

Chapter 14

11 May His Divine Majesty bestow His abundant grace upon us; and that nothing will prevent us from advancing in His service; that He protect and assist us all of us; and, that this good beginning not be lost because of our weakness. A beginning which He was pleased should begin by women so unimportant as we are. In His name I beg of you, my sisters and daughters, that every one of you be careful to pray, that each new arrival observe the Primitive Rule of the Order (Albert) of the Blessed Virgin, our Lady, and that no slacking be allowed under any circumstances. Understand that from very small things a door can open to very great problems and without you realizing it, the world may enter you. Remember that what you now enjoy with pleasure was obtained by poverty and strife; and if you stop to consider that these houses were for the most part founded, not by men, but by the powerful hand of God, and that His Divine Majesty is very desirous of advancing the works He undertakes, if we put no obstacle in the way. How do you think that someone like me could have undertaken such great works being under obedience, not having a cent, and with no one to help me do anything? My brother, who assisted me in the Foundation in Seville since he had some property, courage, and a good soul willing to help me a little, was then in the Indies.

12 Observe, my daughters, observe the hand of God! He did not grant me this honor because of my noble blood. No matter how you look at it, you can't deny that it was the work of God. It would not be right then to diminish our rule in anyway even if it cost us our life, our honor and our rest because in our rule we have all of these united together. Life consists in living in such a manner as to not fear death nor all the vicissitudes of life. It is about continuing in the constant cheerfulness which you now have, as well as in the greatest of all prosperity which is not fearing poverty but desiring it. And what can be compared to the interior and exterior peace in which you always live? It is within your own power to live and die in this peace as you have seen others do who have died in these houses. If you continually beg God to continue his work and put no trust in yourselves, He will not deny you His mercies. Confide in Him and be courageous! Our Lord is fond of courageous souls. Don't fear the lack of anything. Even if they don't have fortunes, never neglect to receive those who come to be nuns if their desires and abilities please you, they are not coming to seek refuge but to serve God with greater perfection and they are rich in virtue. If you welcome them, God will pay you back double.

13 In this matter, I have great experience. His Majesty knows well that as far as I can remember, I have never neglected taking in a nun for lack of money as long as I approved of everything else about the person. The many individuals who have been received purely by God's sake are examples of this as you well know. I assure you that those who I received with large incomes have not given me as much pleasure as those who I took solely for God's sake. I had pity on them but the poor have enlarged my heart and given me such great pleasure as to cause me to weep for joy. This is the truth.

14 If when houses needed to be purchased or built, He helped us so well, why shouldn't He do the same now that we have sufficient funds to live on? Believe me, daughters, thinking about what you gain, you will lose. If a wealthy person comes wanting to be a nun and has no other obligations, she does well to give her wealth as a gift to you. Why would she give it to anyone else who perhaps doesn't need it? I admit that if she gave it to someone else it would seem unkind. Always take care that anyone who becomes a nun distributes her property based on prudent advice because in this way she will be doing God more service. It would be very wrong of us to accept the property from anyone with any other motive than to serve God. We gain more if she performs her duty to God with greater perfection than from all the money she can bring

with her. We have no other goal in mind, and that this always be so, but that His Majesty be served in all things and by all things;

15 ...and though I am a miserable and wretched, I say it for His honor and glory, that you may rejoice in the way in which these His houses were founded. Neither in their management nor in anything concerning them would I have knowingly done anything unlawful by not following His guidance even if I thought I wouldn't succeed in an undertaking. Nor have I done anything in setting up these Foundations that I thought would in any way be against the will of God. I am following the advice of my confessors (They have always been, from the beginning of these undertakings, very learned men and servants of God, as you know.) Nor do I remember any other thought coming into my mind.

Questions:

1/ What connection is there between obedience and learning about our life as children of God?
(14,15)

2/ What connection is there between and the service to our fellow man? (11)

3/ What are the principle aspects of obedience that have both impacted and helped me this year?