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First news after the earthquake

Earthquake in Chile causes much material damage to Carmelite monasteries

Chile, February 28, 2010 (Communicaciones).- The first meagre news has begun to trickle in about the situation in Chile, after the strong, early-morning earthquake, measuring 8.8 degrees on the Richter Scale.

The Vicar of Chile, Fr Julio González Carretti reports that, despite the intensity of the shock, there were no victims among the Carmelite friars and nuns. However many of our churches and monasteries suffered much material damage.

The greatest damage was done in Chillán, where various halls used for catechetics were demolished and the church was seriously damaged by cracks. Viña de Mar also suffered damage to the church and part of the monastery was destroyed. Likewise, the churches in Independencia, in Santiago, and the Sanctuary of Saint Teresa of los Andes suffered considerable damage.

As far as we are able to know, important structural damage was done to the monasteries of the communities of Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Puangue, Talca and San Bernardo. However all the nuns are well and were spared from injury.

Fr General sends a congratulatory message

Carmelite Bishop, Aníbal Nieto, takes possession of the new diocese of San Jacinto de Yaguachi in Ecuador

Yaguachi, 28th February, 2010 (Communicationes).- Yesterday afternoon, 27th February, the Carmelite Bishop, Aníbal Nieto took possession, as the first Bishop, of the new diocese of San Jacinto de Yaguachi (Ecuador). The Nuncio presided at the moving Eucharist at which concelebrated a great number of bishops and priests.

The Carmelite Bishops from the Vicariate Apostolic of San Miguel de Sucumbíos (Ecuador) – Mons. Gonzalo López, and the Auxiliary of Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia) – Mons. Braulio Sáez accompanied Mons. Nieto on this day and were joined by a large representation of Discalced Carmelites, among whom could be found the Definitor General for Latin America and the Caribbean – Fr Marcos Juchem, Fr Carmelo Hernández – Delegate Provincial of Ecuador, as well as the Vicar-Provincial of the Burgos Province – Fr Gabriel Castro.

During the ceremony, Fr Marcos Juchem, Definitor General, read a letter of congratulations sent by the General of the Order, Saverio Cannistrà, in which he said he was proud “on seeing a Carmelite brother of mine the object of particular esteem and confidence to the Pope”. Fr General also assured Mons. Aníbal of his prayers together with the “prayer of the Teresian Carmel, as well as the close support, not just spiritual, of our brothers and sisters of the Carmelite Family in Ecuador”.

A new diocese

Last November, Pope Benedict XVI erected the diocese of San Jacinto de Yaguachil (Ecuador) and appointed Monsignor Aníbal Nieto its first Bishop. With an area of 6,265 square kilometres, which before formed part of the Archdiocese of Guayaquil, this new ecclesial circumscription has 40 priests and 20 seminarians.

“It is a grace to live in these places in which are our sources”

Fr General highlights the plurality of cultures among the Discalced Carmelite Nuns in the Holy Land

Mount Carmel, February 27, 2010 (Communicationes).- “It is a grace to live in these places in which everyone was born”, emphasized Fr General, Saverio Cannistrà, in his message to the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of the Holy Land, during the visit he made to Egypt and the Holy Land from 6th to 21st of February.

In his words, Fr General stressed the need to live with “great human and spiritual maturity”, while inviting the Carmelite nuns to simplify their lives in order “to go to the essential of their own vocation.” “The existing conflict between the Arab and Jewish world is the *present moment* which you are called to take upon yourselves, lifting it up in prayer and transforming into an offering of love all that you are called to suffer in communion with the men and women of these peoples.”

The Discalced Carmelite Superior General also placed value on “the multicultural composition” of the communities, describing them as an example of plurality of cultures for the whole Order.

He also pointed out in his message the interest the monasteries had shown in being involved in the preparation process for the V Centenary of the Birth of Saint Teresa of Jesus, with the reading of the Book of her Life of Saint Teresa of Jesus. “We need to discover St Teresa’s fundamental options in order to discern what protects contemplative and fraternal life, as well as what can be detrimental to it and lead it astray”, said Fr Saverio.

Association of the Holy Land

The Association of Our Lady of Mt Carmel of the Holy Land is composed of the monasteries of “Pater Noster” in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Mount Carmel and Nazareth – which celebrated its first centenary of foundation this year.

