

Communicationes 326

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Jubilee celebration: 125 years of foundation at the Monastery of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Haifa - Israel

"Let us live on the holy mountain for the glory and honor of God"

We sang the hymn of the jubilee with full voice to thank the Lord who, in his love and Providence, wanted and supported this presence throughout our history, despite the wars and in the midst of difficult circumstances, peculiar to the blessed Land where we are. The foundation dates from January 1, 1892, when eight Carmelites from France settled at the foot of Mount Carmel.



To tell this holy story, we published two books. The first, entitled *Near the Source*, is published in French. In four main chapters, we present the vocation and mission of our community and situate it in the whole of the contemplative life present in the Holy Land. We recall past events from archival documents and, finally, we express the meaning of our current presence within the local Church and in the social and political context that is ours.

The second book is entitled *The Guardians of the Vine*, a title that refers to a biblical verse from the Song of Songs. It is published in Arabic. It is an abridged account of our history, geared toward Arabic-speaking Christians and intended to present our monastery to them.

The Jubilee Year culminated in the celebration of the Eucharist on November 4, 2017, in the monastery chapel. It was presided by Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the apostolic administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and concelebrated by Bishop Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo, Vicar in Palestine, Father Hanna Kildani, Vicar in Israel, Father Enrique Castro OCD, General Delegate for Israel, several members of religious communities, local clergy as well as Discalced Carmelite fathers and brothers.

The Christian people were present in all their diversity: Catholics of Maronite and Greek-Melkite rite and Orthodox. We also enjoyed the presence of Jewish, Baha'i and even Druze friends. All, as children of the same Father, participated in the Jubilee Mass, led by the choir of the New Life ecumenical community. It was a powerful moment, an eruption of the Spirit in an atmosphere of joyous and festive communion, something of a messianic moment that overwhelmed us all.

To prepare for this jubilee, we have benefited from numerous collaborations in all fields, and everything made us feel that, despite our weakness and our poverty, we are at the heart of the ecclesial community, that Carmel belongs to the people of God; we are theirs and for them. It was a strong experience, part of the essential missionary character of our vocation.

This event was lived under the sign of internationality and interculturality. Such is the characteristic of the Mother Church of Jerusalem. During the celebration, we used three languages following the dynamism of the Spirit! A long procession of entry preceded the Eucharist: above all, the processional Cross carried by a Carmelite brother, followed by the entire community of sisters with some symbols: the Founding Infant Jesus, the same that Mother Mary of the Sacred Heart brought on the day of the foundation, 125 years ago. Then, the icon of Our Lady of Mount Carmel with our Holy Mother Teresa; a notebook from our Annals, and the light of the jubilee; behind these, the other sisters who bore lights, signs of fidelity. Our sisters on the council of the Association of Our Lady of Mount Carmel also participated in this procession while coming for their regular meeting.

After the Introductory Rites, there was the special rite of the Jubilee Year when we presented our symbols to the people. In the end, Archbishop Pizzaballa read the blessing that Pope Francis sent to our community on the occasion of the jubilee.

During his homily, Bishop Marcuzzo reminded us of the biblical meaning of jubilee, which, according to the book of Leviticus, is a time of repose, not for rest, but to return to the roots, to return entirely to God. What are our roots? He reminded us of our origins here at Wadi'ain es-Siah. Carmelites were born near a spring, as our Rule of Life says, 'juxta fontem,' near the spring of the prophet Elijah who, by his prayer, brought back the pagan people to the true God. He also recalled the important place that the Virgin Mary has in our Order.

"How can we return to God?" the bishop asked us. Saint John of the Cross tells us: we must go out, climb the mountain of Carmel by detaching ourselves from all that is old to enter a new way of thinking and acting, doing this with patience like Elijah did hoping for rain after years of drought. This is the newness of jubilee.

So what does it mean to go back to the source? We can respond as St. Teresa of Lisieux answered: "In the heart of the Church, my mother, I will be love". I wish that you might make this holy decision, to be love in the heart of the Church of the Holy Land.

After the homily, we renewed our vows in the presence of the whole assembly: a powerful moment of communion with our pastors and also a moment of communion with all the consecrated men and women present.

At the end of Mass, the whole assembly was invited for a fellowship hour.

VIDEO: <https://youtu.be/-tyt1qduzl4>



Congress on Bld. Marie-Eugene

On 26th October last, the Teresianum celebrated/held a congress on Bld. Marie-Eugene of the Child Jesus, entitled: 'Fr. Marie-Eugene, Mystic and Teacher'. After the welcome address, given by the President of the faculty, Fr. Denis Chardonens, there were six conferences: 'I want to see God and contemporary debates about mysticism' (Fr. Bernard Minvielle); "Bld. Marie-Eugene of the Child Jesus, Discalced Carmelite' (Fr. Emilio José Martínez, OCD); 'A concept of mystical life rooted in experience' (Fr. Louis Menvielle, Vice-Postulator of the Cause of Canonisation); 'The sanctification of Ordinary life according to Bld. Marie-Eugene' (Fr. Laurent Touze); 'Theology and contemplation in the thought of Fr. Marie-Eugene of the Child Jesus: implications, problems and perspectives" (Fr. Jesus Manuel García Gutiérrez); and 'I want to see God as a theological synthesis' (Fr. François-Marie Léthel, OCD).

