

## **POINTS FOR REFLECTION – BOOK OF THE FOUNDATIONS Chs 3 to 8**

### **Chapter 3**

1. The foundation of Medina began with very little: ‘Well, now that I had the permission, I didn’t have a house...’ (3,2) and ‘...only my lowliness and my powerlessness did I have before me.’

- To what extent does this find an echo in our own experience?

2. Of great importance is the incident concerning the Eucharist, which caused Teresa considerable suffering: ‘When I saw His Majesty placed in the street, at a time so dangerous...’ (3,10). Yet she had the conviction that a new religious house was only really founded when the first Mass was celebrated in it and the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the chapel.

- What are our convictions today in this respect?

3. She comes towards the end of her narrative by dealing with the foundation for the friars and with her first meeting with Fray John of the Cross (3, 16-17). It is surprising how quickly things developed from that meeting, which would be of vital importance for John’s vocation and so providential for the Teresian Carmel and the entire Church.

- What, if any, experience of such decisive meetings have we had in our own lives?

### **Chapters 4 – 5**

*Chapter 4. Counsels concerning the favours granted by the Lord and how to receive them profitably.*

- To what extent do we agree with Teresa that it will profit us more to spend a long time in prayer than in a service well done?
- All of us have known people who have been fundamental to our Christian life. Are we able to mention experiences, attitudes, some words of Christian people, which have caused us to feel strengthened in some Christian truth?

*Chapter 5. Harmonising the life of prayer with service.*

- What lights has Teresa given us for harmonizing our lives of prayer and service?
- What, today, could be the mistaken ideas which make integration between the life of prayer and service difficult?

## Chapters 6 – 8

‘That we might have understanding in things so important, may it please the Lord to give us light; and may His help not fail lest we cause Him displeasure through the favours He grants us.’ (F.6,23)

### *Chapter 6 Absorption on receiving Communion*

- We recognise that our human nature has certain entirely legitimate needs which can nevertheless enslave us. Which of Teresa’s counsels seem to us the most useful for freeing a person who is too much absorbed in some matter?
- How can we individually learn from the counsels Teresa gives for receiving God’s gifts in a fitting way?

### *Chapter 7 Melancholy and Counsels to Prioresses*

- How realistic is the remedy given by Teresa for dealing with the malady of melancholy?
- How can a community best come to terms with illness – mental and physical – among its members?

### *Chapter 8 Revelations and Visions*

- How does one discern the authenticity of a supernatural experience?
- How can the supernatural experiences of individual members contribute to the building up of the community?