



Carmelite Communications

Special Newsletter No. 2 covering the International Student Course

Blessed Titus Brandsma: Carmelite, Professor, Journalist and Martyr **Contemplation, the dynamic element that unifies them** International Student Course for Carmelite Friars in Simple Profession 22 July - 5 August 2018, The Netherlands - Germany

DAY 2 - 24 July: Titus Brandsma, Carmelite, Nijmegen



Morning Prayer

Sr Sanny Bruijns

Surveyed the Marian influences in Titus' formative years as well as exploring some of the ways in which Titus continued to include Mary in his Carmelite life.

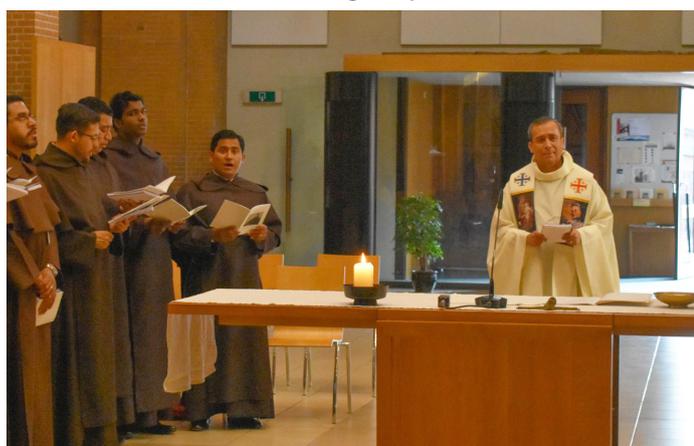
Titus (Ano) was raised in a committed and devotional family. His parents were members of the Franciscan Third Order. Daily rosary and devotion to Our Lady of Frisia of the Seven Woods, were formative experiences in Titus' childhood.

The particular Marian qualities of the Carmelite Order appealed to Titus, who decisively chose to join the Carmelites rather than the Franciscans with whom he was familiar.

While studying in Rome, Titus took an interest in the catacombs and particularly the images of the *orantes* figures whom for him represented the church with arms raised in prayer and also Mary proclaiming her Magnificat.

On his return to the Netherlands he published a regular magazine 'CarmelRozen' with the aim to foster a love of Mary, through knowledge of Mary.

In 1932 Titus, now a professor in Nijmegen,



Eucharist with Raúl

organised a conference entitled: 'Mary mother of God, mother of man,' to commemorate the 15th Centenary of Mary being given the title *Mother of God* at the Council of Ephesus in 431. The conference emphasised Mary's humanity and receptivity, exemplary to the devoted Christian.

Visiting the Carmelites and lecturing at Niagara Falls, he said that Carmelites "should obviously be other Marys". Carmelites should have Mary present in their cell and she can be called "Mary Hope of all Carmelites."

More photos on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/carmelitesAET
Words: Matthew Tonini | Images: Joseph Khoa, José Natalino Freitas

The lecture was followed by personal reflection on two questions: How do you relate to Mary? and, How do you live the marian dimension of the Carmelite Charism?

Following personal reflection time the brothers gathered in small groups to continue the reflection on the role of Mary in the life of the Carmelite.



Sr Sanny Bruijns



Francisco's small group

SESSION 2: 'O Jesus, when I gaze on You' Lecture



Fr Kees Waaijman led the participants through an analysis of Titus' poem written while imprisoned in Scheveningen, 1942, of which there were two manuscripts smuggled out of the prison.

Kees' commentary article can be found at <https://titusbrandsmateksten.nl/o-jesus-when-i-gaze-on-you/>

Analysis and reflection on the text led into a discussion of Titus' concept of a 'special friend' and 'the cell' in Carmelite spirituality. A special friend being one who cares about the spiritual journey

seeking God. The discussion also touched on how Titus' prison cell became a for him a Carmelite cell and revealed the inner cell that a Carmelite always seeks to dwell in.

There was personal reflection and small group sharing on : 1) How can my Carmelite cell help me to discover my true self? and 2) What in your cell is essential for you?

The day concluded with Evening Prayer Dinner and recreation.



José & Matthew in small group

Other Comments

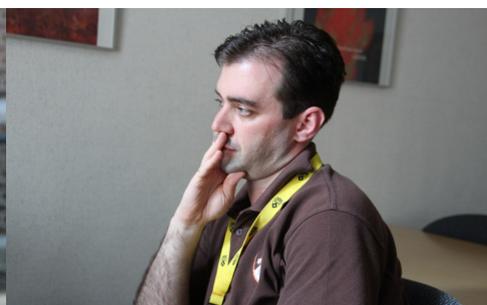
There is a reflective nature to the timetable, giving space to reflect on, take in and consider how Titus' example enters into our lives as young Carmelites today.



Francisco



José



Matthew

DAY THREE - 25 July 2018: Vsit to Megen, Oss and Boxmeer

Megen

Today we began the first part of following in the footsteps of the young Titus, Anno Sjoerd Brandsma. We boarded a bus in Nijmegen and travelled half an hour to Megen, where Titus boarded and attended school between 1892-1898. This Minor Seminary was run by the Franciscans. Titus would have traveled from his home farm in Friesland (north of the Netherlands) more than 10 hours to Megen.

