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INDEX

- The next Blessed: Mother Josephine Catanea of Jesus Crucified
- Commemoration of the death of St John of the Cross
- Continuing insecurity in the area of Kivu in the Congo
- Change of Secretary for the Secretariate General of the Nuns
- Improving our News Service

The next Blessed: Mother Josephine Catanea of Jesus Crucified 1894-1948

With the signing of the Pontifical Decree on 17th December, the Order came to know of the approval of the miracle attributed to this Discalced Carmelite Nun from the monastery of Santa Maria dei Monti in Ponti Rossi, Naples. We can now fill in a few of the details.

Cardinal Alessio Ascalesi, Archbishop of the city where she lived, used to go up every week to talk with the one he called "the holy nun". As a result he gave her the duty of being concerned for the priests. For many of them, particularly during the second world war, the humble Carmelite nun was truly a charismatic oracle. At the request of the Provincial, Fr Romualdo of St Anthony, she wrote her autobiography (1894 - 1932) and her diary (1925 - 1945), 1925-1945). She wrote many letters of exhortation to religious sisters and priests. In 1943, when physical illness struck her down, she was convinced that this was "the sickness from God's will". This led to a most painful gangrene which spread throughout her body. This became the source of great wonder after her death, since her body remained incorrupt as it awaited burial for nearly two weeks. Her tomb in the chapel of the Carmelite Nuns is the destination of continual pilgrimages, mainly of young married couples.

The miracle examined for the beatification of the Venerable was the rapid, complete and lasting cure of the two month old Francesco Natale, who suffered from "grave encephalitis with perinatal asphyxia, prolonged convulsive syndrome and a state of shock", all of which placed his life in grave peril. The miracle happened at Naples in 1999. The Postulator of the Cause for Mother Josephine Catanea of Jesus Crucified is Fr Luigi Borriello, a professor at the Teresianum in Rome and member of the Naples Province.

Commemoration of the passing of St John of the Cross

Each year, on 14th December, at Ubeda in Spanish Andalucia, there is a celebration of the holy passing of St John of the Cross to heavenly glory. When he heard midnight sound in the clock tower of the nearby church, "the saintly Brother John" was himself, "chanting Matins in heaven". Every year this event is celebrated with appropriate ceremony. This year, as part of the festivities, the XXX St John of the Cross Week took place as well as the First International Scientific Meeting on St John of the Cross. Experts on his life and writings discussed the music in the Spiritual Canticle, St John as a basis for a culture of life and resurrection, his heart as an interior mirror in the state of perpetual evolution. An outstanding conference was given by professor Ana Maria Schüler on "Mysticism in St John of the Cross and Zen: what is equivalent and what is different. Mysticism for our time".

This year the night of his passing – 13th to 14th December, was remembered in the same place where he died with a vigil that was historical, lyrical and musical. The commemoration concluded with a Mass celebrated by Fr José Vicente Rodríguez, a noted international expert on St John of the Cross.

Continuing insecurity in the area of Kivu in the Congo

The state of security in the North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo increasingly deteriorates. Since August 2004, the rebels of Laurent Nkundabatware, the dismissed general of the Congolese forces, have been attacking the government forces in the north of the Kivu province. Since last September, the Congolese government decided to put an end to this situation of insecurity in the province and are trying to get rid of the dismissed general's troops and positions. Because of the military clashes, thousands of inhabitants have fled from their houses. There are tens of thousands of the population in flight, wandering in the jungle without any form of assistance. There are thousands of other displaced people in the refugee camps at Mugunga and Bulengo, thirteen km from the city of Goma on the outskirts of the Carmelite parish of Goma-Katindo, where our priests Jean-Pierre Ngemanyi, Baudouin Mpanga, Pierre Thadée Bayi and Jérôme Paluku are working. They are young Carmelites from the General Delegation of the Congo. In the camps more than 43,000 refugees survive. The only thing this number ever does is to increase each day, in inhuman conditions.

