

## 7<sup>th</sup> Foundation: Salamanca

(Ch.19)

### The Book of her Foundations

by Teresa of Avila

I have digressed much. When something presents itself by the Lord's will that I have come to understand through experience, it bothers me not to give advice about it.

Always inquire, daughters, from those who are learned, for through them you will learn how to **advance along the way of perfection with discretion and in truth...**

**2.** Well, on the vigil of All Saints, in the year that was mentioned, we arrived at noon in the city of Salamanca. I sought to find out if the house was free.

The man tasked with finding out for me, told me the house was occupied, that he hadn't been able to get the students to leave. I told him how important it was that the house be vacated. He then went to the owner and insisted so much that it was vacated that afternoon. When it was almost night, we entered.

**3.** It was the first monastery I founded without reserving the Blessed Sacrament. I learned that to have the Blessed Sacrament reserved was not necessary to make a foundation official.

The house was in bad condition. We did no small amount of work that night. The next morning the first Mass was said. I also arranged for more nuns to come from Medina del Campo. My companion and I spent the night of All Saints alone ...

**4.** The house was very large and had many garrets (attic room). My companion was frightened that a student, angry at having to leave, may have hidden in the house. We locked ourselves in a room where there was some straw for beds.

The next day, some nearby nuns, lent us furnishings and sent us alms ... all the time we were there they gave us alms and did many favors for us.

**5.** Once locked in the room, it seemed my companion calmed down. She asked me what would happen if we were to die there all alone. I told her I'd think about it when it happened but now, let me sleep. The next day, more nuns arrived, and with them present, the fears left.

**6.** The monastery was in this house for about three years. I never did leave a monastery

until it was in fit condition, had a spirit of recollection and was adapted according to my wishes.

I acted as though I would be living in that house the rest of my life and so it gave me great happiness to see that everything was in order.

I regretted to see what these Sisters suffered as the house was in an unhealthy location being exposed to humidity and cold. Since it was a large house, it could not be repaired. And to make things worse the Blessed Sacrament could not be reserved. This was a hardship with so much enclosure practiced. The Sisters bore everything with joy though. Some told me that they were just as happy there as if the Blessed Sacrament had been reserved.

**7.** When the superior saw their perfection, and the trial they were suffering, he called me to come back from the Incarnation Monastery where I was in Avila.

The nuns had already reached an agreement with a gentlemen in the town who was to sell them a house. It was in such bad shape that they would have had to spend a lot of money before entering it.

It belonged to an estate, but we were allowed to occupy it without first obtaining permission from the king. We then put up partition walls. Father Julian de Avila, who came with me on these foundations, looked at the house with me to decide what needed to be done. Experience had taught me much about these things.

**8.** I returned to Salamanca in August. Fr. Julian and I hurried as much as we could. The nuns were able to stay where they were, but we had not rented their house for another year, and another renter was waiting to occupy it.

The new house, though, was far from being finished. We were in a great hurry...

**9.** We moved in on the eve of St. Michael a little before dawn. On the day that we moved it rained so hard making it most difficult to bring the things we needed. It was raining so hard that the chapel roof was leaking.

A good man who had helped us with the first house, told us not to be disturbed. He assured us that God would provide a remedy. And He did. When it came time for the people to come, the sun began to shine.

**10.** There were many people, and there was music, and the Blessed Sacrament was

reserved with great solemnity. Since the house was in a good location, the townspeople learned of it and were very devoted to it, in particular the countess of Monterrey.

The following day, the owner of the house arrived. He was furious. He wanted his money at once. His wife who owned the house wanted to sell it to provide for her daughters. The money had already been deposited.

**11.** Though all of this happened three years ago, the purchase of the house is not yet finished, nor do I know if the monastery will remain there.

**12.** None of the monasteries of the primitive rule (or in other words Teresa's reformed rule) have suffered trials as great as these. But, the nuns bear everything happily. In the end though, it matters little if they have a good house. Rather, it gives us great pleasure to find we are in a house we can be thrown out of.

Remember the Lord of the world didn't have a house. The truth is that I never saw a nun distressed about it.

May it please His Majesty that through His infinite goodness and mercy we will not be in want of the eternal dwelling place.

Amen, Amen.