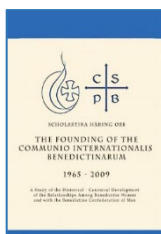


**ISSUE 16  
PENTECOST 2021**

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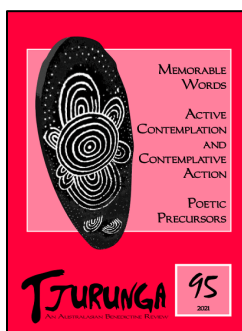
**A Message from the CIB Moderator**

Pentecost is a very good image for gatherings of our CIB organization. **The miracle of Pentecost is that all gathered heard the Good News in their own language, despite the fact that there were many nationalities and foreigners present.** I'm sorry I missed my mark to have this newsletter in your Inbox by Pentecost Sunday!

Who knew that we would be going through another Lent and Easter season during a worldwide pandemic of proportions never imagined?! There was a matter of waiting on a few regions who requested extensions in sending in their response and also I have been traveling a lot in my role as president of my own monastic congregation. Many elections have been held this spring, after postponing several in 2020.

Here in this newsletter we publish the responses of various CIB regions around the world to the questions of either: "Tell us about your experience of implementing *Cor orans*" or "What are the benefits and/or disadvantages of being part of a monastic congregation or federation?" Those regions who responded were most generous with their time – especially generous were the Delegates who worked hard to summarize the responses from the monasteries in their region and make it short enough to fit in this newsletter. Thank you to one and all!

The CIB Administrative Council and I are still working on putting together the agenda and schedule for our upcoming Conference of Delegates meeting from September 4-7, 2021. We look forward to seeing all of you Delegates and Substitutes then which will be held entirely online using the Zoom format. We recognize that the coronavirus is still not under control and its status is unstable in parts of the world. The availability of the COVID-19 vaccine is uneven throughout the world, which is sad. So we will definitely meet, as there is much to discuss, but it will be online. It's regrettable that we cannot meet in person this year, as we had hoped to have a day session with the Synod of Abbot Presidents who will be meeting in Rome in September.



There is very good news to share about Sister Scholastika Häring's important book on the history of the CIB. As you know, the original was published in German, and then an English translation\* was published. In the most recent issue of [Tjurunga](#), the monastic journal of Australia and New Zealand, Sister Sonia Wagner of the Good Samaritan congregation, wrote a wonderful book review of Scholastika's book in English translation. "The Founding of the *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* – 1965-2009: A Review," Sonia Wagner, SGS, [Tjurunga](#) 95/2021, pp. 82-86.

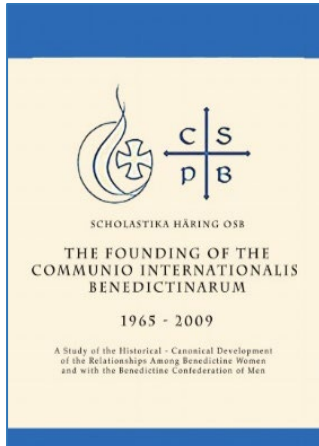
I recommend this review for your reading.

We are still awaiting a Spanish translation that is in progress. And we would love for there to be a French translation, too, if someone is willing to volunteer to do that work. Other translations would also be welcome! Please let me know if you are interested in working on a translation so that this excellent resource by one of our own will become more widely read and understood.

May this Ordinary Time of the liturgical year bring more ordinary, less stressful and fearful, times to our world. No matter what, let us remain united in our monastic way of life, always praying for each other's good and for the good of our Church and our world.



Lynn McKenzie, OSB (Region 9, USA)



\*To order a copy of the English translation of Scholastika Häring's book on the history of the CIB, see [The Founding of the Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum \(lulu.com\)](https://www.lulu.com/en-us/title/9781601764444). The cost is \$20 US Dollars plus shipping.

## Next meeting of CIB Conference of Delegates 4-7 Sept 2021

Virtual meeting via Zoom

Detailed Agenda & Times each day to be announced later this summer.

**ALL Delegates & Substitutes are urged to attend this important meeting.**  
**Please make plans to be in the best location possible for a good internet connection that will be necessary to stream video.**



CIB Administrative Council meeting via Zoom January 2021

## REGION 1 Italy & Malta

I answer the question about “Cor Orans” because as Region 1 we are far from the constitution of a Congregation... even if I believe it is necessary for the survival and development of female monasticism! We need more autonomy from bishops.

“Cor Orans” offers us an intermediate step probably towards a Congregation by passing through a more structured and empowered Federation. This choice of Sacra Congregazione allows monasteries with reduced numbers (equal to or less than 5 members) to be able to affiliate and not “die” alone.

The Federation proposed by “Cor Orans” is an intermediate, gradual step for monasteries to develop and involve together the idea of a Congregation, that would make us more independent with respect to bishops, that sometimes don't understand us and are unable to make choices for the sake of Benedictine life and same monastery; unfortunately we had experiences of business management rather than spiritual and human towards our communities.

The Picena Federation received “Con Orans” with joy, like a gift from God and they managed to update the Statutes in short time.

The Umbrian Federation is hesitant in front of some points, for example: the loss of “*sui iuris*” with the achievement of 5 members, this has caused the phobia of numbers and has alarmed even more

about the problem of vocations and average age of the Community. Another problem could be caused by the maintenance of legal representation at the monastery that has become dependent (we had the unfortunately a negative experience of the interference of relatives or other negative people in a monastery that has become fragile).

Also the double obedience to the Mother President and to the bishop is not very clear. When it comes to intervening in the concrete reality the Mother President has no powers but only duties. A positive thing could be the affiliation of the monastery that loses its “*sui iuris*” status by reaching 5 members, to the Federation, but in concrete reality, how does help this monastery?

The other Federations have also updated the Statutes. The monasteries that were isolated also have been accepted in the various existing Federations. The creation of a Congregation was only given to the community of Rosano.

Only by living day by day in the situations that arise could we discover the richness and poverty of this document, which will allow us to propose along the way a draft of a document that more closely reflects our monastic life.

Although the specification of “monastic life” was inserted for the first time in the documents, the term monastic still seems confused with contemplative or cloistered life, this is an indication we need specific studies in this regard.



## **Region 13 – Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Taiwan**

### **Reflection on the experience of belonging to an international Congregation**

#### **Olivetian Benedictine sisters of Busan, South Korea**

It has been acknowledged as an independent priory of pontifical right by the Propaganda Fide that is united in the Holy Cross Federation. It is the juridical right to retain autonomy in the life of the community and the participation in the various missionary activities from the local church that counts most among many other benefits.

