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The ALACAR Congress and visit of Fr General to Central America

In the presence of Frs Saverio Cannistrà, OCD Superior General and Fernando Millán, O.Carm Prior General, the IV ALACAR (Latin American Association of Carmelites) congress began on Tuesday 27th October in San Salvador. The topic for discussion was «Teresa of Jesus: a window of hope for Latin America».

Taking part were 130 people, including friars, religious of active life and associated laity from 17 countries, paying homage to Saint Teresa on the closing of the V Centenary of her birth. Nine conferences were prepared, given throughout the days following the opening, in which St Teresa was presented from three points of view: Teresa, the woman; Teresa the prophet; and Teresa, the mystic.

This Congress forms part of a path on which the Carmelite family has embarked in Latin America, for the purpose of encouraging integration and sharing the mutual richness that makes up this rich family of Carmel. These congresses are celebrated every three years and this one is the fourth in the series which began in 2006 in Lima, (Peru); the second was in Villa de Leyva (Colombia); and the third in Sao Paulo (Brasil).

After this ALACAR Congress (from Monday 26th to Saturday 31st) Fr Saverio and Fr Javier Mena carried out the following itinerary in Central America:

- Sunday 1st to Monday 2nd: General Assembly of the CICLA
- From the 3rd to 5th: a fraternal visit to Guatemala.
- From the 5th to the 6th: fraternal visit to Honduras.
- From the 6th to 7th: fraternal visit to Nicaragua
- From the 8th to 10th: fraternal visit to Costa Rica
- From the 10th to 12th: fraternal visit to Panamá.
- The 13th: return to Rome.

First Secular Carmelite Congress in Karnataka-Goa Province (India)

Members of the eight Secular Carmelite communities and groups of the Karnataka-Goa Province (India) met in Mysore from October 30 to November 1 at the shrine dedicated to the Infant Jesus to celebrate their first Secular Carmelite Congress. Here the Fathers also undertake other pastoral activities, such as formation for youth aspiring to Carmel and other events to promote religious life among women.

With the motto, «It is time to walk», the Congress provided an opportunity to delve into topics that are specific to the Secular Carmel, the Constitutions, and Holy Mother Teresa. Around 80 participants from the eight communities of the Province were accompanied by the friars who are their Assistants, Father Charles Serrao, OCD – the Father Provincial, some provincial counselors, as well as the General Delegate for the Secular Carmel – Fr. Alzinir Debastiani, who after the Congress continued his visits of the OCDS communities of Mangalore, Goa, Mumbai, etc.

The closure of all the celebrations of the 5th Centenary of the Birth of Saint Teresa at the Provincial level also took place at the Congress, its highest point being the celebration of the Eucharist on October 31. The Bishop of Mysore presided and many Discalced Carmelite friars concelebrated, together with clergy from other congregations. Members of some of the region's Teresian women's congregations were also present at the event. After Mass several religious and cultural activities allowed children, youth, and religious to honor Holy Mother with dance and regional music on this feast day.

All in attendance admired the interesting logo of the Secular Carmel of the Province, designed for this occasion and commemorating the canonization of Louis and Zélie Martin (see photograph), as well as many other fruits of this first Provincial OCDS Congress, which was an opportunity to exchange experiences and consolidate fraternal bonds among the communities as well as relationships with the friars, who received expressions of gratitude on the part of the Seculars for this activity which favored the growth of the Secular Order in the Province.

Congresses with Teresian echoes following the official closing of the Centenary Year

More information in: <http://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/ampliar-noticia/congresos-y-conferencias-de-tinte-teresiano#.VkIMXrcvfiU>

The 5th Centenary of the birth of St. Teresa officially closed on October 15 in Avila. During the month of October, in Spain (and not only there), other events with a Teresian tone followed, which we remember here:

From September 30th to October 1st, In the Colomina CEU palace, Days were celebrated with the theme «Living without living in myself. Teresa of Jesus on the 5th centenary of her birth (1515-2015)». The Vicar General, Fr Agustí Borrell took part in the closing ceremony.

