



Notre Dame de Sion

“SAINT JOHN IN MONTANA”

Congregational Novitiate Jerusalem

Ein Karem, Saturday, 11 July 2015

The days are passing so quickly; it is already the middle of July!

How busy we were this last month! You will be aware of that if you have followed our website. Our time was filled with getting organized for what was to come, while we kept up with the session of Sr. Patricia Watson who shared with us the spirituality of Louise Humann and reflections on Alphonse's beginnings in Jerusalem. Her newly-published book, *Spaces of Dialogue* gave us a glimpse of our NDS Schools in several countries and their ongoing commitment to teach mutual respect through coming to know the other.

Sr. Oonah's visit just before the Christology Seminar at Ein Karem in June, was a source of real hope and joy for us, but was far too short!!

Celebrating the feast of John the Baptist, the Novitiate's patron, was not forgotten in the midst of all the other celebrations at our house during this last month. We put together in one celebration the many birthdays that occurred at this time. With a big “thank you” to the workers who helped us to set up our new home, we packed our bags one Sunday afternoon in preparation for our departures to the different Apostolates to which the Congregation is sending us. That was the closing celebration for the month.

This apostolic stage of the novitiate experience called Alejandra from (Guatemala) and Victoria from (Egypt) to Krakow for the next 5 months. There they will experience and learn about Jewish life and history in Europe.

Rozeni (Brazil) and Joey (Philippines) are called to Ecce Homo, where they will learn more about the sources of Notre Dame de Sion at Ecce Homo in Jerusalem, and will reflect on the experience of the sisters and on their own stories in the past and present, in relation to modern life in the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem.

Arlyne (Philippines) and Clara (Guatemala) will spend their apostolic stage in the Ein Karem convent where guests from Tel Aviv, Haifa, Ashdod, and elsewhere in Israel appreciate this quiet and peaceful place when they come to visit Jerusalem. Arlyne and Clara will have a guided study with Sr. Anne Catherine using the “necklace” method (“hariza” in Hebrew) to work with the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament and Rabbinic teachings.

After the novices left for their apostolic commitments, Sr. Colette, Sr. Ivone and Sr. Juliana went to St. Peter of Gallicantu for their annual retreat, with Fr. Lionel Goh assisting them in their personal journeys to encounter God in the different aspects of our reality today. In chapter 2 of Paul's letter to Titus, he asks him a question that we can ask ourselves: what kind of behavior goes with sound teaching? Is it not self-control, and persevering love expressed in purity and eagerness to do good?

We heard this sound teaching during our retreat but also in the session with Sr. Patricia who helped us to understand more of the history of our Congregation.

Before Ivone leaves for England at the end of July, she and Juliana are working on the program for the Novices who will arrive in January 2016 and are now in the last stage of their study of English in preparation for that.

In August, Sr. Colette and Sr. Juliana will remain in the Novitiate house. During this long summer month, we will be praying for peace in this part of the world. Sr. Colette will continue her ministry in the guesthouse during the summer months. She also will participate in the celebration of Sr. Kasia perpetual vows her Hometown in Poland. Juliana will continue her Hebrew study at the Ulpan (Hebrew language school), and during the weekdays will work as a volunteer in the Hebrew-speaking catholic community of Jerusalem. There migrant children find a shelter during the working hours of their mostly single mothers. All these children are in the Israeli school system and so their language is Hebrew; Sr. Juliana has no doubt that they will help her to learn Hebrew!

Wishing you all a blessed summer, hoping that it will bring some holiday time for each one, especially those who have commitments during the summer months, but also need to take a break and renew themselves in the early fall.

As Fr. Theodore used to say, “The work of Zion is a work of the future,” and it asks that we be open to the reality within and around us as the place of the revelation of God, and that we live, in love, our commitment to community, confident that doing good is the means to God’s peace.

Greetings and blessings from the Community “St. John in Montana”