



Notre Dame de Sion

“SAINT JOHN IN MONTANA”

Congregational Novitiate Jerusalem

Ein Karem, Friday, 29 April 2016

The month of April began with the feast of the Annunciation which marked the beginning of the Official Entry into the Canonical Year for our four novices, Maria, Nancy, Andrea and Lucia. The sisters of the Jerusalem community joined us for this celebration. The Ein Karem house provided the place for a joyful gathering where we shared lunch together.

During the following week the house had organised a First Aid and Fire Safety training in which we the novitiate community also participated.

With Sr. Anne Catharine we continued studying the Jewish Feasts and this time our focus was on the Feast of Peasach which was celebrated later this month.

Our excursion this month included a trip to Massada, Ein Gedi and Qumran. As we walked up some of us found it difficult to climb this little mountain below sea level and it took us more than one hour. The view is very impressive and the history reminded us of the words of Ecclesiastes 1:4 “A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.”

Fr. Werner a Jesuit from Austria who is very musical arrived here in the mid April.. He is very talented and before we knew it we were all singing and music filled our house! The Novices learned the basics of the guitar and their practising has continued until now. The conclusion of this study was a little concert in our house. The Ein Karem community –sisters, brothers, associates, volunteers and some guests shared this moment with us and welcomed Sunday together. Everyone was amazed and surprised at the novices’ effort throughout the week and the skills that they had acquired in such a short time. The house filled with music by the novices and Fr. Werner left Sr. Ivone and I to provide lunch for our hungry musicians!

We felt we needed a break so early one morning (6 am) we all walked via the Hadassah hospital to St. John in the Desert. Traditions has it that John the Baptist took long hours of quiet in one of these caves. There is now a Franciscan Monastery built over the site.

On our way home we stopped at the Haddasah Ein Karem hospital in order to pay a visit to the Synagogue of the hospital. The synagogue windows host the blessing of the 12 sons of Jacob (Israel) painted by the famous painter Marc Chagall. He wrote:

"This is my modest gift to the Jewish people who have always dreamt of biblical love, friendship and of peace among all peoples. This is my gift to that people which lived here thousands of years among the other Semitic people." **Marc Chagall, February 6, 1962**

"All the time I was working, I felt my mother and father looking over my shoulder; and behind them were Jews, millions of other vanished Jews -- of yesterday and of thousands years ago,"

The days here now are hot and filled with excitement as we approach the feast of Pessach.

This feast brings many Israelis from throughout the country to Jerusalem. The Old city is also filled with many Orthodox pilgrims as the Eastern Churches all celebrate Holy week during this time.

The last Sunday of April we were invited by the brothers Ratisbonne. They prepared lunch and we had a wonderful afternoon with them. We practised music together and had coffee with homemade cake. Later we watched a movie and then went to the Kehila to end our Sunday with the celebration of the Eucharist with the Hebrew speaking community.

We also gave our house a good spring cleaning during the last days of this month to make sure that no unpleasant visitors like (scorpions) are hiding among the carpets or in the corners.

The whole month was filled with various studies and activities and by the end of April we had completed our community power point, “Daily Life in the Novitiate.”

Sr. Juliana
for the Community “St. John in Montana”