later, after Teresa's times, the order of Carmel without a critical sense of history or a definite founder, got caught up in the challenge to prove its age-old traditions...In 1725, the Carmelite order triumphantly installed in **St. Peter's in Rome** its celebrated **statue of Elijah as the order's founder**...thus ending a thirty year literary battle with the Jesuits.
- ▶ The **order's devotion** to our Lady **grew stronger** through another tradition that in **1251**, a time of hardship for Carmelites, she appeared to the **prior general, Simon Stock**, to encourage him and give him the **scapular as a pledge of her protection**...(medieval fondness for clothing a spiritual or theological belief in a story...it now appears certain that the prior general from 1247-1256 was not Simon Stock)...Teresa found inspiration in all these cherished Carmelite traditions of her time and speaks about ...the order as being **our Lady's order** and the habit as being **our Lady's habit**.

The Order of Carmel

Slide 4-a

- ▶ ...the **actual date** of the formal beginning of the Carmelite order...that brought the hermits together near the **fountain of Elijah on Mount Carmel** may never be uncovered.sometime **around 1210**, a definite community had formed there and decided to petition **Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem** to give them **a formula of life**.
- ▶ ...in **September 4, 1247**, the **Rule of St. Albert** was **mitigated**...this was the version of the rule that **Teresa thought was the primitive rule**...alterations made in the text of St. Albert's rule were **slight**, the **results** were **extensive**... houses were founded now in cities and towns.
- ▶ In **1432**, the Pope made **further changes** (eating meat 3x week, not remaining near their cells) to the rule making the Carmelites **mendicants** and what **Teresa meant by the mitigated rule**. These concessions weren't written into the rule but were seen by some as a betrayal of the contemplative ideal.

The Order of Carmel

Slide 4-b

- ▶ ... In 1452 John Soreth, Prior General, obtained a papal bull **Cum nulla**, authorized receiving **women into the Carmelite order as nuns**. He never travelled to Spain so the nature of the life of a Carmelite nun varied from place to place.
- ▶ The **Incarnation convent**, anything but luxurious, was founded in **1479** in Avila. In spite meager means, it became a **refuge for women** of the nobility given special privileges ...a source of injustice, class distinction and jealousies.
- ▶ Rubeo, prior general in 1567, noted the **dilapidated state** of the convent/church; **nuns** were **forced by hunger** to depend on friends and family for food and lodging. **Parlor visits** were encouraged to bring in funds. Short, there were **many obstacles** to a life of recollection.
- ▶ Teresa was made **prioress** of the convent in 1571, she brought along St. John of the Cross and these **two leaders** brought about at the Incarnation a **complete spiritual renewal** and **resolved** a number of its **problems**.

The Teresian Communities

Slide 5

- ▶ “Whoever has not begun the practice of prayer, I beg for the love of the Lord not to go without so great a good.” Teresa’s convictions of **prayer’s transforming powers** drew others to her. Her rooms at the Incarnation were used for spiritual conversation.
- ▶ One day half in jest, Maria Ocampo, spoke of **a possible reform** ...a return to a more *eremetical life*, the kind the holy forefathers had embraced on Mount Carmel. The discalced Franciscans provided an example. They sought to live in *austerity and recollection*.
- ▶ A consistent income to live without anxieties was Teresa’s first concern but with further information Teresa changed her opinion resolving to found her house in **poverty, relying on providence**.
- ▶ Prior General Rubeo when visiting the ‘contemplative’ Carmelites encouraged Teresa to **found as many** as she had **hairs on her head**.

The Teresian Communities

Slide 5 a

- ▶ *“To found a monastery where there will be only fifteen nun...their lives will be founded on prayer and mortification.” ...“No one but those who experience it will believe the joy that is felt...once we are enclosed...a great consolation in finding ourselves alone.”*
- ▶ Teresa points out that the cloister is for her nuns what water is for fish...living in the clear flowing stream of their spouse...Teresa discovered that fewer nuns meant greater harmony and quiet...her ideal remained a **small group of good friends** gathered in the Lord to **live totally for Him** through a **contemplative life of prayer** useful for His Church.
- ▶ ...Teresa illuminated this contemplative mode of life with fresh insight into its meaning and place emphasis on the **apostolic dimension of prayer**....she **introduced something new** within the Church, the **life of prayer as a service**.

Austerity in the Reform Movements

Slide 6

- ❖ ...In its relationship to prayer and recollection, **austerity** was looked on as an **aid**. By quieting the activity of the exterior senses a person enabled a kind of sixth sense to make ready for action. In this sixth sense were grouped the spiritual powers capable of grasping realities lying beyond matter and particularly the reality of God who is pure Spirit...
- ❖ Teresa could not help feeling a certain **skepticism** about these extremes...the Lord told her that she was walking on a good and safe path. "*Do you see all the penance she does? I value your **obedience** more.*"...in speaking of the penances of Catalina Sandoval y Godinez, Teresapoints out that they were so many because the girl had no one to guide her....
- ❖ Teresa begged the friars at Durelo for **moderation** fearing that the whole work could be **ruined through excess**...Teresa observed that when physical strength is weakened through austerities a kind of **delightful absorption** may so overpower a nun that she will allow it to possess her for **long hours** and **even days**...such absorption differs from **rapture** which is **short-lived** and extraordinarily beneficial in its effects...while long periods in the other absorption is a waste of time.

