



Notre Dame de Sion

“SAINT JOHN IN MONTANA”

Congregational Novitiate Jerusalem

Ein Karem, Monday, 12 August 2019

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As time passes quickly we find ourselves already in the month of August where mornings and evenings are filled with cool fresh air and sometimes the Ein Karem valley is covered with fog in the early hours of the morning.

In the middle of July, we went to Kiryat Ye'arim, also called Abu Gosh today, for our 8 day retreat and it was a wonderful time to spend on the mountain where The Ark of the Covenant was remembered Short history: (The Ark of the Covenant resided in Shilo for 300-400 years. Then it was taken by the Philistines at the battle of Even-ezer (1 Sam. 4:3-11). The Philistines subsequently sent back the Ark after retaining it for seven months (1 Sam. 5:7, 8) because of the misfortune that befell them (1 Sam. 5:1-6). The Philistines returned the Ark to Beit Shemesh. The people of Beit Shemesh sent it on to Kiryat Ye'arim to the house of Avinadav. (1 Sam. 6:21) The Ark of the Covenant remained at this location for about 20 (or perhaps 50) years (1 Sam 6; 2 Sam 6).

Back in our daily setting we celebrated the 85th birthday of Sr. Colette and feasted all other birthdays during the month of July. Since Erika and I were engaged in a study of our Constitution these past months, we concluded our study with # 140 which tells us who we are and who we want to become. In deepening our understanding of our Constitution on Formation, both initial and continued Formation, we went back and forth between the Constitution and the Initial Formation Sion booklet (from entry to final commitment).

Our study time together now is following the guide that Sr. Elisabeth Losinski put together to study the books, “Origins of Sion.” These books give the story and the spirit of Theodore Ratisbonne, the early beginnings of the Congregation, the key persons and the events that influenced him. In her booklet, Sr. Elisabeth made sure that we do not overlook the footnotes which have fascinating details and colorful bits of information.

Sr. Anne Catherine worked with Erika on the Jewish holiday of Tisha B'Av. This is an annual fast day in Judaism, on which a number of disasters in Jewish history occurred, primarily the destruction of both Solomon's Temple by the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the Second Temple by the Roman Empire in Jerusalem.

Sr. Maureena Fritz gave Erika a wonderful experience of a Shabbat Service followed by a beautiful meal at her place. So we go forward in hope and thanksgiving for all the moments that God was walking with us during these months of summer heat.

Greetings and blessings from Juliana, for the Novitiate Community