#### **Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing, Daegu Priory, S. Korea and**

#### **Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing, Seoul Priory, S. Korea**

The following are the benefits and the difficulties;

1. As an International Congregation with a worldwide network of monastic sisterhood and missionary solidarity, the inter-priory sharing helps secure personnel and financial resources in cooperation with the Generalate; it helps to maintain continuity and steadfastness in the participation in the mission of the church, focusing on the proclamation of the Word of God, commitment to the social justice and peace, charitable activities for the poor and disabled, education and health care. Taking care of our own aging communities abroad is one of the important tasks.
2. Opportunities to participate in the international gathering such as renewal and formative programs or meetings offered at the Congregational level give a fresh impetus to develop in intercultural understanding. It not only opens horizon but also provides cultural and spiritual enrichment in this time of globalization and migration.
3. In searching and discerning the vision of the future, internationality of the Congregation brings a new but more mature perspective to the mission, despite the social and cultural difference of individual regions and nations.
4. Instead, however, it is not easy for the Generalate to keep pace with the uncertainty of the time and the rapidly changing world situation. Thus, it can often overlook a lot of cultural, social background of the person or issue concerned in its decision making.
5. The responsibility of the Generalate, as a control tower of the Congregation is so huge that it is not easy to find good dynamic and spiritual leaders to carry out such heavy tasks.
6. Language barrier is one of contributing factors in creating difficulty, especially for non-English speaking nationals, it hinders full participation in various occasions.
7. At times approval of the plans or projects proposed by priories is given after its time-consuming procedure and a lot of required documentation.

In conclusion, every foundation of religious community was built on the blood, toil, sweat and tears of those foremother missionaries who suffered tremendously, even enduring the death and imprisonment for years. We are deeply indebted to them for their faith and love for God. In the same way, why should we not help other communities in need? Today most of the religious communities live with the problem of aging and lack of vocation. Inter-priory sharing at the Congregational level could be one of the available options to embrace such difficult situation. The benefits and difficulties of belonging to an international congregation reflect, in practice, two sides of the same coin; the one does not progress without the other. Despite the difficulties in adjusting to the reality we are still grateful to be a part of an international congregation.

Sr. Lioba Yang osb (substitute / region 13)

*\* Please note that regrettably, no information was given by Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam though we tried to contact them through e-mail.*

## *Region 7: Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine*

### Where are we with Cor orans?

The *Cor Orans* instruction is addressed to nuns, so the Benedictine Sisters, recognizing that it does not directly apply to them, have not undertaken a reflection on the document. Therefore, the report of our region is limited to nuns only.

Membership in a federation or congregation, required by the instruction, brought with it the necessity of major or minor changes depending on the situation of individual communities. Obviously, the pandemic hinders and slows down the work, limiting the possibilities of meetings and exchanges of opinions.

The **Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, associating 9 monasteries of Benedictine nuns in Poland, has existed since 1933. Thus, the organizational form does not change, but it is necessary to adapt the proprietary law to *Cor Orans*. The nuns reflected in the communities, but at the level of the congregation, work has not yet started.

Established in 1962, the **Polish Federation of Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** brings together 3 monasteries. After years of experience, the Federation's communities have noticed the need not only for a structure of communication and fellowship among them, but also for a structure of authority which would enable the President to provide real and concrete assistance to individual communities. Since the Federation faces the necessity of adapting its statutes to the new norms, the nuns decided that the time had come to transform the Federation into a monastic Congregation, which was supported by all the communities. This is in fact a return to the 17th century tradition when the monasteries of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament formed a congregation.

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life was very positive about this project. According to the indications received from Vatican concerning reorganization of the structure of the Institute, i.e. transformation of the federation into the Polish Congregation of Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, work began on the drafting of new Constitutions, consisting of general norms, declarations to the Rule and statutes of the Congregation. Currently, the work on the draft of the Congregation Statutes has been completed and the revision of the Declaration to the Rule has been undertaken. This work will be continued during subsequent meetings of the

Federation Council and then the developed documents will be discussed and voted on by the communities.

**Polish Camaldolese nuns** (1 monastery and 1 dependent house) currently belong to the Italian congregation of Camaldoli.

Until recently, the Abbey of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Zhytomyr was the only convent of Benedictine nuns in **Ukraine**. On March 19, in the village of Solonka near Lviv, during Mass on the feast of St. Joseph, the consecration of St. Benedict's church and St. Joseph's monastery took place. Three nuns from Zhytomyr settled there. Currently both monasteries belong to the Benedictine Congregation of the Annunciation, and the new foundation, supported by 4 brothers from Polish abbeys, also became the beginning of the first Benedictine monks' monastery in Ukraine.

The Benedictine nuns of Kaunas, **Lithuania**, decided to join the newly formed European Benedictine congregation.

#### Cooperation between religious orders.

In connection with *Cor orans*, similar work as the Benedictines must also be undertaken by nuns of other orders. The conference of superiors of women's contemplative monasteries in Poland is a forum where representatives of monastic communities meet, exchange experiences and mutually support each other. The last meeting of the council of this conference, which took place at the Camaldolese monastery in Zloczew this March, made us realize how many legal problems we have to face. In particular, the "legal recognition also in the civil sphere" required by *Cor Orans* (CO 94) poses a problem, because according to Polish law a monastic federation/congregation cannot obtain legal personality. The next plenary meeting of the Conference, planned for July, with the cooperation of lawyers and canonists, will try to deal with this problem.

Blandyna Michniewicz, OSBap



## **Region 5 Benelux**

In our region, several monasteries are already in a congregation or a federation. Regina Apostolorum congregation has already adjusted its constitutions and obtained approval from Rome. The Federation of the Blessed Sacrament has started the work of adapting the constitutions, but the corona crisis has interrupted the work.

Four monasteries in the region are engaged in the project of building a new congregation, (see note on the European Benedictine Congregation of the Resurrection), with the real hope to be a witness of unity in a world so divided.

For some elderly communities, few in number, no change is envisaged, since they have already "organised" the care of their old age as well as possible, while preserving their life of prayer, and have also planned the transmission of their place.



**Here are some testimonies about the experience of living in a congregation:**

CONGREGATIE 'BENEDICTINESSEN VAN SCHOTENHOF STICHTING 'VITA ET PAX'

(vernieuwde Constituties door Rome goedgekeurd op 11 juli 1994)

geassocieerd met de CONGREGATIO SANCTAE MARIAE MONTIS OLIVETI

Schotenhof has had many happy experiences as a mother house, through the enriching international cooperation in a congregational context with the other convents founded by Schotenhof abroad. We are like a family, we support and encourage each other in our joys and sorrows, and we cherish the precious uniqueness that we are able to experience.

### **Congregation of Regina Apostolorum: testimony of the community of Loppem**

Our congregation has its roots in the same root - Bethany, founded in 1921. This means that we have grown together.

It is a great richness to live in a congregation:

- The missionary spirit opens us up...
- With the monthly chronicles we exchange news and get to know the sisters and the communities, even if we have not visited them...
- It is like a big fraternal family where sorrows and joys are shared...
- There is the possibility of mutual help from individuals or via Coresol (with modest finances, but to help in an emergency)...
- Experiences of monastic life in a community of the Congregation that lives in a completely different context...

Difficulties:

- Lack of vocations and therefore lack of people to help our aging communities...
- Distance and therefore expensive and long journey...
- The challenge of the difference in cultures...

With all the greetings of the Benedictines of the Benelux!

