

Episodes from the Life of St. Teresa of Avila



Session Five

Beyond Avila



Call to Mission from disciple to apostle



Mission: the Response to Vocation

How does the Lord make His Will Known?

The Lord will use any way. Scripture, tradition and experience show one way He uses often.

First, He gets our attention; then makes His will known; we respond by objecting or refusing to do what the Lord has revealed;

then He reassures us by saying that He will be with us as we accomplish the task.

We will see this pattern in the life of St. Teresa of Jesus.

**We must be ready for His call in our life
Perhaps not as dramatic as with some saints
but be sure His call is just as real**



The Monastery of the Incarnation



Teresa is 48. In August 1563, a year after the inauguration of the convent, Teresa walks to the little convent of Saint Joseph.



St. Joseph's monastery as it is today



In the little convent of St. Joseph, they live a holy life, Mother Teresa and her nuns.



Teresa writes these are “the most restful years of my life,” and she means to live at St. Joseph’s the rest of her life



But the Lord has other things in mind.

**In 1567, when she is 52 years old,
two events spur her beyond Avila.**



**Franciscan missionary Alonzo Maldonado,
tells of millions who had never heard of Jesus.
Teresa is appalled: what can she do?**



Prior General of the Carmelites Father Rossi Visits St. Joseph's



Rossi authorizes Teresa to found more monasteries in the manner of St. Joseph's



**Teresa is overwhelmed
but the Lord is with her always, encouraging,
prompting, sustaining and showing the Way**



Teresa as Foundress

Teresa will found in addition to St. Joseph's fourteen monasteries for nuns ; two others she directed at a distance. 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). She also established two for friars at Duruelo (1568) and Pastrana (1569).

**It is the 12th of August 1567.
Teresa at 52 leaves on her first mission beyond
Avila and makes her second foundation
St. Joseph's at Medina del Campo**



**Father Julian de Avila was Teresa's companion for
her first eleven foundations
He is buried in the Carmelite chapel
of St. Joseph's in Avila.**



**At Medina, Teresa meets the young
Father John who promises to be the first Discalced
Carmelite friar.**



In 1568 at Medina he takes the Discalced Carmelite habit and the name John of the Cross



In 1568 Antonio de Jesus is the other friar at Duruelo with John of the Cross



Teresa is summoned from Toledo to meet the Princess of Eboli in Pastrana



The Princess pampers the nuns. But she has demands and fancies, she wants to interfere in their life and Teresa will make no concession.



The Prince intervenes, and the new monastery is founded, the Monastery of the Conception. But nobody is happy. For the next four years Teresa's nuns live there



**Then the princess gives herself the habit and
tries to rule the monastery.**

She is expelled. Furious she takes revenge.

She denounces Teresa to the inquisition.

Teresa removes the nuns to Segovia.



**At Pastrana, away from the Princess,
On July 13 1569 Teresa
establishes a monastery with three friars**



Meanwhile, Teresa's home monastery, the Incarnation in Avila, is close to ruin. Father Pedro Fernandez decides a new leader is needed. In 1571, he appoints Teresa as prioress



The Provincial takes Teresa there on the 6th of October and announces her as prioress. The nuns object, they are worried that she will enforce strict disciplines



In the chair reserved for the prioress Teresa places a statue of Our Lady, and in her hands she puts the keys. Teresa sits at the feet of the Blessed Mother, Queen of Carmel.



Teresa assures her Sisters at the Incarnation

“Ladies, Mothers and Sisters of mine: Our Lord, by means of obedience, has sent me to this house, to carry out this office... I have only come to serve you and to comfort you in everything I can. I am a daughter of this house, and a sister of you all. Do not fear my government, because, even though until now I have lived and governed Discalced nuns, I know well, thanks to the goodness of God, how to govern those who are not Discalced ...”

John of the Cross comes to assist Teresa as confessor and spiritual director. And the nuns become a model of observance, recollection and spiritual prosperity



**After three years as prioress at the Incarnation;
Teresa travels again. She goes across Castile to Avila,
Medina del Campo, Malabon, Valladolid, Toledo,
Pastrana, Salamanca, Alba de Tormes and others**



1575. Teresa is 60. The Lord tells her to go to Madrid, but in Beas, Father Jerome Gracian directs her to Seville;



Maria del Corro finds the life Carmelite too hard Finally she leaves, telling no one. She seeks revenge and denounces Teresa



Teresa impresses the tribunal with her responses and the spiritual quality of her writings and is acquitted of the charges.



Vatican's Father Ormaneto is not pleased that Teresa travels away from her monastery. In 1575, when she is 60, she is ordered to stay in one monastery and not leave it.



The good and holy mother is not saddened. It was precisely what Teresa had been longing for: to end her days in quiet.



For Reflection and Discussion

- 1. This session covers eight years, beginning when Teresa is 52. What drove her to make foundations beyond Avila?**
- 2. Why was Teresa appointed prioress of the Incarnation? Discuss the reaction to Teresa's return.**
- 3. Why was Teresa denounced to the Inquisition? Discuss the motives of the Princess of Eboli and Maria del Corro.**

Any questions or comments?