Austerity in the Reform Movements


Slide 6-a

- ❖ ...in the Madre's view the **balanced life of prayer, work and solitude**, provided all that was necessary for reaching the **goal** of the spiritual life....conformity with the will of God. (see W, constitutions)
- ❖ ...Teresa's often quoted passage regarding perfection: '*The **highest perfection** obviously does not consist in interior delights or in great raptures or in visions or in the spirit of prophecy but in having our will so much in **conformity with God's will** that there is nothing we know He wills that we do not want with all our desire, and in accepting the bitter as happily as we do the delightful when we know that His Majesty desires it.*' (F)
- ❖ ...The adaptability manifested in the **virtues** of **obedience** and **humility** impressed her much more as **means of spiritual growth** than did **harshness**.

Austerity in the Reform Movements

Slide 6-b

- ▶ Her **love for obedience**...is put in perspective when she issues warnings against indiscretion and offers a **practical norm easy to grasp**: *'Anything that would be a mortal sin when not ordered by the superior would still be one if the superior orders it' ...*
- ▶ Teresa felt that Father Gracian could promote this same balance among the friars... Teresa felt that too much **stress on austerity** would **discourage** desirable **vocations** among university students...
- ▶ after Teresa's death...those seeking to **conserve her spirit** fell into **disfavor** ...Gracian insisted ...that Teresa was foundress of both friars and nuns...all in all it was **too much** for these **tough austere men to admit** that they had been **founded by a woman**. The pervasive thinking went that since **men are stronger** than women they can practice more **austerities**; thus the nuns could only share in the perfection of the friars.



The World


Slide 7

- ▶ The term '**world**' appears frequently enough in Teresa's writings, but always in a **pejorative sense** as an irreconcilable **enemy of the spiritual person...**
- ▶ Without hesitation she proclaims openly the **essential goodness** of things and how they show forth the **splendor of the Creator**. And one of her **major themes** is the beauty and astounding capacity of the **human person** made in the **image and likeness of God ...**
- ▶ For Teresa the 'world' is the sum of realities that **opposes or impedes God's work...it robs the soul of peace and inner serenity...**she tends to **measure spirituality** in terms of one's **distance from the world...**
- ▶ From **honor and money** flows the sap that keeps the world alive. In sixteenth-century Castile **honor** was the very **soul of social behavior**. Money played a pivotal role and was so tied up with money that the two could be reduced to simply honor...with these snobbish concerns the Spaniard became a slave to others...

The World

Slide 7a

- ▶ **'What friendship there would be among all if there were no self-interest about honor and money! I think this absence of self-interest would solve all problems'**(L20,27) **...things offer nothing in exchange for the sublime gifts of God's friendship. 'All the harm that comes to the world comes from not knowing the truths of Scripture in clarity and truth.'** (L40 1).
- ▶ Teresa said that she **'has always esteemed virtue more than lineage.'** (15,15)
- ▶ Madre **Teresa's personal love of poverty** is obvious from the **Life** in which she says **'for a long time I had been desiring that it would be possible for me to go begging for love of God and not have a house or anything'**.
- ▶ in the end, Teresa opted for a mode of action contrary to what learned men advised her and followed....the growing urge coming from within to **found her monastery in poverty, without a fixed and secure income, with entire dependence on God.**



The World


Slide 7b

- ▶ *...Teresa's desire to be poor increased....And I felt freedom in having so little esteem from temporal goods, for lack of these goods brings. (15 15)...*
Her ideals about poverty caused her much more difficulty in **obtaining permission** to make foundations...
- ▶ As her desires for poverty increased, her need to **deal with money** also seemed to increase...A problem for Teresa's **ideal of poverty** ...in **small towns**...it was simply impossible to survive without a **fixed income**...
- ▶ Teresa succumbed to Banez under the condition that those foundations made with a **fixed income** be an **exception** justified by the economic situation of the town. ...

