

## Chapter 12

1 There came into this monastery to be a nun, a young lady named Dona Beatriz Onez, whose soul made all of us astonished to see what great virtues our Lord had produced in her ...

2 In matters of obedience she never committed a fault, but with promptitude, joy, and perfection she performed everything that was commanded of her. She had a most ardent charity for her neighbor, and to such a degree, that she often said, " she would allow herself to be cut in a thousand pieces for any one, on condition he might not lose his soul, but might enjoy the sight of her brother Jesus Christ; this is what she was accustomed so to calling Him. In the midst of her serious illness (as I shall relate further on), which though it was so great, and so terrible, and accompanied with the most violent pains, she endured them as willingly and contentedly as if they were the greatest joys and delights. Our Lord must certainly have given these delights to her soul, otherwise it would have been impossible for her to have borne her sufferings with such joy.

3 It happened once in this city of Valladolid, that certain criminals were led along to be burnt for some enormous crimes. When she understood that they were not prepared for death as they should have been, she became very upset. She immediately and with profound sorrow went to our Lord, and earnestly beseeched him to grant salvation to their souls instead of what they deserved. In order to obtain her request (for I do not remember her words exactly), she begged Him to give her for the rest of her life all the pains and suffering that she could bear. That very night her first fever seized her and until the day of her death she was always suffering. The criminals died well, and so it appeared that God had heard her prayers.

4 She also had an imposthume (abscess) in her bowels which caused her great pain. She could not have borne it patiently unless our Lord had given her soul what she needed to tolerate the pain. This imposthume (abscess) being inward, all the medicine which she took was of no use to her, until our Lord was pleased that it should break open and cast forth matter (puss). This relieved this affliction (pain). Having such a great desire for sufferings, she was not content with only a few sufferings. One day, hearing a sermon on the "Cross," this desire to suffer more increased to such a degree, that when the sermon was over, she went and threw herself on her bed with floods of tears. When asked what the matter was, she replied, " that they should ask God to grant her to suffer much and then she would be content."

5 She spoke with the prioress about everything connected to her interior life which gave her much consolation. In spite of all her sickness she never showed the least sign of impatience, and did nothing except what the infirmarian wanted, even if it was something as small as not to drink a drop of water. For souls who practice prayer, to desire trials when they have none is not unusual; but when they do and are in the midst of them, to rejoice is not the case with many. Once when she was already so afflicted, though it didn't last long, because she had an imposthume (abscess) in her throat, so she could not swallow, she told the prioress, the person whose duty it was to console and encourage her to bear her sufferings patiently, "that she felt no pain, and that she would not change places with any of the other sisters, however healthy they might be." She had the Lord so present in her mind, that the Lord for whose love she suffered, that as much as she possibly could, she turned her head to prevent anyone from understanding what she was suffering. She complained very little except when her pains were unbearable.

8 As the time came when our Lord wished to take her out of this life, her pains increased, as did so many other afflictions, that the sisters, in order to praise our Lord in seeing the patience with

which she endured them, came to visit her often. The chaplain, especially, had a great desire to be present at her death, for he was confessor in this monastery, and was a great servant of God. Being her confessor, he considered her a saint. God was pleased to grant him his wish, for although she was in perfect possession of her senses and had already received extreme-unction, the nuns called him so that he should be needed that night, he might confess her, and help her to die well. A little before nine o'clock, the chaplain and all the sisters were standing by. Her pains left her a quarter of an hour before she died. She lifted her eyes up with very great calmness, a certain joyfulness came over her countenance, a kind of splendor, and she remained as one gazing upon an object which gave her abundant joy, for she smiled twice. All who were present, and the priest himself, experienced such great spiritual delight and joy that they could say nothing more, they thought themselves to be in heaven. And with this cheerfulness I speak of, and with her eyes fixed on heaven, she expired, her countenance appearing like that of angels; for so we may believe (according to our faith, and her life,) that our Lord took her to His eternal rest in recompense for the desire she had to suffer for Him.

### **QUESTIONS:**

What shocks us in this demanding text? Why?

Why do we find repeated in the life of so many saints the desire for the salvation of souls or for personal suffering?

An example would be St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, Manuscript A, folio 36, folio 45.

*At this present time, my joy comes from the suffering that I am going through for You, and I complete in my own flesh, what is missing from Christ's trials for His body which is the Church.*

How can our text help us to reflect more deeply on St. Paul's verse?