

# Communications 89

## 01-11-2007

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### Discalced Carmelite Asian Mission Congress held at Mangalore (September 24 – 29, 2007)

The Discalced Carmelite Order organized a 'Mission Congress' for Asia and Oceania at Ryshivana, Institute of Indian Christian Spirituality in Ranipura (Mangalore), on the banks of the river Netravati. In its history, the Diocese of Mangalore records a lot of missionary work by the Carmelites and counts among its shepherds, three Carmelite Vicars Apostolic from 1845 to 1873, making it an ideal setting for serious deliberations on the theme. The 35 participants included all major superiors from the two continents, besides superiors of various Missions in the region and Masters of theology students.

Fr. Luis Arostogui Gamboa, Superior general, presided over the sessions and in his key-note address reminded those gathered, in the words of the Carmelite Fr. Juan Vicente, that *action without contemplation would not be Carmelite and contemplation without action would not be Teresian*. Hence the missions are an integral part of the Carmelite vocation. Fr. Damaso Zuazua, Secretary General for the missions, spelt out the aims and objectives of the Congress, and urged the assembly to gear up towards some practical guidelines that could be implemented in the various circumscriptions as a fruit of the deliberations. Frs. Xavier Jayaraj and Angelo Madelo, both Definitors General, in-charge of the two continents, were also present.

The resource persons were the Carmelites Fr. Paul D'Souza of the Karnataka-Goa Province and Fr. Dominic Fernandez from Mendiola (Navarre, Spain — former Rector of Alwaye Seminary, Kerala), who presented papers on "**Unforgettable Carmelite Missionaries on the Asian Soil from the sixteenth to twentieth century**" and '**Main characteristics of the missionary activity of the past in Asia**', respectively. Fr. Michael Amaladoss SJ (Institute of dialogue with cultures and religions, Chennai) spoke on inter-religious dialogue and ecumenism and Fr. Felix Wilfred shared his reflections on the document '*Ecclesia in Asia and the challenges of mission today*'. The participants spent every evening in group discussions, so that the deliberations of the day could be studied and applied to concrete living and situations. Fruits of these discussions were shared in common. All the major superiors were also given opportunities to present a brief report of their life, and especially of their missionary activities. The wide experiences of members from India, S. Korea, Philippines-Vietnam, Singapore-Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, Tanzania, Kuwait and Australia were enriching, while showing the diversity in the fields and means of evangelization / mission.

On the final day, the committee entrusted with the preparation of a message and orientation for praxis, presented a draft that was discussed and finally approved after corrections and modifications. Fr. General appealed to the participants to explain it to all the members of the region, so that it would become really fruitful. The last two days were spent visiting places in Mangalore and Goa that were connected with the mission of the Carmelites, not forgetting also a halt at the sanctuary of Bl. Joseph Vas, a great missionary in Kanara and Sri Lanka.

To our knowledge, this is the first such congress in response to the call given by the Asian Mission Congress organized by the FABC last year in Thailand. Since the Church is essentially missionary, such reflections have to form part of her life at regular intervals. We hope that this attempt will instill a renewed love and enthusiasm in the Carmelites of Asia and Oceania, to share their faith with the people of these vast continents.

## **Carmelite Martyrs of Spain**

*"Quiénes son y de dónde vienen. 498 mártires del siglo XX en España"*. This is the title and subtitle of the thick volume of 524 pages published by the Spanish Episcopal Conference as a preparation for the solemn beatification of almost half a thousand martyrs of the religious persecution in Spain (1934-1936). The short biography of each martyr, essentially a synthesis, was prepared by the Postulator General of the Order, Fr Idefonso Moriones. COMMUNICATIONES already has published the list of the names of the 32 Discalced Carmelite martyrs (nº 84, 01-07-2007). There are 14 from Barcelona including one seminarian, 1 from Oviedo, and 16 from Toledo. To these are added 4 Carmelite Missionaries and 1 Carmelite of Charity. The three Carmelites of Guadalajara and Mother Sagrario of St Aloysius Gonzaga have already been beatified. "This Order will have many martyrs....." Such was the prophecy that "a saint" (St Albert of Sicily?) made to Saint Teresa (See *Life* 40: 13). But the Holy Mother never imagined how many martyrs there would be in her own Spanish home land.

The splendid beatification ceremony took place on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October at St Peter's Square in Rome. In preparation, the Provincial of Castile sent a pastoral letter to the Province. In it he emphasized that the Carmelite martyrs died pardoning their executioners. It was this that inspired the hymn composed for the occasion by Fr Luis Miguel Sánchez, from the Toledo community, titled "Witnesses of pardon in a world thirsting for peace ...". The Provincial recalled in his circular letter the words written by Fr Tirso de Jesús María in the letter sent to his family on the eve of his execution: "Pardon them and bless them and amen to everything, just as I love them and pardon them and bless them....."