The World

Slide 7c


- ▶ She could never bring herself to found monasteries with a fixed income in **cities** where there was **wealth...in the case of monasteries founded with an income, my goal always was that they have enough to keep the nuns form dependence on relatives, or on anyone...that everything necessary be given to them...and that the sick be very well cared for (20 13).**
- ▶ **Happy to trust in God**, she never worried about those monasteries founded in poverty, but the ones that were dependent on a fixed income for support She figured that if the established income were too small, the monastery would be doomed.
- ▶ In the end, seven of the monasteries were founded with an income: **Malagon, Pastrana, Alba de Tormes, Beas, Caravaca, Villanueva de la Jara, and Soria.**



The World

Slide 7d

- ▶ **Work** was not a respected source of wealth ...it was counter to the current of the times and contrary to the practice in other monasteries....
- ▶ Teresa wanted her communities to survive however with the **help of income gained through work**, in addition to **donations**. The kind of work recommended by Teresa was the peaceful labor of **spinning** without pressure of deadlines...but women's work was poorly paid...when compared to the **donations**...
- ▶ Teresa makes a point of mentioning benefactors by name so that **those living now and those who are to come after, remember them in their prayers** (31,29).It was her experience that the Lord always provided for them...by awakening some to come to their aid...
- ▶ ***When it is know that a monastery is founded in poverty, there is nothing to fear because everyone helps. But when people think it has an income, to be without one is dangerous and the monastery will be left temporarily without means.*** (31, 48).



The World

Slide 7e

- ▶ **Dowries** made up another important contribution to the community's financial needs...
- ▶ it was the practice of the times that a woman entering religious life was **required** to bring a dowry.
- ▶ The inequality of status in Teresa's former monastery, the Incarnation, was rooted in the difference in dowries...so Teresa shows a certain scorn of them.
- ▶ She exhorts her nuns never to refuse an applicant because of lack of a dowry...***On the contrary, I had fear about those with wealth, but the poor filled and enlarged my spirit with a happiness so great I wept for joy (27 13)...***

The World

Slide 7f

- ▶ During the dramatic years of her activity, Teresa faced legal actions and financial worries...buying a house required **shrewdness**...*Finally, I went to see them...not with the intention of buying them but only so the owner wouldn't think we had no other choice (29,15).*
- ▶ **Holiness** did not prohibit Teresa from rejoicing over a bargain...she praises her good friend Dr. Aguiar involved in the Burgos foundation who by insisting on secrecy was able to buy a house at a price that was **no less than a miracle** (31 39)...
- ▶ In all these matters with regard to money Teresa's persistent conviction was that **God will never Fail those who serve him**, if they live as moderately as we do...in communities where the nuns are so few and help themselves through the labor of their hands (18 1).
- ▶ An astounding testimony to the validity of her conviction is the fact that **all of her seventeen foundations are still in existence today**, four centuries later; some of the communities are living in the same houses in which the foundations were made.

On Making a Foundation

Slide 8

- ▶ In making a foundation, Teresa **developed her own method** adapted to circumstances.
- ▶ In foundations made in **poverty**, before starting on the journey, she tried to **rent a house** to serve as a **temporary dwelling** until a house suitable for a monastery could be bought. Foundations made with an **income**, the nuns first **lived with** the founding benefactress.
- ▶ In her **boundless trust**, Teresa believed that once established in a rented house, the **Lord would provide**. Her **experience** supported her belief... *'For the Lord Himself....chooses in each place someone to help Him'* (29, 8).
- ▶ After the embarrassing muddle in **Medina de Campo**, her first foundation away from Avila, she concluded it best to take with her as few nuns as possible...They brought along **basic furnishings**; straw, for example...then we would have a **bed**...



On Making a Foundation

Slide 8a

- ▶ Teresa arranged the daily journeys so that the group would reach the destination in the **middle of the night**...nighttime entries allowed Teresa and her companions to prepare a room ...that she referred to as a church, where **Mass** could be said immediately the following morning to make the **foundation official**...surprising the townspeople with a ***fait accompli***,
- ▶ In this way **opposition** was **avoided**...especially from other religious orders. Once the foundation established...Teresa had to enter the arena of house searching... *'O Jesus! How many fears I have suffered before taking possession of these foundations! I reflect on the fact that if one can feel so much fear in doing something good for the service of God, what must be the fear of those who do evil'* (25 7-8)
- ▶ ...as a **compensation** for the opposition of other religious orders, Teresa makes a point of mentioning the **ever present assistance of the Dominicans and the Jesuits**.

On Making a Foundation

Slide 8b

- ▶ It ought to be mentioned, that in many practical matters Teresa experienced extraordinary **help from the Lord** through **locutions**. She continued to receive them up to the end of her life. Her custom...was to consult a confessor...always **determined to follow his advice** even if it went **contrary to the locution** (29,21; 31,4).
- ▶ An **example** ..our Lord told her to make a foundation in Madrid, she went to Seville instead at Gracian's orders. She believed she had more **certitude of doing God's will** by **obeying her superior** than her locution.
- ▶ Troubles worsened when the **opposition** came from diocesan administrators. In two cases, **archbishops opposed her in Seville and Burgos**. Teresa concludes that the difficulties encountered at St. Joseph's in Avila were the hardest followed by Seville (and surely Burgos as well). (26,2)
- ▶ Everyone of her foundations except Soria amounted to a physical, psychological and spiritual trial for Teresa: "*The Lord desired that no foundation be made without some trial in one way or another*".(24,15)