The conferences were followed by a round table, presided by Fr. Piero Coda and it fell to Fr. Jean-François Lefebvre, Director of the 'Studium Notre Dame de Vie', which is affiliated with the Teresianum, draw the discussion to a close.

The congress succeeded in demonstrating Fr. Marie-Eugene's contribution to theology, particularly to understanding mystical life, placing it in its context, as well as within the Carmelite tradition and showing the validity of his work today.

Tenth anniversary of the beatification

On 28th October, 2007, Cardinal Saraiva Martins beatified 498 martyrs who had died in Spain during the 20th century, in St. Peter's Square. Among them were 32 Discalced Carmelites, including Fr. Eufrazio of the Child Jesus or Fr. Eusebius of the Child Jesus who led the group of 15 martyrs in Toledo, among whom was Fr. Tirso of Jesus Mary.



At 18.00 on 28th October last, on account of the above mentioned beatification, a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated in the church of the Discalced Carmelites of Toledo, Spain. It was presided by the Postulator General of the Order, Fr. Romano Gambalunga, OCD.

Prior to this, the relics of the martyrs had been taken in procession through the streets of Toledo, accompanied by 16 palms and 16 candles which were lit in the church entrance in memory of each one of the martyrs. In the morning, Fr. José Vicente Rodríguez, OCD, Vice-Postulator of the Cause, gave a conference entitled: 'A community of martyrs'.

Family members of the martyrs, from the monastery in Toledo, took part in the Mass and a chasuble donated by one of the families and made by the Discalced Carmelites nuns of Consuegra, was seen for the first time, as was, a glass window made by Laura Gutiérrez, with the words which Fr. Tirso spoke to her family just before being martyred: 'Forgive, bless and love to all'.



Pastoral visit to North-east India

During his visit to the Province of South Kerala, Fr. Johannes Gorantla, Definitor General for South Asia, has visited the Vicariate of Koltaka, which includes nine Indian states, including those of Western Bengal and Sikkim.

For the moment, the Order has established itself in the region with four houses established canonically and six which have yet to be established. Most are missions in remote areas of north-east India.

Fr. Johannes has explained the difficulties of travel to us, but also the new and most beautiful experiences which he has been encountered in the Order in this region of India, with the brothers who work in there and the people whom they serve.

There are 31 solemnly professed friars and 22 who have taken simple vows, working in a mission with a future full of hope.

Together with Fr. Johannes, we thank the brothers who have listened to the call of the Lord to serve the Order, the Church, and men in a mission which demands great sacrifices and a strong apostolic spirit. Let us pray for them!!!



“Building Peace: A challenge for Christianity and Islam” An Islamic-Christian encounter

The Islamic-Christian meeting entitled, “Building Peace,” was held November 17th through 19th of this year in the University of Mysticism of Ávila in collaboration with the Mufti of Byblos, Sheik Ghassan Lakkis; the Diocese of Ávila; and the Blanquerna Observatory. The opening ceremony took place on Friday, November 17th, at 5:30 p.m. Following it, Mufti Ghassan Lakkis and Bishop García Burillo spoke about the importance of religion in the building up of society. Each presented to the auditorium the contributions of their religion. In the subsequent days, the theme of the search for peace was developed from the perspective of dialogue between both religions. Points discussed were: 1– *The face of God in the Koran and the Gospels*; 2 – *“Neighbor” in Scripture*; 3 – *Solidarity and social outreach*; 4 – *On interior peace and the construction of social peace*. Each theme was developed by two speakers, always from their religious perspective, Muslim or Christian.

At the end of the congress, presenters offered a series of proposals with which they renewed their faith in the wealth found in cultural and religious diversity; in freedom of religion; in the importance of ongoing dialogue based on principles of equality, mutual respect, and justice among all human beings; and the need to continue this type of meeting in the future. Those attending the congress also proposed declaring the city of Byblos as an international center for interreligious dialogue.



Disalced Carmelite Nuns meet in the CITEs

Nearly seventy Disalced Carmelite nuns from several Spanish and Portuguese monasteries met in Avila’s CITEs—University of Mysticism during the first days of November. The purpose of the meeting was to study and reflect on Pope Francis’ Apostolic Constitution on contemplative life, “*Vultum Dei Quaerere*.” They were accompanied by the Order’s Procurator General, Father Jean Joseph Bergara.

Also at the meeting as auditors were Father Miguel Márquez Calle, Provincial of Iberia, and the Provincial Councilors of that province, Fathers Sebastian García and José Luis del Pozo.

Online participation made it possible for 143 monasteries from Spain, Portugal, Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Mexico,

and Lithuania to follow the course. At the end of the event, Father Jean Joseph and the federal counselors of Spain stayed on to meet for two more days.

The sisters who attended the course celebrated the Jubilee of Holy Mother Teresa of Jesus on November 2nd, passing through the jubilee's holy door in the church of the Saint and celebrating the Eucharist there accompanied by Fathers Jean Joseph, Sebastian, and José Luis. It was a moment of particular communion with the Order.

We wish to thank Sister Virtudes Parra, ocd, from the monastery of Altea in Alicante, Spain, for the photographs and information she sent about the event.