

Spain: The Authentic Face of Saint John of the Cross

The *San Juan de la Cruz, Esperanza de alto Vuelo* exhibition, which is currently on display in Alba de Tormes as part of the centenary commemorations of Saint John of the Cross, features one of the saint's most significant historical and scientific elements: a reconstruction of Saint John of the Cross's face.

The study *Fisonomía original de San Juan de la Cruz* outlines the process that made it possible to approximate the true appearance of the Mystical Doctor. This process began in Segovia in 1992, on the occasion of the fourth centenary of his death, with the canonical recognition of his remains. Under the direction of Dr

Massimo Benedettucci, the scientific reconstruction of the face was carried out using the saint's skull.

The technique involved producing a plaster cast, anatomically reconstructing the muscles and soft tissues, and interpreting those features not directly defined by the bone structure by drawing upon historical descriptions — particularly those of Fr Jerome of St Joseph (Ezquerria de Rozas). The reconstruction was then transformed into a bust using the lost-wax technique at the *Fonderia Artistica Cavallari* in Rome. Finally, the artist Alejandro López Araguez completed the bust using traditional oil polychromy, giving the final work greater realism and expressive depth.

European Meeting of Formators at CITEs, Ávila

CITEs hosted the European Meeting of Formators from 9 to 13 February. This gathering brought together individuals responsible for initial forma-

tion within the European OCD provinces, providing an opportunity to collectively reflect on formation processes and the challenges currently facing the Order.

The speakers were the formators themselves. Each was given 15 minutes to present his experience: how initiation into mental prayer is carried out in his circumscription at the various stages of formation, the difficulties encountered, and the tools employed.

On Tuesday, the formators visited the Monastery of the Incarnation, on Wednesday they visited Duruelo, and on Thursday they visited Segovia. It was a simple yet

meaningful initiative: returning to the sources in order to continue moving forward with hope.

This meeting enabled us to share insights and suggestions, strengthen communion among the European provinces and renew our commitment to integral formation that remains faithful to the Teresian-Sanjuanist charism while addressing the challenges of the present day.

Formation Session of the Province of Venice

From 2 to 6 February, the Province of Venice organised in Fatima (Portugal) a brief yet intense Marian formation session, intended primarily for novices and students, in response to the invitation of the Father General to deepen the Marian dimension of our charism. Led by our Provincial, Fr Giuseppe Pozzobon, the programme alternated between formation sessions led by the Father General and Sr Angela Coelho (Vice-Postulator of the cause for the canonisation of Sr Lucia), and visits to the apparition sites: the *Capelinha at Cova da Iria*, the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, the modern Basilica of the Holy Trinity, the Immaculate Heart exhibition, and the village of Aljustrel.

Accommodated at Domus Carmeli, just a short walk from the apparition sites, the twenty pilgrims were able to spend several days in reflection. They also had the opportunity to meet the Carmelite nuns of Fátima and Coimbra, whose testimony about Sister Lucia was particularly enlightening.

The essence of the entire experience can be summed up in the rediscovery of the radically evangelical nature of the message of Fátima: a maternal call to conversion that transcends affective devotion and seeks to be expressed through an intense sacramental life and persevering prayer. This prayer has the power to provide a solid foundation for the life of every baptised person.

Philippines: 50th Anniversary of the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel as a parish

From 14 to 17 February, the Carmelite brothers of New Manila, Quezon City, celebrated a triduum to mark the 50th anniversary of the erection of the Basilica as a parish. The closing Celebration was presided over by the Most Rev. Honesto Ongtioco, D.D., Bishop Emeritus of Cubao.

For fifty years, this Basilica has been a home—a place where the poor are welcomed, the young are formed, the wounded are healed, and all who seek the Lord find strength. This Jubilee celebration is not only a time for remembering, but also for renewing. May this sacred place al-

ways listen to the cries of the people!

After the Holy Eucharist, the community gathered beyond the main entrance gate, where a lively band welcomed everyone with joyful music that filled the air with celebration. This was followed by a series of heartfelt performances, as the community came together in song and dance. More than mere entertainment, the gathering became a beautiful expression of thanksgiving, a reminder that the Basilica is not simply a structure of stone, but a living community strengthened by shared faith, service, and hope.

Nigeria: Joint General Assembly of the Conferences of Discalced Carmelite Superiors of Africa and Madagascar

The second Joint General Assembly of the Superiors of the Discalced Carmelites of Africa and Madagascar took place in Enugu from 26 to 30 January 2026. It brought together 22 participants representing 21 of the 22 countries of sub-Saharan Africa and the islands of the Indian Ocean, alongside the two General Definitors for Africa, Fr Jean-Baptiste Paguebeleguem and Fr Philbert Namphande. Participants shared their experiences of the lived reality of the Order's charism and spirituality, its lifestyle, and its current challenges, including formation, gov-

ernance, self-sustainability, collaboration, and restructuring.

The Father General addressed the participants in a letter to express his solidarity with the Discalced Carmelites in Africa and invited them to reflect on the specific challenges facing Carmelites on the continent.

At the conclusion of the assembly, the participants departed feeling renewed and strengthened, ready to continue their work within their respective circumscriptions. The next gathering is scheduled for 2029, when a formation congress is planned to take place in Nigeria.

Chile: Meeting of the Discalced Carmelite Sisters

The Association of Carmelite Sisters in Chile had a deeply enriching experience taking part in a spirituality course organised at the Sanctuary of St Teresa of Los Andes in Auco.

Sixty-three sisters from monasteries across the country gathered to share moments of prayer, reflection, and fellowship. The central theme of the meeting was: “A Journey

into the Depths of the Soul with Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross”.

The *Casa de Espiritualidad* offered a warm welcome and created an environment conducive to silence, contemplation, and fraternal encounters. These days were characterised by spiritual depth and the joy of living our consecrated lives in communion.