



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

Ein Karem, Saturday, 30 November 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Winter has arrived in Jerusalem as temperatures drop during the night sometimes down to 6 °. It is cold and we hope for lots of rain in the coming days. After celebrating the feast of Christ the King with the Ecce Homo communities we enter into the Advent season by lightening the first light in our season of Advent.

During this last month Erika and I engaged in studying Book 2 of our history "Origins of Sion" where a rich description of Theodore the man is found. Sr. Carmelle gives us many letters he wrote that paint a picture of this delightful and wise man with his great capacity for relationships. The catechumenate beginning of the ministry of education in Sion needed its own sign before Theodore was ready to begin it. Or as he states, '... the characteristic of the work of our Lady of Sion must be Jesus Christ's love for the Jewish people...' and the last sentence on page 72 where Theodore says Sion is about an attitude rather than an apostolic project or plan.

Now we are reading Book 3 and there we hear what Theodore believed and what he taught the first little group of sisters. When he speaks of Mary he roots her in the Bible with her people. This was unique during his time and is an aspect of our Charism. Page 184 tells us why John the Baptist is the Patron of novices, and what is a Daughter of Sion - you will find this in pages 130 to 133.

We celebrated with Br. Tiago his ordination to the diaconate on the last Sunday of October, and we also celebrated all the sisters Jubilees of 50, 60 and 65 years living in the country of Israel. On the last day of the month of October we had an online Assembly for our Region/Zone.

By the second week of Advent, and on the feast of the Immaculate Conception Erika ends her canonical year and begins her Apostolic year from mid of December to mid of September 2020 in St. Mary's community where she will work as a volunteer, sharing the ministry and life in Ecce Homo, within her community of St. Mary's. So she would be a regular community member in initial formation. Here Sion community life and prayer life are fully lived and integrated within the mission of Ecce Homo. Also during the Biblical programs she will have the opportunity to be of service in these programs through helping Sr. Marge and in other tasks related to the programs. We would see this ministry also as: (1) - a resource for her own Biblical formation; and (2) - a way to learn to be available while becoming acquainted with the necessary knowledge of working within the Biblical program setting. And she will continue her volunteer work in the homeless restaurant once a week.

Sr. Colette is having her Cataract Operation on one eye on the 4 of December and that will give her hopefully the quite of Advent we all look for. Ces is back from her Family visit and I continue to enjoy my lectures within the frame of interreligious dialogue classes. Wishing you all a meaningful Advent.

Greetings and blessings from

Juliana for the Novitiate Community