

# A Fortnight Before Christmas

by Mark Lederhos

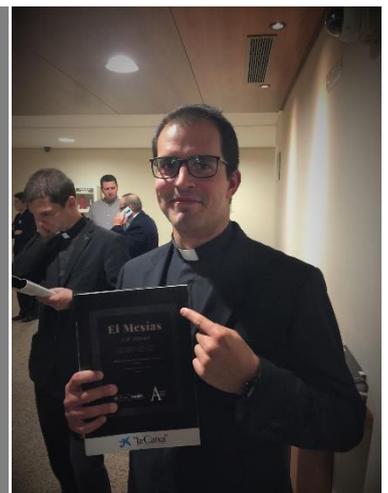
12/11 – 12/22

A fortnight (two weeks) before Christmas the community of the formation house had the opportunity to go to see a performance of *Handel's Messiah* at Madrid's National Auditorium of Music. The three-part performance lasted about two hours and was comprised of 53 movements or different songs. The first part told about the birth of Christ; the second part was about His passion, death, and resurrection; and the third part about His promise of eternal life and triumph over original sin. Every song was comprised of a quote from the bible that was sung either by a soloist or by the entire choir. It was also accompanied by an orchestra. The performance was absolutely incredible. Though it lasted two hours, every song sounded different and told its own story. The fact that it was in English also made it easier for the Americans to pay attention. It was amazing how the music came alive and how with just a few words from the bible, Handel was able to explain so much. As the Hallelu jah Chorus was sung everyone in the theater was on the edge of their seats as the entire chorus closed the second part of the Messiah.



A view of Handel's Messiah during the performance

Br. Javier Carmena proudly posing with a program of "El Mesías" as it was titled in Spanish



Since Christmas was approaching us that also meant that the end of the year was as well. Which means one thing: Finals... well sort of. Navigare this year is attending the Ecclesiastical University of San Damaso with the rest of the Disciple brothers. We are taking 7 classes this year: Introduction to Christianity, Introduction to Sacred Scripture, Latin, Logic, Philosophical Anthropology, History of Philosophy, and a Texts class. Most of our finals for the first semester, however, aren't until February. We did still have a final in both Latin and History of Philosophy before Christmas break.



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After classes ended for Christmas break, we traveled to Villaescusa where the Disciple's motherhouse is located. On December 22nd, Navigare took a big step in the course of our year in Spain by making the rite of protagonism. This means that we will take initiative in the tasks that we are given during the year and refuse to be spectators. The prayer we recited translated into English is "Holy Mother Mary, you who were chosen by God to be the mother of his Son, and who in the Annunciation trusted Him with your yes; help me to assume the missions with which He entrusts me with protagonism, serving with generosity like His, giving myself up like Him, allowing myself to be worked by Him. Amen"