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INDEX:

- Puerto Rico International Congress of Mysticism
- General Chapters
- Spanish Episcopal Conference visits Avila
- News of Fr Jacques' Cause in a new web page
- «Carmel and the Missions» on line

Congreso

Puerto Rico International Congress of Mysticism

Puerto Rico, April 27, 2015 (Communicaciones).- Teresa of Jesus was the principal topic of the International Congress of Mysticism held in the Catholic Pontifical University of Puerto Rico during the 8th and 9th of April. The Congress gathered together well-known specialists from various countries and universities: Harvard, Oxford, Buenos Aires, Mexico, Antwerp and Ponce, to mention a few.

The inaugural conference on "Self Knowledge in Teresian Mysticism" was given by Francisco Javier Sancho, Director of the University of Mysticism.

Following on was the architect and specialist in world patrimony, Dr Agamemnon Panter Tekakis, who spoke on the Teresian heritage of Avila, as well as all the plans for its conservation and promotion, and its importance as a World Heritage site.

The second day of the congress was opened by Colin Peter Thompson, a Professor from Oxford University, who discussed "Now you can truly look on me!" The gaze of the Beloved in the Spiritual Canticle of St John of the Cross. Dr Luce López Baralt from the University of Puerto Rico followed with the topic: The simile of the Teresian castles and the difficulty of its literary reception.

Among the other presentations was one by Dr Cecilia Avenatti from the Buenos Aires Catholic University of Argentina. She discussed "Between theological aesthetics and dramatic art: a renewed reading of Teresa's idea of spiritual marriage."

Luis Manuel Girón, a professor from Harvard university, presented a paper on the lyricism of Saint Teresa in the history of Christian mysticism.

Professor Margarita León, from the Autonomous University of Mexico, spoke on “St Teresa and the Desert Nuns.” Dr. Miguel Norbert Ubarri from Antwerp University finished the discussions with his conference “The originality of Teresa in the light of the nuns and “beatas” of her time.

Chronicles from the General Archives

General Chapters

April 27, 2015 (Communicationes).- P. Óscar I. Aparcio.-The General Chapter is the most important instrument for decision making in a mendicant Order. In the Discalced Carmelite Order of the Italian Congregation of St Elias and the whole Order there have been 90 General Chapters since 1885. Logically, the place where they have most often been held is Rome in various places: Santa Maria della Scala, Santa Maria della Vittoria, San Pancrazio and the General House. The first time the Chapter was celebrated outside Rome was in the monastery of San Silvestro at Montecompatri in 1611. Other places where the General Chapters were celebrated outside Rome were: Loano (1623, 1626), Bologna (1680, 1686, 1773), Piacenza (1725), Milan (1728), Florence (1823), Genoa (1889, 1895), Holy Land on Mount Carmel (1931), Venice (1937), Campiglioni (1973-1979); Lisieux (1997); Avila (2003) and Fatima (2009). The General Chapter has also been celebrated in places which were not monasteries of the Order: Grottaferrara (1985) and Ariccia (1991).

From 1605, when the first Chapter was celebrated, until 1743 Chapters were held every three years. Since 1743 to the present time, they have been celebrated every six years. In turbulent times of history, particularly during war, the Chapter was postponed to new date. This happened during the Napoleonic invasion, and in the first and second world wars.

Besides dealing with the lifestyle to be followed throughout the Order, the General Chapter elects the Superior General and his Definitors. The Definitory used to be composed of four members (Definitors) plus the Fr General. In 1985, the number of Definitors was increased to six, and in 1997 to seven, while in the 2003 Chapter, the Definitors were increased to eight, a number which is maintained to the present time.