On Making a Foundation

Slide 8c

- ▶ When immersed in **controversy and doubt**, her one desire was always to do the **will of God**...in all business matters and everything else related to her foundations she never did or would have done anything contrary to the will of God...this didn't remove **secrecy** as often the best mode of action...
- ▶ In telling her story, she **tempers her account** of those who **opposed her** and tries to excuse them...expressing **gratitude to those who helped**...when the time came for public inauguration of a foundation ..it was the moment of housing the **Blessed Sacrament** in a definitive way and for rejoicing in **God's triumph over the devil**.
- ▶ As for leaving a foundation, Teresa said: *'I never would, or did, leave any monastery until it was in fit condition, has a spirit of recollection, and was adapted according to my wishes'*.(19,6)
- ▶ Teresa always placed **images** of Christ and His saints in her monasteries...a magnificent means of **awakening love**...for her these images were like portraits of the **persons she loved**. **Teresa's mysticism** was never **snobbish**...even in **full flower**...**experiencing enlightenment within**, she esteemed these **simple means to love**...**Her mystical life** ... gave these means a **new power**...in turn she received more from them. The **mystic understanding divine realities** ...often sense a stronger need to **give outward expression** to this **reality**.



Travel

Slide 9

- ▶ In 1574, the Carmelite chapter...attempted to **confine the expansion** of its discalced friars in Spain and maintain control...
- ▶ Teresa **was ordered to stay in one Castilian monastery** and **not to leave it**. She interpreted the command as a form of imprisonment... The irony of the situation...was that Teresa now received **blame** for doing what she had been asked to do...
- ▶ There were **troubles** within the order on account of the Madre's **friars**...After the Council of Trent...strict **cloister** was imposed on all nuns. The nuncio...began to get qualms about **Teresa's travels** throughout Spain...he confided to Gracian that he was **not pleased with her exits from the monastery** and requested a **gentle solution** that wouldn't **sadden 'this good and holy Mother'** ...She however was not saddened not to leave her monastery but rather **overjoyed**...she had been longing to **end her days in quiet**.

Travel

Slide 9a

- ▶ Travel for Teresa with her bad health had often been a torment. In those days...there was **nothing pleasurable** about traveling...Teresa wrote: *'I am not recording in these foundations the **great hardships endured in traveling**: the cold, the heat, the snow...; sometimes getting lost, being very sick and having a fever' ...* (18,4; 27,17) and being chilled to the bone by the cold and the heavy rains.
- ▶ The **wagons** were forever getting **stuck in the mud**...at one point all came near to being **killed** when crossing a flooded bridge...A number of times ... they all got **lost**. Once, the **guides**, not knowing the way, led the group along routes not made for wagons causing the **wagons to tip over**. Finally, when they got so lost ... the **guides excused themselves** saying that they had other things to do now and **they left**
- ▶ once on a trip to Salamanca the **mule carrying the money** got lost after dark... Teresa herself once got lost. "And, Oh! The **inns!**", Teresa exclaims. They could be **without comfort, overcrowded, dirty, swarming with vermin**. The **clientele** was often **rowdy, perverse** and **foul-mouthed**; sometimes the **friars and nuns were made fun of**. No one could be sure the inn would have **food**. Once, in trying to think of something to **compare hell to**, she opted for a **bad inn**.



Travel

Slide 9b

- ▶ The **means of travel** used by Teresa were **all those used in Spain** at the time: **donkey, mule, horse, covered wagon, coach and carriage**. The one **preferred** and usually used by her was the **covered wagon**; it kept the **nuns hidden...**
- ▶ When necessary...the **coach** was used... more fashionable and luxurious form of travel favored by the **wealthy**. It could be **drawn by either horses or mules....** This means was **offered** to Teresa when the foundation bore some relation to the **aristocracy...** The coach could be **ideal for short journeys on level and dry terrain**, but on a winter journey in snow and heavy rain, it could be burdensome...
- ▶ Teresa also learned what it was to **travel by donkey in December...** but, **normally**, when not journeying by wagon or coach, she rode the **mule** and was exposed to the heat of the **sun** or the cold winds of **winter**. Gracian left word of Teresa's **skill in handling a mule**.



Travel

Slide 9c


- ▶ **A pervading spirit** marked all of Teresa's journeys: she was traveling for an **ideal**. She transferred the **community life of Carmel into the covered wagon**.
- ▶ To this life **inside** the wagon Teresa **created a system of good relationships**. The 'inside' group had their **prioress, schedule of prayer, a water clock, a tiny bell, breviaries, holy water, a crucifix and some statues** of our Lady, St. Joseph and/or the Infant Jesus.
- ▶ **Outside** there was some friend ready to lend a helping hand when needed. Finally, there was a **chaplain** who would celebrate **Mass** in whatever little church along the way.
- ▶ **Inside** the Sister had their times for laughing and joking—they were **joyful solitaires**.
- ▶ **Outside** the men had to be sure they were taking the right roads, keeping the mules in line, hiring a barge to cross a river. The clergy and friars kept the **peace** among them.



