

MEDITERRANEAN ECHOES

June

2012

News from Jerusalem

Pentecost Sunday for the Jerusalem Communities and a Golden Jubilee Celebration.

Apostolic sisters, Contemplatives sisters, Kathy, Brothers of Sion and the community of Chemin Neuf assembled in the Basilica of Ecce Homo to Celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. During the Eucharistic celebration presided over by our brother Reinaldo, we, the sisters of Sion renewed our vows as always and Trudy renewed her vows for the 50th time. The spirit of Pentecost was alive in the many languages spoken in this very meaningful celebration. Martine's flute playing was magic and Tiago's accompaniment on the guitar was more than music to our ears; it truly was good to be there!



Following the celebration we proceeded to the Terrace for an aperitif followed by a festive meal.

During the meal sisters and members of Chemin Neuf shared reflections and



recalled happenings of Trudy's life and special memories they had been part of over the 50 years of loving faithfulness she had lived as a sister of Sion. This was truly a joyful and memorable occasion. We invited the Sion community to put closure to the day of Pentecost and jubilee in St. Mary's for a final drink. It was a great celebration that brought us all together in a

spirit of commitment and deep gratitude.

The Staff Celebration of Trudy's Jubilee.

On Saturday 26th May the staff of Ecce Homo with the two local communities of Notre Dame de Sion and Chemin Neuf gathered in Salle de Sion to give thanks for Trudy's 50 years commitment in Sion and almost 16 years of these lived in Ecce Homo. Trudy shared a little of her call to Sion and her journey of 50 years, especially what it had meant to be in Jerusalem all this time. She mentioned joys and pains especially the pain of lack of peace. Maha then read Chapter 15: 12-17, one of Trudy's favourite texts. This was then followed by Ziad praying a prayer for peace which was based on a prayer of the Prophet Mohammed. Maureen had beautifully arranged a centre piece of the bible and the Koran. It was very meaningful to be able to give thanks as a Christian, Muslim staff and to pray for peace. This precious moment was appreciated by all. We then moved to the dining room for a very festive Palestinian meal during which the staff (as well as a bunch of beautiful roses,) gave Trudy a small banner embroidered by Palestinian women "Jerusalem for your Peace we pray". This was truly appreciated by Trudy. This special occasion was enjoyed by all.



A note of thank you from Trudy for Jubilee wishes.

Dear Sisters,

A loving thanks for all the wishes I received for my golden Jubilee-cards, emails and phone calls. I was really touched and it sure added to the joy and gratitude of this special time. The community did all they could to make it a memorable time, and to be able to celebrate with all my sisters of Jerusalem as well as the community of Chemin Neuf and the staff, made it special. It has been time of gratitude to God for so many things but especially for my sisters of Sion near and far. The celebrations seem to continue!

With blessings and renewed thanks to you all.

Love

Trudy

Biblical Formation

The Center of Biblical Formation-The June English speaking Biblical Program

On the weekend of June 3 we began to welcome the participants for the June program who had made their way from many different countries all wanting to experience the Bible in the land and more particularly to learn more about the gospel of St. Luke. We are fortunate to have as professor, Sr. Dr. Mary Coloe, a sister of the Presentation from Australia, who will be teaching about 26 to 28 hours during this program. We are delighted to have 35 very keen enthusiastic participants who are delightful and a joy to have. Their program is very full as over and above lectures on The Gospel of St Luke, the Participants also spend time in the desert and Galilee as well as benefiting from teachers like Debbi Wiseman for the program on Yad Vashem, Fr. Frans Bouwen on the spirituality of Islam and Oriental churches and Mary Reaburn on the texts of Nostrae Aetate.. Both Jewish and Christian guides will take them to visit Bethlehem, other Christian sites as well as some Jewish sites, and a visit to an Erev Shabbat Synagogue service. An afternoon and evening was also included to visit the churches in ein karem and then to Notre Dame de Sion where Kasia gave a explanation of NDS Ein Kareem, which was followed by a meal.



Ecce Homo Staff Outing.

The weather was perfect for our annual staff outing on Sunday June 3, and from the time we left Jerusalem until the time of departure from the National Park of Gan Hachlocha or Sukhneh near Beit Shean. Throughout the whole bus journey we were entertained with the singing and laughter of over 50 members of staff with their families and members of the Chemin Neuf Community and Sisters of Notre Dame de Sion. The many children and teenagers added a great spirit of festivity in a park that was just perfect for such an occasion; with many pools fed by an underground spring. The delight of the children as they enjoyed the water was just incredible to see, they could not get enough of it and to play on the grass was pure delight. For some of us it was enough just to observe the joy and excitement of the children and the contentment of the parents to see their children enjoy themselves. The park provides great lawns and shady trees so the adults could relax and chat among themselves when they were not in swimming. At lunch time families shared their food with others giving all a chance to mix and converse. Some had brought barbeques so we enjoyed delicious cooked meat. The park closed at 16.45 and the children and some of the older ones had to be almost dragged on to the bus. As we began our journey homewards Ziad took the lead and said to all, "it is now time to thank, if we do not thank each other we do not thank God," He then proceeded to name all those who had made the day possible and happy for all. Although all were tired the singing and clapping continued until we reached Damascus Gate full of gratitude after having enjoyed an amazingly wonderful day together.