## Region 5, cont.

### ***In French:***

Dans notre région, plusieurs monastères sont déjà en congrégation ou fédération. La congrégation Reine des Apôtres a déjà ajusté ses constitutions et obtenu l'approbation de Rome. La fédération du St Sacrement a commencé le travail d'adaptation des constitutions, mais la crise corona a interrompu les travaux.

4 monastères de la région sont engagés dans le projet d'édification d'une nouvelle congrégation, (cf la note sur la congrégation bénédictine européenne de la Résurrection), avec l'espoir réel de témoigner de l'unité, dans un monde si divisé.

Quelques communautés âgées, peu nombreuses, aucun changement n'est envisagé, vu qu'elles ont déjà « organisé » au mieux le soin de leur grand âge, tout en conservant leur vie de prière, et prévu la transmission de leur lieu.

Voici quelques témoignages d'expérience en congrégation:



**CONGREGATIE 'BENEDICTINESSEN VAN SCHOTENHOF STICHTING 'VITA ET PAX'**  
(vernieuwde Constituties door Rome goedgekeurd op 11 juli 1994)  
geassocieerd met de CONGREGATIO SANCTAE MARIAE MONTIS OLIVETI

Schotenhof a connu de nombreuses expériences heureuses en tant que maison mère grâce à la coopération internationale enrichissante dans un contexte de congrégation avec les autres couvents fondés par Schotenhof à l'étranger. Nous sommes comme une famille, nous nous soutenons et nous encourageons mutuellement dans nos joies et nos peines, et nous chérissons la précieuse singularité que nous pouvons ainsi vivre.

### **Congrégation de la Reine des Apôtres : témoignage de la communauté de Loppem :**

Notre Congrégation est issue d'une même racine – Béthanie, fondée en 1921. Cela fait que nous avons grandi ensemble.

C'est une grande richesse de vivre en Congrégation:

- L'esprit missionnaire nous ouvre...
- Avec les chroniques mensuelles nous échangeons nos nouvelles et connaissons les sœurs et les communautés, même si nous ne les avons pas visitées...
- C'est comme une grande famille fraternelle où peines et joies sont partagées...
- Il y a la possibilité d'entraide de personnes ou bien via Coresol (avec des finances modestes, mais pour aider dans une urgence)...
- Expériences de la vie monastique dans une communauté de la Congrégation qui vit dans un tout autre contexte...

Difficultés:

- Manque de vocations et donc manque de personnes pour aider nos communautés vieillissantes...
- Distance et donc, voyages coûteux et longs...
- Le défi de la différence dans les cultures...



## Region 19 – India & Sri Lanka

We are a community founded by the Solemes Congregation. We were an autonomous monastery and so we did not belong to the congregation. We have good relations with our founding monastery but due to distance they did not want to have any juridical power over us. Now in the light of *Cor Orans* we asked them to take us into the federation. But they refused. As we are cloistered sisters it is difficult for us to join an active congregation in India. So far we have the canonical visitation by the Bishop of the diocese. But they know very little about Benedictine life and Charism. So it is rather difficult to get help from them.

Now the candidates who come are so much influenced by the modern way of life and they are not very interested for *Ora et Labora* especially as we have no outside apostolate. At Present we have no postulants, no novices or candidates.

So we are still wondering how to go about with *Cor Orans*.

*Nirmala Narikunnel, OSB, Delegate*

## What are your experiences/the benefits/the difficulties of belonging to a congregation?

### Introduction

In world that is rapidly changing under the impact of modernity religious life too is going through a period of profound transition. Pope John Paul II defines the purpose of religious life as “a complete love, dedicated to Christ under the impulse of the Holy Spirit and through Christ offered to the father”. Today more than ever, religious life is facing a crisis. Unless religious give a prophetic witness which is reason for our existence, consecrated life won’t be meaningful. We are called to be a prophet to continue and be part of this living tradition in the same as was done by Jesus and by the foundress.

### Experiences

We the congregation of **Benedictine Sisters of St. Lioba** following the vision of the congregation experiencing the consecrated life which is rooted in the divine Christ and committed to the well-being of humanity. The main experiences we learned within the congregation is that our contemplation on God’s mysteries challenges us to the service of His people and we integrate the motto “**Never Forsake Charity**”. The main apostolates are Education, Health care, boardings, Socio-Pastoral and catechetical ministry, vocational training centers, Home for the aged and destitute house. Following the Charism “**To respond to the needs of the Church**” we experienced the dynamic power of the Lord in all events of our life.

### Benefits

There are numerous benefits being a member of a religious congregation and we have witnessed in different ways and many of the members have a sense of community life and belongingness and a support in times difficulties and trials. Benedictine prayer and liturgy is balanced, inspiring and admired by great majority. Building trust is a blessing within our communities.

- ❖ There is a thirst for spiritual life in the midst of materialism.
- ❖ Mass media provides a means for a new way of evangelization.
- ❖ Deeper and solid knowledge of scripture help us to deepen our spirituality
- ❖ There are certain role models in the community life like our Foundress and sisters specially who were in the concentration camps inserted themselves in the contemporary world and became valid models of human and Christian fullness.
- ❖ We become living memorials of Jesus way of living and acting. Through our consecration we are able to love everyone at large.
- ❖ Many of the religious are have never once regretted the step. The path was far from strewn with roses. Yet many are grateful that deep down in their hearts He was there keeping the lamp He had lighted burning.

## Region 19, cont.

### Difficulties

- ♣ Growing institutionalization has made us lose the prophetic thrust of our life and mission and therefore we need to rediscover the prophetic charism, the quality of our life will not improve if we do not recover this thrust. We must be evangelized ourselves by the good news of which we are witnesses. It is from this transformation that our own mission must precede.
- ♣ Lack of dedicated personnel.
- ♣ To certain extent media and technologies misuse and electronic gadgets leads the religious to seek comfort zones which leads to lack of oneness and at home feeling and recollected silent atmosphere.
- ♣ Our identity as religious became our apostolate than manual labour and prophetic witness.
- ♣ Consumerism affects the poor life style expected by religious communities, insistence on personal freedom and human rights leading to individualism under mining Community life and authority.

### Conclusion

Empowered by the word of God, we claim our gifts as women in the Church, to effectively accompany the people to whom we are sent to guide them to true wellbeing and happiness. Manifestation of God's love takes place only when we are rooted and grounded in God who is loved above all.

*Vandhana Paliakkara, OSB, Substitute*

## Region 15- Oceania

### Where are we with *Cor Orans*?

The Benedictine Abbey, Jamberoo Australia – Region 15

At present we find ourselves traveling through a somewhat uncharted and unfamiliar landscape. We cannot as yet see with human eyes, our full destination. Only with the eyes of faith can we perceive the eventual outcome and indeed even take on this journey.

Cor Orans presented us with an unasked-for challenge to let go of our identity, as we have known it since 1848 within our own uniquely Australian Catholic context. At present we walk a road spattered with the rain of grief despite our belief that all will be well. We have not found it easy to reimage our identity, and therefore our progress has been slow, indeed in many senses it feels as though we have not yet fully begun.



