

Spain: examination of the tomb and the body of St Teresa of Jesus

The examination of the tomb and remains of Saint Teresa of Jesus began on the morning of 28th August, in Alba de Tormes. It was overseen by Italian specialists from the Dicastro for the Causes of Saints, at the Vatican. The analysis focussed on the state of the body and on the ‘major relics’, consisting of parts of the body: the heart and the arm. In this way their “conservation” and “veneration” will be guaranteed.

The General Postulator, Fr Marco Chiesa, confirmed that the body of Saint Teresa of Jesus has remained the same as it did when it was last seen in 1914. The Postulator General said that it is too early to give any details about the results that are yet to be carried out. Fr. Marco Chiesa stated, “The Order believes it is opportune to carry out this work and it will be the specialists, after further research, who will give us their conclusions. We know from similar studies that we can find out very interesting data about Teresa and also get advice

about how to conserve the relics, but this will come at a later phase. The other reliquaries will be cleaned.

The first phase of the examination of the tomb and the reliquaries of Saint Teresa was completed on the afternoon of the 30th August. Fr Marco Chiesa recalled, “The team of scientists, led by Professor Luigi Capasso, told us that the state of conservation of the reliquaries of Saint Teresa was exceptional. The first phase of this process that took place *in situ* in Alba de Tormes has already been completed. The second phase will begin with an examination in laboratories in Italy. This will take several months. During 2025 we will have the conclusions and the third phase will then be carried out in Alba de Tormes.”

The first data has emerged on St Teresa's health in her final years. From this first phase *in situ* the medical team has concluded that Teresa had a very fragile constitution. In the last years of her life she walked with a marked curvature

of the spine. Such curvature is usually due to weakness of the vertebrae in the back bone and provokes fractures. The medical team indicated that Teresa did not have osteoporosis. The deformation of the vertebrae in her spinal cord would have made it difficult for Teresa to breath, at least in the last years of her life. From a medical point of view, in this first examination, it was found that the Saint suffered from rheumatoid arthritis in her left knee. In the final years of her life, Saint Teresa of Jesus suffered from a foot sore which would

have caused her pain when she walked. This first analysis tells us that there was no fracture in her left arm but rather a dislocation in the wrist. It took months before anything could be done. Then the healer from Medina del Campo and an assistant pulled the arm to dislocate it from the shoulder joint. In other words, the cure was worse than the illness. The arm remained useless for the last five years. The question of the arm is well documented in the writings of St Teresa herself and in the testimony at her beatification.

France: Meeting in Lisieux of the OCD students from Europe

The meeting of our young professed friars from Europe was held in Lisieux from 19 - 24 August 2024, bringing together more than 80 participants (including the formators).

The theme of the meeting was: the three pillars of the Carmelite life according to the Declaration on the charism of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. The conferences for the first three mornings concentrated on each of these pillars: prayer, community life and mission. The time for group discussion according to language allowed the participants to discover different experiences of our Carmelite life.

On Friday morning, our Father General spoke to us about the union among the brothers, sisters and members of the Carmelite secular order, then we had a time to dialogue with Fr General and with Fr Christophe-Marie, the Definitior.

In the afternoon we visited the places associated with Therese of Lisieux: Les Buissonnets, the Cathedral, the Basilica and a half day visit to Alencon. On the last evening, a festive gathering allowed us to have a wide range of activity. It was the culmination of these stimulating days spent together.

Spain: 2nd International Congress on Therese of Lisieux at CITEs

From 2 – 7 September, CITEs in Avila hosted the 2nd International Congress on Therese of Lisieux. The theme “*My Vocation Is Love*” the speakers and participants studied the manuscripts B & C from her “*Story of A Soul*”.

There were 21 speakers and 400 participants from 18 countries who took part in the conference in person or on-line. Each day 30 monasteries of our Discalced Carmelite nuns participated.

Some of the best specialists on the writ-

ings of Therese of Lisieux from various countries (Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Lebanon, Peru and Mexico) came to analyse the manuscripts B & C from different perspectives. The main objective was to make the manuscripts B & C better known. These two manuscripts contain very interesting themes that refer to christian vocation, like that of Therese herself, or to her role as a spiritual accompanier. Such a vocation can enlighten even those who are far from the Church.

