



*Notre Dame de Sion*

# “SAINT JOHN IN MONTANA”

*Congregational Novitiate Jerusalem*

Ein Karem, Tuesday, 21 February 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters

January and already one month into the New year of 2017 and February brought much life and excitement to us.

We began the Year 2017 with a time of petitions and thanksgiving. Where some of us thanked God for the people who were a light on our way, some thanked for the wonderful experiences that we had during 2016 and some asked for a new year full of peace and hope for all the nations.

With Sr. Ivete, we had an opportunity to study some topics in the Bible. Together with the Junior sisters, Cida Duca, Joselia, Leah, Wafaa and Victoria Sr. Ivete discussed with us the different ways of understanding the Bible from different and particular texts of the Scriptures in which we were always invited to relate to the Tanach. The second week the novitiate Community continued with Sr. Ivete on texts where the question was? What is the meaning of discipleship? The answer to this question can be easily found in a dictionary but the deep meaning of this simple word goes further than a sentence or a description about someone who follows somebody else. We saw in the scripture discipleship as lived by Samuel and Elisa.

During the third and fourth week as Sr. Ivete continued to stay with us in the Novitiate house and also being part of the Spanish Biblical Program in Ecce Homo we looked at the different aspects of Mission presented in the 4 different Gospels of John, Mark Luke and Mathew. Our session with Sr. Kathy Wolff on leaving all in order to follow Christ, chaste, poor and in obedience brought us to the depth of our call. The Contemplative, Apostolic Sisters, the Brothers of Sion, volunteers and friends of Sion felt a great joy in thanksgiving for 175th anniversary of Mary's sign to Alphonse Ratisbonne and this was a beautiful and special celebration (1842-2017) at the Ratisbone center in Jerusalem. Between inputs and activities and sometimes heavy rainfall and cold we managed to harvest our Lemons and filled all the bottles with the delicious lemon juice which keeps us refreshed during the hot summer months.

February 2nd, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, Sr. Maureena Fritz and Sr. Rosé Theresa celebrated the anniversary of their commitment in religious life – Sr. Maureena celebrating 70 years and Sr. Rosé Theresa celebrating 60 years. With the beginning of February our schedule changed. The Novices began to take the responsibility of two days per week volunteer work. Each group of two is spending one month in the Kehila in the Migrant day care centre, with the children who come from different backgrounds and situations of uncertainty, while the other group is giving a helping hand to Sr. Colette in housekeeping. The second month they will switch. During this next two months the novices are sharing with the ConectSion in the Session of Charism-Identity.

The Sundays during the months of February were celebrated with the different rites of the oriental catholic churches. So we began by participating in the Sundays service of the Catholic Greek Community one Sunday, the second Sunday we celebrated with the Philipino Community at the church of the Rosary sisters Agron Stree. Our 3rd Sunday was with the Syrian catholic community and the 4th Sunday we participated with the Marionette community and our last Sunday by that time lent began we will celebrate with Armenian Catholic community just down the road from Ecce homo. In our communities we discussed and reflected on the questions for our next Webex assembly in March. Some of us participated in the Reshit Da'at Seminar which is a new project lunched by the brothers of Sion and is held in Ratisbone. Where every two weeks one given person will present a seminar about a chosen theme related to the topic: **“Jews and Christians in the Early Christianity”**.

Juliana for the St. John in Montana community