

4th Foundation: Durelo

(Ch.14)

The Book of her Foundations

by Teresa of Avila

Continues to speak of the foundation of the first monastery of disalced Carmelite friars. For the honor and glory of God, tells something about both the kind of life lived there and the good our Lord began to do in those surroundings.

Having obtained the permission of the two provincials, we arranged for John of the Cross to get the house ready to be lived in. I felt it urgent that the friars begin, so to avoid any obstacles in our path. And this they did. Father Antonio had already gathered a few things and came to Valladolid with great joy to let me know he had five clocks to help follow the daily schedule which he wanted well established. I don't think that he even had a bed at this point.

2. They had wanted to do a great deal with the house, but had no money. Fr. Antonio gave up his priorship, once the house ready and embraced his new way of life with much happiness. Fr. John was already there.

3. Fr. Antonio felt a great inner joy at the thought of leaving the world behind for a life of **solitude**. Neither of the two friars found the house unfit, quite to the contrary.

4. Let me ask you Sisters and Fathers, that you never fail to be very moderate in this matter of large and magnificent houses. Keep always before you our true founders who by means of poverty and humility now enjoy God.

5. There seems to be more spirituality and even inner happiness when suitable accommodations for the body are lacking. Remember, this house will not be ours for long. The less we have on earth, the more we will enjoy eternity where our dwellings will be in proportion to the love with which we imitated the life of our good Jesus on earth. Let us not be so offensive to the Virgin, His Mother, or to our holy fathers of the past, as to fail to live as they did. It is all about a little effort in the beginning, which becomes delightful, as was the case of the two Fathers. Once determined to make this effort, the difficulty passes.

6. The first Mass was said in the little stable of Bethlehem during Advent 1568. Since

then, no great improvements have been made.

The following Lent, however, I passed by the house and found Fr. Antonio sweeping the chapel with a joyful look on his face. He told me that he cursed the day that he had had any honor.

The spirit of the Lord dwelt in this place. There were many crosses. The little cross made for the holy water fount was made from sticks and had a paper image of the Christ attached to it. It inspired much devotion.

7. The choir was in the loft. In the middle of the loft, the ceiling was high enough to allow the recitation of the Hours, but one had to stoop low to enter and hear Mass.

In the two corners facing the church, there were two little hermitages where one could only either lie down or sit. Both were filled with hay as the place was very cold and the roof almost touched one's head. Each had a window facing the altar and a stone for a pillow.

I learned that the friars remained in the choir after Matins and before Primes as their prayer was very deep. When it came time to pray Primes, their habits were covered in snow without them even being aware of it ...

8. They would often travel barefoot (they were later ordered to wear sandals) to preach in the neighboring towns where there was no monastery for people to get instruction in Christian doctrine. In a short time, the reputation of the Fathers had grown.

When finished preaching and confessing, they returned very late to their house for supper. All seemed not at all a bother to them as they were so happy.

9. The people in the town provided them with all the food they needed. And, a gentleman from one of the local towns offered them better lodging.

Don Luis had a beautiful image of our Lady and when Fr. Antonio saw it, he agreed to transfer the monastery to Mancera. Though there wasn't a well, the gentleman built the friars a monastery and furnished it. He did everything well.

10. Let me not forget to mention how the Lord gave them water One day after supper, Fr. Antonio was discussing the need for water. He rose and made the sign of the cross on the staff he was holding.

He pointed the stick and said: “Now dig here.” After they had dug but a little, so much water gushed out that now it is difficult to drain the well to clean it. It is very good drinking water. The well never empties.

Another time they had enclosed a garden with a wall, they even made a water wheel at great expense to water the garden. But, they have never been able to draw any water.

11. I really couldn't thank our Lord enough when I saw that little house which was completely uninhabitable! And the way they were living, the mortification, prayer and good example they were giving. The townspeople spoke of the holiness of these Fathers and of the good they were doing in the town.

I was filled with joy seeing the beginning that would be of much benefit to our order in the future and of service to our Lord ...

The merchants with me told me that for nothing in the world would they have missed the trip to Durelo ! What a thing virtue is, for that poverty pleased those merchants more than all their riches and their souls were left satisfied and comforted.

12. I begged the Fathers not to be so rigorous and severe in penitential practices and I feared the devil would attempt to put an end to this beginning with the friars. They paid little attention to my words however, but I left there greatly consoled. I understood that this foundation was a much greater grace than the favor He granted me to found houses of nuns. Amen