

Communicationes N. 272

20/12/2014

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Annals of the General Archives

Mount Carmel

Rome-Italy, December 20, 2014 (Communicationes).- The biblical Mount Carmel is the cradle and origin of our Order, both O.Carm. and O.C.D. According to Holy Scripture, the prophet Elijah and his disciple Elias were both there. Legendary traditions of the Order will later name Elijah as the first Carmelite, who in his day gathered together the original hermits that wore the brown sackcloth of the Order. These are traditions and legends that sought ancient origins for the Order.

Archeological remains prove that between the 4th and 7th centuries of our era, there were Byzantine monks living on Mount Carmel.

We Carmelites are descendants of the hermits that lived in contemplation on Mount Carmel: in allegiance to Jesus Christ. Many were pilgrims, some former Crusaders who lived there about a hundred years (1190-1291) and built a convent on the slope of Mount Carmel. This is the origin of our Order which, driven out by Muslim forces, migrated to Europe in the middle of the 8th century and was transformed into a mendicant Order, although it was born as an hermitical Order.

In 1631, Father Prospero of the Holy Spirit, OCD (1583-1653), born in Nalda, a town of Rioja, Spain, was the first Discalced Carmelite to go to holy Mount Carmel and persuade the emir to donate part of the mountain to him. In what is called the Grotto of Saint Elijah he celebrated Mass on a day in November 1631.

In the OCD General Archive, Section [unnamed], shelf 252 h, we have two drawings. One is a simple drawing that shows the layout of the first convent built by Father Prospero. The other, in full color and possibly drawn by a professional, shows Haifa Bay in the early 17th century. These are two documents that show the presence of the Discalced Carmel on holy Mount Carmel. A presence that continues to this day.

CITeS

The International Center for Teresian Studies of Ávila (CITeS) will inaugurate the “International Center for Young Pilgrims” in 2015

Ávila-Spain, December 20, 2014 (Communicationes).- The foundation stone of what will soon be the “International Center for Young Pilgrims” was laid. This project of the Order of Discalced Carmelites responds to a need to give special attention to young people.

According to the CITeS director, Father Javier Sancho, this project “focuses on the great contribution that Teresa of Jesus can offer today’s youth.” In the Center a young person can find the place, support, and guidance to find him- or herself, to open him- or herself to their inner wealth, and to grow in moral values. In short, it will be “a place of encounter with the other self and an oasis to celebrate one’s own life,” in the words of Father Sancho.

This center for young pilgrims will have two residences, each with a capacity for 48 persons, and a central building with all other resources (dining area, kitchen, classrooms, chapel, welcoming area, etc.) and additional residential facilities for 24 people. It will also include areas for parking and camping, and areas for future expansion.

Web

Now available in English and Spanish: www.oraison.ca

Montreal-Canada, December 20, 2014 (Communicationes).- The Carmels of Montreal and Trois-Rivières has set up a webpage at <http://www.oraison.ca>. It is now available in English and Spanish.

The website was created to draw the general public toward the richness of Teresian prayer on the threshold of the 5th Centenary of the Birth of Saint Teresa of Jesus.

The English newsletter has already been published and distribution of the Spanish newsletter will begin in January 2015.

Anyone interested can subscribe to receive the newsletters by email. The newsletters consist of a series of memoranda that give brief notes on prayer in narrative format or MP3s.

Currently there are over 200 subscribers.

Young Carmel

Fourth Carmelite Youth Encounter in Medina del Campo (Valladolid)

Medina del Campo-Spain, December 20, 2014 (Communicationes).- On the weekend of the feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 6-8), the Carmelite Youth of the Iberian peninsula met in Medina del Campo. The meeting had as its motto, "Staunch friends of God."

A gymkhana was organized in the city. At each Teresian-Sanjuanist location there was a person associated to Saint Teresa that gave participants a test. In the evening a prayer vigil was held.

On Sunday, December 5, Father Luis Hernández, ocd, gave a presentation titled, "Teresa and the missions." Later there was a talk about "Staunch friends of God" given by the members of Young Carmelites of Valencia (for children) and by Father Francisco Sánchez Oreja, ocd (for older participants). The Eucharist took place in the chapel where Saint John of the Cross celebrated his first Mass. In the afternoon there was a video forum and at night, the Vigil of the Immaculate and a concert by Rogelio Cabado, musical coordinator of the 5th Centenary apostolate.

On December 8, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the encounter concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist in the convent of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Medina del Campo.

5th Centenary

Teresian activities in the province of Naples

Naples-Italy, December 20, 2014 (Communicationes).- The OCD province of Naples prepared a Teresian reliquary which is visiting several churches in southern Italy. It arrived at the parish of Our Lady of Constantinople in Naples. With the relics present, a Mass was celebrated by the pastor and moderator of the Curia, Mons. Rafael Ponte.

The reliquary is shaped like a castle and the congregation has had intense moments of reflection and prayer in its presence.

In his homily, Mons. Rafael Ponte noted that "Teresa always walked toward the Lord and for that reason it is important to have her relics during this time of Advent, when the liturgy invites us to walk toward the Lord who is coming."

In addition to the celebration of the Eucharist, the parish family offered a Holy Rosary prayed in community and a prayer vigil with Teresian texts, chosen for that occasion, in which Saint Teresa speaks of her love story with Christ.

During the time the relics of Saint Teresa were present, attendees could write messages, prayers, or petitions. Those notes will be taken to the Birth Chapel of Saint Teresa in Ávila by Father Emilio José Martínez, Vicar General of the Order.