

5th Foundation: Pastrana

(Ch.17)

The Book of her Foundations

by Teresa of Avila

Treats of the Foundation of the two monasteries in Pastrana, one for the nuns and one for the friars. They were made in 1570, I mean 1569.

All the work on the house in Toledo was completed by the Pentecost vigil. As we sat down in the refectory to eat, a great consolation came over me in seeing that I no longer had anything to do; that I could simply enjoy some time with the Lord on Pentecost; I was so consoled that I was almost unable to eat.

2. I did not have this consolation for long though. In the midst of it, they came to tell me that a servant of the princess of Eboli was there. I had been in communication with her for some time now about founding a monastery in Pastrana but I didn't think it would happen so quickly.

I felt uneasy. It would simply have been dangerous to leave the monastery in Toledo, founded so recently, and in the midst of opposition. I decided not to go.

The servant told me that this would not be acceptable. The princess was waiting for me in Pastrana. She would take my refusal as an insult, but I still had no thought of going. I wrote to her to explain my reasons and the servant went along with them.

3. Moreover, the nuns who were to make up the community had just arrived in Toledo, and so another reason I couldn't leave so soon.

I went before the Blessed Sacrament; the Lord told me to go. The trip was not only about the foundation and that I should bring the **rule** and **constitutions** with me.

4. Since I heard this ... I decided to follow the counsel of my confessor. When our Majesty wants something to be done, He puts it in their heart. This has happened to me many times and it happened this time too. My confessor thought I should go, and with that, I decided to leave.

5. We left Toledo two days after Pentecost and ended up staying at a monastery of Franciscan nuns near Madrid....

6. A lady in the monastery wanted me to meet a hermit. The thought came to me that

that I only had two friars. The hermit was there with another brother. While speaking together the hermit told me he wanted to go to Rome.

7. Before going on, let me speak of Father Mariano, the hermit. He was an Italian doctor to the queen of Poland when our Lord called him to leave all to better obtain salvation.

He had undergone some trials where he was falsely accused and put in jail for two years. While there, he refused lawyers saying he only wanted to be defended by God and God's justice.

Resembling the old men in the story about Saint Susanna in the Bible, when each of Father's two accusers was asked where the accused was at the time, one said seated on a bed; and the other, at a window.

In the end, they admitted their lie. Father Mariano assured me that he had spent much money to free both his accusers so they wouldn't be punished by the law.

8. Through these and other virtues, he must have merited from our Lord knowledge of what the world was so that he would strive to withdraw from it. He began to think about which religious order to join...

None suited his temperament though. He learned of some hermits near Seville who had come together to live in the desert. Each one lived in a cell and they came together for Mass. They had no fixed income nor did they want to receive alms. They supported themselves through the work of their hands. Each one ate alone and poorly. It seemed to be a living picture of the life of our own holy early fathers on Mount Carmel.

Father Mariano spent eight years in this manner of life. When the council of Trent took away authorization for hermetical life, he wanted to go to Rome to seek permission to continue as they were.

9. I showed him our primitive rule and gave him reasons about how he could serve God in this habit of Carmel.

The next day he called for me, as he had very determined to follow our path. He was very surprised how quickly he had changed. The Lord changes hearts!

10. Great are God's judgments. Mariano had gone years without knowing what to decide concerning his state in life. But, God quickly moved Father's heart and revealed to him how God would be served by him.

It has cost Father Mariano many trials, and, the work of establishing the primitive rule of Carmel, will cost him more until the rule is firmly established. He is very influential with many persons who favor and defend us.

11. He told me he had obtained a good hermitage site in Pastrana, that he wanted to accept it for the order and then receive the habit.

I praised the Lord greatly and sent a message to the present and previous provincial since the monastery couldn't be founded without their permission.

12. Once in Pastrana, I met the princess and the prince. They gave us an apartment while our house was built anew.

13. I spent three months there and suffered many trials since the princess made many demands not in compliance with our form of religious life. Rather than make a foundation, I just left.

I did put up with some things to see the monastery of friars founded; the importance of this later became clear.

14. Mariano and his two companions arrived once the permission was obtained from the provincials. The prince and princess were glad to allow the hermitage given Mariano, to now be used for discalced friars. Father Antonio de Jesus, the first discalced friar, was sent for. I made habits and white mantles so that they could at once take the habit.

15. A Father in Medina came with the nuns I had sent for. He, himself, wanted to become a discalced. He gave the habit to Father Mariano and his companion, who remained lay brothers—Mariano didn't want to become a priest, he only wanted to be the least of all. But, later on, by order of our Father General, he did finally become a priest.

Once the two monasteries were established, novices began to enter and they served the Lord authentically...

16. All went well for the nuns until the princess lost her husband and she entered to be a nun. She struggled with the practices of enclosure. The prioress, bound by the Council, was unable to give her the liberties she sought.

17. The princess came to dislike all the nuns, and continued to cause them problems after she discarded the habit and returned to her house.

The nuns were so distressed that I begged the superior to move the monastery to Segovia, where they did end up moving, leaving behind all the princess had given them. Their departure saddened the townspeople, but I was very happy seeing the nuns at last in peace. The nuns were in no way at fault for the displeasure of the princess.

In sum, the Lord permitted the incident with the Princess of Eboli. He must have seen that it was not right for the monastery of nuns to be in Pastrana. Amen.