

Communicationes N. 269

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Reuniting

Journey towards a new Carmelite province in Spain

Madrid-Spain, December 1, 2014 (Communicationes).- Fr Miguel Marquez, Provincial of

Castile. We will be meeting for what is surely a unique moment in the history of the Discalced Carmelites in Spain which, God willing, will culminate on the coming fourth of February in the celebration in Avila of the Chapter of the new Province, with our Father General, Saverio Cannistrá presiding.

Our most decisive steps were taken in December 2009, when the Provincials decided to raise with the Provinces the question on whether to form a new single Province, given the situation in which we now find ourselves, with a galloping decrease of numbers and a reduction of forces.

In Avila, on 6th and 7th of April 2010, we called together the provincial councils of all the provinces to asked them how they viewed this proposal. From out of this meeting came the intention of encouraging a change of mentality to confront the new challenges, to intensify the collaboration between all and to check and define our presences. It was decided to call a meeting of all the superiors of Spain and Portugal in January 2011. A working commission was appointed to do their best to channel the popular feeling.

In January 2011, we had a meeting of the provincial councils of the seven provinces of Spain and Portugal with Father General, to talk about what we had done up to the present moment and to discuss the future.

Before the April 2011 Chapter, each religious was asked if they were in favour or against the creation of a new Province. Each Chapter was asked to take a vote on whether they were in favour or against beginning this journey. The majority in six Provinces said yes, while the majority in one Province, Navarre, said no, yet expressed the desire to continue collaborating with what we were doing together.

Six work teams were set up to study various areas and to enable a better analysis of what we were seeking and needed to face: vocational work, formation, sharing our spirituality, missions, and youth work. It was also asked that we start thinking about some areas which fell outside what the teams were discussing: bursars, young people, parishes, colleges....

All these areas and team work was presented at a meeting of all the superiors of Spain and Portugal, which took place from 19th to 22nd June 2013. With us during this meeting was the General Fr Saverio and the Vicar General Fr Emilio to help us continue forward.

From this meeting was born the idea of developing a programmatic document which would serve as an ideological basis for the creation of the Province, reflecting what moves us to propose this important step of disappearing as provinces and becoming part of a new project by joining our forces and capabilities.

This document saw the light on November 28, 2013, the anniversary of the discalced Carmelite friars in Duruelo. The document collated what came out of so many meetings and drafts, with the desire not to leave out the feelings of anybody. The document served as the basis for the question that was posed to each religious previously at the Provincial Chapter.

Five Provinces declared in the majority yes to the creation of a new Province (Andalusia, Aragon-Valencia, Burgos, Castile and Catalonia and the Balearic Islands), while two others said no (Navarre and Portugal). It should be pointed out that the vote was not clear or overwhelming, either for yes or no.

On the 7th and 8th June, a meeting was held of the Provincials from the five Provinces with the General and his Definitory in Rome, to determine the steps to be taken from now on. Although the programmatic document spoke of the possibility of the provincial chapter in November 2014, Father General suggested having it before the general chapter in May 2015.

From this meeting came the date and place of the Chapter of the new Province: from the 4th to 12th February, 2015, at the retreat house in Avila.

By the end of November 2014, polling will already have been done for the election of the new Provincial and the election of the socii to go from each one of the Provinces. In total there will be 55 friars, plus Father General who will preside at the Chapter.

During last September the decree was received for the establishment of the new Province, which will be named after Saint Teresa.

In the Chapter will be elected a Provincial and four Counselors. Depending on where the Provincial comes from, the four Counselors will be from each one of the other former four Provinces.

During these few months leading up to February, we will be preparing as far as possible the way in which the Chapter can make the most appropriate decisions for launching this new reality and be an occasion for New Life and vitality in our charism. During this centenary year, we strongly commend ourselves to Teresa, that she may direct the steps we take and guide all our decisions.

Chronicles from the General Archives

The Saint Egidio community and the Discalced Carmelites

Rome-Italy, December 1, 2014 (Communicationes).- Fr Óscar I. Aparicio, OCD General

Archivist. The Saint Egidio community was founded in 1968 in Rome, in light of the Second Vatican Council. At present it is a lay movement to which belong more than 50,000 people committed to evangelization and charity in Rome (Italy) and in more than 70 countries in various continents. Its founder was Andrea Riccardi, the Italian historian.

The community has its centre in the Roman church of Saint Egidio, from which it takes its name. It was also here that the Carmelite community of Saint Egidio was born. From 1601, there was a tiny community of pious women in this small church, which was first called Saint Lawrence on the Janiculum and in 1610 become Saint Egidio in Trastevere. It was in this year that the Discalced Carmelite nuns came there to live.

In 1628, Pope Urban VIII granted the Carmelite Nuns the adjoining church of St Crispin, which belonged to the shoemakers' Guild. It was decreed that the church of St Egidio and that of St Crispin would now

be called the church of the Virgin of Mount Carmel and St Egidio (1630). It was at this time that the church was renovated into one nave in Baroque style. At present the canvas behind the main altar represents the Virgin of Mount Carmel giving the scapular to St Simon Stock. In 1873 the nuns lost a good part of the cloister and the monastery. In 1910 the Carmelite nuns had to let go of more property from the meagre monastery until, on the first of October 1972, they began a new life in the Pescara Carmel. Because of this, the present community of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Pescara is the continuation of Saint Egidio in Trastevere, Rome. A year afterward, from 1973 to 1998, Evening Prayer of the Saint Egidio community was carried out in the church of the same name. From 1998 until now, it is held in the Basilica of Saint Mary in Trastevere. A great part of what was the Carmelite monastery is now occupied by a Rome museum in Trastevere, displaying the most relevant aspects of working-class Roman life in the late eighteenth century to the nineteenth.

These few lines serve to make known the Carmelite history behind the community of Saint Egidio, now known world-wide.

Spirituality house

New spirituality house in the Krakow Province

Slovakia, December 1, 2014 (Communications).- The Krakow Province has a new monastery of Discalced Carmelite friars in Slovakia. The monastery is situated on the outskirts of the city of Košice. The new house will serve as a place for spiritual retreats to strengthen faith or explore the Carmelite charism. The monastery was dedicated to Our Lady of Mt Carmel and Saint Joseph.

The ceremony was preceded by an artistic-cultural program prepared by the Detva choir, dressed in typical costumes. There was a big screen illustrating with photographs the progress of the construction work.

Monsignor Bernard Bober, the Archbishop of Košice presided at the Mass of consecration. There were 52 concelebrating priests, among whom was Fr Albert Wach, one of the Order's Definitors.

The new retreat house has nine single rooms and a conference hall that can hold 100 people.

The monastery is situated in a beautiful place bordering the forests on the outskirts of Košice.

Church consecration

Consecration of the new church in Laiguda, India

India, December 1, 2014 (Communications).- One of the most evident signs of growth and maturity in a Christian community is to obtain a place of worship in which to celebrate and gather together in dignity to praise the Lord.

From 2011, under the direction of Fr Raphson, the Christian community of Laiguda (Orissa) has succeeded in building a magnificent church.

Special thanks go out to the Christians for their dynamism, as well as to the benefactors and organizations who made this project become a reality.