Travel

Slide 9d

- ▶ The **Muleteers** were usually **charmed** and **inspired** by Teresa who was **attentive to everyone's needs**. But now and again they reverted to their old selves...Once after a full-day's journey in **heavy rains**, with no protection and unable to find a place of lodging...the group reached an inn at nightfall only to find nothing for lighting the lamps and no food. In addition, the roof was so full of leaks that the water came in everywhere even on top of the beds.
- ▶ Teresa in an attempt to lift everyone's spirits, exclaimed: '**Come now, take heart, these are days very meritorious for gaining heaven.**' The mule driver, soaked to the bone responded: "**I could have also gained heaven by staying home.**"
- ▶ On approaching an inn, Teresa would send someone ahead to order food and to reserve rooms. One of the rooms had to be sufficiently large to permit the **nuns to stay together**...On leaving the wagon, the nuns lowered their veils; once in their rooms, they closed the door, and a portress was appointed. In those inns where the nuns were unable to have a room for themselves, **blankets** were brought in and hung up so as to allow them privacy



Illnesses

Slide 10

- ▶ From her youth until the moment of her death, Teresa was **assailed by bodily illnesses**; sickness was one of the great battles of her life.
- ▶ Keenly observant, she has written of these illnesses with impressive objectivity, precise description, and a great simplicity...
- ▶ Her **bad health**, though, **never interfered** substantially with her **capacity of intellectual and organizational work** or for **full spiritual growth**...
- ▶ Undoubtedly, the countless **trials** and consequent **stress** that Teresa had to endure in her mystical life and her life of service as foundress must have **taken their toll** and contributed to her illnesses...



Illnesses

Slide 10-a

- ▶ A difficulty in Teresa's case...was her tendency to **take lightly** any need for rest and care...
- ▶ On Christmas eve in 1577, Teresa fell down the stairs at St. Joseph's in Avila and **broke her arm**. Since it didn't set properly...the bone was **rebroken** to correct the deformity, but this not only failed to remedy the matter but **made things worse**. Teresa's arm was left **useless**...for the **rest of her life** she would **need help** with the simplest of tasks...
- ▶ Her own experience of **bodily infirmities** and **spiritual trials heightened her capacity to feel compassion** for other suffering people...



Illnesses

Slide 10-b


- ▶ Teresa ordered that the sick be cared for with **great love, concern for their comfort and compassion.**
- ▶ Healthy nuns should **deprive themselves** rather than allow the sick to go without some **deeds of kindness...**
- ▶ One wonders how much awareness of **mental and bodily hygiene** was present in ascetical practices of sixteenth century spirituality...
- ▶ Teresa was concerned for **monastic hygiene**...She wanted her foundations in **healthy surroundings**, requires good health in those entering and values it in the prioress ...insisting on **cleanliness** especially for the sick...



Illnesses

Slide 10-c

- ▶ As for mental and emotional illnesses, Teresa uses the term '**melancholy**'. Chapter 7 of the Foundations is a **treatise on melancholy**...she had a good understanding of the human psyche...
- ▶ Teresa states that one person with melancholy can be enough to disrupt the quiet of an entire community...
- ▶ She felt that one must **govern the afflicted** in such a way that no harm is done to the other nuns...
- ▶ The remedy Teresa proposes for the very afflicted still has its validity...the condition should be cared for as a **major illness...isolate the nun** and treat her with love but she **must understand** that as long as she feels free to do as she wishes she cannot return to the community. **If allowed to return**, she must be **occupied with duties** to avoid imagining things.



Inquisition

Slide 11

- ▶ The intermingling of Christians, Jews, and Moors in Spain created **complex religious and racial problems** prompting the organization of a **tribunal** whose solution was **Christian orthodoxy**.
- ▶ The Spanish Inquisition would not tolerate the slightest diversion from the most rigid orthodoxy as the **smallest deviation** it was feared would bring about **heresies**.
- ▶ To be **investigated** by the Inquisition was **serious** and **dangerous**, not to mention the **gossip** and **loss of honor...**



Inquisition

Slide 11-a

- ▶ Teresa declared that if she had **something to fear** with regard to her faith she would **seek out** the Inquisition ...the **opportunity to demonstrate such fearlessness** came in **Seville**, where she was accused to the Inquisition.
- ▶ Maria del Corro, 41 year old widow with a saintly reputation. She had trouble adapting to the Teresian Carmel. She failed. Now the 'Saint' was ridiculed for her inability to live in a monastery.
- ▶ She **denounced** Teresa and another nun that they **poked fun** of the Inquisition...Teresa was exuberantly happy to suffer these accusations...She wrote an account of her spiritual life for Rodrigo Alvarez, a Jesuit consultant to the Inquisition. In the end Teresa was acquitted of the charges as she impressed the tribunal with her humility, wisdom and spiritual quality of her account written for Alvarez.