## Region 15, cont.

Each sister has needed time to accept this new status quo. I wish to make clear, that this comes not from an unwillingness to comply or any form of disobedience, but rather from the naturally human process that must say “goodbye” to a dearly held identity faithfully lived for a very long time and passed to upcoming generations, to take up another, as yet unknown version. Had the initiative come from within ourselves it would have been completely different. This is a process that cannot be rushed if a sustainable identity is to be achieved. We have been on our own and have learned to navigate our own oceans. We have lived our monastic life not only according to the Rule, but also according to our Constitutions, Directory and specific understandings, formed as they have been within our own determined and historical context. Who we are has found lived expression through all of these.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the English Benedictine Congregation who have so kindly allowed us a time of discernment with them with a view to future full membership. We are not unmindful of the extra work involved for the EBC in “taking us on”. This is the Congregation that first sent us to Australia and with whom we retain strong links of friendship and exchange, especially with Stanbrook Abbey to whom we owe much. As part of the discernment, we have gained a great deal through their shared webinars and even though we cannot join them in person because of the vast time differences, nonetheless these have been a means of getting to know the Congregation a little better, seeing ourselves as a part of them and reaping the benefits of their wisdom.

Furthermore, we have been able to be a vital part of the EBC initiatives for initial formation. Our sisters in formation have joined with their counterparts within the Congregation in a series of Zoom meetings. This has been of enormous benefit widening their Benedictine Vision.

Having spoken of our journey thus far, we can nonetheless see the great benefits there are in belonging to a wider group especially one with whom we feel such an affinity and wonder at what our own contribution might be. Once we used to speak of the “global village”, now with the advances in technology and the closeness of the world’s peoples, we can, I think, speak of the “global household”. There is a big Benedictine house out there and perhaps the time has come for this small group of Australians to lend their uncertain and halting voice to the whole in a new way.

The requirement for a nine-year term of formation, though initially unwelcome for various valid reasons, has with the passage of time taken on a different hue. In these, the days of our time, we can see how long it takes for individuals to reach the level of abandonment and understanding required of anyone committing themselves to monastic life.

We do not know what lies ahead but trust in the God who will bring all things to completion in His own good time. We ask to be worthy of the journey.

Patty Fawcner, SGS (Delegate) and Hilda Scott, OSB (Substitute)

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### REGION 16 – East Africa

While *Cor orans* does not technically apply to us because we are *sorores*, we still comment here about the longer formation period required by *Cor orans*. We have enough time in formation. Because most of those who enter our monastic way of life here are in their teenage period we have a longer period of formation, because it seems necessary for those with less life experience. We have 5 to 6 years of formation until they make the First Vows, from there we have 5 to 6 years until they make Perpetual Vows which sometimes can be prolonged up to 9 years in specific cases. Therefore, we have more than 9 years before their perpetual Vows.

Asanta Goliam, OSB

## REGION 9 – USA & Canada

### Benefits/Difficulties of Belonging to a Monastic Congregation (*sorores*)

The three “federations” of North American Benedictine women who are *sorores* are in reality monastic congregations. For this reason, though we name ourselves “federations,” I will use the terminology of “monastic congregation” in this little essay.

In the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the houses of Benedictine women in North America transitioned from fully autonomous monasteries under the jurisdiction of the local bishop to members of monastic congregations under a president and shared constitution approved by the Congregation for Religious in Rome, putting us under pontifical jurisdiction. There are many advantages to being a member of a monastic congregation. There may also be some difficulties, though these are harder to identify as we have been living within the context of monastic congregations for up to 100 years.

The major advantage has been the placement of our monasteries under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for Religious in Rome rather than under the jurisdiction of the local bishop. In our histories, some bishops were very supportive and hands off, others interfered greatly in the internal affairs of the monasteries, even to the point of deposing legitimately elected prioresses, mandating that monasteries construct schools and hospitals regardless of the debt incurred, and even seizing sisters missioned in their diocese to form new motherhouses. Our monastic congregations were formed in part to decrease the power of the local bishop over the monastic houses (termed *convents* at that time). It could be argued that pontifical jurisdiction is also an advantage for the local bishop, who doesn’t have to concern himself with the operation/oversight of a religious community in his diocese.

The congregation president and council are in a role of oversight and support vis-a-vis the monastic communities. The president presides

over visitations and the canonical election of a superior, as well as assisting prioresses and monastic communities when they are encountering difficulties. Belonging to a monastic congregation keeps these roles within the women monastics of the congregation, rather than with an outside male monk or bishop.

The congregation president is also the liason in the monastery’s relationship with CICLSAL. The president develops an expertise in the requirements and procedures for certain permissions from Rome, such as alienation of property, indults of departure for members, etc. She can advise the prioresses on these matters and in some cases, depending on the constitutions, actually be the person through whom the paperwork is processed and sent to Rome. She can also facilitate the sharing and mutual support that we want to see happen between the prioresses and the monastic communities.

One of the difficulties of belonging to a monastic congregation might be that it is somewhat more complex to process the above permissions through CICLSAL in Rome than through the local bishop, whose office one can contact with a simple phone call. Another might be securing the prior authorization of the congregation president and council needed for these permissions. For example, in the Federation of St. Gertrude, the president and council need to approve the alienation of property over a prescribed limit before that request can be sent to CICLSAL. Likewise, the president and council need to approve the dismissal of a finally professed member. The monasteries also pay annual dues to the monastic congregation, which provide the funds for the day-to-day operations. These dues may be a financial burden to some monasteries, though we work to keep them reasonable and to provide assistance for communities who are not able to pay the full amount.

Jeanne Weber, OSB

Region 9, cont.

### Impact of Cor orans on monasteries of *moniales* in USA & Canada

#### OUR LADY OF THE DESERT, New Mexico, USA

Our community is very grateful to Sister Lynn for explaining the “Heart” of *cor orans*.

Where are we with *cor orans*? We are working with Mother Mary Elizabeth Kloss (St. Scholastica’s Priory, Petersham, MA), in forming a new Congregation. The extended period of formation; however, is something we are trying to understand more clearly. Overall, the *cor orans* is a protection of our commitment to God as we live in the world, but not of it. With Praying Hearts we can move forward with encouragement. God bless us all! Sister Kateri, SubPrioress

#### ST EMMA, Pennsylvania, USA

**Cor orans:** We are working with our Congregation to set out the details of the Document. As for Covid, we have experimented difficult outcomes like everyone, but very generous benefactors have come in to help us. We are very grateful to them... and bless the Lord as we are peacefully continuing to lead our beautiful monastic life with complete Divine Office.

#### ST SCHOLASTICA, Massachusetts, USA

Thankfully, with the help of our generous Benedictine canon I – Sr Nancy Bauer, OSB and Sr Lynn McKenzie, OSB – we began to understand *Cor orans*, what was required and set out on fulfilling what we needed to.

In September 2019 with several monasteries that we have been associated with by our aggregation to the Subiaco-Cassinense Congregation, a resolution was formed to pursue the task with the further expertise and knowledge of Sr. Scholastika Häring, OSB and others.

