



*Notre Dame de Sion*

## “SAINT JOHN IN MONTANA”

*Congregational Novitiate Jerusalem*

Ein Karem, Tuesday, 19 December 2017

Here in Jerusalem we are saddened by the response to Trump's announcement of having Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Even more we are distressed by the expressions of hatred towards Jewish people around the world. Hostility towards Jews is not only in the history of the Nazi regime; it is a history of nearly 2000 or more years in which education has played an important part. Violence begins in the mind and the heart. Before the gas chambers of Auschwitz there were the harsh words of Hitler and before that, there were homilies and theological writings and even expressions of hostility in the NT towards the Jewish people. ("The language anti-Semitism" by Monika Schwarz-Friesel).

Rabbi Sacks spoke on Friday 8th December 2017, in a debate in the House of Lords on Education, on the question of why Moses in his last speech didn't talk about the long walk to freedom. Why did Moses not speak about the land flowing with milk and honey? Instead, repeatedly, he turned to the far horizon of the future and spoke about the duty of parents to educate their children. He did it again at the end of his life, commanding: "You shall teach these things repeatedly to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. Dt: 6:6  
He asks why '... this obsession with education that has stayed with us (Jews) from that day one? Because education is the conversation between the generations?"

We received news on December 4th that Sr. Ivone dos Santos, NDS (St. Amaro, Brazil) had died. She suffered a stroke, her health deteriorated and left her unconscious. Sr. Ivone was known for her smile, her irreverence, her simplicity and, above all, for her deep fraternal charity. We Religious of Sion pray for her soul and the comfort of her family and friends, and her entry into eternal life with G-d. We thank the Lord, our God, for the gift she was among us, for her vocation and active presence among us in her time of living in the formation house in Jerusalem.

Our Christmas gift for all Jerusalem Communities this year will be home made Christmas cookies which of course needed to be baked by us first. What a joy we had baking Christmas cookies and then creating gift baskets. Our creativity was not restricted.

Before Christmas we will officially say good bye to our Contemplative sisters who are preparing to return to France after 49 years in Jerusalem in January.

We will celebrate Christmas night together in the Shepherds' Field and afterwards continue on in the Novitiate with hot chocolate and finger food.

As we continue our Christmas preparations we learnt more about Chanukah - from the book of Maccabees and traditions shared among the Jewish people and life experiences lived in the city of Jerusalem. Christmas and Chanukah are feasts of light. Both are intended for "pirsum ha-nes", the glorification of the miracle. And they both are celebrated in December. The two disciples of Emmaus were disappointed because Jesus the Messiah had died. So they went to Emmaus to do a kind of pilgrimage to the place where Judah Maccabee had defeated the Greeks (see 1 Maccabee 4). As Jesus joined and walked with them, he showed them a new understanding of what he came to bring: the light of his resurrection.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and Celebrations of light, joy and peace as you share together.

Sr. Juliana for the St. John in Montana community