

## 11<sup>th</sup> Foundation: Seville

(Ch.25)

### The Book of her Foundations

by Teresa of Avila

Continues telling about the foundation named after the glorious St. Joseph in Seville and about what we suffered in order to get our own house.

No one would have thought that in a wealthy city like Seville that there would be fewer opportunities for a foundation than in other places I had gone to.

There was so little help there that I wondered if it was wise for us to have a monastery in that place.

I have always heard it said that the devils had greater leeway there to tempt souls. They certainly afflicted me in that place. I have never felt more cowardly in my life... Perhaps the Lord partly withdrew His hand that I might see that my courage did not come from me.

**2.** ... There was not a chance of buying a house there nor did I have anything to buy one with, nor anyone to lend to us.

The women who had often told Father Visitor that they would enter our community if there was one in Seville, ended up thinking we were too strict and thus they would not be able to endure the life.

The time finally came for me to leave Andalusia to tend to matters elsewhere. It distressed me deeply to have to leave nuns without a house, although I clearly saw I was accomplishing nothing.

**3.** At this time, my brother Lorenzo de Cepeda returned from the Indies where he had been for more than thirty-four years. He helped us procure the house in which the nuns now live...

But just as it seemed that all would work out, all came to naught.

**4.** One day, while in prayer beseeching our Lord to give the nuns a house ... He told me: "I have already heard you; leave it to me." His Majesty prevented us from buying the one that was pleasing to all though it was old and run down... But the owner, though making a great profit, raised a difficulty about signing the contract, allowing us to get out of the contract. This was a great favor from our Lord, for there was just too much work to be done on the house.,,

**5.** We received much help from a priest who came to celebrate Mass almost daily as he knew we didn't have a celebrant. He came from far away despite the heat. He was known in the city for his good works. He and my brother went to see the house in which the nuns now live. The contract was signed within two or three days.

**6.** What we had to go through before moving in was no trifle. The occupant didn't want to leave and the Franciscan friars nearby tried to persuade us not to move in.

I would have been happy to break the contract... but the prioress of the community that would live in it, was happy the contract could not be broken. In this situation, His Majesty had given her more faith and courage in Him than He did me.

**7.** The trouble lasted more than a month. We moved in at night to avoid trouble with the friars. In the morning, the same good priest came to celebrate Mass and then all our fears left us.

**8.** O Jesus! How much fear I have suffered in doing good, for the service of God, what must be the fear of those who do evil, who are against God and neighbor?

**9.** My brother was in hiding because of an error made in the contract that had been drawn up in haste. The error was very harmful to the monastery, and since he was the guarantor of the loan, they wanted to arrest him.

Since he was an outsider we too were harassed. The trouble continued until he put up the collateral.

We were enclosed on the ground floor in a few rooms. My brother was there all day with the workers. He provided us food as he had done before.

Since we were in what was a private home, it was not widely known that it had been transformed into a monastery, thus there were few alms except those from a saintly Carthusian prior. He helped us in every way. Pray for him, daughters, and all those living or dead who helped us.

**10.** My brother remained with us about a month. During this time he worked to construct the church and to adapt everything so that we didn't have to do anything.

**11.** Once the work finished, I wanted to have the Blessed Sacrament reserved without any noisy display.

The two priests who were looking after our affairs as they would their own, felt to make the monastery known in Seville, the Blessed Sacrament would have to be reserved with solemnity from a parish. The archbishop ordered that the clerics and confraternities gather for the occasion and that the streets be decorated.

**12.** Our good priest decorated our cloister that looked onto the street.

We were consoled to see our festival celebrated with such solemnity, the streets had been highly decorated and there was a great deal of music and musical instruments. The saintly prior told us he felt it all to be the work of God. The archbishop reserved the Blessed Sacrament.

So, here you see, daughters, the poor discalced nuns were honored by all. The number of people that came was extraordinary.

**13.** After the procession, there was much shooting of artillery and firecrackers, which continued into the night. At one point, powder caught fire. A huge flame leapt as high as the cloister. The taffeta hangings were not damaged though the stone beneath them was blackened.

**14.** All were amazed when they saw it. The nuns praised the Lord that they didn't have to pay for new taffeta. It must have been the devil seeking revenge. But, His Majesty did not allow the devil to succeed; may He be blessed forever! Amen.