Sr Ana-Françoise, Coordinator of the Association, during an interview published on their web page <http://www.carmelholylan.org>, emphasized hopeful signs for Carmel in the Holy Land. Notable among these signs was an increase of vocations in all the monasteries, where the novitiates remain open with “one of two sisters and some aspirants”. “There are also close friends of Carmel who like to come and pray with us and share our spirituality”.

Challenges to the “Teresianum” on completing 75 years

Fr Silvano Giordano: “it was a week of deep reflection, organized and rich in ideas”

Rome, 27th February, 2010 (Communicationes).- Fr Silvano Giordano, in charge of the Teresianum Spirituality Week, judged successful the outcome of the 51st Spirituality Week which came to a close recently in Rome on 25th February.

During an interview offered to Communicationes, he praised the deep reflection, that was organized and rich in ideas” and also noted “a good response from the public”, with more than one hundred registered daily in attendance.

In his interview, the Vice-President of the “Teresianum” Pontifical Faculty, Fr Silvano, explained the special features of the Week which the Spirituality Institute has organized for more than fifty years. He also reviewed the history and the significance of this Faculty of the Order which, on the 16th July this year, celebrates it 75 years of establishment.

Communicationes: How did the Spirituality Week come about?

Silvano Giordano: It began in 1960, as a series of conferences on spirituality topics in the form of a formation course directed mainly to religious women, shortly after the founding the Spirituality Institute, while Fr Anastasio Ballestrero was General. The idea was brought to fruition by means of the “Teresianum” and use was made of their professors.

C: On what subject matter does the Week centre?

SG: Normally, the Spirituality Weeks is structured around a single topic developed under distinct aspects. They are mainly topics related to the Carmelite tradition of spirituality, such as “The mystery of Christian prayer”, with which the first Week was inaugurated in 1960, and combined with precise events in the present-day Church. For example, in 1966 it was devoted to Sanctity in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, of the Second Vatican

Council. This year we reflected on the encyclical “*Caritas in veritate*” published by Benedict XVI on 29th June, 2009.

C: What has this Encyclical, which is so social, to do with spirituality?

SG: It is true that the Pope in the Encyclical does not deal with spiritual topics in the traditional sense, rather anthropological. He analyses the present economic situation, however since the Pope is not an economist, the attitudes of man faced with the social and economic situation are much better explained. Benedict XVI sets out from *Populorum Progressio* of Paul VI (1967) with the idea that integral humanism is identified with integral growth. If we wish to grow then it is necessary to choose an economy of “gratuitous gift” in which relations between persons are based on gratitude and mutual respect. Objectively, the encyclical does not try to speak about the economy, but about the attitude of people faced with daily life and other people. For the Pope, the model for relationships between persons is the Trinitarian model. There is nothing more spiritual than that.

C: So it is from this that came the slogan for these days: “Development needs Christians”?

SG: Exactly. It is a phrase taken from number 79 of the encyclical. After presenting the various attitudes of the *homo oeconomicus*, the *homo faber*, the Pope ends up with Spirituality. However, it is not a banal spirituality reduced to “being good”, rather he deals with the theologic and anthropological basis of Spirituality.

C: Could we say that there is a new approach in the Week after 50 years?

SG: This Week sought to be a “tiny break-away” from what has always been dealt with from the very tradition of the Order in order to involve us in a more ecclesial theological reflection. We set rather high objectives and demanded of the lecturers a theological reflection of truth, not just beautiful words or pious exhortations, rather a good theology reflecting on what is man and, at the same time, connecting with present theological trends. All in all, we tried to have spirituality connecting with present theological and philosophical currents.

C: How do you assess the Week?

SG: I am fairly satisfied. The speakers responded to what was asked of them with a deep reflection, well set out and rich in ideas. We reached the objective we planned at the beginning. We also relied on response from the public, since the change of approach could result in a lesser number than usual attending. We had hoped for between 40 to 60 people, given the wide opportunities on offer in Rome, besides we are not a well-known university. Despite all this we had around one hundred attending. This means our approach drew interest.

C: This year is the 75th anniversary of the “Teresianum”. How did it begin?