USA: OCDS Congress of the Washington Province

The 2024 OCDS Congress that took place in Wakefield, MA, from August 22nd to the 25th, gathered hundreds of OCDS from 33 states in the United States and from abroad. Some Carmelite Fathers and Nuns were present too making it indeed a family reunion. The title was “The Joy of Carmel.” The different conferences, the moments of prayer and reflection and the times of community recreation, help attendees to really experience the joy of belong-

ing to the Discalced Carmelite Order. His eminence Card Seán Patrick O’Malley, OFM Cap., Archbishop of Boston, came to celebrate Mass on August 24th and during his homily he said: “Carmelite spirituality allows us to discover that love, the crucified love, and to be able to climb the mountain and be able to embrace that love, and we are so grateful for your charism, for your vocations, for your presence here.” The Congress was very successful and very well organized.

Columbia: meeting of Formators - CICLA

A meeting of Formators from CICLA was held in the priority of Villa de Leyva, from 4-24 August, in the presence of friars from several countries in Latin America (Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Mexico, Columbia, Peru, Costa Rica, Panama, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Argentina). The meeting was held to come together as brothers in Carmel, to live teresian fraternity and then to have a space to share personal and vocational experiences. Besides, another important time was spent in revising the *Ratio Institu-*

tionis, during which each of the formators who were present was able to give his own perspective.

There was also time for on-going formation. There were contributions from Fr Carlos Damoniguez SJ, Mrs Myrna Torbay OCDS, Fr Jacob Iadarola OCD and the Sisters Anny and Lismar from the Discalced Carmelites of Caracas, Venezuela.

Apart from the above-mentioned experiences the friars had the opportunity to get to know some beautiful parts of the country.

Puerto Rico: OCDS National Assembly

The OCDS communities in Puerto Rico gathered together on August 3, 2024, in the city of Caguas for a national gathering. The meeting began with the Eucharist and was followed by a conference with the title, "OCDS: Vocation and Mission." Afterwards, the General Delegate for the OCDS, Fr. Ramiro Casale, OCD, Denise Osorio, president of the OCDS national council and members from all

communities on the island, discussed important topics regarding the identity, life of prayer, fraternity, formation and mission in the OCDS. There was also times for prayer and recreation. The OCDS communities in Puerto Rico belong to the Commiserate of the Caribbean and are in constant communication and communion with all the other OCDS communities present in their circumscription and beyond.

Philippines: Accompaniment for Formators

The Philippine Federation of Discalced Carmelite Nuns conducted the second of their three-phased Formators training program last July 24 – August 24 at the Carmelite Missionaries Center of Spirituality in Tagaytay City.

For this triennium, the federal council focused on the needs of newly appointed Novice Mistresses and Assistants.

We had Sr. Loida Tortogo, CM, for her talks on accompaniment, the basic attitudes, requirements and its practice.

With the 21 participants from 19 member-communities of the Federation were Fr. Danilo Lim, Religious Assistant; Mother May Catherine, Federal President; Sr. Maria Teresa, councilor and Sr. Marian Therese, secretary.

Quebec: Annual Retreat of the OCDS

The OCDS in Quebec held their annual retreat from 13 – 15th September at the Centre of Prayer in Trois-Rivieres, on the theme of “*Who will lead me to happiness, with Teresa of Jesus*”. The retreat was led by Fr Francois-Dominique Lambert, the Provincial Delegate from Avignon-Aquitaine.

More than thirty members from our eight communities came from far and wide, including Ontario, Abitii and Lake St Jean, to participate in this event, which is always greatly appreciated. The programme

consisted of lectures, a workshop in small groups, liturgical celebrations, communal prayer and, naturally, fraternal meetings. We also had the joy of celebrating the entrance into formation of Barbara Seguin, the first fruit of the latest group, “Notre Dame du Bon Samaritain”, based in St Jerome, in the Laurenziani.

This time of renewal gave us the opportunity to say with St Teresa and in communion with all our brothers and sisters in Carmel, “God alone suffices”.