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Museum

Alba de Tormes' Teresian Museum

Alba de Tormes-Spain, November 23, 2014 (Communicaciones).- Father Daniel de Pablo Maroto.- The Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Alba de Tormes, whose community was founded by Saint Teresa (1571), have been making an immense effort for several years to make known the riches which their monastery treasures, all of them a living memory of their foundress, Teresa. Originally, a visitor was shown—from a distance—the cell where she died with a graphic representation of that event. Next to that, on either side of the main altar, were two signature relics, the heart and the arms, each in its beautiful reliquary. The principal relic, the marble casket that contains the body of the Saint, could be seen through the grates from the nave of the Church.

Later, using two small rooms of the convent, they opened a small museum on the left side of the Church where the heart and arms could be seen together with other mementos of la Santa. The project grew and, from a door to the sanctuary, tourists and pilgrims could enter some rooms where beautiful museum pieces could be seen: copper paintings, sculptures, etc.; and most importantly they could enter the place where the mortal remains of la Santa repose and could pray before her tomb.

Finally, the project was completed in the past few months with the construction of a new, four-story building connected to the convent. This was a grand finale for the desire to show the public a great part of the riches this historic convent, almost 450 years old, houses, and which the nuns have received from donors and kept in custody with the affection proper to

Teresa's daughters and heiresses of her spirit. It is worthwhile to visit this Castilian villa to see the great treasures of art and history in the magnificent setting of this museum, unique in the world like the one in Ávila.

In addition to what the tourist and pilgrim could see in the places I have alluded to, in the new locale paintings, sculptures by famous artists, gold and silver sacred objects for the celebration of the Eucharist, precious metalwork, banners from pilgrimages—abundant from the 3rd centenary of her death (1582-1882), many and precious sacred ornaments, a beautiful cloth that covered the deceased Saint in her sepulcher, work tools of the nuns, pottery, etc. can be seen.

There are endless, very beautiful objects which are impossible to summarize in a brief narrative. What is said and what remains unsaid for lack of space invites tourists and pilgrims to visit this marvelous museum worthy of Teresa, a model of the good work of the small community of Discalced Carmelite Nuns and of their good friends who have helped them in this arduous task. All this has been done to honor the Church and the other museums that are offered to the visiting public.

Father Gracián

Closing of the 4th Centenary of Father Gracián

Madrid-Spain, November 23, 2014 (Communicationes).— The Carmelite family also celebrates 400 years of the death of Father Jerome Gracián Dantisco, a fascinating figure in the history of Carmel, great collaborator of Saint Teresa, renown author and speaker, who died in Brussels in 1614. The general councils of the Carmelites and Discalced Carmelites (O.Carm. and OCD) organized two events to frame this anniversary: the opening of the centenary, which took place in Brussels on September 21 with a solemn Mass presided by Father Saverio Cannistrà, Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites, who was accompanied by Father Fernando Millán Romeral, Prior General of the Order of Carmel and many Carmelites; and a seminar on the biography of Gracián which took place in Madrid from November 12 to 14 and which served to close the 4th centenary.

Several scholars of his life and spiritual doctrine participated. The congress was organized by a study group called "Texts for a Millennium" (TPM – Textos para un Milenio). A large audience was in attendance. Professor Henar Pizarro of the Comillas Pontifical University presented a "portrait" of Jerome Gracián against the background of the situation of the Spanish Court in his day, very divided along "Papist" and "Roman" lines, and the more Spanish nationalist sector which favored the autonomy of the monarch in religious matters. Father Luis Javier Frontela, OCD, presented Gracián in the light of the first group of the Discalced Carmel and his relationships with other persons in that context. Professor Gloria Alonso de la Higuera spoke about the relationship between Gracián and images, in a double sense: images of him which have been preserved, and his tendency to distribute images, particularly of Saint Teresa during the time leading up to her beatification, for which he worked dauntlessly.

Professor Esther Jiménez Pablo described the last years in the life of Father Gracián and Father Oscar Aparicio, OCD, showed the evolution Father Gracián's person has undergone through the years, from the first biographies until the most recent.

On the 13th, Father Emilio Martínez González, OCD, Vicar General of the Discalced Carmelites, officially presented the letter written by both superiors general of the entire Carmelite family on the occasion of this centenary. The letter is titled, "*The Lord guards the footsteps of his faithful ones (1 Sam 2,9): Jerome Gracián, a man on the way.*" The letter will soon be translated into several languages.