## **Latin-American Congress on Elizabeth of the Trinity**

From 17<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September, a Congress on the spirituality of our charismatic Carmelite sister from Dijon was celebrated in the "Our Lady of Mt Carmel" prayer house in El Salvador, Central America. One hundred and forty participants gathered from Latin America, the Caribbean and the Oklahoma Province (USA). As well as doctrinal conferences, there were moments of personal and community prayer, Eucharistic celebrations, work groups, fraternal recreation and music: all inspired by the teaching of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity.

A practical conclusion from the meeting was that the 2010 Congress be celebrated somewhere in the Caribbean and have for its theme the study of the spirituality of Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein.

## **Blessing of the Spirituality House in Malawi**

In 1963, a year before independence, when the country was still called Nyasaland, Carmelites from the Navarre Province arrived in this East African country, which shares borders with Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. It is the country where worked the White Father Maurice Bellière, who was the spiritual brother of St Therese. The Carmelites took charge of the two large missionary parishes of Chipaso and Kapiri. Their postulants stayed in the intercongregational institute of Balaka. In 1982, in memory of the IV centenary of the death of our Holy Mother, Teresa of Jesus, they founded the "Karmel" house of prayer and spiritual direction in Kasungu. In 2004 the Association of English-speaking Carmelites in Africa founded the Zomba monastery. Also present are the Carmelite Missionaries of Bl. Francisco Palau and the Carmelite Sisters of Luxemburg. There are also two Secular Order groups.

On 5<sup>th</sup> October last, was the blessing of the new house of spirituality which the Carmelites had opened at Nyngwertu in the archdiocese of Blantyre. It was a day to go down in history, an important date in the growth of Carmel in Malawi, just as it was also an important happening for the whole Church in the country. The "St John of the Cross" centre is a harmonious complex of separate small houses, which has a great capacity for welcoming guests, is situated at the foot of a hill and surrounded by a fence. On setting foot inside the main entrance, the first thing guests see is a statue of the "little saint, brother John".

For the ceremony, there came from Rome Mons. Giovanni Lajolo, Governor of State of Vatican City, who was created Cardinal by Pope Benedict XVI four days after his return to Rome. He was accompanied by Fr Dámaso Zuazua, Secretary General of the Missions. "*L'Osservatore Romano*" on 18<sup>th</sup> October (p. 8) gave wide coverage to the Vatican Prelate's

journey. The Mass of blessing was an important happening for the Church in Malawi. Five bishops were present with a great number of clergy, religious and people of God. The local Archbishop, Mons. Tarcisio Gervasio Ziyaye, along with Mons. Giovanni Lajolo cut the ribbon at the entrance. Then Mons. Lajolo proceeded to bless the chapel and the beautiful mosaic of the Mother and Beauty of Carmel, which had been made in the prestigious mosaic studio in the Vatican, then he consecrated the altar.

The Governor of Vatican City, made use of the occasion to get to know the missionary activity in Malawi, by visiting the seminaries, the Mtengo wa Nthenga hospital, and the Carmelite Missionary Sisters. He held meetings with seminarians, priests and religious. He paid particular attention to the missionary presence of Carmel in Malawi. The high point was the great Mass of multitudes, with more than 1,500 in attendance at our Chiphaso parish. Previously, when Mons. Lajolo arrived in the country, a delegation of 50 parishioners went to the airport at Lilongwe to welcome him with dance and joyful song. In "alendo" song they told him that "the stranger arriving among us feels as though he is in his own house..." There is an exquisite courtesy in the Malawi people.

### **Once again, St Therese is Patron**

This time, it is for the next World Days for Youth to be celebrated from 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2008, in the Australian city of Sydney. The second Preparatory Day, announced that there would be ten Patrons, including saints, blessed and servants of God for this great world meeting of the youth: Our Lady of the Southern Cross, the Servant of God John Paul II, Blessed Mary McKillop, St Peter Chanel – martyred in the Wallis-Fortuna Isles, Blessed Piergiorgio Frassati, St Therese of the Child Jesus – Doctor of the Church and one of the Patrons of Australia, Blessed Peter To Rot of Papua New Guinea – who was married and chief of a tribe, St Maria Goretti, St Faustina Kowalska – the first saint of the third millennium, and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.

In Sydney they are hoping for the greatest concentration of Christian youth in the world, coming from the five continents. Their consecration to Our Lady is planned for the pilgrimage to St Mary's Basilica in Sydney. Pope Benedict XVI has promised he will assist. It is a time to remember that presence St Therese had during the World Youth Day at Paris in 1997, when Pope John Paul II officially announced that the holy Carmelite saint would be declared a Doctor of the Church on 19<sup>th</sup> October of the same year.

In the last preparatory bulletin on 25<sup>th</sup> October, ("on-line" pilgrimage), Mons. Anthony Fischer, the auxiliary bishop of this Australian State Capital and General Coordinator for the 2008 World Youth Day, proposed to the youth to journey towards Sydney hand in hand with St Therese, undertaking the journey of spiritual childhood, which the Prelate emphasized is "a mature spirituality based on humility, honesty and simplicity". This is a practical instruction for the next World Youth Day in July 2008, which has as its general theme "You will receive the power of the Holy Spirit which will come on you, and then you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1: 8).