

Notre Dame de Sion

Congregational Novitiate Jerusalem

“St. John in Montana”

Month of April 2015

We celebrated Easter with the Community at Ecce Homo. From there we could easily participate in all the Holy Week celebrations. A highlight for me was the Good Friday holy hour on the Lithostrotos led by Fr. Russ McDougall, C.S.C.; in his homily he mentioned that ...

Mark, Matthew and Luke make it clearer than John does, that opposition to Jesus coalesced within particular groups - among the priests, the scribes, the Pharisees. They also show that even within those groups, Jesus did have some supporters. The Gospel of John, on the other hand, speaks too often of Jesus' opponents simply as “the Jews.” And that, for me, is the dark side of the Gospel of John, the side that has nurtured Christian hatred of Jews as enemies of Jesus, hatred that paved the way for the Holocaust, hatred that lives on to this day in some quarters of the Christian world. At just this time last year, a white supremacist in Kansas City killed three people that he thought were Jews.

We had Easter morning Mass on the terrace of Ecce Homo and then had breakfast together there as well. Our dinner on Easter Sunday was a traditional barbecue at Beit Ruth, which we enjoyed with all of Sion in Jerusalem (apostolic sisters, contemplatives, brothers, and associates).

Through the following week, most of us packed suitcases for departure to our apostolic experiences in various communities around the Mediterranean Region. For this first apostolic commitment of six weeks, Victoria and Arlyne will stay in the Novitiate house and will work with Sr. Colette and Sr. Ivone. Victoria is working at “Hand in Hand” which is a bilingual school (Arabic and Hebrew); she helps full-time during school hours for 3 days a week (8 A.M. until 3.30 P.M.) working with the teacher of the first and second grade children, teaching Arabic and handicrafts, and spends one afternoon a week working with the mentally handicapped children in Ein Karem. Arlyne, who is also staying in the Novitiate house, is helping those who work with the migrant children in the Kehila (the Hebrew-speaking Community) and is visiting the Filipino communities in the afternoon, for a full-time commitment 4 days a week. For two weeks, before leaving for Tunis on the 28th of April, Rozeni went to help with the migrant children in the Kehila. In Tunis she will work in La Voix de l'Enfant (The Voice of the Child) a baby-care center. Clara is already in Egypt awaiting her visa for Tunis; while there, she is working with Alejandra in apostolic ministries in Berba and Cairo. During this time, Juliana went to Egypt for a week and is now in Austria for her holidays until the end of May.

Why are Novices going to Muslim countries? Since there are Muslim populations in so many countries today, there is value in having an experience of Islamic culture along with the opportunity to reflect on it with our sisters who live and work there. Joey was not granted a visa for Egypt, and so is at Ecce Homo community, working in the guesthouse; she also goes twice a week to the L'Arche community in Bethlehem where the handicapped make handicraft items for sale. We all will be together again at the end of May when Sr. Patricia Watson, from Australia, will be with us for a two-week session on Father Alphonse and on Louise Humann.

After our session with Sr. Patricia, and hopefully a little holiday, all the Novices will go off for their longer apostolic experiences, Rozeni and Joey at Ecce Homo, Arlyne and Clara in Ein Karem working in ministries outside Sion, and Alejandra and Victoria in Cracow, Poland.

As we approach the summer months when holidays, retreats, and home visits will interrupt our usual schedule, I would like to thank specially the Jerusalem communities – St. Mary's, Beit Ruth, Ein Karem, (contemplative and apostolic sisters), Sr. Kathy, Sr. Carmen and Sr. Maureen, and the Brothers of Sion in Ein Karem and in Ratisbonne, for their witness to the Novices through their simplicity and sharing, their availability and openness, their generosity and the many life-giving encounters we have enjoyed, as well as the many gifts that we and I have received during this past year, which have enabled and even enriched the Novitiate experience. Their various forms of input and acceptance of tasks like honorary secretary, or their silent work as correctors of English texts for our websites or of our written reflections and letters, have been so many expressions of the loving support about which Theodore talks so much, in his understanding of community where God's love is the source of our loving-kindness to one another.

Don't forget to follow us each week, via websites, where our activities and reflections are posted to keep you updated on the Congregational Novitiate in Jerusalem, at Ein Karem.

The Novitiate community wishes you all the joy of continuing to walk in the light of the risen Christ, along with the disciples on the way to Emmaus, or in Galilee and even to the ends of the Earth!