Shortly after our world was struck by Covid 19 and our efforts have mostly been on hold as we wait for tools to assist us in setting up our congregation. We are hopeful that the mutual encouragement and assistance that can come from a congregation will benefit each of the houses without overwhelming them. The community of St Scholastica Priory as well as others does find the formation periods and their lengthening a burden and a frustration.

#### ST. WALBURGA, Colorado, USA

We have worked together on implementing the Cor Orans specifications in our community. As with everyone, the Covid 19 breakout has slowed some aspects of it down. Our formation is in the timeline given. We are currently hoping to form a congregation with 2 other communities in order to be able to be a closer support for one another and to encourage the Benedictine life and to share resources as we are able to. Our continued formation for the Solemnly professed is still evolving but we are enjoying trying different approaches as some like to study together and others privately. And there are the little outings to the museums if there is a special display that a group is excited to see.

#### IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, Vermont, USA

Membership in a congregation is an integral—even essential—component of our identity as contemplative Benedictine women. The Rule is lived out through the interpretation given it by the Declarations and Constitutions formulated by our congregation. This shared vision of life, joined to our common history, creates unity between the disparate monasteries within our congregation.

An important benefit of belonging to a congregation in our times is the security provided by a well-defined hierarchy of authority outside the community properly speaking. This greatly diminishes the risks of arbitrariness in governance or abuse of authority on the part of the local superior. The possibility of an appeal to a higher authority is especially important in the enclosed life.

Finally, as part of a mixed congregation, we profit from the complementarity provided by our brother monks.

#### THREE MONASTERIES OF CANADA

Cor Orans allowed us to work together to form an agreement which was approved by Rome, because it was not possible for us to form a Federation since we were only three French-speaking monasteries in America and SM2M already belongs to a Congregation.

The requirement for extended training surprised us, but we submitted to it.

-Isabelle Thouin, OSB

## REGION 2 – Spain & Portugal

### What is your experience of the benefits and/or difficulties of belonging to a Congregation?

**At this moment the pandemic is determining our experience.** The monasteries of the Monastic Congregation of St. Hildegard finished their first General Chapter on March 8, 2020 and an emergency state was declared in our country on March 14, 2020. Previously scheduled formation meetings, Council meetings, visits to the monasteries, etc., had to be called off. The Monastery of Sant Benet (Montserrat) had to stop all the steps necessary for the preparation of the statutes of its future congregation. The nuns of Sant Daniel (Girona) have to wait until the Chapter of the Sublacense Casinense Congregation can be celebrated to see if their formal request to join it is accepted. Fortunately, the Community of Roriz (Portugal) could host the General Chapter of its Congregation in its house right at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020.

#### Benefits

To be in contact and to know what other communities are living, especially those belonging to the other former federations. To share, to establish links, not to be isolated, diverse but united. This is the experience shared by all the monasteries that have been involved or are involved with the writing of our constitutions.

To walk together, to support each other, especially the weaker communities. Unity strengthens. It implies a lot of fraternal help. It broadens horizons by being attentive to other communities. It generates hope and sometimes compassion... it mobilizes us to help and support one another, in this way, we grow in co-responsibility.

To take care of our charism together. Paths have been opened to carry out our traditional monastic formation and motivation is given to do it. Virtual education was accelerated. More help and guidance. It is good to have the same structure of life and government around our RB, to share its monastic values and to open our welcome to offer listening and both human and spiritual help.

The canonical visitation will be very important. It is necessary to experiment, it will help us to leave prejudices.

It will help us in the management of our patrimonies.

#### Difficulties

The added work of implementation and management which is especially heavy for the communities most involved in the Council and the Offices of the Congregation.

Things are being managed very slowly.

Also, since we come from different previous structures, we do not know each other very well.

### Where are you in relation to *Cor Orans*?

The Roriz community, which has belonged to the Regina Apostolorum Congregation for many years, has not noticed any changes in its daily life, although it has been necessary to update the Constitutions regarding both the longer period of formation and enclosure.

It has shown us we are not as autonomous as we thought. It opens up possibilities of greater decision-making and management capacity on the part of the nuns. It makes it possible for us to make decisions in situations that are beginning to become impossible. It tries to update the structures of the Communities. In this sense, I believe this is also good for bishops, now that the situations are getting difficult, it is much better if the nuns work them out on their own.

We are stunned by the many years needed until solemn profession.

It has provided us with a return to reflection on our life and its values, and a way to try to take care of them.

It is a call for us not to get stagnated, and to keep us in Ongoing Formation. It suggests a return to the fundamental pillars: to take care of formation is not only to work. Although for many communities perhaps it comes a little late because they consist of elderly sisters and much formation is not the priority....

I think it came at the right time for us, OSB women. It brings us light, freshness and superiors are provided with freedom and responsibility... which is already the case in male orders.

-Rosario del Camino Fernández-Miranda, OSB, Delegate

**REGION 3 – France & Israel**

Notre région n°3 est constituée d'une petite quarantaine de monastères; une vingtaine d'entre eux sont déjà en fédération ou congrégation. Ces monastères apprécient ces liens canoniques de congrégation ou de fédération car ils permettent soutien et entraide fraternelle. Aujourd'hui, il est quasi-impossible de vivre isolés. Les autres monastères font donc un travail de rapprochement pour se mettre en fédération. Il semble que dans notre région, c'est la **fédération** qui a la faveur des monastères. Cela leur paraît moins lourd à mettre en place ; rédiger des constitutions communes est un gros travail qui semble rebuter certaines. Certaines communautés seulement associés à une congrégation masculine sont obligés de se mettre en congrégation ou fédération ; elles n'en voient pas l'intérêt car elles ne sont pas isolées et entretiennent des liens informels avec des communautés proches d'elles ; elles sont d'autre part heureuses des relations avec la congrégation masculine. Leur avancée vers la formation d'une congrégation ou d'une fédération est au point mort.

Les monastères qui sont déjà en congrégation apprécient beaucoup la structure de congrégation. Elles sont plus autonomes par rapport à l'évêque, ont un Chapitre Général qui prend des décisions, tout en respectant l'autonomie des monastères.

Presque tous les monastères travaillent à réorganiser la formation plus longue qu'avant mais la rédaction de nouvelles constitutions avance très lentement pour certaines communautés, d'autres ont déjà envoyé leurs modifications au Saint-Siège pour faire approuver leurs modifications.

**English translation**

Our region 3 is made up of about forty monasteries; about twenty of them are already in a federation or congregation. These monasteries appreciate these canonical links of congregation or federation because they allow for support and fraternal mutual aid. Today, it is almost impossible to live in isolation. The other monasteries are therefore working to bring them together in a federation. It seems that in our region, it is the federation that is favored by the monasteries. It seems to be less cumbersome to set up; writing common constitutions is a big job that seems to put some off. Some communities that are only associated with a male congregation are obliged to form a congregation or a federation; they do not see the point of this because they are not isolated and have informal links with communities close to them; they are also happy with the relationship with the male congregation. Their progress towards forming a congregation or federation are at a standstill.

The monasteries that are already in congregation appreciate the congregational structure very much. They are more autonomous from the bishop, have a General Chapter that makes decisions, while respecting the autonomy of the monasteries.

