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CICLA Meeting

The members of CICLA in Bolivia are the province of Colombia, the regional vicariate of Peru, the provincial delegation of Bolivia and the provincial delegation of Ecuador. The provincials of these regions met in Cochabamba (Bolivia) following their last meeting which took place last May, at which they discussed the decisions and ideas adopted from the last general chapter. The members spoke about the restructuration of the region with a view to undertaking common projects. Among these projects is a second novitiate which would be in preparation for final vows. The young religious had their meeting from June 18 to 30 2007 in Cochabamba. They came up with an important idea which they wrote in a letter to their superiors; 'We believe it is right to encourage a common formation programme, indicating sometimes the stages of the said formation...' For the time being, at least, they can put into practise as a project in Lima a common theological college. It is hoped that they will be able to combine efforts to promote vocations, which they believe can be one of the ways of integrating the carmelite regions.

One of the outstanding initiatives from this meeting was an important conference on the Carmelite Rule which took place in Lima in 2006. The general definitior, Fr. Nicholas Garcia, took part in some of the meetings of the Latin American carmelite organisation. The carmelites have agreed to begin immediately with an inter-change of personnel and set up joint-commissions in different areas of formation, spirituality, parochial and missionary apostolate. These initiatives are a step forward in creating a common awareness among these carmelite communities based in the Andes.

A Spirituality Centre in Madagascar in memory Of Fr. Sergio Sorgon (RIP 1985)

On January 7 1985 the Carmelite Order was stunned to hear the news of the murder of Fr. Sergio Sorgon, a missionary in Madagascar and a member of our Venetian province. The following Sunday the Pope, during his angelus address, recalled the sacrifice of this Carmelite missionary. There is a book in Italian and another in Malagash about his tragic and final journey on a motorbike to his priory. 23 years later on January 13 last, the new Centre of Spirituality in Moramanga dedicated to his memory was blessed. There is a bronze bust of Fr. Sergio at the entrance to the Centre. Here, in September, the Extraordinary General Definitory will take place.

At the blessing ceremony were many religious from the Madagascar and Indian Ocean Commissariat together with thousands of the faithful, also present was the female President of the Malagash National Assembly who is a friend of the Carmelites, Jacky Sylla. The Archbishop of Antananarivo led the ceremony. In his homily he recalled the significance of Fr. Sorgon's life and death.

Remembering Fr. Jesus Castellano

Two years after the death of this well known Carmelite (June 15 2006) the publishers, EDIBESA (Valencia, Spain), printed Fr. Jesus' Radio Vatican homilies during the years 1990-1993. The book is entitled, 'Orar con el Año Litúrgico, Cycle B'. It can be a useful aid for priests in the preparation of their Sunday homilies.

Almost at the same time the people from Villar del Arzobispo (Valencia), Jesus' native village, who consider him to have been an illustrious son dedicated a street in his name and organised, together with the local parish, a commemoration and an exhibition.

New seat of CITEs, Avila

An International Centre for studies on St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross (CITEs) next to St. Teresa's priory has been operating already for 21 years. However, due to insufficient room for lectures and to accommodate the number of people wishing to enrol, the central government of the Order has decided to create a new, more functional and presentable Centre. The City Council has given us a piece of land near the Incarnation, on condition that we use the place for at least 30 years. The architectural style of the building is that of a star, with visible symbolism linked to St. Teresa's spirituality. It is the work of the architect Andrew Perea Ortega.

The foundation-stone was blessed by the local bishop on March 28 2004. Unfortunately, the construction work on the building has made slow progress, due to no less than three chosen contractors withdrawing in the course of the construction and only a fourth accepted to finish the work. In the meantime the cost of construction increased considerably, either because of imprecise estimation of costs from the outset, or cost of labour, or an increase in the cost of building materials. As a result of these increases we had to borrow heavily from a bank, in spite of two substantial financial gifts were offered to CITEs. A commission appointed by the General Definitory has been following the path of this project from the very start.

The religious and student community has in recent days finally transferred to the new Centre. Work still remains to be finalised but soon all the work should be completed.

The structure consists of 103 rooms (single and double) with a maximum capacity for 160 people. There are, besides, halls for different functions, a chapel, dining-room, library and a large conference room and other spaces where people can relax, there is even a small covered garden. The complex covers 10,000 square meters. The lighting system was inspired by the company that made it, although there is plenty of light coming from the many windows offering a view of the famous walls of Avila and the surrounding area.

The construction of this new Centre has been the initiative of the Order in order to promote, deepen academically and spread the spirituality of our holy Doctors of the Church. The lectures of the Centre, mostly in Spanish, are open to everyone. There are 40 chosen lecturers for the specialised fields courses from both religious and civil universities, with a prevalence of our own Carmelite students.

The challenge for us Carmelites is to share our charism, much appreciated in the Church, with the modern world which on the one hand seems in sensitive to spiritual values but on the other urgently seeks such values.

The construction of the new Centre in Avila will offer a flexible programme. There will be the usual annual 9-month course but also weekly retreats, conferences, spirituality courses for a month which will be offered in other languages, general cultural meetings, accommodation for pilgrims, meetings for religious as well as other initiatives suggested by various ecclesial or civil organisations. The residential course has been recognized as a Master's by the Catholic University of Avila and this is a further signal of other possible academic developments in the new College. The courses are open to members of the Order, Carmelite institutes, religious, priests, members of the Secular Order, laypeople and for any student who wants to deep his/her knowledge of Carmelite spirituality.

There will be a reunion of ex-alumni of the Centre from September 24-27, for a celebration of a large International conference on 'Mysticism and contemporary thinking',. Different experts in the various aspects of mysticism will be taking part. Fr. General of the Order will give the inaugural address entitled 'A necessary meeting between philosophy and mysticism.'

The Laval convent (France), a '20th century patrimony'

The convent was founded from Le Mans Carmel in 1856 the same year as the diocese was established. It was originally located in the heart of the city but it became necessary, in 1965, to relocate the building outside the city but not too far away. The present building is the work of the architect Marconnet, a disciple of Le Corbusier. The rectangular construction combines the cement walls with the stain-glass windows. In 2003 the sisters presented a plan to a special commission. The plan has been tried and tested and so the commission, responsible for the preservation of special buildings, gave the convent a preservation order. This order came into effect on April 10 with a plaque on which is written 'Patrimony of the 21st Century' placed by the front of the building.

There are 18 buildings who have this specific preservation order. Laval Carmel's is the only one in the Mayenne 'department'.