

## 10<sup>th</sup> Foundation: Beas

(Ch.23)

### The Book of her Foundations

by Teresa of Avila

Treats of the foundation of the monastery of the glorious St. Joseph of Carmel in Seville. The first Mass was said on the feast of the most Blessed Trinity in 1575.

While in Beas, waiting to receive the license for the foundation in Caravaca, Maestro Jeronimo Gracian de la Madre de Dios, a discalced friar, came to see me.

He had received the habit a few years before in Alcalá. He was a man of much learning, intelligence and modesty to name a few of his virtues.

His parents, however, had other intentions for his life because of his great talent, but he was far from being inclined towards their plans. His father wanted him to study law while he had a strong desire to study theology, which he ended up studying.

**2.** After graduating with a master's degree, he was accepted into the Society of Jesus but was required to wait a few days. He was tormented by all the pleasure in his life; he didn't feel it was a safe path to heaven. He practiced routine prayer and was extremely recollected.

**3.** A close friend of Father Gracian entered the monastery in Pastrana at this time. Father Gracian enjoyed reading about this order.... Our Lord truly saw the great need there was for a person like this to carry on the work He had begun.

Had I very much desired to ask His Majesty for a person to organize all the things pertaining to the order in these initial stages, I would not have succeeded in asking for all that He in fact gave in Father Gracian. May the Lord be blessed forever.

**4.** Not having the slightest thought of taking the habit of this order, he was asked to go to Pastrana to speak to the prioress of our monastery there... that she might accept a nun....

Our Lady to whom he was very devoted wanted to repay him by giving him her habit... He actually became very fond of the order....

**5.** While still a boy in Madrid, he often prayed before an image of our Lady to whom he had a great devotion ... He called her "his

love." ... He said that sometimes his eyes were swollen from weeping over the many offenses committed against her Son. As a result, there arose in him a strong impulse and desire to help souls. It was so great an impulse that any hardship became small if he felt it could bear fruit...

**6.** The Virgin brought him there by tricking him into thinking he was going there to request the habit for the nun; but in fact, God had brought him there in order to give him the habit.

Oh, secrets of God! How true that without our desiring it, he disposes us so as to give us favors. This soul was repaid for the good deeds that he had done; for the good example that he had always given, and for his great desire to serve the Lord's glorious Mother. His Majesty must always repay those who serve Our Lady with wonderful rewards.

**7.** He arrived in Pastrana and went to speak to the prioress that she might accept the nun; and it seemed as though he had asked her to pray to the Lord that he himself might enter. A pleasant person, generally loved by those who had dealings with him, he didn't, however, allow any fault to go by ... as he looked out for the welfare of the religious life. In his actions he was so gentle and pleasant that it seemed no one was able to complain about him.

**8.** When the prioress saw him, she felt a strong desire that he enter the order ... She told her nuns to beseech our Lord not to let him go without his receiving the habit. This prioress was a very great servant of God.

All the nuns took this matter very much to heart, and with fasts, disciplines and prayer begged His Majesty continually. Thus, God was pleased to grant this favor.

Father Gracian went to the monastery of the friars and saw so much religious observance and opportunity to serve our Lord and above all it was the order of the Virgin Mary whom he desired to serve, that his heart was moved not to return to the world.

The devil set before him though many difficulties especially the pain this would bring his parents but he decided to be a subject of the Virgin and take her habit. Great happiness was had by all .... as it was felt that His Majesty had granted them this favor through their prayers.

**9.** He spent the year of probation with the humility one would find among the youngest novices. His virtue was tried when the prior was absent as a very young and inexperienced friar was left in charge.

When I think of this, I am amazed at how Father Gracian was able to suffer this trial, especially how he could put up with a person like that. The spirituality God gave him was necessary for this suffering.

It was later understood that this young friar was a victim of melancholy. He was a good religious; and God sometimes permits this mistake of putting such persons in office to perfect the virtue of obedience in those He loves.

**10.** As a reward, God gave Father Gracian the greatest light in the area of obedience to be able to teach it to others. Prior to his profession, so that he would not lack experience in all he would need to know, he underwent severe temptations for three months... He gave me a work he wrote while undergoing great temptations, it inspired me with much devotion.

**11.** It might seem inappropriate that he would have informed me of so many personal matters about his soul. Perhaps the Lord wanted it that I might record it here. It was while we were speaking about other matters that he told me these things and others that cannot be put in writing, for I would be going on at much greater length.

**12.** So that he not suffer any pain, I have used much restraint should this work ever get into his hands.

It seemed important to me that the one who had done so much good for the renewal of the observance of the primitive rule should not be forgotten.

He came along at the right moment for I would have regretted ever having begun, I'm referring to the houses of the friars, for those of the nuns, have so far gone well. Those of the friars were not going badly, but the chance of a quick collapse was there.

Since the discalced did not have their own province, they were governed by the calced or traditional friars. Those who could have governed were not given the power to do so. Nor did the friars have constitutions given by the Father General. Each house did as it saw fit. Some thought one way, and others another. At times, I found them very tiring.

**13.** Our Lord provided the remedy through Father Gracian (or Father Maestro Fray Jeronimo de la Madre de Dios). He was made apostolic commissary and given rule over the discalced friars and nuns.

He drafted the constitutions for the friars.

In his first visitation, he arranged all with moderation and harmony. It seemed as if our Lady had chosen him to help our order. ....

Amen.