Conflict among the Friars

Slide 12

- ▶ Blessed **John Soreth**, Prior General, Carmel 1451-1471, who had never set foot in Spain, sought to **remove all abuses** characteristic of friars in the fifteenth, especially those that were **out of keeping with poverty** as the practice of poverty was crumbling due to a double standard, one for the rich and one for the needy. Soreth's efforts bore **no results** in Spain neither did any **reform movements** rise spontaneously among Carmelites despite the general interest in the betterment of religious orders on the part of the Crown.
- ▶ During **Nicholas Audet's** term as prior general (1524-1562) the **Carmelites turned to reform**: practice of poverty; education; Divine Office; laws dealing with residence outside of the monastery and exits from the house. Audet's efforts **resulted in an exodus by friars** from the order.
- ▶ Following him, **John Baptist Rossi, Rubeo**, who Teresa wrote about in her **Foundations Chapter 2**, sought to **avoid quarreling**. His goal in reform was to **promote the perfection of Carmelite religious life**. Unfortunately, many of things he feared did take place.
- ▶ **Teresa** proved capable of preserving **homogeneity and coherence among the nuns but not among the friars**. She remarked that the friars in **Durelo** paid no attention to her when she remarked about their austerities. Teresa's ideal had **nothing but trouble** in **Andulasia** with members who had been disciplined by the Prior General in the past now trying to join the Carmelites.

Conflict among the Friars

Slide 12-a

- ▶ During the year **1570-1575**, **seven houses of contemplative friars were founded** in addition to the **two original ones** (Durelo, Pastrana). The **four in Castile** (Alcala, Altomira, La Roda, Almodovar de Campo) were founded with the **Prior General's permission**. The **three in Andalusia** (Seville, Granada, La Penuela) were founded **against Rubeo's orders**, but requested by the **Dominican visitorator Varga**.
- ▶ By the time the four-year term of the Dominican visitators had expired along with Teresa's term as Prioress at the Incarnation, the **total picture had changed**...the prior general, Teresa and the provincials were **alarmed** because monasteries were being **founded without consulting the prior general**; the communities coming into being were almost **autonomous** with practices not in keeping with the order's tradition.
- ▶ Teresa **trusted in God** or she said she would have **regretted** founding friars. They had **no leader** and **no constitutions** that they all agreed upon. "***In each house they did as they saw fit.***" (23,13)
- ▶ In **Beas** in Andalousia (she thought it was in Castile), she met **Father Gracian**...an **answer to her prayers**. He was a friar with the **learning , spirituality, and apparent political skills necessary to salvage** what Teresa had begun. What was remarkable about Gracian is that he actually **listened to Teresa's opinions** about the friars.

Conflict among the Friars

Slide 12-b

- ▶ In **May 1575**, the **Carmelite order convened** in chapter at Piacenza...the **discalced friars in Andalusia were immediately addressed**. Those who had been made superiors **against the obedience** due superiors.... should be **removed**....The friars and nuns were not to go **barefoot**...they were to be referred to as **contemplatives** or **primitives** (not discalced).
- ▶ **In 1575, the papal nuncio, confirmed Gracian in his present position** but made him **reformer** and **visitor** to the **friars** and **nuns in Castile** as well... Gracian desired not only to **reform the friars** of the observance but to **protect Teresa's friars from being undone**.
- ▶ **Accusations of boldness and ambitions** were hurled at him...Teresa feared for Gracian's life when as a **reformer** he went to the Carmelite friar monastery in **Seville**. They asked for the **letter from the nuncio to copy** it, Gracian wouldn't let it out of his possession... a minor **revolt** ensued among 80 friars...
- ▶ The young Carmelite Visitor **excommunicated the friars**...bringing more **scandal** to the city of Seville. As it turned out however, though Gracian had asserted his authority, he was **anything but a tyrant to be feared**... there were those who complained that he wasn't severe enough.

Conflict among the Friars

Slide 12-c

- ▶ The movement among Teresa's friars had now gone so far that it was **impossible to reverse the tide**. Their number came close to **three hundred**. They had gained considerable **prestige** among the people and at the royal court. On August 3, 1576, under Gracian's initiative, these friars declared themselves **a separate province** which consisted of ten monasteries of nuns and nine of friars.
- ▶ In June 1575, Teresa wrote to Rubeo, the prior general, to explain everything ... *things are being done **against his will**...* You see, Father Gracian, it is to him we promised **obedience**... "But let Your Reverence consider that it is characteristic of children to err and of parents to pardon and not look at faults. For the love of our Lord, I **beseech your Reverence to do me this favor.**"
- ▶ She puts in a plea that Rubeo might listen to her...even though **we women are not suited for giving counsel, sometimes we are right.**"