Almost all the monasteries are working on reorganizing the formation, longer than before, but the drafting of new constitutions is progressing very slowly for some communities, others have already sent their modifications to the Holy See for approval.

Thank you very much sister Lynn for your attention.

Sr. Marie Caroline

Delegate for Region 3

*Translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version)*

**REGION 8, Croatia**

No report was available due to the widespread COVID-19 infection in the region since Easter. However, the federation located there has written new statutes consistent with *Cor orans*.



## REGION 17- Central and West Africa and Madagascar

### Monastery of BOUAKE - IVORY COAST

With our Motherhouse and six other monasteries in France, our community belongs not to a congregation but to a federation, “The Immaculate Heart of Mary” which has been recognized by the Vatican since several years ago . We have a lovely fraternal experience of communication and mutual aid.

Now, with *Cor Orans*, we are walking towards a new federation which is temporary named “Notre Dame de la Rencontre”, recently joined by other French monasteries

### Assumption Abbey of DZOGBEGAN - TOGO

We believed to be part of the congregation of Subiaco-Cassinese, which, in reality, did not integrate us entirely. We would have wished for a complete integration , which is not possible, as the monks consider themselves as a clerical congregation.

Now, with *Cor Orans*, we have opted for an existing federation which is in reformation in France: “Notre Dame de la Rencontre”.

We are still reflecting on *Cor Orans*, to have a better understanding of its main purpose and some of its noted changes, for example, why the second year of the novitiate become canonical and no more the first one

### Monastery of POPERYAKOU - BENIN

Our Motherhouse, the abbey of Jouques in France, is a member of the new federation named “Notre Dame de la Rencontre”. As a dependent monastery, we also joined that federation and this is perfectly convenient for us.

*Cor Orans* requires that after fifteen years of foundation, each monastery gets its autonomy. We have just reached fifteen years. However, our community is not ready for that step. Therefore, we requested five additional years from the Vatican, which was granted to us.

### Monastery of SADORI - TOGO

Same as the monastery of Dzogbegan, we always believed to be part of the Subiaco-Cassinese Congregation. Therefore, it was with stupefaction, consternation and disbelief, that we find out later on that the Subiaco-Cassinese Congregation is convinced to exist strictly just for the monks. The immediate solution for us could be to join the new forming federation of Notre Dame de la Rencontre. But we don’t find it timely or suitable in these circumstances.

Our wish would be to see our already existing CIB, being recognized canonically by the Vatican, as an international confederation of the Benedictines nuns and sisters from the world, in line with the confederation of the Benedictines Monks. That’s what we are really hoping we could push for or could see coming out of our meeting in September.

The CIB being already subdivided into regions, sprayed in the five continents, couldn’t those regions acquire the status of dependent federations?

Marie Fidégnon, OSB, Delegate

## REGION 12 Cono-Sur

### Introduction

Region 12 includes the monasteries of the Cono Sur of America: Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay. In this moment, of the 9 monasteries that constitute it, 6 are in Argentina, 2 in Chile, 1 in Uruguay.

1. Abadía de Santa Escolástica(Argentina)
2. Abadía Sta. María, Madre de la Iglesia (Uruguay)
3. Monasterio Madre de la Unidad (Argentina)
4. Monasterio Ntra. Sra. de la Fidelidad (Argentina)
5. Abadía Ntra. Sra. de la Esperanza (Argentina)
6. Abadía Gaudium Mariæ (Argentina)
7. Abadía de la Asunción de Santa María (Chile)
8. Monasterio Ntra. Sra. del Paraná (Argentina)
9. Monasterio Santa María de Rautén (Chile)

Even if the 9 monasteries form a cultural unit that integrates the entire Cono Sur of America, due to the diversity of countries and regions, each of our communities has its own character.

All monasteries are incorporated into the Benedictine Congregation of the Holy Cross of the Southern Cone, which allows us to work together on both the themes of the CIB and those of the Congregation.

### We have chosen to answer the second question, on Cor Orans

Like all women's monasteries, both *Vultum Dei quaerere* and *Cor Orans* had a strong impact on us, because it meant news and changes in the legislation of our monasteries.

When *Vultum Dei* appeared, all the Abbesses and Prioresses of our region agreed to hold a meeting to study the document -guided by a necessary adviser, in which we were able to reflect widely on the spiritual principles proposed by the document.

Since we already have our Constitutions approved since 1987, as soon as *Cor Orans* was published, each one began to study it personally in relation to the Constitutions for our Monasteries, in order to see what should be amended and evaluate how to implement the laws given in the apostolic constitution. We held two meetings to work on the issue and we agreed that it would be necessary to prepare the appropriate amendments to the constitutions and present them to the Holy See.

The Pandemic surprised us on this task with both its positive and negative side. We could not meet any more in a same place but, thanks to technology, we were able to organize several virtual meetings in which we went over the different points of the Constitutions that needed updating. The decrease in journeys to other Monasteries, the obligation to stay inside because of quarantine and the lower lodging of guests in our monasteries, gave us more time to dedicate ourselves to a detailed study of the subject. We were able -via e-mail- to contact Dom Richard Yeo osb, who gave us very valuable canonical advice, and finally we could send the amendments to the dicastery. At the moment we are waiting for response from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

We continue praying for the end of the pandemic and pray that all Monasteries of Nuns and Sisters may be protected by the Mother of Divine Love from this terrible disease, and may our Lord bring journeys of salvation and hope.

*Maria Cristina Moroni, OSB*

## Region 4, UK and Ireland

### on the experience of *Cor Orans*

Six communities in the region live 'canonical contemplative life' as understood by *Cor Orans* (CO 4). Sadly, two other contemplative communities have closed, or are the process of closing, through shortage of numbers, with surviving members either joining a larger community or becoming resident in a care home.

Two communities which have long been members of a congregation with monks were required by the Holy See, rather curiously, to seek exemption from joining a federation: St Cecilia's, Ryde, is a full member of the Solesmes Congregation, and the nuns' communities in the English Benedictine Congregation have full membership of the Congregation. The concern had been that nuns in congregations with monks should have full rights and participate in decision-making. The eight superiors in the Solesmes Congregation (from different countries and continents) have their own four-yearly meeting, the Chapter of Abbesses, which is separate from the General Chapter of monks. A Council of Abbesses, elected by the abbesses, assists the Abbot President in matters concerning the nuns and certain abbesses attend the Solesmes General Chapter. Abbesses are now also involved in canonical visitations.

Nuns in the EBC participate fully in General Chapter and vote on all matters relating to the Congregation as a whole. For instance, they vote for the abbot president, the members of the abbot president's council and congregational officials. They do not vote in matters which concern only monks, but do engage in the discussion. This happened at the last general chapter (2017) where the monks' constitutions were under review.

Turvey is a member of the Congregation of the Benedictine Nuns of Schotenhof, a small congregation affiliated with, but juridically separate from, the men's Olivetan Congregation. Minister, until recently aggregated to the Subiaco Congregation, is returning to its historical roots and becoming a member of the nuns' Bavarian Congregation.

