



Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum

www.benedictines-cib.org

November, 2012

CIB Conference Meeting

September 9-15, 2012 Valledacqua, Italy



The 2012 CIB Conference Meeting was held in Valledacqua, Italy from September 12-15 followed by attendance at the Congress of Abbots at Sant'Anselmo in Rome from September 17-25. One of the highlights of the Conference Meeting was spending a day with 20 Italian Abbesses to discuss current issues facing women religious throughout the world. A lengthy meeting agenda was covered along with a presentation by AIM International and a discussion with the Abbot Primate.

Those attending both meetings included: S. Judith Ann Heble, Moderator; Abbot Primate Notker Wolf; M. Ester Stucchi, Region 1; M.M. Jesús Sáez de Vicuña, Region 2; M. Thérèse-Marie Dupagne, Region 5; M. Franziska Lukas, Region 6; S. Christine Vladimiroff, S. Anne Shephard and M. Isabelle Thouin, Region 9; M. Marianna Pinto, Region 10; M. Martha Lúcia Riberio Teixeira, Region 11; M. Maria Cristina Moroni, Region 12; S. Angela Choi, Region 13; M. M. Araceli

Escurzon, Region 14; M. Henriette Wéndbala Kalmogo, Region 17; M. Magdalena Shetunyenga, Region 18; M. Metilda George, Region 19; M. Hannah Van Quakebeke, Congregation Regina Apostolorum.

Others who attended the Conference Meeting included: M. Michela Porcellato, Region 1; M.M. Blanca Blanco Coiradas, Region 2; M. Fabienne Hyon and S. Marie-Caroline Lecouffe, Region 3; M. Zoë Davis, Region 4; M. Martyna Wysocka, Region 7; M. M. Margarita Maillot, Region 12; S. Mary John Mananzan, Region 14; S. Rosann Ocken, Region 16. Guests included M. Gian Paolo Pederzoli; S. Gisela Happ, and S. Placid Dolores, AIM International; S. Ester Strus and S. Maria Immacolata Tapia, translators.

In addition, M. Andrea Savage, Region 4 and S. Clare Condon, Region 15, Oceania, represented their Regions at the Congress of Abbots.





ITALIAN ABBESSES ATTEND CIB CONFERENCE MEETING

On September 13 excitement filled the Hotel Valledacqua as 20 Italian Abbesses joined the CIB Delegates and guests for shared discussions and the celebration of the Eucharist presided by Abbot Primate Notker Wolf. S. Judith Ann Heble, CIB Moderator, warmly welcomed the guests and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to get to know each other. During the table discussions, each Delegate and Abbess shared pictures of their monastery, oratory, and refectory and spoke about their community. They talked about their hopes and concerns both now and in the future. Many identified common issues facing monastics throughout the world. The day ended with a festive celebration at pranzo where all enjoyed a wonderful meal and time to share friendship. As the Abbesses prepared for their journey home, all present experienced feelings of solidarity, authenticity and reverence, another step forward toward the CIB Goals, 2010-2014.

2010 CIB SYMPOSIUM STAFF REUNION

NEW ITALIAN ABBESSES, M. SOPHIA GATAHI, SECRETARIAT, M
ESTER STUCCHI, TRANSLATOR AND
S. MARY JANE VERGOTZ, COORDINATOR



As the Abbesses prepared for their journey home, all present experienced feelings of *solidarity, authenticity and reverence*, another step forward toward the CIB Goals, 2010-2014.

SAN MARCO MONASTERY WELCOME THE CIB



The Benedictine Nuns at San Marco Monastery, Offida, Italy hosted the CIB Delegates for the celebration of the Eucharist and dinner on September 15. The Delegates were welcomed by M. Benedetta D'Angelo, Abbess, and her community. We learned about the history of the monastery that was founded in 1634 and its current plan to found a new monastery in the country of Georgia.