Conflict among the Friars

Slide 12-d

- ▶ **Ormaneto, nunio in Madrid died in the odor of sanctity...Filipe Segá, replaced him** and sought to persuade the King to **give up the reform** initiated by Ormaneto so that the religious orders would be free to reform themselves.
- ▶ Segá also informed **Gracian** that his **faculties had ceased...** The leaders among Teresian friars were **excommunicated** and were placed **under house arrest until the investigation of the order was completed Segá....Gracian was absolved** of all censures but forbidden to write or receive letters or otherwise interfere in the affairs of the order...
- ▶ **Nicolas Doria**, a Genoese banker, greatly frightened by a near shipwreck, converted and gave all away to the poor. He joined Teresa's order. It was **to him** that **Teresa turned** when all her friars were under arrest or in exile...The **King 'took the initiative to favor us'**. He **appointed Teresa's close friend**, the Dominican P Fernandez.... He appointed **Angel Salazar, a former provincial of the observants Carmelites in Castile, in charge of the contemplatives.** He was **gentle and discreet whose main concern was to console the afflicted and promote peace.**

Conflict among the Friars

Slide 12-e

- ▶ At the beginning of **Chapter 28** in her *Foundations*, Teresa gives a quick sketch of these events...Gracian later wrote his account of the friars foundations...
- ▶ Teresa stated that her **greatest trial** was the **displeasure of the prior general, Rubeo going against the will of my superior was like death for me...** I wanted to obey him by following his order, I could not because there were apostolic visitors whom I was obliged to obey... (28, 2).
- ▶ Teresa was **prevented** from **making anymore foundations** for **4 years** after Seville (or 1580). This was the year that Teresa's friars formed a **separate province, 'which was all that we were desiring for the sake of our peace and tranquility.'**
- ▶ Teresa summarizes the happy outcome: "**Now, we are all at peace, calced and discalced; no one can hinder us from serving our Lord... since his Majesty has heard your prayers so well, let us make haste to serve Him**" (29, 30-32).



The Last Days

Slide 13

- ▶ A peasant girl entered St. Joseph's in Avila at the age of twenty-one and took the name **Ana de San Bartolome**.
- ▶ **She was favored by God with extraordinary mystical graces**, and was beatified in 1917, accepted them with remarkable simplicity...
- ▶ After **Teresa broke her arm on Christmas eve 1577**, she chose **Ana to act as both her infirmarian and secretary**. Blessed Ana became **Teresa's constant companion**.
- ▶ It is to her that we owe **the account of Teresa's last days**.

The Last Days

Slide 13-a

- ❖ Ana pointed out that in the **dreadful journey** to Burgos with the rains, snow, and flooded roads and bridges, **Teresa's health** was no better than the weather...
- ❖ In the following three months with all the disappointments over the prospects for a foundation in Burgos, Teresa was seriously ill...Finally in July she was able to leave Burgos.
- ❖ She stopped off in Palencia...then she left for Valladolid....where **her stay was unpleasant...Maria Bautista**, the prioress, a relative and long-standing friend of Teresa's favored Teresa's relatives protesting her brother's will...she became ill-tempered...
- ❖ When Teresa was leaving she **slammed the door** according to Ana telling Teresa to **go and not return**...Teresa told Gracian that she trusted God that the monastery would eventually inherit everything...



The Last Days

Slide 13-b

- ❖ In September in Medina she received **a distressing order** from Antonio de Jesus, acting vicar provincial,...that she must go to **Alba de Tormes** because of the election of prioress and because the duchess of Alba wanted to see her...
- ❖ Teresa **fell into a deep sadness**. The orders and their effect on the Madre remained fixed in Ana's mind. This incident became for devoted Ana **a key example of Teresa's virtue**.
- ❖ Ana testifies that she had never seen **Teresa suffer so much** over anything superiors had ordered her...As for the election in Alba, it seems that there was **little that was edifying in the community in Alba**. The Vicar Provincial no doubt thought Teresa's presence would inspire **better behavior and change some attitudes**....
- ❖ Teresa indicated ...bluntly her **displeasure over the conduct of some of the nuns**...she worried no prioress would want to stay there since so many are trying to get out of the office... 'If then nuns are what they ought to be, what will it matter to them who the prioress is? These **childish ways** reveal **attachments** that are far from being **appropriate for discalced nuns**, nor are they found in other houses.' ...

The Last Days

Slide 13-c

- ▶ Before leaving Medina, Teresa met with some **unpleasant behavior** by the prioress there. Teresa **made a reflection** about something not going well there. **Alberta Bautista, the prioress took the matter badly and went to her cell...Teresa** wearied that her remark would be so upsetting to someone who is usually showed good spirit, grew heavy of heart and **went to her cell without eating.**
- ▶ The next morning, Ana indicates that they were **sent on their way with nothing to eat for the journey...Teresa thought she would faint...there was no food to give her** other than some dried figs. **Ana was very distressed** too.
- ▶ They arrived in **Alba** around 6. It was **September 21, the feast of Saint Matthias...** Teresa told the nuns how tired she was and went to bed earlier than she had in years. Ana doubted that she had healthy bone left in her body...
- ▶ For **the next 8 days Teresa was up and down**, receiving Communion daily, even reciting the Divine Office and attending to some business matters in the parlor...
- ▶ Her sister Juana visited on September 28 to whom **Teresa** told of her **desire to move on to Avila**, but on **September 29, Teresa went to bed never to rise again...**it is thought perhaps from cancer of the uterus...On **October 3rd at 5 pm Teresa asked** Padre Antonio to bring her **Communion...**

