



## **ASIA/HOLY LAND - Amidst conflict and difficulties, using weapons of prayer to change hearts**

Jerusalem (Agenzia Fides) – Faced with riots that flare up again to Jerusalem, before the conflict that seems to rob the Holy Land of its hopes, "our response is prayer, the invocation of the Most High, asking that He move hearts, dissolve the hatred, and make peace flourish," Fides was told by the Discalced Carmelite Sisters of the Holy Land. The nuns have four enclosed convents in the Holy Land: in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Haifa, and Nazareth, where they live their charism of "hidden presence and prayer, called to stand before Him, to pray and praise the Lord," says Sister Maria Agnese, Superior of the Monastery of Nazareth, which in 2010 celebrates its 100th anniversary of founding.

"We live our faith in the cloister, also in hiding. The situation of the Holy Land and the Universal Church is very close to our hearts," says Sister Maria Agnese to Fides. "In the Holy Land, the population has been suffering for years. Our prayer becomes more intense when the situation becomes more difficult. At these times, the Lord is present. Prayer is important because God touches the hearts of men and can soften them. Our vocation is to intercede before God, to restore peace in the Holy Land. We ask Him to listen to the cry of His people, and we pray that the people hear the voice of God."

Sister Anna Francesca, of the Monastery of Bethlehem, is the coordinator of "Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in the Holy Land," which includes the religious of the four monasteries. She tells Fides: "In the Holy Land, everyone prays: Jews, Muslims, and Christians, every community in its way. Prayer always has the power to change the heart and is a source of unity. Prayer is not useless; indeed, it becomes more important in difficult times. If we look at the conflict from the human point of view, it becomes difficult to find a solution. If you put it before God in prayer, widening their horizons to the top, everything changes, and your eyes open to love." "Thanks to prayer, there is still hope for peace and goodness to the Holy Land," she said.

The Carmelite nuns of the Holy Land are "an example of multiculturalism" and live "with great human and spiritual maturity" in the delicate situation in the Holy Land, said Fr. Saviero Cannistrà, Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites in a recent visit to the Middle East. "The current situation of conflict between Arabs and Jews is the situation today that you are called to live, living in prayer and transforming all that you are called to suffer in communion with the men and women in these countries into a loving offering," he said in his message addressed to the nuns, asking them to participate in the preparation of the 500th anniversary of the birth of Saint Teresa of Jesus (PA) (Agenzia Fides 16/3/2010)