Language was not a barrier to their expression of Benedictine hospitality. M. Benedetta and her community shared the Bread and Wine at the Eucharist followed by an Italian banquet that filled both the body and the soul. Their graciousness and care was felt throughout the visit especially when it was time to leave laden with gifts. The CIB was blessed by our visit with the Benedictines at San Marco. PAX



S. M. LUZ LOZIER AND M.M. CRISTINA MORONI ENJOY THE
CELEBRATION WITH THE SAN MARCO COMMUNITY(TOP LEFT TO RIGHT)



FIRSTTIME CONFERENCE ATTENDEES: INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

It is difficult to find the right words to word my first CIB-experience in Valledacqua in this September 2012. The targets of solidarity and authenticity we were allowed during the meeting to personally experience. It gives courage to discover the various forms of Benedictine life in all those different cultures and to see that at the same time all these expressions have the same common ground: Christ, our deepest source of life. In the 19 regions so many different languages are spoken but we have no problems during the meeting to share at a deep level of our human and religious life. It is really a wonderful experience that I would like to wish everyone. Thanks to God for all of my fellow Benedictine sisters who I might meet.



S. HANNAH VAN QUAKEBEKE,
CO-OPTED SUBSTITUTE, CONGREGATION REGINA APOSTOLARUM



S. ROSANN OCKEN, DELEGATE
REGION 16 EAST AFRICA

My first experience of the CIB was gently nested in the serene, mountainous terrain north of Rome. The Camaldolese community of San Benedetto at Valledacqua “held us” in their rich prayer and generous hospitality. Personally engaging with outstanding Benedictine women from around the world over the span of four days gave me a much broader awareness of the diversity and richness of our world-wide Benedictine family. I was particularly amazed to hear of the rich contemplative Benedictine tradition very much alive in Europe.

It is difficult to put into words, but I am broadened and changed through this experience. The 2010-2014 goals of the CIB, “solidarity, authenticity and reverence” have entirely new energy within me because they are no longer beautiful “words” but are a commitment we share with one another.

But, this new insight also requires a new response. I have more questions than answers, wondering how we can share this unity, hope and joy with others, particularly, with the sisters in my region.

I am grateful to the CIB solidarity fund, which makes our East African participation possible.

United...yes truly united...in solidarity, authenticity and reverence.



CONGRESS OF ABBOTS SANT' ANSELMO SEPTEMBER 17-25, 2012

Every four years the Congress of Abbots meets at Sant'Anselmo in Rome. The CIB was represented at the Congress by 19 Delegates who joined 235 Abbots and representatives from the Orthodox and Anglican traditions. During the Congress, keynote speakers included Professor Michael Hochschild who addressed the viability of Benedictine monasteries based on an international research project and well respected author, Father

Michael Casey OCSO, who shared his insights on autonomy and monastic life. Sister Judith Ann Heble, CIB Moderator, presented a report on the CIB and led a workshop entitled "The Relationship of OSB Men and Women. Time was devoted to reports by the Abbot Primate, the Commission for Sant' Anselmo, the State of the College, AIM, MID/DIM, and the Benedictine Commission on China to name a few.

The group attended an audience with Pope Benedict XVI and had the opportunity to select one of four pilgrimages to Norcia, Subiaco, Montecassino or Camaldoli where the community was celebrating its 1000th anniversary. On September 21st Abbot Primate Notker Wolf was reelected for another 4 year term.

The bonds of *communio* were strengthened within the Benedictine family of men and women during this time together. Conversation and laughter filled the air during meals, break times and excursions. An openness to and sense of gratitude for each other were apparent throughout the meetings and ...the discussion. The actions kept alive our

***Benedictine Motto:******so that in all things God may be glorified.***

(1Pet 4:11)

ABBOT PRIMATE NOTKER WOLF



On September 21, 2012 Abbot Primate Notker Wolf was re-elected for a four year term by 235 members of the Congress of Abbots. Prior to his election as Abbot Primate in 2000, Abbot Notker served as Archabbot of St Ottilien Archabbey in Bavaria and as President of the Ottilien Congregation.



CIB DELEGATES ATTEND
ABBOT PRIMATE INSTALLATION LITURGY



DELEGATE REFLECTIONS ON CIB MEETINGS AND THE CONGRESS OF ABBOTS



M. ARACELLI ESCURZON, S. GISELA HAPP AND
S. ANNE SHEPARD (LEFT TO RIGHT)

The 2012 CIB meeting was held in Valledacqua at the Hotel Ristorante Monastero, a converted Benedictine monastery. The conference center is couched in the Sibillini mountain of Italy, located 3 1/2 hour drive northeast of Rome. The site is breathtakingly beautiful with fruit trees, olive trees, flowers and hills covered with chestnut and oak trees.

