

COMMUNICATIONES N° 42

01-05-2005

CONTENTS

- \$ Newsletter inscription
- \$ Election of Provincials and Councils
- \$ Letter from the General to the new Pope
- \$ Fr. Jesus Castellano ocd represents Religious before the Pope
- \$ Association of North East India
- \$ Carmelite Books in Africa
- \$ Carmel in Latvia

ELECTION OF PROVINCIALS AND COUNCILS

<http://www.ocd.pcn.net/capitoli05.htm>

A LETTER FROM OUR GENERAL TO POPE BENEDICT XVI

Fr General sent the following letter on behalf of the whole Order, congratulating the newly elected Pope on Fr. Luis's return from Japan and India: *(the original in Italian)*

Rome, 28th April 2005

Most blessed Father,

All the Friars and Enclosed Nuns of the Teresian Carmel wish to express to your Holiness their most whole hearted congratulations on your being elected to the Papacy, their fidelity to Your Teaching Office and a promise to accompany you with their daily prayers and sacrifices. We make our own your pastoral concerns **A**here is the desert of poverty, the desert of hunger and thirst, the desert of abandonment, of loneliness, of destroyed love. There is the desert of God's darkness, the emptiness of souls no longer aware of their dignity or the goal of human life@

The Carmelite Saints lived lives dedicated to the Church which they loved, and have left us an example to follow, and so this love remains a priority in the heart and apostolate of every one of us, in order that our charism may bring riches and life to all.

On the day that you were elected I was in India on a pastoral visitation of our communities, I saw for myself the joy on everyones face and the fervour with which they listened to Your words.

On behalf of the Order spread throughout the world it is my privilege to express toYour Holiness our most fervent prayer, that Christ, the Redeemer of the world, will enlighten, strengthen and console you in Your Petrine service to the universal Church.

I am you most devoted servant in the Lord

Fr **Luis Arostegui** OCD, Superior General

His Holiness
Pope Benedict XVI
Vatican City

FR. JESUS CASTELLANO OCD
Represents Religious Men and Women Before the New Pope

In an act of obedience to the Pope, in the course of the celebration of his Petrine ministry, Fr. Jesus Castellano Cervera OCD was chosen, as one of twelve representatives of the People of God, to fulfill this gesture on behalf of the Religious. These were the words he spoke to the Pope:

Holy Father, at this moment I want to offer you, on behalf of all those in consecrated life, our affection, obedience and collaboration for the good of the Church. I do this also on behalf of my Carmelite family, with all my Brothers and on behalf of all my Discalced Carmelite Sisters spread throughout the world

ASSOCIATION OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

From the 5th to the 22nd April 2005 twenty-five Carmelite Nuns assembled in Bandel, North-East India. This is also a place of pilgrimage, dedicated to our Blessed Mother "Our Lady Of Bandel". Hundreds of pilgrims come daily to this hallowed spot to pray, ask for favours and thank Mary for graces received.

Our Sisters had an 18 day course attended by 25 participants from 6 continents. Rev. Fr. Xavier Jayaraj ocd, Definitor General kindly made himself available. He said the inaugural Mass and during the three first days gave inspiring talks on the Holy Eucharist laying special stress on the devotion to this great mystery from the part of our Holy Parents and the other Carmelite saints, particularly Bl. Candida of the Holy Eucharist. Rev. Fr. Cyriac Neerakkal ocd, the Religious Assistant of the Association delved into the treasures of the "Interior Castle" in a systematic way. The other two resource persons who gave inputs on community building were MS Pearl Drego and Fr. James Chacko sdb. One complemented the other and helped the participants with the expertise of their tools on how to handle the wear and tear of community life.

CARMELITE BOOKS IN AFRICA

Following the OCD Congress on Formation in Francophone Africa held in Nkolbisson (Yaounde) in September 2004, came the idea to publish Carmelite material with the Daughters of St. Paul in Abidjan. Promoted by the centre of the Order, the project is in the hands of a commission made up of confreres from all over Francophone Africa. The aim is to offer to our communities and to anyone who might be interested books on Carmelite spirituality printed here and at an affordable price for Africa. The first book entitled *Introduction au livre des Demeures*, (Introduction to the Interior Castle) is already available. The second, on the Eucharist, is with the printers.

CARMEL IN LATVIA

Damaso Zuazua, ocd

My missionary journeys have taken me this time to the edge of the Baltic Sea. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are the legacy of the old *Livonia*, a land that Pope Innocent III, in the XII century, called *Mary's land*. The people have not forgotten the cold-war, when, on the 13th October 1944, these three countries were forcibly annexed to the Soviet Union. The people sensed a great relief when the winds of Mickail Gorbachov's *Perestroika* and *glasnost* blew over their land. They came out into the streets, courageously asking for independence and freedom. These three Baltic countries have a keen sense of their own identity, of their culture and land.