From October 20th to 23rd, the Congress «Saint Teresa or the permanent flame» was celebrated and organized by the Complutense University of Madrid. Fr. Emilio José Martínez participated and delivered a conference entitled: «Saint Teresa, a mystic with open eyes».

From the 23rd to the 25th of October, the 5th Congress of Spirituality was held in Lleida, organized by the Discalced Carmelites of Cataluña. Fr. Agustí Borrell gave the concluding conference: «It Is Time to Walk. Beyond the 5th Centenary of Saint Teresa».

From October 27th to the 29th, the Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Pontifical Foundation and the University of Francisco de Vitoria organized a congress on the theme: «Prayer, a force that changes the world». Fr. Agustí Borrell gave a conference on prayer in St Teresa and Fr. Emilio Martínez spoke about prayer and evangelization according to Teresa and Benedict XVI. Also present was Fr Miguel Márquez, in his capacity as Iberian Provincial and President of the Foundation for the V Centenary.

Fr. Agustí was also present **on October 30** at the bibliographical exhibition on St. Teresa held at the University of Barcelona and organized under the motto: «I write with freedom». He gave a conference on «Saint Teresa, friend of books».

Finally, **from the 4th to the 6th of November**, the Pontifical Theological Faculty of the Teresianum held an International Congress on the theme: «Within ourselves is a palace of great richness (*Way of Perfection*, 28:9). Teresa of Jesus and humanness».

Blessing of the first monastery of Discalced Carmelite friars in Zambia

The Discalced Carmelites received a new gift from our Holy Mother, Saint Teresa of Jesus, during the fifth centenary of her birth, with the foundation of this new Carmelite presence. After 17 months of work on this mission in Zambia, the first missionaries have managed to build the first monastery in the diocese of Chipata, with help from the General House and the Manjummel province.

This first monastery, dedicated to Saint Teresa of Avila, was blessed on Sunday, 9th August, on the feast of Saint Edith Stein, by the Bishop of Chipata (in Camilala, to the east of the province of Zambia). Assisting at this memorable event was Fr Prasad, the Provincial of the Manjummel province, and Fr George Tambala, the Definitor General for Africa. Fr George Tambala blessed the chapel of the monastery and celebrated the first Holy Mass in it on 8th August. Four heads of the local police, the Vice-Minister and other political dignitaries also took part in this event. This monastery is the first religious presence in Lwunagwa Valley, where the people are practically abandoned by the authorities and the volunteers for being in a special geographical and sociological context.

The inhabitants of this area belong to the Nyalugwe and Ansenga tribes. It was our first missionaries who began a serious evangelization accompanied by an improvement in their conditions of life. The major part of their time is occupied with this, formation in the faith and the organization of small Christian communities. The people are very open and simple, but their life is a constant fight against nature and wild animals, which has given them a fairly special character. At the present moment they come from five villages to fetch water from our friars' well.

Teresa of Jesus and what is «human» - International Congress at the Teresianum in Rome

November 4-6, 2015. Many proposals have sprung up concerning the thought of Teresa of Avila during the V Centenary of her birth (1515-2015). These were the purpose of the International Congress organized for the 4th to the 6th November in the Teresianum Pontifical Faculty in Rome: to evaluate the content of all these in the light of the sensitivity of our contemporaries, to see how Saint Teresa in her time attracted her contemporaries and today attracts our contemporaries, to see the way in which she dealt with so many of the layers of our human universe, in a continuum between daily life, spirituality and mysticism.

Experts coming from the most diverse of horizons: from Spain to France, from Italy to Switzerland, from Burundi to Malta presented Saint Teresa in three aspects (Experience / doctrine / experiences-expressions) from the point of view of linguists, psychology, anthropology and phenomenology.

Starting with the category of what is human, which is a constant in all contemporary reflection, from philosophy to theology, Teresa was presented as a story and face of God, for being an untiring traveler along the tracks of our history, and also because of her explicit desire that mysticism be converted into a universal experience in the heart of God's people. Since she was so human and, at the same time, able to start us on the experience of the mystery, capable of «attracting souls to so high a blessing» (*Life* 18:8), she is capable of inspiring and of being a model *par excellence* for the Christian of today.