In the beginning, the General was of Spanish origin. The first Italian General was Fr Paulo Simone de Gesù Maria (1623). The first General who was neither Spanish nor Italian was the famous Belgian historian, Fr Isidore of Saint Dominic (1656). There have been Generals who were French (Dominic of the Most Holy Trinity, 1659), German (Fr Charles Felix of Saint Teresa, 1680) and a Pole (Fr Adrian of Saint Teresa, 1791). The great majority of Generals have been Italian. The first non-European to rule the Order and for two sexenniums (1991–2003) was the Mexican of Lebanese origin, Fr Camilo Maccise, who died recently.

This brief chronicle helps us to know a little of the history of the General Chapters, while preparing us for the soon to come Chapter, to be celebrated in CITEs in Avila, to coincide with the 5th Centenary of the Birth of Saint Teresa of Jesus (1515–2015).

V Centenary

The Spanish Episcopal Conference visits Avila

Avila–Spain, April 7, 2015 (Communicationes).- All the Bishops of Spain made a recent pilgrimage to Avila on 24th April to celebrate the 5th centenary of the birth of Saint Teresa of Jesus. The Bishops went to the three principal places in the city associated with Teresa: the Incarnation, La Santa and St Joseph's.

The Bishop of the city, Mons. Jesús García Burillo, called the happening an "historic event".

The Bishops began their pilgrimage in the Incarnation monastery where they recited the Daytime Prayer with the community. Afterwards they travelled to La Santa where they celebrated a solemn Eucharist at which presided the President of the Spanish Episcopal Conference, Ricardo Blázquez, the Cardinal of Valladolid.

Previously, the Vicar General of the Order, Fr Emilio José Martínez, greeted the Spanish episcopate in the name of the Order. During his message Fr Emilio pointed out, "I bring to you very affectionate greetings from the Discalced Carmelite Nuns. Without any doubt, they are the ones who are most enjoying celebrating the birthday of their holy Mother. From their prayerful silence, their constant happiness, their daily family life and their great love for the Church, they are the ones who are keeping alive the memory of Teresa of Avila".

On his part, Mons. Ricardo Blázquez emphasized in this homily that Saint Teresa left us a great living memory in her writings and in her daughters and sons. "So many splendid graces shine out in the life of Teresa, such as her generous commitment to the Lord. No wonder the centennial initiatives have multiplied and that they all have found a gratifying response", said the President of the Spanish Episcopal Conference.

After the Eucharist they met in a Plenary session and after a meal they finished their pilgrimage in St Joseph's monastery, reciting the Office of Readings with the Community.

Mission

«Carmel and the Missions» on line

April 27, 2015 (Communicationes).- Fr **Julio Almansa, Secretary General of the Missions.**-

After attempts to restart the magazine **CARMEL AND THE MISSIONS**, it seems that the simplest solution would be to do it from the office of the Secretary General for the Missions, not in its printed version but online. Here you have in your hands (PC, portables, Ipad or otherwise...), the fruit of this initiative.

(<http://www.calameo.com/read/0015587830e2f1d3b2abe?authid=Vs4SQGkmRH7h>).

With this new output we want to take maximum advantage from the experience of the past, to take the present time more seriously and to look to the future with responsibility.

Today mission is a **prophetic service** to our Church. It is an attitude which points to the future and, above all, it is the place nearest to the poor, as our Pope Francis has pointed out. We are

called to live and give witness in a way increasingly more visible of our personal choices, our signs of fraternity and of overcoming any temptation to clericalism.

Carmel desires to take up this missionary call and to go to the geographical and existential boundaries «to advance in the journey towards a **pastoral and missionary conversion**, which cannot leave things as they presently are” (EG 25).

Mission extends in both directions, because if it is true that we are called to rekindle hope in our brothers and sisters, to give warmth to hearts, by showing courage in opening new ways, it is no less certain that this has a strong repercussion, not only for the missionary, but also for the Church to be open to these new horizons, since «there is no greater freedom than that of allowing oneself to be guided by the Holy Spirit, renouncing the attempt to plan and control everything to the last detail, and instead letting him enlighten, guide and direct us, leading us wherever he wills» (EG 280). In this meaning of mission is always contained **a joyful service bearing hope**.