Kylemore, an autonomous community in Ireland, was finding it increasingly difficult being independent and is happy with the CICLSAL

requirement to join a federation. The community is currently seeking to join the EBC, as are Mariavall in Sweden and Jamberoo in Australia. Discernment for joining the EBC has been hampered by Covid. Essential to discernment is getting to know each other and this would normally require visits and mutual exchange, which of course the pandemic has prevented. Good use has been made of Zoom – the formators and those in formation in particular have used this facility – but face-to-face meetings remain the best way of getting to know each other. As soon as travel restrictions are (safely) lifted it is hoped personal meetings will resume. A temporary extension of the time for achieving compliance with *Cor Orans* was granted.

Affiliation, required where monasteries are believed to be vulnerable, is difficult and painful. One community has affiliated, another is affiliating. One, sadly, is on the way to being suppressed, with the monastery being put up for sale and sisters moving to other communities or to a care home. The other community, though reduced in number and mainly elderly, remains dynamic and engaged. The community to which they are affiliating will have no difficulty supporting and encouraging them; there is no question of dispersal or suppression here.

All the communities in the region are *very* concerned about the formation requirements of *Cor Orans*, particularly the length of time a sister must spend in formation before solemn profession. To quote one response:

*Our experience suggests that the discretion of the community and the nuns engaged in formation is a wise guide regarding the length of time necessary for admission . . . to final profession, and that an extension of that time could inhibit healthy human and spiritual development. We hope that exemption from par.287 can be given when a community requests it.*

Another superior regrets the loss of the previous flexibility to prolong formation to nine years, where needed.

Generally, the communities recognize *Cor Orans* is seeking to renew monastic life in the C.21<sup>st</sup>. The one major concern, as already stated, is the lengthy time for formation being imposed.

Anna Brennan, OSB



Cor orans and one of its effects

This report should be brief, therefore: Cor orans has had the effect that since the publication of this document, 11 Benedictine women's monasteries have joined together to form the "European Congregation of the Resurrection".

In these monasteries there was already an inner readiness for a greater union in the seed, because 2 Belgian, 1 Catalan, 2 Dutch, 1 French, 3 German, 1 Lithuanian and 1 Swedish communities had quickly decided to set out together on the way to a new Congregation of Women.

There was a first meeting of the Superiors in October 2018, where we decided two things: our language of communication should be English and that we form a juridical commission which, based on already existing Constitutions of existing Congregations, prepared a draft which we modified in each of our Superiors' meetings and presented to the 11 communities for comments and additions. The input from the communities was read and incorporated in the next Superior's Conference in order to achieve the necessary consensus in our various charisms.

Since none of us had any experience of organising a congregation, a former congregation president assisted us with his advice. The overall draft of the Constitutions that were drawn up also passed through the scrutiny of an ecclesiastical lawyer and an ecclesiastical lawyer from the religious sector.

Our meetings always took place in one of our convents. Since the beginning of the Corona Pandemic we have been meeting via Zoom. After 2 ½ years, the Constitutions have now been drawn up, translated into our national languages and all communities have agreed to them.

Our wish is that we are on the way to a greater Communio. With this in mind, all the sisters were involved in finding and deciding on the name and logo for the Congregation.

Canonical erection is our hope!



## CIB – Region 11 - Brazilian Benedictine Congregation

### WHERE ARE YOU WITH COR ORANS?

The Brazilian Benedictine Congregation is composed of monasteries *sui iuris*, both of monks and of nuns, which have been canonically erected within the Congregation or aggregated to it.

“The Monasteries of nuns who are full members of the Benedictine Congregation of Brazil, meet on the occasion of the General Chapter of the Congregation in the Assembly of Nuns which has as its purpose, respecting the autonomy of each monastery, governing its own interests and promoting the intensive development of monastic life”.

In 2014 took place the General Chapter and the Assembly of Nuns and we (the Nuns) discussed and approved some changes in our Constitutions.

This text was sent to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA) and then we were told we should wait for a new document regarding contemplative life that was being prepared.

On August 27<sup>th</sup> we received the Questionnaire made by the Congregation on April 29<sup>th</sup> with the Keys issues: autonomy, formation, enclosure.

In 2016 came out a new document from Pope Francis: Constitution “Vultum Dei quarere”. And in 2018 came out the document “Cor Orans” implementing instruction of that Apostolic Constitution on women’s contemplative life.

In this same year, while we was working to adapt our Constitutions to the document “Cor Orans”, we invited Sister Scholastika Häring, from the Abbaye of St. Scholastika - Dinklage - Germany, to participate in a joint session of the Extraordinary Assembly of Nuns and the Meeting of Abbots to be held the following year (from May 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>) in order to give us a Conference on the documents mentioned above. She provided valuable assistance with her rich exhibition, in which she used the Power Point resources.

At this meeting, the reformulation of the structure of our Congregation (Councils and General Chapter) was discussed again.

The subject of the Assembly of Nuns (to analyze, discuss and vote on the adaptations to be made in the Constitutions) was not exhausted and a 2nd stage was scheduled, also giving the opportunity to think and mature the changes in the structure of the Congregation.

It was then decided to hold an Extraordinary General Chapter (monks) to deal with this issue, together with the 2nd stage of the Assembly of nuns.

Thus, on August 2019, the General Chapter approved the important changes required, while the Assembly of nuns finished approving the adaptations of the Constitutions to the Instruction “Cor Orans”.

The Instruction met some old claims, such as: 1) Monastic cloister defined in the Constitutions and 2) The abbess may authorize the absence from the monastery of a nun with solemn vows for not more than a year.

And also “Cor Orans” gave us the opportunity to resume our reformulation of the structure of our Congregation with an emphasis on Councils and on the General Chapter.

And in this matter, we are deeply grateful to sister Scholastika Häring, whose availability to come to Brazil was extremely important to achieve this goal. Our deepest thanks to her and to Mother Abbess Franciska.

Our Constitutions have already been approved by the Holy See and are already in effect. We are waiting for the steps of our Abbot President Filipe da Silva to send to the Holy See the changes regarding the new structure of the Congregation, that were approved by the General Chapter.

With great affection

S. Maria Regina Silva, OSB

Delegate



## Region 18 –South Africa & Namibia

### Experience of Belonging to a Congregation

#### Benefits:

We've experienced mutual support to all members through prayers, advice and necessary assistance. There's similar treatment and more or less equal share, irrespective of the background from which one is coming. We enjoy protection and ample opportunities to nurture our spiritual wellbeing through daily routine, workshops, retreats, Masses, etc. We have lots of opportunities of attaining the peace of mind, like through meditation and lectio. Almost all the Congregations belonging to Region 18 wear the habit, so there's no stress of following fashions or of wearing one and the same clothes all the time if you don't have a variety. We enjoy protection from social influences of the time, of pursuing fame, wealth and power together with individualism. We're all being directed by shared vision in our communities, which facilitates communion. Individuals' communication skills have been shaped and improved as we reside, have meals and prayers together, and also take part in community meetings from time to time. Sharing of duties have made our life satisfying as one does her duty for all, and her needs are met holistically as she benefits from other members' chores. This life has helped each member to have deeper understanding of herself, strengths and weaknesses, because of feedback from fellow sisters. Boundaries and limitations protect members from dangers of being in wrong places at wrong times that might put them into trouble. Total care regarding each member's needs leads to inner peace and unperturbed commitment to monastic life.