Lastly, on the 14th a solemn Eucharist was celebrated in memory of Father Gracián who, despite having died in Brussels, officially belonged to the Madrid convent. Prior General Fernando Millán Romeral, O.Carm., presided over the Eucharist accompanied by Father Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD, Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites of Castile; Father Francisco Daza Valverde, O.Carm., Andalusian Provincial and president of the Iberian Region; several other provincials (O.Carm. and OCD), and many Carmelites. Likewise, the Superiors General of the two Spanish congregations of the active life were present: María del Carmen Aparicio Personal (HVMMC) and Rosario González Domínguez (HCSCJ).

5th Centenary

National inauguration of the 5th Centenary and solemn profession in the Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast, November 23, 2014 (Communications).- The solemn profession of friars Ambrosio Djovapko, Christophe Guéré and Roger Kiebré took place on November 15.

The Mass was presided over by Father José Francisco Santarrufina, Provincial of Aragon-Valencia (Spain). In addition to the parishioners, a significant number of the members of religious communities of Abidjan were present.

Before the final blessing, the Father Provincial and his delegate announced the official opening of the 5th centenary of the birth of Saint Teresa in the Ivory Coast with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. After Mass, the faithful were invited to view 13 panels on the life and vocation of Saint Teresa as a Carmelite and reformer. Holy cards, stickers, and other memorabilia were distributed among the parishioners.

Some of the brothers of our Delegation were also present, such as Father Festus, Superior of Togo; Fathers Florent and Alphonse from Burkina; and Father Julio Almansa, Secretary General for the Missions, who is accompanying the Father Provincial to all the houses of our Delegation.

The celebration finished in the grand esplanade of the Carmelite convent of Saint Joseph in Abidjan with a meal shared in fraternity and gift-giving to the newly professed. About 600 guests attended.

Peru

Saint Teresa of Jesus in Ayacucho (Peru)

Peru- September 23, 2014 (Communicationes).- The Carmelite Nuns of Ayacucho and the Metropolitan Archbishop of Ayacucho organized a week of permanent formation for diocesan priests on the occasion of the 5th Centenary of the Birth of Saint Teresa. Sessions are in the morning. In the afternoon, high school youth, the Spanish Conference of Religious (CONFER – Conferencia Española de Religiosos), the Diocesan Office of Catechism (ODEC), confirmands, and laity were invited to a series of conferences.

The Discalced Carmelite Nuns, present in Ayacucho since 1683, invited Father Alfredo Amesti, who resides in Lima, to accompany this event and share reflections developed during the days November 11 through 13. In those days, about 40 priests led by their archbishop rediscovered Teresa's message and the importance of prayer in priestly life. Over 400 young people met Teresa for the first time thanks to new illustrations of Teresa by Fano, provided by the Centenary's General Secretariat.

Also during those days an image of Teresa that presides over a side altar in the monastery, was displayed for veneration in the Cathedral of the Archdiocese.

The days were closed with a procession of the image of Teresa along the streets of Huamanga, from the Cathedral to the Monastery of Saint Teresa, where a Pontifical Mass was celebrated, presided by Bishop Salvador Piñero, Archbishop of Ayacucho, and concelebrated by several priests. The community of Discalced Carmelite Nuns and a large public were present.

Comments in general point to the interest that has been generated in Huamanga, in the person of Saint Teresa, and the desire to continue delving into her figure and message throughout the year.

Father Zacarias

Grand celebration in honor of Venerable Father Zacarias

India- September 23, 2014 (Communicationes).- The province of Manjummel celebrated a Eucharist in thanksgiving for the declaration of Father Zacarias Salterain-Bizkarra OCD (1887-1957) as “Venerable” by Pope Francis last January.

The news brings immense joy to the Church of Kerala and particularly to the Carmelite province of Manjummel.

Over 10,000 people participated in the Eucharist. The number surpassed all expectations and is proof of the great affection that the people of Kerala have for Venerable Father Zacarias.

The archbishop of Bombay, Bishop Oswald Gracias, presided over the Eucharist in which the highest representatives of the Syro-Malabar Church of Kerala also participated, as well as several bishops of the area and over 200 priests among who were many Carmelites. Father Augustine Mulloor was present on behalf of the General House and gave the homily.

The outstanding success of this Thanksgiving event was sufficient proof of the sanctity of Father Zacarias. The celebration was closed with a prayer that Venerable Father Zacarias soon be elevated to sainthood.