Small children in pool



Young staff at outing

Tunisia

Oh, how beautiful are the feet of the messenger who brings good tidings.

A few days ago we had a wonderful “moment of prayer, listening to the word” led by Mgr Rault, a White father, Bishop of Ghardeya, in the Algerian Sahara. The idea came after our “Revolution...”.. our “revolutions” when we wanted to pray with someone who lived our realities, someone who would share the Word from a “place” where we live. Father Rault was all that. He also lived close to the monks of Tberine and with them set up “Ribat es Salem” (the place of Peace)*. We thought that in view of the intense events we are living through at the moment we needed strong resources for spiritual sustenance. The rest followed and we thought to broaden our “tent” and stretch it beyond Tunisia and beyond our community: Geneviève from Aubagne, Mireille and Andrée from Gemenos, Darlene from Cairo, Monique from Istanbul and us in Tunisia with other sisters and friends with whom we are in communion in our effort to meet “the different other”, to meet the peoples who have preceded us on this land and over whom the Spirit is spread.



The theme of our Retreat was “the meetings of Jesus with the others” choosing to dwell on the GO rather than the COME.... so we went with the Gospel of John to reread the call and the meeting of disciples, of the Samaritan woman, of his mother at the wedding at Cana, of the cripple, etc....” A journey filled with the Word of God, sharp, TOPICAL, rooted in “where we are”. Beautiful liturgies, prayerful and joyful and also a sharing our revolutions as....they stand..

We thank all the participants: there were 2 priests and 4 lay friends amongst us who enabled us to broaden the space of our tents, along

with 4 little “Sisters of Foucauld”, 2 of which from Libya, one F.M.M. and 8 Sisters of Sion. Father Rault “accompanied” us with his knowledge of Arabic, his love of Algeria and the south Sahara, his will to Dialogue with Moslems and with Islam, not to mention his biblical and theological skills: we are so grateful to him!

Thank you also to our “network” that enabled us to organize these important moments for our lives. Our only regret is not to have had with us for this wonderful “retreat” any sister from Jerusalem!

Questions come to mind after this experience, for instance , how to keep the possible “creativity” we have within us and enable it to live how to continue to journey “together” in different areas, not through individual achievements but through collective ones.

Our joy is so great that we wanted to share it. This time of prayer showed us also that we, religious communities, Christians and our Church, are very small but we are not alone, a “multitude” surround us, we know that the Spirit spreads over all. So we journey together with joy in our GALILEE, sure that THE ONE who called us accompanies us and precedes us in this Galilee of Nations.



Aracely (Nabeul)

*Group of Christians and Moslems who share prayer and their lives. Founded in 1979 at Tiberine

Some photos of the retreat



Nabeul: our encounters

In our new house.

Saturday, on the 14th April we decided to invite our friends of the Parish of Hammamet, for a little feast in our new house. Two days before we were busy to finish the arrangements, to put new curtains, to install the lights etc...

We met together (20 persons in all) at about 1pm for the lunch, in our little flowering garden, around a big paella prepared by Aracely. But before lunch we took a few moments to pray together,



Lent at home.

This year on Friday afternoons during Lent we decided to invite the members of the parish who

wished to come to pray with us. Some came regularly and expressed their desire to continue. This time of prayer was an expression of the depth of our faith.

and Fr. Joseph, our parish priest, blessed the house. It was important moment for our guests. The meeting was very meaningful. It seems that moments like these are very important to form community.



Meeting of the Sisters of the Network of Nabeul.

On the 23rd May after the retreat at la Marsa with Mgr. Rault, Bishop of Sahara, all the sisters left for Nabeul. Janine, Mireille, Andree went by car with Aracely as the driver, as for Monique, Darlene and myself we took the TGM, then the metro and finally a bus to reach Nabeul after two and a half hours. Genevieve and Rose Anna came also. We were together nine of us at Nabeul for a sionian meeting. It was a very pleasant meeting with joy for being together for the day. We exchanged our views of the different countries within our network - Tunisia and Egypt following the Revolution and the efforts to build their democracy. It is a period of both hope and deception for the population. We spoke of the movement of solidarity and the moments of conscientious. We also shared on the life of our sisters of Gemenos, on the life of the Network, and of what we live in our countries. It seems that it is very important for us to meet in little groups, to exchange views and to share our richness.



Déjeuner sur la véranda



Travail sérieux de réflexion

Agnès (Nabeul)