

Visits to Monasteries and Study Trips

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In January and February various brothers and sisters spent a period in monasteries outside Italy to strengthen the bonds of friendship we have with other communities, to know more intimately monastic life in traditional monasteries, and to learn better foreign languages.

Several sisters stayed for a month in French monasteries: sr Lara at Echourgnac, sr Michela at Rivet, sr Beatrice at Blauvac, sr Barbara at Pradines. Br Matteo was for a month a guest at the Benedictine monastery of St Ottilien in Munich, to improve his German and to share a common interest in the Church in China, while br Luigi spent a month in Athens as guest of the Orthodox monastery of Petraki for a course in modern Greek. To take a course in English sr Laure spent a month and a half in Oxford; sr Sylvie was also in Oxford, to visit several Anglican communities. Sr Roberta stayed for ten days with the community in Grandchamp, Switzerland, where sr Lisa later preached a series of spiritual exercises.

As in other years, br Luciano and sr Donata participated in the meeting of novice directors of Eastern France, which this year was held at Lérins on the theme "Commitment to the Monastic Life through Vows in the Twenty-First Century". In the same period br Michele R. took a course in wheel-turning at the school for ceramicists that several other brothers attended recently and during his stay there he was also able to spend a few days in Taizé.

Others of us visited or spent short periods of retreat in Italian monasteries and communities: br Vincenzo and br Sabino stayed at the Certosa di Serra San Bruno in Calabria; sr Raffaella gave a course on "Liturgy and Iconography" at the monastery of Dumenza; br Adalberto travelled to Settignano (FI) to give a conference on spiritual fatherhood in the Russian tradition to the Community of the sons of God founded by don Divo Barsotti. Finally, br Guido and br Vincenzo went to the monastery of Praglia (PD) for the blessing of the new abbot dom Norberto Villa, while br Lino and br Michele participated at the funeral of sr Brigitte of the hermitage of Campello, with which we are bound especially through the memory of sister Maria. We would like to make her known to a wider public, so recently we have published her correspondence with father Giovanni M. Vannucci and with don Primo Mazzolari and have been listening to a reading of some of her writings during the midday office.

In these months sr Maria, br Matthias, sr Natalia, and br Rupert have taken turns in spending brief periods at our fraternity in Jerusalem, while br Edoardo, who lives there habitually, is spending several months in Bose for a period of rest.

Br Guido and br Matthias have participated in the third phase of reflection and encounter, held in Wittenberg, in preparation for the European Ecumenical Assembly, which is to take place in Sibiu in September.