During the Conference Meeting we were placed at tables reflecting the diversity of the Delegates as well as with sisters speaking the same language. Our small group discussions were filled with enthusiasm and energy as we shared our thoughts and ideas from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

The Abbot Primate spoke to us and posed the question, "How do we cope with our situation today?" The good old days will not return. Were some monasteries called to exist for a certain time and place? He suggests that we must rekindle our passion for monastic life and beware of being too comfortable. He also challenged us to stay in solidarity with one another, a stance which is in stark contrast to being left alone.

Sister Gisela Happ, AIM International, gave a report on their current activities and plans. She accented that as the needs for funding increase,

the international board believes that the monies ought to be used for formation programs in new monasteries. There is also a need for funding for higher education. The AIM Board is scaling back the budget to reflect a somewhat depleted economy. The stalwart years for funding were 2005 and 2006 although in the first decade of this century, AIM has distributed over 10,000,000 Euros, ten times that of the decade of the 80's.

The Congress of Abbots had as a major focus, the election of the abbot primate. Additionally there were major presentations. "The Aims of the Congress" was presented by Abbot Giuseppe Casetta, Abbot General of the Vallebrosian Congregation. He focused on the significance of the Second Vatican Council and the Emmaus story of the disciples on their way to Jerusalem. He emphasized the essential qualities of listening and communicating, indicating that our times and technology have a tendency to diminish both possibilities.

The tone of his comments are captured in his introductory remarks: "It is no longer the time for adjustments, but it is necessary to have the courage to face changes, sometimes painful, but necessary...Our faith has nothing to fear from a serious commitment because we have a rich patrimony and an extraordinary creative God, because-as the American historian Jaroslav Jan Pelikan stated- *the tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.*

We listened to a report from a German sociologist, Michael Hochschild, who studied eight Benedictine monasteries of men in Germany, Austria and Hungary. In his research paper, "Benedictines Between Continuity and Change", Hochschild noted the worrisome tendency for the newer members to be more interested in their



DELEGATE REFLECTIONS CONTINUED

work or ministry than coming to the Opus Dei, the Eucharist, the common table and taking time for *lectio*. When *lectio* is low on the list of priorities of the monks then the future is in real jeopardy. Our struggle for balance is so very universal. Especially helpful was the summary of his 10 theses: Individualism is rife in monasteries; the demands for attention of the friends of the monastery ought to be on the periphery not the center of attention; monks are too focused on their own success; monasteries that have an outward focus will last.

Abbot Primate was reelected and the place seemed very much at peace.



M. M. JESUS SAEZ DE VICUNA, S. CHRISTINE VLADIMIROFF,
M. MICHELA PORCELLATO AND M. MARGARITA MAILLOT
(LEFT TO RIGHT)

2013 BRAZIL HERE WE COME

M. MARTHA LUCIA
RIBERIO TEIXEIRA
PREPARES FOR 2013 CIB
CONFERENCE IN
BRAZIL, M. THERESE-
MARIE DUPAGNE AND
S. ROSANN OCKEN
ANTICIPATE THE
MEETINGS (LEFT TO RIGHT)



Calendar

2013

January

England

January 15-23

Meeting of the CIB Administrative Council

September

Brazil

September 2

Arrival of CIB Administrative Council

September 3

Arrival of CIB Conference Delegates

Meeting of CIB Administrative Council

September 4,6,8

Meeting of the CIB Conference

September 15 or 16

Departures

2014

January

Rome

January 14-16

Meeting of the CIB Administrative Council &
Symposium planners

September Sant'Anselmo, Rome

September 3-6

Arrival of Staff & Symposium
Planning Committee

September 7

Arrival of CIB Administrative Council
First arrivals of Symposium participants

September 8

Meeting of CIB Administrative Council
Arrival of Symposium Participants

September 9

Meeting of CIB Conference
Optional Trip to Montecassino & Subiaco

September 10-17

CIB Symposium

September 18

Morning – Meeting of CIB Conference
Afternoon – Meeting of CIB Admin.
Council

September 19

Departure of CIB Administrative Council
and Conference

September 20

Departure of Symposium
Planning Committee