



Notre Dame de Sion

“SAINT JOHN IN MONTANA”

Congregational Novitiate Jerusalem

Ein Karem, Monday, 03 April 2017

Dear Brothers and Sister

Just as April begins, we will take a look back over the month of March and what has engaged us here in the Novitiate Community.

With the liturgy of Ash Wednesday we began our Lenten time which we lived individually and also communally. It was a spiritual time and we fasted from meat and also fish during our Friday meals. We began Lent with a 3 day retreat with Fr. Carmil who guided us during this moment focussing on repentance and acts of Reconciliation and also in the form of Confession.

During the beginning days of Lent we participated in the Mediterranean Regional Assembly for 3 days. Our work on the Charism with the ConnecSion has continued and we began to put our sharings and learnings on paper. We have also participated with the Brothers in the Reshit Da'at Seminar. It is a project held every 2 weeks where sisters, brothers and friends participate. We began with Cristovao giving a lecture on John the Baptist and the Jewish Rites of Purification in the 1st Century. Joel spoke to us of the Jewish-Christian Controversy also at this same time and Tiago helped us to look at the different Messiahs at the time of Jesus. With Elio we looked at different apocryphal writings which did not enter the Canon by the 4th century and why?

Purim, Jewish Holiday that commemorates the saving of the Jewish people from Haman, an advisor of Ahasuerus the King of Persia and this we celebrated with the Kehila community.

March 16th was a special day for us as we celebrated the anniversary of Lúcia's birth. We had a thanksgiving mass for the life of Lúcia and her family in the big Chapel with the apostolic and contemplative sisters, brothers of Sion and volunteers.

Our session with Br. Elio was on the life of Fr. Marie Alphonse and his relationship with Fr. Theodore was very enlightening. Fr. Alphonse had a special and close relationship with Fr. Theodore. It was a very strong bond of trust that existed between them, and a profound love and compassion as they tried to do the will of God. It was a good relationship that helped them to be self-critical in their discernment of the work of Sion.

Then we also had a walk with Br. Elio in Jerusalem, where we learned the significance of the Mount of Olives in the Bible and in Jewish tradition and why only on the Mount of Olives Jesus could have been proclaimed the Messiah. We also visited the City of David where new excavations are bringing new findings to light. We also learned that until 1948 this area was the home of the Yemenite Jews.

On the feast of the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Mary we celebrated with a concert of gospel music – 'My soul says YES!'. It was prepared by Veronika, our polish volunteer, with Br. Tiago's and Sr. Anne-Catherine's help and in which we all participated. Anybody would like to watch the video it is on the Website of <http://friendsofsion.org>

Also on one of the Sundays during this month, we participated in the retreat held in the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu for the Union of Religious here in Jerusalem.

Sr. Aracely is staying with us in the Novitiate and during her time here she is searching how she could live her dream more deeply at this point of her life.

We continued with our volunteer work until the end of March and our official closing of the Canonical year is planned for the 8th of April with the Eucharistic celebration and entry into Sunday at our house.

Wishing you all an Easter of life and peace because this is where God is telling us that He is alive in the midst of pain, humiliation, sorrow and hopelessness. Rejoice and be glad because Jesus is risen, indeed risen from the dead. Hallelujah.

Juliana for the St. John in Montana community