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Mission

A new mission in Jacareacanga, in the heart of the Amazonian rainforest

Brazil, March 23, 2015 (Communicaciones).- Fr. Marcos Juchem.- During the last Provincial Chapter of the Province of Southern Brazil in January 2014, the establishment of a new mission in Jacareacanga, Pará state, in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, was approved.

The municipality covers an area of 53,000 square kilometers and its population of approximately 30,000 persons is dispersed throughout the region. The inhabitants are in their majority native (90%), mostly from the Mundurukú people and some Apiacá. They speak Mundurukú and a little Portuguese.

The name Jacareacanga means "head of the jacaré" (caiman, a type of crocodile). The mission territory is 96% jungle; large rivers cross through it, among which the Tapajós stands out. It is up to four kilometers wide in some areas. Other important rivers include the Xamanxin, Tropas, et cetera.

About 6,000 people live in the small town, mostly Native Americans. They live near the rivers, especially the Tapajós. The Franciscans served this area previously, but they left five years ago and the inhabitants have had no priests since then. When we visited them, we were told they awaited us anxiously. Once they find out you are a "*pain*" (the father, the priest), they lose their fear and invite you to visit their village.

Then, while talking to them, you find out their village is not around the corner, but one, two, or three days away by canoe or motorboat, along the length of the river. The new mission will cover about 70 villages, and perhaps a village of white people. This means we will have to travel many weeks out of the year, along the rivers most of the time, to attend the population. In all the villages there are schools. They teach in Mundurukú and Portuguese. Among themselves they prefer to speak Mundurukú. Their livelihood is hunting and fishing. They also cultivate cassava, coffee, plantains, papaya, and corn.

On the sociopolitical level there is currently a lot of tension because the government began to build the Tapajóz hydroelectric complex (a total of seven hydroelectric plants), and this requires our special attention – to support them in this area, so that they are respected, are relocated, and this is done with prudence and affording them the dignity they deserve.

We cannot speak of mission without speaking of needs. To reach these villages, spread throughout the jungle, a motorboat and a 4x4 pickup are needed. There are no paved roads, only dirt roads. To get to the prelacy of Itaituba, where Jacareacanga is located, one must travel about 400 kilometers over dirt roads, through the jungle. As you can see in the photographs, when it rains a lot the roads are impassable. During the dry season there is a lot of dust. We will start out in whatever way we are able, but ideally we would have two teams and two motorboats to carry out this pastoral work.

We extend our gratitude to the Father General for his determined and enthusiastic response to our presentation of this new mission which I joined, and which, God willing, will be called “Saint Teresa” as it was born during this 5th Centenary of her birth, in the heart of the Amazon, the Earth’s lung and provider of oxygen, and mystical-charismatic oxygen for all. May she help us and accompany us.

5th Centenary

Walking through today’s paved deserts with Teresa

Peru, March 23, 2015 (Communicationes).- Within the celebratory context of the 5th centenary of the birth of our holy mother Saint Teresa of Jesus, the Carmelite Commissariate Saint Martin de Porres in Peru, in coordination with the Spirituality Center, organized a series of conferences titled, “Walking through today’s paved deserts with Teresa,” held February 16 through 27. The objectives of the event were to spread the spiritual message of La Santa to men and women of our time.

Father Maximiliano Herráiz generously offered his support for this project, and from Peru we extend our thanks to Father for his time and dedication. He is truly in love with Holy Mother. The conferences were held in various convents of Carmelite friars and the nuns of Ica, Arequipa, Trujillo, and Lima. A good number of participants attended each event.

There were many days of hard work in the capital, but also of great blessings, because there was a deepening knowledge of the Saint’s intuitions concerning perseverance in the way of faith. We give thanks to the Lord for all we experienced, because in Lima as well as in the various places where the conferences were held, a good and varied level of participation was achieved: laity, priests, religious men and women, pastoral workers, literary figures, academicians, and others. Expressing himself simply and clearly, Father Maximiliano captivated and drew his audience into the sweetness of the prayer proposal of Saint Teresa.

It should be mentioned that during the days the conference was held, specifically in the capital, the Catholic media covered the events (both by written and televised means). They highlighted the relevance of the message of Saint Teresa in our times, and that despite 500 years of her birth, she continues captivating us all.

This event serves to bring awareness of the great need people have to come closer to the Lord, but also helps us rediscover the wealth and great heritage of Carmel. What is left to us who form part of the Carmelite family is to continue delving into the spirit of Holy Mother, to be good friends of God, and thereby bring others closer to the experience of transformation in the love of the Lord.

Appointment

Isidro Catela, new Managing Director of the 5th Centenary Foundation

Ávila-Spain, March 23, 2015 (Communicationes).- The Board of Trustees of the 5th Centenary Foundation has appointed Isidro Catela Marcos as the new Managing Director. The Board took into consideration his broad experience in social and religious spheres, and his ability to lead teams and coordinate activities.

Father Antonio González, President of the Foundation, noted that “Isidro Catela will work so that the message of Saint Teresa of Jesus will reach today’s society.”

Isidro Catela was born in Salamanca in 1972. He is currently a professor in Francisco de Vitoria University. He is a journalist, writer, holds a doctorate in philosophy in Information Sciences, and has directed the Spanish Episcopal Conference’s Office for Information for the last 10 years. He is married and has three children.

He has also been the Spanish language deputy spokesperson for the Synod on the Eucharist (the Vatican, 2005) and director of communications for Benedict XVI’s trips to Santiago de Compostela and Barcelona (2010).

He regularly participates in social media and has authored several books, among which are “Entrevistas a doce obispos españoles” [“Interviews with 12 Spanish bishops”] published by La Esfera, 2008; and “Hijos conectados. Educar en la era digital” [“Connected children. Education in the digital era”] published by Palabra, 2012. He has likewise received several literary awards, particularly in the genres of micro-stories, short stories, and poetry.

Theater

A Castle within the Heart

Rome, March 23, 2015 (Communicationes).- “A castle within the heart. Teresa of Ávila” is the title of the stage play coproduced by the province of Venice as an initiative of the Church of Carmel Movement and Argot Productions Company. The leading lady is Pamela Villorosi, among the most famous actresses of Italian theater.

Pope Francis has acknowledged the initiative with a letter in which he recalled the importance of being “children of the Church” with Saint Teresa.

The Project is presented at a national level. Its opening performance will be in Rome on the day of the 5th Centenary (March 28) and will take place on a smaller scale in Santa Maria della Vittoria (where Bernini's famous "Ecstasy" is). It is presented in collaboration with the Province of Central Italy. The entire production will be presented on March 31 and after, will have 10 showings until April 11.

The script of the play will be published by Edizioni OCD and promoted simultaneously in a special edition of the periodical, "Teresa de Ávila. Diálogos Carmelitas" ["Teresa of Ávila. Carmelite Dialogues"].