



Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum

916 Convent Road NE
Cullman Alabama 35055 USA
lynnmckenzieosb@gmail.com

Moderator

Lynn McKenzie, OSB
Cullman, Alabama, USA



As a member of Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Alabama USA and president of the Monastic Congregation of St. Scholastica (representing 17 member monasteries in the USA and Mexico), I was first elected as Moderator in 2018 and then again in 2022. I cannot say that I knew, 42 years ago when I became a Benedictine Sister, the extent to which I would be encouraged to grow as a person in my search for God. Yet that is who I am -- a seeker of God in the monastic way of life, together with my Sisters in community and with my Sisters around the world. Having the opportunity to become a part of CIB some years ago, when I first came to a CIB Symposium, was a life-changing experience for me. I knew of the richness and fullness of monastic life but I didn't realize the depth of such until I began meeting Benedictine women from around the world and sharing together how and why we live our lives as Benedictines. As we continue to grow and develop as a still young international organization, it is my sincere hope that CIB will be a source of witness in the Church and in the world and also a source of strength and inspiration for all of us as we continue to live and grow in the school of the Lord's service.



Assistant Moderator

Äbtissin Franziska Lukas, OSB
Region 06 Delegate

Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Scandinavia



I am Sr. Franziska Lukas and I have been living in the monastery at St. Scholastika Abbey in Dinklage, Germany, since 1974. Our community is still quite young, based on the fact that St Benedict was born in the 5th century. We were founded after the Second World War from the community in Alexanderdorf in 1949.

Before my sisters elected me abbess in 2007, I worked in different areas as prioress and novice mistress, as guest mistress and cantor. All these tasks are about listening, which is so important to Benedict. Thus, it runs like a thread through my life as a Benedictine.

So too it will be for me now as a delegate from CIB Region 6, having been re-elected to the CIB Council, to work with the Moderator Sr Lynn McKenzie, the other Council members and the Delegate Conference to seek and find answers to how we as Benedictine women can best be there in the Church and for people in our times. I am grateful that we can work together on this, looking forward to discover where the Holy Spirit will lead us.

Administrative Council

Abbess Anna Brennan, OSB Region 4 Delegate - Great Britain & Ireland



I entered Stanbrook Abbey, England, in 1992, aged 36, after a rather varied 'career'. For some years I was a member of an apostolic congregation, which at that time focused on teaching. After leaving, I became a police officer, but left after five years to look after my dying mother. While caring for her I did a law conversion course, with the intention of becoming a solicitor (a lawyer). But God had other plans. After my mother died, I kept remembering a quotation I picked up as a teenager: 'there is much love in your heart, dear child. Else why would God so relentlessly pursue his fleeing servant?' (from the 1950s book *The Cardinal* by H.M. Robinson). God did finally catch up with me – or I stopped running away. Since entering Stanbrook I have been laundress, kitchener and cellarer. In 2009 I went to Jamberoo Abbey, Australia, for two wonderful years; then, in 2012, I was sent as pontifical commissar to a monastery in Nigeria for two years. On my return from Africa, before the election, I was reappointed cellarer. I have followed CIB since my early days in the monastery, largely because a previous Stanbrook abbess, D. Joanna Jamieson, worked with Abbess Maire Hickey, the first Moderator of the CIB. Monasticism is organic: communities support and enable each other by 'being connected,' sharing life and energy, wisdom and ideas across boundaries. Our communities would wither and die if we tried to 'go it alone'. So, I am honoured and privileged to be working now so closely with the CIB.

M. Cecile Lañas, OSB Region 14 Delegate, Philippines



I joined the Congregation of Benedictine Sisters of the Eucharistic King after three years of working in the Population Commission Office, my first job after my Baccalaureate studies. The simplicity of life lived by the Benedictines in our place, attracted me to join them. After finishing other courses during my juniorate and as a young perpetually professed sister, I was assigned in various ministries: Catechetical, Liturgical, Biblical and Pastoral. In 1995- 2005; 2011- 2017, I was appointed and then elected Prioress of St. Benedict Priory, Vigan City, one of the four priories of our Congregation and at the same time the Dean of Studies of our small College in the same place. In 2017, I was elected Prioress General of our small Congregation with four priories with only 152 members in the Philippines, Germany, Israel and Indonesia. I came to know about CIB through my predecessors who used to gather us as a Region after every CIB happening. In 2018, two of us from our Region were invited to be the facilitators during the CIB symposium. I was so impressed by the camaraderie of the delegates despite the language barriers. The desire of each one to reach out to the other by trying to learn important words and phrases of the language outside of her own is a very touching scenario for me. Yes, at the CIB we go beyond the boundaries of language and culture. We create a common language of CHRISTIAN LOVE and BENEDICTINE CULTURE.

Abbess Hilda Scott
Region 15 Substitute, Oceania



My name is Hilda Scott, from the Benedictine Abbey Jamberoo Australia having joined monastic life in 1991. Prior to this I was a member of an active religious Congregation involved in education, retreat giving and pastoral work of every description. My journey to monastic life is a song of joy that always echoes in my heart. That He chose the Benedictine way of life for me is still a wonder and a gift, ever new every day. I have filled various roles of service in the community, Guest Mistress, Cottage mistress, Novice Mistress, Prioress and now Abbess. I believe in Benedictine monastic life, in the enduring capacity, within that life, to give oneself completely to God, on God's terms, not on one's own and I believe in the transforming power of this way of life to assist God in bringing and revealing all that is good into the world. The same can be said of the CIB. I believe that in the commitment of the individual members, their unity and shared vision. It has a real voice for the future of Monastic women and the wider Church and world as well. I count myself blessed to be a small part of this mighty ship, sailing as it is right now through uncharted waters, yet sure of its destination



M. María del Mar Albajar i Viñas
Montserrat (Barcelona)



I am the abbess of the Monastery of Sant Benet de Montserrat, Spain, since 2015 and member of the Administrative Council of the CIB since 2018.

Although my vocation has not been an easy one, I feel very fortunate with the monastic path that God has given me. It is the best expression of who I am and who I want to be. As Benedictine women of the 21st century I believe we are called to share our vocation with other women and to share its wisdom with our wounded world. To this end the CIB is key. The CIB as the body that gathers the voices of all Benedictine women of the world in the richness of their diversity and the strength of their unity and is a voice in our Church and help and support for our shared journey.



Executive secretary
Sister Mary Luke Jones, OSB
Beech Grove, Indiana, USA

When I was in the first grade, I fell in love with my teacher. She was a Benedictine sister and the love affair continues to this day. Born in Seymour Indiana, I led a charmed life! My grandparents owned a drugstore, complete with soda fountain, and their grandchildren were welcome to have whatever they wanted. The sisters had a great influence on me so after High School I entered Our Lady of Grace Monastery. For over 50 years, the sisters have educated me (Bachelors from the University of Indianapolis; Masters from the University of Notre Dame), given me worthwhile work to do, supported me and loved me into maturity. I have taught in grade schools, was a principal, started the monastery's development office and administrated our retreat center. The bulk (30+ years) has been in fundraising in support of our ministries and our lives of prayer and work. It is my great pleasure to work with moderator Sr. Lynn McKenzie and serve the Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum. Realizing firsthand the scope and breath of the work of Benedictine women across the globe fills me with pride and hope.