I went to Latvia as part of my role as Missionary Secretary. It is squeezed between its two republican neighbours. With its 64,598 square kilometres it is just smaller than Ireland. There is enough surface area for its 2,360,000 inhabitants. Like the other Baltic republics, Latvia is open to the sea, with a 494 kilometre coastline, with rivers and lakes, and plains that are never any higher than 300 metres. It

has managed to maintain unchanged its frontiers since the constitution of the Republic on the 18th November 1918. Dark periods of its recent history include the Nazi invasion, due to the agreement on the 23rd August 1939 between Molotov and Ribbentrop (representing Stalin and Hitler) and then the subsequent Russian annexation.

During the Soviet period (1944-1991) a nuclear missile base was created in the Zematija national park. For 40 years it remained a secret, hidden beneath the earth. But in 1978 it was mysteriously dismantled. The Latvians discovered only then what danger they had run in their own country during those cold war years.

On the 21st August 1991 the country regained its freedom. The first parliamentary elections took place in 1993. A year later the last Russian contingent left the country. With the rebirth of freedom the **Drang nach Europa** (The Drive towards Europe) began in earnest. On the 1st May 2004 Latvia was admitted into the European Union. The country was understandably euphoric, as it had made a great and admirable effort at reconstruction. But it is aware of the big challenges it still has to face due to the problems created by such a rapid economic change.

The first apostle to Latvia was the German, Saint Meinard, a Canon of St John Lateran. He built the first wooden Church in Ikskil, in 1184. Pope Clement II nominated him as the first Bishop. Nine centuries later, during his apostolic visit on the 8th September 1993, John Paul II restored the liturgy of Saint Meinard (+ 1196), patron of Latvia.

Riga, the pearl of the Baltic

It is the most impressive of the Baltic capitals, an attractive coastal city, divided by a river, with lots of flat surrounding land that easily accommodates its one million inhabitants. A German Bishop, Albert, from Bremen, successor of Meinard, established the Diocese in 1201.

Riga is full of streets and wide avenues. The bridges keep the city united, the river Daugav, being more than 500 metres wide. The old city is quaint. The church of St. Peter dominates the place with its high round tower. In a country with vast forests much of the construction is in wood. I was surprised to see the presence of a style of architecture known as **Augendstyl** as I believed it was exclusive to Vienna. One can also see the simple accommodation built during the Soviet period. Thanks to the celebration of the VIII centenary of the city, in 2001, a great effort was made at restoration. I admired the soldiers on guard-duty at the country's main monuments, solemn and very still even in the cold. However, I was assured that they were dispensed from such service when the temperature fell below 20 degrees Celsius.

In a street next to the river there is a monument to the giant who helped people cross the river Daugav. Here we have the origin of the legend of Saint Christopher. With his height and broad shoulders he helped people cross the wide river, long before there was a bridge. One night the giant heard the cries of a child in distress coming from the other bank. Christopher picked the child up and placing him on his shoulders they crossed the river to safety. We know the legend and even more the medals dedicated to St. Christopher, that show Christopher carrying on his shoulders the Infant Jesus - the Greek word **Christophoro** literally means **Christ bearer**. The mysterious Infant disappeared, but in the place where he lived they minted gold coins, with which Bishop Albert founded the city of Riga. From this popular belief was born the devotion to their patron Saint, **Āilais Kristaps** or the Great Christopher.

Regarding the artistic life of the city, Richard Wagner lived here as **Kapellmeister** from 1837-1839. He composed the opera **Rienzi** in Riga, as well as the carol **Der Tannenbaum**. In 1843 he presented **Der fliegende Holländer** at the national theatre in Riga for the first time.

The metropolitan seminary, converted into a major institute for theology and catechesis, is a huge brick building with an adjacent park. Next door is the neo-gothic parish church dedicated to St. Francis. It is a fine building, and somewhat surprisingly was constructed during the Soviet period; this is because they decided in Moscow that all the Catholic seminarians throughout the Soviet Union

would study only in one place, Riga.

The seminary was my base during the days that I stayed in the capital. I could not have found a more suitable place to discover better the situation of the Church. I lived with the 36 seminarians and their professors. The fact that I did not know the language was not a barrier as they were able to understand me when I spoke in German, or French or Latin...We communicated. In my homilies and our five meetings I spoke to them about the Church, its mission, about Carmel, and prayer. There was a felt need to be more open to the wider Church. They were aware that the Church of Latvia had now reached a time, thanks to new found freedom, to give without reserve.

The Church in Riga has begun the material and moral reconstruction after five decades of neglect and confinement due to the communist regime. In the last 14 years of freedom it has built more than 30 places of worship. A young and enthusiastic clergy promises much for the future.

A Carmelite view

I came to Latvia eager to know the present situation above all for the Carmelites. I did not have time to find out if any of the 13 priories which made up the previous Province of Saint Casimir in Latvia, since its foundation in 1734, still exist today.