SG: It was at the time of the General, William of St Albert, from the Roman Province. He was a very active General. During his mandate, the International College began again after the First World War; plans were begun for Mount Carmel and a Biblical Institute in Jerusalem which came to nothing because of the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1931, Pope Pius XI promulgated the Apostolic Constitution “*Deus scientiarum dominus*” in which global norms for seminaries and Catholic faculties throughout the world were drawn up for the first time. Then Fr William, in consultation with the Congregation for Studies, attained the title of *Faculty* for

the International College of the Discalced Carmelites, which had been founded in Corso d'Italia at the beginning of the century, where the present General House is. In 1955 the present building on the Gianiculum was officially inaugurated and in 1963, Pope John XXIII granted the Faculty the title of "*Pontifical*". Later on, during the 1982 Centenary of Saint Teresa, it became known as the "Teresianum".

C: What has the founding of the "Teresianum" meant for the Order?

SG: It was something quite novel for us, since from the time of the 1581 Constitutions it was prohibited to Discalced Carmelite to attend universities and receive academic degrees and the attending privileges. For this reason, it was the first time in history that Discalced Carmelites were allowed to acquire an academic degree.

C: What has the "Teresianum" contributed to the Order in these 75 years?

SG: Two things stand out. The first has been assisting the process of internationalization of the Order. Until the 70's of the XX century, the Order was mainly formed of Spanish and Italian friars. There were other nationalities, but the strongest groups were these. After the Second Vatican Council, there was a growth of Africans, Asians, Latin-Americans . . . which led to an exchange of ideas on how to live Carmelite life, at times different from what each one had experienced in their country of origin.

Secondly, I believe that the Teresianum helped to form a certain academic awareness, that goes beyond a simple seminary training, with a better planned theological approach, contributing to the stimulation of a specific intellectual preparation.

C: Facing the future: What ought the role of the Teresianum be?

SG: Going deeper into this approach, it ought to be a centre of theological reflection and investigation. I believe that, in the short or long term, it is still lacking and is what the Order is demanding of the Teresianum. Energies need to be mobilized, in dialogue with other cultural environments, in order to site Saint Teresa, Saint John of the Cross, Edith Stein and Saint Therese in the eye of the cyclone. It is to be hoped that it leads to new guidelines for investigation.

She founded the Carmel of the Holy Face and Pius XII at Tremembé (Brazil)

The process of canonization of Mother María Carmen of the Most Holy Trinity opens Tremembé, February 26, 2010 (Communicationes).- The diocese of Taubaté (São Paulo–Brazil) has officially opened the process of canonization of Mother María del Carmen of the Most Holy Trinity, the foundress of the Carmel of the Holy Face and Pius XII.

The ceremony took place on Sunday, 7th February, in the chapel of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns in the monastery of the Holy Face and Pius XII in Tremembé, 135 kilometres from São Paulo. The Eucharist was presided by the Bishop of the diocese, Mons. Carmo João Rhoden, and the Vice-postulator of the cause, Fr Patrizio Sciadini concelebrated. Attending were many priests and deacons friends of the Carmel, as well as a great number of faithful who joined in with the 15 Carmelite nuns in their celebrations.

With Mother Carmen, there are now three Discalced Carmelite Nuns whose cause is in process in Brazil.

Mother María del Carmen of the Most Holy Trinity

Carmen Catarina Bueno was born in Itu, in the State of São Paulo, on 25th December 1898. She entered the Carmel of St Joseph in Rio de Janeiro in 1926, where she was professed with the name of María del Carmen of the Most Holy Trinity at the age of 27. During her religious life she was Mistress of Novices, Sub-Prioress, and Prioress. In 1955 she set out to found the Carmel of the Holy Face and Pius XII at Tremembè.

She devoted great attention to novitiate formation and the care of the sick sisters in the community. In 1966 she died from a cerebral haemorrhage at the age of 67.

Introduction of the Cause of Canonization

The first step in the process of canonization belongs to the diocesan bishop and to the Postulator of the Cause who present to the Congregation of Causes of the Saints a report on the life and virtues of the candidate for the Altars.

After examining the report presented, the Vatican Congregation issue the Decree “Nihil Obstat” by which the diocesan authorities are permitted to begin the canonical process. At this time, the diocesan Bishop can pronounce the Decree of Introduction of the Cause of the Servant of God.