



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

Ein Karem, Monday, 28 January 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As rain has brought us cold and snow on Mount Herman, our cisterns are now full with water and the trees and land drank from this precious gift of rain in abundance.

In our Novitiate program we participated from the 7th of January to the 21st in the Biblical Program course on the Psalms. Here we looked at the Psalms as Literature with Rabbi Benjamin Segal, as Liturgy with Rabbi Dalia Marx, and as Psalms for Personal Spirituality with Rabbi Gail Diamond. With Rabbi Levi Weiman, founder of the Kol HaNeshama synagogue we looked at Psalm 150. Engaging with the Word, the People and the Land, by studying texts and visiting sites related to the biblical text; reflecting on relevant Church Documents; and engaging with the people. ('The Bible, The People, The Land') is the motto of the Centre for Biblical Formation at Ecce Homo. We had amazing encounters with people - teachers of the Word and visits in the Land with a closing talk on Kabala in the city of Sefat. Our speaker ended with the words, "Living a religious way of life is living with traditions, teachings ... living a spiritual way of life is respecting all traditions and ways of differences, this may be cultural as well as religious differences."

Our next study during this month was with Sr. Maureena who spoke on St. Paul. She opened her talk with two questions: is Paul the source of AntiJudaism? and is Paul a source for the DeJudaization of Jesus? Looking at the text Sr. Maureena explained that we need to keep history in mind. Some texts were written by Paul and he speaks about his encounter with the risen Christ, as we read in Galatians and the texts in the Acts of the Apostles which were written about 30 years after Paul's death.

Religious life and Monastic life was another questions which we looked at in our sharing during this month of January.

As these last days were full of spring sun, flowers and fresh smells - the beautiful odor of Jasmine and Rosemary, of cedar wood and lilacs. New life in the Ein Kerem garden was found everywhere!

During the coming weeks we will explore the constitution, and different styles of prayer - Biblical prayer, contemplative and apostolic prayer life that are essential to our way of praying in community.

The 20th of January was a beautiful celebration with Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate here in Jerusalem. His homily on the gospel reading was that of the wedding at Kana. When there is no more wine, Mary tells the servants do whatever Jesus tells you to do. As interpretation has it in Biblical tradition, wine symbolizes Joy and Happiness. The Joy and Happiness are gone when there is no joy and happiness within families and communities.

Greetings and blessings Juliana for the St. John in Montana community.