In the past there have been a few vocations to Carmel and those have been sent outside the country to: Belgium, Germany and Poland. There has been success in vocational work and today there are two Latvian priests Ande Marie Jerumanis and Andris Kravalis as well as other youngsters. But the time has come for Carmel to be planted in Latvia. 28 kms from Riga, along a motorway lined by pine and fir trees, is to be found town of Ikšķile. It is famous as the place where the first Christian community was established in Latvia by Saint Meinard. Here, very close to the river Daugava, is the place where the new Carmelite convent is soon to be built. On the 16th July Cardinal Janis Pujats will bless the first stone of the building, with rooms for 18 Sisters plus accommodation for anyone wanting to visit or spend time on retreat. Work has already begun on the land to drain it and prepare the foundations. 200 trees have been planted. The building work should take two years, as, during the coldest part of the winter, the work has to be interrupted.

Much credit is due to Sister Elisha of Jesus OCD and her community in Essen, Germany. She has been the architect of the new project, and has persevered in making a preliminary study of the land and obtained the relevant authorizations. Carmel has aroused great interest in the Lutheran community, who invited the Carmelite Nuns to build the first Roman Catholic Church in the place. The arrival of native vocations makes us optimistic for the future. For the time being the Carmelite Order will be the only contemplative presence in the country. It will be a new presence of the Order, and open to Carmelite Sisters from any country that would like to be associated with this missionary undertaking. The archdiocese of Riga has in mind two possible locations for a small international community of our Friars, who will begin to live a Carmelite life here in the coming months. One of the places is the Catholic School of Riga. The local Church is looking forward to the beginning of the Carmelite apostolate. The present **A**dith Stein Christian Institute for Dialogue and Religion could hand over its functions to the Carmelites. Thanks to its Director, Inga Reinvalde, who is also President of the Carmelite Secular Order in Riga, the Institute already has a Carmelite presence. Present at the conference I gave, entitled **A**dith Stein in the school of St. Teresa was the Professor, Heidi Tuorila Kahanpee, president of the OCDS in Helsinki (Finland), who gave a lecture entitled, **A**the pedagogy of prayer according to St. Teresa.

During the time I spent in Riga I received an invitation from the Mgr. Lapelis, the young Dominican Bishop of Liepaya, for the Carmelites to accept the running of a centre of spirituality. The building is already available and could easily be adapted to this apostolate. There is no such centre in his diocese at this time.

With the help of Germany a group of the Secular Order was formed about ten years ago. The number of members is now over 20. I received the first promises of two of them. There is another group being

formed outside Riga. The heart of the OCDS in Latvia is Professor Inga Reinvalde, who has spent an academic year in the International Carmelite Institute in Avila, Spain.

A young Latvian woman has recently defended her brilliant doctoral thesis on St. Teresa at the Teresianum in Rome, and is now preparing to translate all the writings of St. Teresa into Latvian. Another is preparing her doctorate on St. John of the Cross in Spain. There are also to be seen the beginnings of the Carmelite Ecumenical Movement (MEC). The Patroness of the Missions, St. Therese, is very popular in this country thanks in great part to the saintly Bishop Sloskan (+ 1981), who suffered greatly under both the Nazis and the Communists. He translated *The Story of A Soul* and made every effort to encourage devotion.

The Congregation of the Carmelite Sisters of the Child Jesus, founded in Poland by Fr. Anselm of St. Andrew Corsini, in 1921, has recently made two foundations in Latvia. And even though they have not been in the country long they already have 15 native vocations. Chief supporters of this Carmelite growth for the service of the Church in Latvia are two Priests, both members of *Notre Dame de Vie* Carmelite Secular Institute.

The flower of Carmel in Latvia has begun to grow. We can expect an imminent blooming for both the Nuns and Friars. This surely merits all the help that the General Secretary of the Carmelite Missions can give.

NEWSLETTER INSCRIPTION OF www.communicaciones.org

This notification is for those who have not yet subscribed to the Newsletter (www.communicaciones.org). The new website is already online, though some technical points still need to be sorted out. If you wish to receive the newsletter then you will need to register. For a while we shall continue to use the old website; <http://www.o.cd.pcn.net/news/index.htm> The site is in five languages: Italian, English, Spanish, French and German. It is equipped with an archive, a search motor and a module for subscribing.

If you wish to receive the newsletters (the regular emails with our news) you will have to subscribe individually.

How to do this:

1. Connect to the website: www.communicaciones.org
2. Select the language you want (English, Spanish, French and German)
3. Click on **Subscribe**
4. Complete the form with the requested details:
 - **Name** and **Surname** (your own or the Community's)
 - **Email address** you wish us to use
 - **Log-in name** (i.e., **Users name** free choice)
 - **Password** (with confirmation)

and **send**.

(N.b., please remember your **log in** name and **password** for future purposes)

5. After a few minutes the confirmation of your subscription will arrive by email . But **please reply** (simply click where indicated) in order to confirm the language you want and eventually, to select other languages.

-If in future you wish to change your details or add or change the language, it is enough to insert your *log in* name and *password* in the **ENTER** window of www.communicaciones.org then select the menu that you want.

- If, after having followed all the instructions correctly, you are not able to subscribe it would appear you have a technical problem. Please wait a few days and then try again.