

Precarious situation of the 800 monasteries in Spain



In Spain, a cloistered monastery is closed every month, mainly due to the advanced age of the nuns and economic difficulties. The lack of young vocations and the lack of income precipitate closures and force some communities to ask for help from food banks, according to a report prepared by Vida Nueva magazine.

Thus, the precarious situation of the 800 monasteries in Spain makes two-thirds of them have an uncertain future. However, in the face of these facts, contrary examples emerge such as the monastery of La Aguilera (Aranda de Duero, Burgos), belonging to the Institute Iesu Communio, which has more than 200 young nuns”

For Fr Eleuterio López, Claretian missionary, director of Claune, the Pontifical Institute dedicated to solving the material and formative deficiencies of the Spanish convents," the situation of many female convents is very alarming and worrying. “ “There is a lack of vocations and many communities are being suppressed, at least more than one a month in Spain," he said.

On the occasion of the Day of Consecrated Life, which the Catholic Church celebrates on February 2, Vida magazine Nueva has produced a report that reveals that two-thirds of the 800 monasteries in Spain "would be in a position to be closed in the near future." The motive, according to the magazine, is that donations have fallen and the work the nuns traditionally did - such as baking - are no longer enough to cover costs, to rehabilitate the historic monasteries and to face social security contributions.

"In fact, there are convents that do not reach the gross 100 euros per month of income and have been forced to resort to food banks to eat, "says the publication." And this is not an exceptional case, "explains Father Eleuterio, whose organization destined in 2016 half a million euros to help fifty communities in difficulty. An example of this "vocational winter" is the monastery of the Capuchin nuns of San Fernando town, in Cadiz, which in recent days has had to close and its last four sisters, all in their eighties, to be transferred to a different place.

However in spite of this crisis, Spain also witnesses a flowering of new contemplative communities that have seen the cloisters of the convents of young sap, "says the magazine. This is the case of the more than 200 religious belonging to the institute Iesu Communio - with convents in Lerma and La Aguilera (Burgos) - or the Samaritan Carmelites of the Sacred Heart - present in Valladolid and Valdediós (Asturias).