

Daily log
CIB Symposium 2010
Sister Nancy Bauer, OSB
Entry: September 11, 2010

Buon giorno. Day 4 of the Symposium was Italian Day and so the Italian-speaking Sisters had their turn in the liturgical spotlight. The Camaldolese Benedictine Sisters of Monastero Sant'Antonio Abate, which is located just down the road (and hill) from Sant'Anselmo, led us in song, along with Symposium participants from other monasteries in Italy.

We heard more thoughts on the theme of hope, this time from a panel of four participants. They were Mother Angela Strobel, prioress general of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing; Mother Agnes Le Thi To Huong, Monastère des Bénédictines Sainte Marie, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Mother Maria Isabel Guiroy, Monasterio Nuestra Señora del Paraná, Entre Rios, Paraná, Argentina; and Mother Henriette Wêndbala Kalmogo, Notre-Dame de Koubir, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

The panelists responded to questions they received in advance. One question, in particular, captured their attention. Every Benedictine, at the time of profession, chants the following prayer: "Uphold me, O God, as you have promised and I shall live; do not disappoint me in my hope." The panelists were asked to recall their hopes at the time of their profession and reflect on whether those hopes have been fulfilled. Each panelist affirmed that, even though she has encountered difficulties in her religious life, she has not been disappointed because God has been with her through it all. In the words of Mother Angela, "There is a certainty of faith in God's love." Someone summarized the panelists' comments as follows: hope does not deceive us, but it does surprise us.

On Day 4, we also heard from Abbot Primate Notker Wolf. He pointed out that women's Benedictine communities are more pluralistic than the men's and he urged us to continue on the path of growing unity through participation in the CIB. He also urged greater collaboration between monasteries, especially as some become too small to rely solely on their own resources.

The day's sessions concluded with some words from the members of the CIB Administrative Council who were present: Sister Judith Ann Heble, CIB moderator and a Benedictine from the United States; Sister Zoë Davis from England; Sister Clare Condon, Australia; and Mother Theodora Ntuli, South Africa. These Sisters spoke favorably of their experience as councilors. The CIB Conference will elect a moderator and councilors on Thursday, September 16, the day after the Symposium ends.