#### Difficulties/Challenges:

Most of us have encountered lots of misunderstandings and misinterpretations when expressing themselves verbally or non-verbally. Sometimes permanent dependency for a living is frustrating, especially when one is blocked somehow, yet she sees the way out. Living in small communities where some members have conflicting characters makes our life boring and dull. Some members are full of suspicions due to backgrounds and past experiences. There's painful detachment from comfort zones in times of changes of places and/or responsibilities, especially when done abruptly. Demands and obligations are continuous, there's no retirement as long as one can still do something. When unity is lacking or shaky, members form clusters of 'we' and 'them', which is very poisonous to community life. There's easy transmission of infections, since all things/ activities are done together. Faced with the aging of members, which goes with chronic ailments, and few joining vocations, it's somehow challenging to provide assistance to those who need total care. Burnout at times is experienced because enjoyable activities we used to do, like walks, picnics, evening parties, are getting lesser and lesser as elderly members are no longer interested, due to aches and pains, they prefer to retire earlier.

Bonaventure Tshabalala, OSB, Delegate



## INFORME DE REGIÓN 10: ABECCA

Ciudad De México a 29 de abril de 2021

Queridas hermanas de todo el mundo!!!

Reciban un cordial saludo deseando que cada una de ustedes se encuentre bien y fortalecidas por la presencia amorosa de Dios después de haber tenido la experiencia de vivenciar un tiempo con sabor a Pascua, estamos haciendo llegar a ustedes el Aporte de nuestra Región 10 ABECCA.

Este año continúa marcado grandes cambios y desafíos en nuestras vidas, comunidades, monasterios y apostolados, esto nos invita a mantenemos con un corazón abierto y una escucha atenta para continuar redescubriendo un rostro de Dios más cercano a las realidades que cada día se nos presentan y a las cuales queremos seguir respondiendo con nuestra oración y presencia evangélica.

Este tiempo de confinamiento que todas seguimos viviendo de diferente manera y con los riesgos que esto implica mantenemos la esperanza creativa de buscar acercarnos, acogernos y escucharnos, es lo que hemos podido vivenciar en este tiempo como Región. Tuvimos la oportunidad por primera vez hna. Cristina Galván Valtierra (Catequistas de María Santísima) y una servidora de podernos comunicarnos con M. Fabiana Barrera y comunidad del Monasterio Santa María de la Paz en Nicaragua, fue un momento muy grato vernos y escucharnos como hermanas por vía Zoom. Una comunidad alegre, dinámica y de un espíritu evangélico muy profundo. No sin dificultad continuamos tratando de ser una presencia cercana, de enlace y animación con nuestra Región por medio de washap y ahora a través de la plataforma zoom, esto nos sigue animando, aunque no desconocemos la dificultad que hemos tenido de recibir poca respuesta de los monasterios o comunidades.

Por esto mismo nos fue un poco difícil poder tener el sentir y el compartir acerca de las dificultades o no de la experiencia de Cor Orans y como ha impactado en las comunidades.

Para nosotras encontramos riqueza de pertenecer a una congregación religiosa por su carisma y espiritualidad, pero al mismo tiempo un cierto desafío al contar en nuestros Institutos un número importante de comunidades que atender, así mismo el cuidado de cercanía y comunicación con nuestra Región.

Gracias Hermanas y Dios les bendiga con salud y paz.

A nombre de la Región.

Hna. María Teresa Razo Laguna Delegada y  
Hna. Cristina Galván Valtierra, Sustituta

## REGION 10 REPORT: ABECCA (Deepl.com translation)

Mexico City April 29, 2021

Dear sisters from all over the world!!!

Receive a cordial greeting wishing that each of you are well and strengthened by the loving presence of God after having had the experience of living a time with a taste of Easter, we are sending you the Report of our Region 10 ABECCA.

This year continues to mark great changes and challenges in our lives, communities, monasteries and apostolates, this invites us to keep an open heart and an attentive listening to continue rediscovering a face of God closer to the realities that every day are presented to us and to which we want to continue responding with our prayer and evangelical presence.

This time of confinement that we all continue to live in different ways and with the risks that this implies, we maintain the creative hope of seeking to get closer, to welcome and listen to each other, is what we have been able to experience during this time as a Region. Cristina Galván Valtierra (Catechists of Mary Most Holy) and I had the opportunity for the first time to communicate with M. Fabiana Barrera and the community of the Monastery of Santa María de la Paz in Nicaragua, it was a very pleasant moment to see and listen to each other as sisters through Zoom. It was a joyful, dynamic community with a very deep evangelical spirit. Not without difficulty we continue trying to be a close presence, liaison and animation with our Region through What's App and now through the Zoom platform, this continues to encourage us, although we are not unaware of the difficulty we have had to receive little response from the monasteries or communities.

For this reason it was a little difficult for us to have the feeling and to share about the difficulties or not of the experience of Cor Orans and how it has impacted in the communities.

For us we find the richness of belonging to a religious congregation for its charism and spirituality, but at the same time a certain challenge to have in our Institutes a significant number of communities to serve, as well as the care of closeness and communication with our Region.

Thank you Sisters and God bless you with health and peace.

On behalf of the Region,

María Teresa Razo Laguna Delegate and  
Sr. Cristina Galván Valtierra, Substitute

## REGION 6, Germany, Austria, Switzerland & Scandinavia

*Cor orans* and its consequences:

In Region 6 of the CIB, GASS, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Scandinavia, we as Benedictine Sisters are on the move in a great diversity. Diversity, that means: with different approaches to Benedictine life and orientations. To name a few: there are communities of *sorores* in smaller and larger associations. There are communities of *moniales*, for whom the Roman document is primarily written, who have joined together in a congregation with our brothers. There are communities connected with each other in a federation of women's monasteries, and we have women's monasteries in the German-speaking countries which are or were "sui iuris" until now. So there is a whole range of legal structures, which also have to react differently to *Cor orans* and its implementing regulations. A movement has emerged and the opportunity it offers for reflection and adaptation of existing structures is being used. The networking, the solidarity as sisters and brothers and the conversation that has arisen through *Cor orans* is one of the good aspects that is worthy of attention. The concern that unites us is probably, in the main point, the question of the formation period: for many a rather fundamental question, for the communities that are in union with our brothers, it is also becoming a question for the men's monasteries, since the Roman authority has not deviated from its requirement of a total of 9 years of formation until today and seems to recommend that our brothers also join this change.

It is not yet clear what answer we will give to this question, but the paschal hope that fills us will lead to life.

*Franziska Lukas, OSB  
Delegate*



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### ***Region 14 - Philippines***

*Because of a change in delegates due to an election close to the time of the requested report, no report was received.*

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Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum  
Moderator

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