

*Notre Dame de Sion*  
"SAINT JOHN IN MONTANA"  
*Congregational Novitiate Jerusalem*

Ein Karem, Saturday, 22 October 2016

Dear Sisters,

Our months of September began by making vinegar of the last grapes of our Novitiate garden and before the beginning of our preparation for our Galilee week. We celebrated Ivone's Birthday before she left us for her holiday to visit family and friends. By the middle of September Sr. Jivlvaneide arrived and also Sr. Darlene for the Congregational formation meeting and to be part of our Galilee week. The Galilee week was divided into 6 guiding tours which the Novices and also the professed sisters prepared. Juliana was the driver and she brought us to the different places with speed and sound driving.

Our Galilee week began by picking up the rented car from Jerusalem and by the time Juliana came back all were waiting and ready to begin the adventure and the walk with Jesus. Sr. Darlene was the driver's right hand and watched and kept us on the right roads during our trip. During our first day we visited the crusader city of Acco, Mount Carmel and Elijas cave. The meeting place of God with Elija, where Elija recognised God in the whispering voice.

Our resting place for the next 3 days, was at the sisters of Nazareth. There we were able to participate in the morning masses at the Basilica at 6.30, breakfast at 7 and off we went. First visit was to the Mariam centre run by the Community of Chemin Neuf. Then in Zippori where an angel was waiting for us to guide us and share some tradition with us, for example-that Anna and Joachim, the parents of Miriam lived there and Mary grew up in Zippori? Today the sisters of St. Ann have a convent there for the troubled children around the Region. Cana just two hours walk down the hill makes it easy to understand why Mariam and Jesus where there- was there a relative getting married? Sunday our second day began by participating in the St. Joseph's Parish church of the Nazareth community. We visited the Greek orthodox church traditionally called the church of Mary's well ,and the church-synagogue where it is remembered that Jesus preached his famous sermon which brought the community of Nazareth, at the time of Jesus, into an uproar. We had some local lunch of humus, falafel and salads. The day went by fast. From 3 to 5 pm we spent in silence in the garden of the little brothers of Carl de Foucauld.

Monday morning was time to say goodbye to Nazareth .The next 3 nights we stayed in Tabga at the Benedictine Monastery. On the way we visited Naim and stopped on the mountain peak of Tabor with the desire also of wanting to stay and build booths like Peter, John and James. We continued our drive down to Tiberius where our lunch was St. Peters fish. After lunch we had a boat ride on the lake of Galilee before visiting Magdala.We then arrived at our accommodation for the night as well as the next days.

Tuesday early morning for sunrise, we were on the way up to the church of Beatitudes. We had our picnic breakfast on the way and enjoyed the view and magnificent space and time to overview the lake of Galilee. After our return we took



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the car to drive up to Domus Galilaea which is a modern first Catholic International Centre, meeting place, primarily used for Christian Seminarists, and it is administrated by the community of the Neocatechumenal Way. The view and Library are magnificent. We continued our way which took us to Korazin where we sat on Moses chair, had our lunch on the river bank of the Jordan river. Before continuing to Bethsaida, Kursi and then to Hammat Gader (from where we could look into Syria as it is on the border with Syria). Hammat Gader is a Roman Byzantine Thermal complex, with modern therapeutic activities as well as a resort centre on the north bank of the Yarmok river. It had been a long day and it was nice to find a shower and a bed waiting for you. Wednesday our first stop was Safat where the Lord thought that we need a tour guide in order to understand this beautiful city so full of History and spirituality. We visited Synagogues, the art street... Later we drove right up to the northeast city of Israel (Metula) which is on the boarder with Lebanon. We visited Banias (Cesarea Philipi) where we had our picnic lunch before walking to the Waterfalls, which are the source of the Jordan river dashing out of the rocks. It was happy day, and we took time to have some reflection -prayer together at the quite of the sea of Galilee to close our day.

It was already Thursday and time to return to Jerusalem! After breakfast we packed the car and visited first the Tomb of Rambam or also called Maimonides. He was a great halachic authority (Jewish law), a philosopher and writer as well as the royal physician to the sultan. On our way back to Jerusalem we visited Beit Shean as we took the road down through the Jordan valley via Jericho. Late afternoon we arrived tired and joyful with our marvellous experience of our visit to Galilee. Friday morning Juliana returned the rented car and we all took some moments of re-capturing the week before writing our reflection with questions from the CNFTeam. This Reflection we shared during our next community meeting.

Now we are already in the months of October. We had a short session on social Media and how to use the Program Excel on our computers. We participated in a few sessions of the Biblical Program, - a talk on Israel and Palestine with Fr. David Neuhaus, the Shema Israel with Sr. Ann Lee, as well as some sessions with Sr. Ann Catherine on the High holidays, Rosh Hashana and Succoth. We experienced Yom Kippur in Jerusalem by staying at Ecce Homo in order to visit the Synagogue services and walk the streets of Jerusalem. Sr. Ivone is back in the Novitiate from her holiday, in time for the feast of Sukkoth. Now we are preparing ourselves for a 10 day educational tour with Pax Christi.

Juliana for the St. John in Montana community