The conditions in this situation effect the whole area: human lives become totally destroyed, the infrastructures ruined, ... People live in the uncertainty of what tomorrow will bring. On the 18th October this year, the parish of Nyakariba in the territory of the Masisi, was set on fire by unknown people. The parish priest was away at an outstation on pastoral duty. It is not only the rural areas that suffer from the general insecurity.

In the capital, Goma, the situation is the same. It was a miracle the Bishop escaped assassination last October. The insecurity is the same for individuals and religious communities. How long must we live in these conditions? Nobody knows! Observers say that the situation could deteriorate. All of us live surrounded by destruction, fearing to talk about the present.

The majority of priests from the interior, the mountainous areas, have taken refuge in Goma. There, just like here, systematic looting of parishes and religious communities is frequent and unforeseen. Other priests have fled to unknown places. Various parishes are closed due to the tremendous and continuous insecurity. From the 22nd October the priests in Goma have taken refuge in the "Maria Mama" centre at Buhimba, next to the large philosophy seminary. From there they can observe if the situation is getting better. How long will they have to remain there? Nobody knows.

A Congolese songster sings in Lingala: "Na mokili tour à tour, lelo ya yo lobi ya moninga" — In this land everyone takes care of everything: today it's my turn, tomorrow it will be the turn of my brother". . . This is the refrain that orders daily life for the inhabitants of Goma, leading thousands of people to a traumatizing psychosis of desperation and discouragement.

Every day there are armed robberies with the disturbing knowledge that there is nothing that can be done about the situation. It is a sign of the daily degradation. This ongoing robbery or institutionalized plundering is a way of economic survival in the general chaos. There are thousands of victims of this barbarity. At nightfall, everyone asks themselves who will be the next victim. In this way the general traumatization increases.

On the night of 10th November, armed men in military uniform attacked the convent of the Ursuline sisters at Tildonk, in the barrio of Himbi, in the area of our Carmelite parish. They assaulted the Sisters, wounding one grievously in the eye. They took away the furniture, computers, mobile phones, money ... whatever they could find to hand. Which religious community will be the next victim? And what will happen if the thieves do not find anything to take in the houses they are trying to rob? This is our life in Goma. We can say without any form of drama: In the present situation the only thing that counts is to trust totally in Divine Providence and the protection of Our Lady of Mt Carmel.

Change of Secretary for the Secretariate General of the Nuns

Since 2003, Fr Ulrich Dobhan has been Secretary General for the Nuns in the General House. On 21st December he returned for good to his Province of Germany to be the Prior of our

monastery in Munich. His successor in the office is Fr. Karol Władysław Kraj, from the Krakow Province. He is shortly to defend his doctoral thesis in canon law at the Lateran University of Rome on the topic of "The Patrimony of the Discalced Nuns of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel in the light of canon 578 and its teachings".

To improve our News Service

With the arrival of the New Year the new web page of the General Curia of the Discalced Carmelites will have its premiere. It will be a newly designed web page with updated technology, that takes its bow at the service of the Order and the Church. One of our greatest challenges will be to present the news of what is happening in the Teresian Carmel throughout the world. There are many things to assist this in the new web site, among the best of these you will find: a renewed system for sending Communications by Email, a new section for web notices and a reorganization of the information offered on the web site.

Fr David Jiménez, from Castile Province, is the craftsman bringing this technical and electronic work into being. This new site of the General Curia of the Discalced Carmelites will continue to offer its contents in five languages (Italian, Spanish, English, French and German), as it has done up to the present. As well, with the intention of making it easier to have access to the various languages, the following addresses have been provided which come into effect on 1st January 2008:

www.carmelitaniscalzi.com	- Italian
www.carmelitasdescalzos.com	- Spanish
www.discalcedcarmel.com	- English
www.carmesdechaux.com	- French
www.karmeliten.com	- German

All of us at the General Curia of the Discalced Carmelites invite you to visit our new web site and we wish you all a Happy New Year.