The Last Days

Slide 13-d

- ▶ While waiting for the Blessed Sacrament **she asked her sisters to pardon her for her bad example** she had given and **to obey the rule and constitutions with much perfection** She **begged them not to follow in her footsteps** since she had been the worst in observing them.
- ▶ **When the Eucharist was brought in, her countenance changed and grew radiant with a kind of reverent beauty, making her look much younger...** 'O my Lord and my Spouse, now the hour has arrived for us to go forth from this exile, and my soul rejoices in oneness with You over what I have so much desired.' She also uttered **fervent prayers of thanksgiving to God** for having made her a **daughter of the Church** and **enabling her to die within it.**
- ▶ Confessing that she was **a great sinner**, she prayed over and over the prayers of **psalm 51**: 'a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn'; cast me not out of your presence;' a clean heart create for me, o God.'
- ▶ At nine in the evening she asked to be **anointed** and assisted in reciting the psalms and other prayers.

The Last Days

Slide 13-e

- ❖ In **testimony given by witnesses...on the one hand**, she revealed her intense feelings of **sorrow at being a sinner**, repeating pleas for mercy from God.... **On the other hand**, she revealed her **awareness of the approaching union with Christ her Bridegroom** and her urgent longings for that moment...
- ❖ **The following day, the Feast of St. Francis, her face was aglow, and with a crucifix in her hands she remained in prayer, in deep quiet and peace, without speaking or stirring throughout the whole day...**
- ❖ **When Ana returned, (*she had been sent out to eat something*) Teresa smiled and with tender love took the humble Sister's arms and placed her head in them. In this manner, the saintly Madre remained until she died between nine and ten that evening ...**
- ❖ **After her death, her countenance turned as white as alabaster and being freed of every wrinkle took on an extraordinary beauty. A powerful and pleasing fragrance began to flow from her body and spread through the entire house, indeed as the truths of her profound writings would one day spread throughout the world.**
- ❖ Hers was a life unexplainable without God and without the grace that comes through Jesus Christ.

The AutoGraph

Slide 14

- ▶ The autograph of ***The Foundations***, once finished, was probably left at the monastery of Alba de Tormes. Later it was given to **Luis de Leon**, the noted Augustinian friar and scholar at Salamanca, who was assigned the task of **preparing the first edition of Teresa's writings**.
- ▶ ***The Foundations* was omitted**. The given excuse was lack of time. But few doubt that there were other reasons as well...namely **Teresa had made references to people who were still alive...**
- ▶ After the death of Luis de Leon, in an effort to **enrich his library**, **Philip II** called for **Teresa's autographs**-*The Life, the Way of Perfection, On the Making the Visitation, The Foundations*- are now in the library of King Philip, the **Escorial**.

The AutoGraph

Slide 14-a

- ▶ In 1610, two of Teresa's close friends, **Padre Gracian** and **Madre Ana de Jesus, in exile** from Spain, took upon themselves the task of getting the book into **print in Brussels**...Teresa hadn't given the book a name, so they called it ***The Book of her Foundations***...their publications had its **deficiencies**.
- ▶ An **account of the foundation in Granada**, written by Ana de Jesus, was included in the ***Foundations***. This latter foundation was made by Madre Ana and Fray John of the Cross with **Teresa's authorization** at the time of the foundation in Burgos.
- ▶ **The publication was not well received in Spain**. The book had been brought out **without gaining the required permission** from authorities within the order and because the editors depended on **defective copies rather than on the autograph**.

The AutoGraph

Slide 14-b

- ▶ Even in the autograph the industrious Gracian crossed out some words, but wisely in such a way that usually they can be easily read...
- ▶ Fray Domingo Banez, Dominican, crossed out many of Gracian's comments and corrections and rewrote clearly Teresa's original words...
- ▶ The most **notable variation** in the original, **deciphered only in this century (20ⁱeth) by Padre Siverio**, is that introduced into the last paragraph of Chapter 4. Teresa wrote: *'The favors the Lord grants in these houses are so many that if there are **one or two nuns** in each house that **God leads by meditation all the rest reach perfect contemplation"** (4, 8).*
- ▶ **Gracian crossed out** some of the words so the text read: 'the favors the Lord grants in these house are so many that though **all the nuns** are brought by God along the **way of meditation, some reach perfect contemplation.**'
- ▶ Not until 1880, when Don Vicente de la Fuente **published a photocopy of the original** did readers have a faithful copy. Padre Silverio in his critical edition of the works of St. Teresa was the first to offer the public a reliable text.

