

## Lebanon: The Pope Visits the Discalced Carmelite Nuns

**T**he night of his arrival to the Land of Cedars on Sunday, November 30 and after meeting with the official authorities, Pope Leo XIV went to the Monastery of the Theotokos and the Unity of Harissa. There he received a typical gift of Carmelite spirituality.

Pope Leo XIV is the third Pope received by the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Harissa, after St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

In the visit, which lasted approximately thirty minutes, the Pontiff greeted each one of the sisters and received the gift of a small statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague, a “typical” gift of the Carmelite spirituality that throughout the centuries has spread in a special way the love for the infancy of Christ.

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## Spain: Opening of the Jubilee Year of St. John of the Cross

**O**n December 13 in *Segovia*, by the tomb of St. John of the Cross took place the solemn celebration of the Eucharist and opening of the Holy Door, visible signs of the official beginning of St. John of the Cross Centenaries. The celebration was presided by the bishop of Segovia accompanied by the bishop of Avila, the Father General of our Order, the Provincials of the Iberian,

Portuguese and Navarre Provinces, representatives of the City of Segovia, and numerous religious.

On December 14, Solemnity of St. John of the Cross, also started the Jubilee Year of St. John of the Cross in the Diocese of Avila, at the parish of St. Cyprian of *Fon-tiveros*, birthplace of the saint. The Eucharist was presided by the bishop of Avila, Monsignor Jesús Rico, and started with

the opening of the Jubilee Holy Door. In *Avila* the day started by the saint's monument, with a prayer led by Cardinal Ricardo Blázquez, and continued with a procession to the Basilica of St. Teresa, where it was officially declared a Jubilee church.

On December 15 the Holy Door was opened in *Ubeda*. The celebration, presided by the bishop of Jaén, Monsignor Sebastian Chico Martínez, started in St. Paul's Parish, and continued with a pilgrimage to St. John of the Cross oratory. There the doors were officially opened and they prayed before the tomb and relics of the saint. The Eucharist was then

celebrated in the church of San Miguel, with multitudinous participation.

The following places have been established as Jubilee sites associated with these centenaries:

- *Ubeda*, place of his death
- *Segovia*, the place where his tomb is
- The Diocese of Avila, with the city of *Avila* and *Fontiveros*, place of his birth

In this way a shared journey begins which invites all to go in pilgrimage, pray and rediscover the timeless power of St. John of the Cross' message. May this Jubilee Year help us to walk with depth, fraternity and hope.

## OCDS World Encounter

The OCDS World Encounter will take place in Avila, Spain from July 23rd to the 26th of 2026. Almost 1,000 people from all over the world will be participating. The theme is: "Witnesses of the Experience of God: Identity and Mission". The objectives of the encounter are to:

- Go deeper into the spirituality and charism of the Secular Carmel.
- Strengthen communion among OCDS communities of the different regions of the world.
- Share experiences and formation.
- Do homage to St. John of the Cross in the celebration of the 3rd centenary of his canonization and the 1st centenary of his declaration as a Doctor of the Church.

- Remember with gratitude the spiritual heritage of the Discalced Carmel.
- Contribute to the cultural and religious life of Avila.

The event offers a unique opportunity for the members of the Discalced Carmel to know one another, share the faith, renew of the Carmelite charism, and strengthen the fraternal bonds that unite them. Inspired by the rich spirituality of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross attendees will be able to go deeper in their journey towards union with God through prayer and fraternal life. For more information we invite you to visit the event's website: <https://ocd-savila2026.com>

## OCD Students Meet with OCDS Members of Central Italy

**O**n Saturday, December 13 took place the Advent retreat of the five Roman OCDS communities at the Basilica of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus in Anzio in an environment of joy and deep communion. Joining them were the OCDS Provincial Delegate, Fr. Basilio Visca, Fr. Joseph Heimpel, Fr. Mario Ottaviani and the Fathers from the religious community of Anzio.

The center of the day consisted of listening to the vocational testimonies of three Carmelite young students from the St. John of the Cross International School – Br. Niccolò (Central Italy), Br. Christian (Albania), and Br. Agostino (Egypt). With

freshness and profundity they reminded everyone that each one is loved and guided by God in a unique and special way.

The fraternal dialogue after the testimonies, the Eucharistic celebration presided by Fr. Joseph Heimpel, and the shared lunch reinforced everyone's sense of belonging to the great family of Carmel.

This was a new and fruitful experience that opened spaces for knowledge and fraternity, transforming Advent's expectation into encounter and communion. With gratitude the OCDS from Central Italy carries this day in its heart as a concrete sign of renewal and hope.

## Rome: The Teresianum Inaugurates an Academic Chair dedicated to St. Thérèse

**O**n November 19, 2025 at the Pontifical Theological Faculty of the Teresianum in Rome it was inaugurated an academic chair dedicated to St. Thérèse of Lisieux. The objective is to strengthen and promote the doctrinal and intellectual contribution of this young woman, whom Pope John Paul II declared Doctor of the Church in 1997 and whom UNESCO recognized in 2021 as an intellectual “whose work examines the depth of

the human heart and opens possible response ways to men and women of this world in search of meaning, in search of personal and universal peace.”

The purpose of this academic chair is also to make known not only the teachings linked to the “little doctrine” that has inspired generations of believers and non-believers, but also the contribution of this French saint to the cultural dimension of the faith in dialogue with the intellectuals of her time and today.

## Brazil: ‘Elijah and Elisha Project’ formation meeting

**F**rom 24 to 28 November 2025, in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, we, the friars of the Southern Cone, gathered together for a formation meeting entitled ‘Elijah and Elisha Project’.

The purpose of this project is to offer accompaniment during the first ten years following initial formation. Thus, the ‘young brothers’ are represented by the figure of Elisha, while the ‘more experienced brothers,’ who accompanied us during this meeting, are represented by the figure of Elijah. We shared in the Liturgy, times of personal prayer and recrea-

tion. We benefited from formation courses on human, psychological and spiritual development, some of which were inspired by the Carmelite saints.

We visited the Discalced Carmelites Nuns of Porto Alegre, where we shared Mass, breakfast and sang together. We concluded our meeting with a walk through the most significant sites of Porto Alegre.

It was a beautiful moment of fraternal exchange, which, without a doubt, gave us the strength to continue facing the years ahead in the complexity of our vocation.

## Chile: Carmelite Family Encounter 2025

**T**he Carmelite Family Encounter gathered more than 200 participants at the Carmelite school of El Melón. The day started with the prayer of Lauds and the exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, followed by the words of welcome of the general coordinator, who highlighted the history of Chilean Carmel and the spirit that unites the country’s communities.

The first formative moment was led by Sister Adriana Montenegro, CMT, who reflected profoundly on the pillars of Carmel, which led to group work and plenary expositions. After lunch in community the attendees participated in a moment of prayer inspired by St. Teresa of Los Andes and lis-

tened to testimonies on the Carmelite life.

The scholar Myriam Dúchenos led the second formative moment, focused on the presence of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Chile. The afternoon continued with religious dance, expression of popular piety and Marian devotion.

The Encounter concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist presided by Monsignor Mario Salas Becerra, stressing Carmel’s mission as a sign of hope. The day reaffirmed the communion, spiritual identity and pastoral commitment of the Chilean Carmel under the theme “Pilgrims of hope with Carmel”.