Our tour guide moved to Megen 43 years ago and renovated the then derelict boarding houses where Titus would have lived during his education in Megen. The house is now a private residence with wild cottage garden behind, where one of the boarding houses was demolished.

The school or gymnasium building, about 100m away from the boarding houses now serves the town as a community centre. The old school chapel has been converted into a theatre with a stage and other rooms are available as artist studios. The building was and is called the *Acropolis* because the building sits on the highest point in Megen (something of a joke since the town itself is flat and the site is only centimetres higher!).



The Acropolis boarding house & Minor Seminary



Recreation in the Minor Seminary

Next Stop Oss

Next we visited Oss to see the statue of the Sacred Heart which Titus had been involved in designing. It was originally installed in the middle of the town, but was moved in 1967. There is also a high school in Oss founded by Titus and commemorates him with its name, statue and approach to education. Titus had a nephew who was a Carmelite and may have been an influence in Titus choosing to be a Carmelite.

Our morning tea and lunch stop was at Titus Brandsma Parish. The church of Titus Brandsma Parish (formerly St Joseph's) was built in 1990. Fr Tom O.Carm (who joined the Order in 1967) welcomed us and gave us an introduction on Titus in Oss. Fr Tom stressed Titus' belief that 'a spiritually healthy society does not exist without a healthy religion.'

Sanny presented a talk on Titus' life that had been compiled by a local Lay Carmelite, Johan.

Titus lived as a student friar studying theology and was ordained in 1905 (Oss 1903-1906). He returned to Oss following his doctorate studies in Rome in



Titus Brandsma Parish, Oss



1909 and become philosophy professor for two Carmelite students (plenty of time for social activities and personal studies). He started a magazine called *Carmelrozen* in 1912. Titus founded a library for the development of Oss and became chief editor of the local newspaper, breathing new life into it. He often made social commentary. He supported the Catholic social action group with articles in the paper for crowd funding of the Sacred Heart sculpture that was installed in the centre of the town and relocated in 1967. He remained in Oss until 1927.

In 2013 the high school produced a musical in honour of Titus the founder of the school (90 years since the founding of the high school). The Carmelites celebrated 125 years in Oss 1890-2015) in 2015. In the same year Titus was made an honorary citizen of the city of Oss.

Our midday prayer in the Titus Brandsma Parish Church reflected the simple style of prayer used in

On to Boxmeer

the Carmelite Convent founded in 1653 by the Belgian Carmelites. It is where Titus Brandsma did his Novitiate. We had afternoon tea and later dinner in the refectory.

The visit to Boxmeer included tours of the house, the archives and library and the Church.

During our visit to the archives, Sr Susanna, the Provincial Archivist, showed us some key items of the collection. The printed book in which Titus wrote his biography of Teresa's life between the lines of the already printed text, the suit he was arrested in and his suitcase.



Student friars from the Asian Region

the Nijmegen community, with readings taken from Titus Brandsma's *Carmelite Mysticism*, reflecting on the meanings of Elijah's double spirit.

The lay Carmelites of the parish put on a soup and sandwiches spread for us before a group photo.

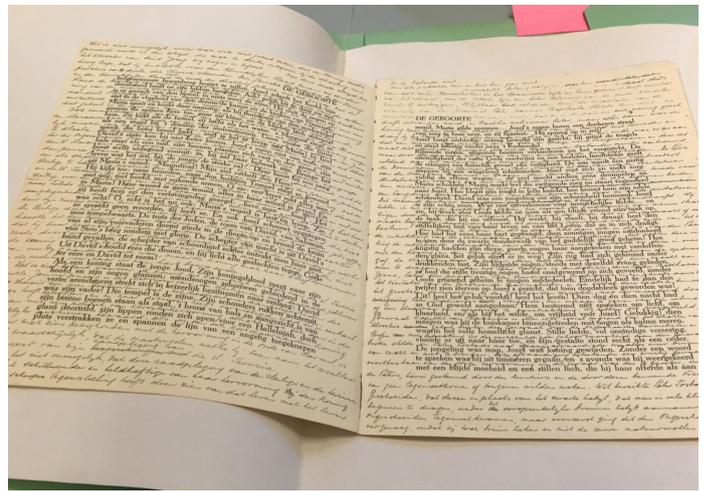
Fr Falco Thuis, former prior general, presided at an evening Eucharist in the Boxmeer Church and preached on Lk 6:27-36 "Love your enemies, be good to those who persecute you..." He noted that Titus had began his life in his cell at Boxmeer and would end his life in a very different cell, and yet living his Carmelite life had made him able to live out the Gospel teaching of Jesus in the face of profound hatred.

While much could be said of the visit to Boxmeer, the real value has been in the experience of visiting the place where Titus had been, listening to the stories retold and walking in his footsteps. It makes him real and human.





Dutch Carmelite Institute at Boxmeer



Titus' biography of St Theresa



Francisco with Titus' suitcase



Student friars with the Archivist



Quinn Connors with Falco



Dining Room

