

# Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum

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AN ORIENTATION ABOUT WHAT THE CIB IS, HOW THE CIB BEGAN  
AND DEVELOPED AND SOME CANONICAL OBSERVATIONS FOR  
FURTHER REFLECTION

# Aims of my presentation

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1. To give an explanation of the *status quo* of the CIB and of the *status quo* of the monasteries of Benedictine women within the Benedictine Confederation
2. To give a short history of the development of the CIB
3. To make some observations from a canonical point of view for further reflection

# WHAT IS THE CIB?

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# VISIBILITY of the CIB = MEETINGS

## Symposium & CIB Conference of Delegates

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SYMPOSIUM 2018 ROME



CONFERENCE OF DELEGATES 2019 MEXICO

What is the nature of the CIB?

→CIB Statutes, I A

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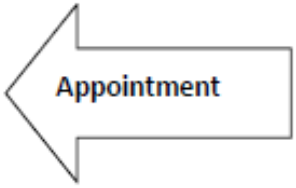
“The *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* (C.I.B.), respecting the autonomy of each monastery, congregation and federation, brings together in a sisterly bond all women’s communities consociated with the Benedictine Confederation, and functions under the aegis of the *Ius Proprium* of the Confederation.”

What is the structure of the CIB?

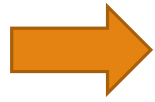
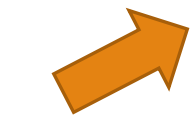
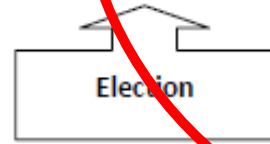
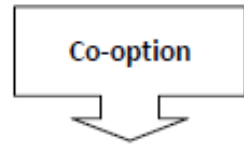
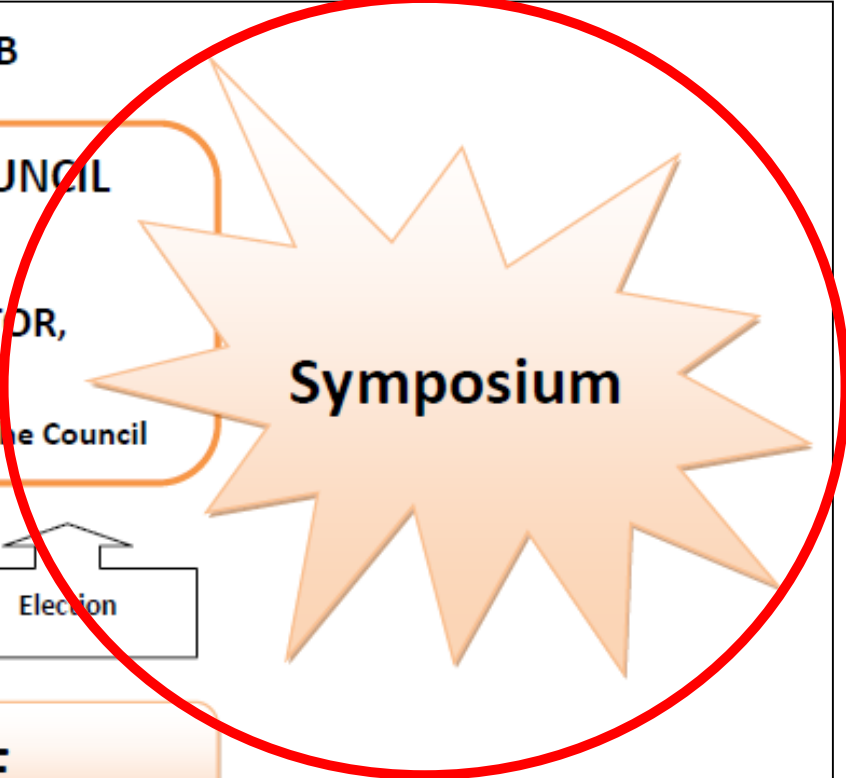
### Structure of the CIB

Abbot Primate

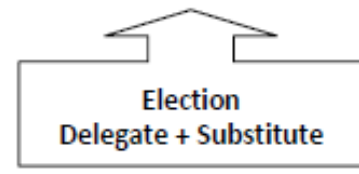
Secretary Treasurer



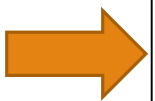
**ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL**  
**MODERATOR**  
**ASSISTANT MODERATOR,**  
**2 MEMBERS** elected  
**1-2 MEMBERS** appointed by the Council



**CONFERENCE**



**19 Regions**



**All women's communities consociated with the Benedictine Confederation**

# What is the purpose of the CIB?

## →CIB Statutes, I B

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1. To promote mutual support and exchange of ideas and experience among Benedictine women on an international level and to foster the development of monasticism for women.
2. To continue to develop the *consociatio* between the women's communities and the Benedictine Confederation.
3. To bring significant concerns of Benedictine women to the attention of the Confederation, the Synod of Presidents and the Congress of Abbots.
4. To advise the Abbot Primate and submit proposals and suggestions to him with regard to matters which affect Benedictine women.

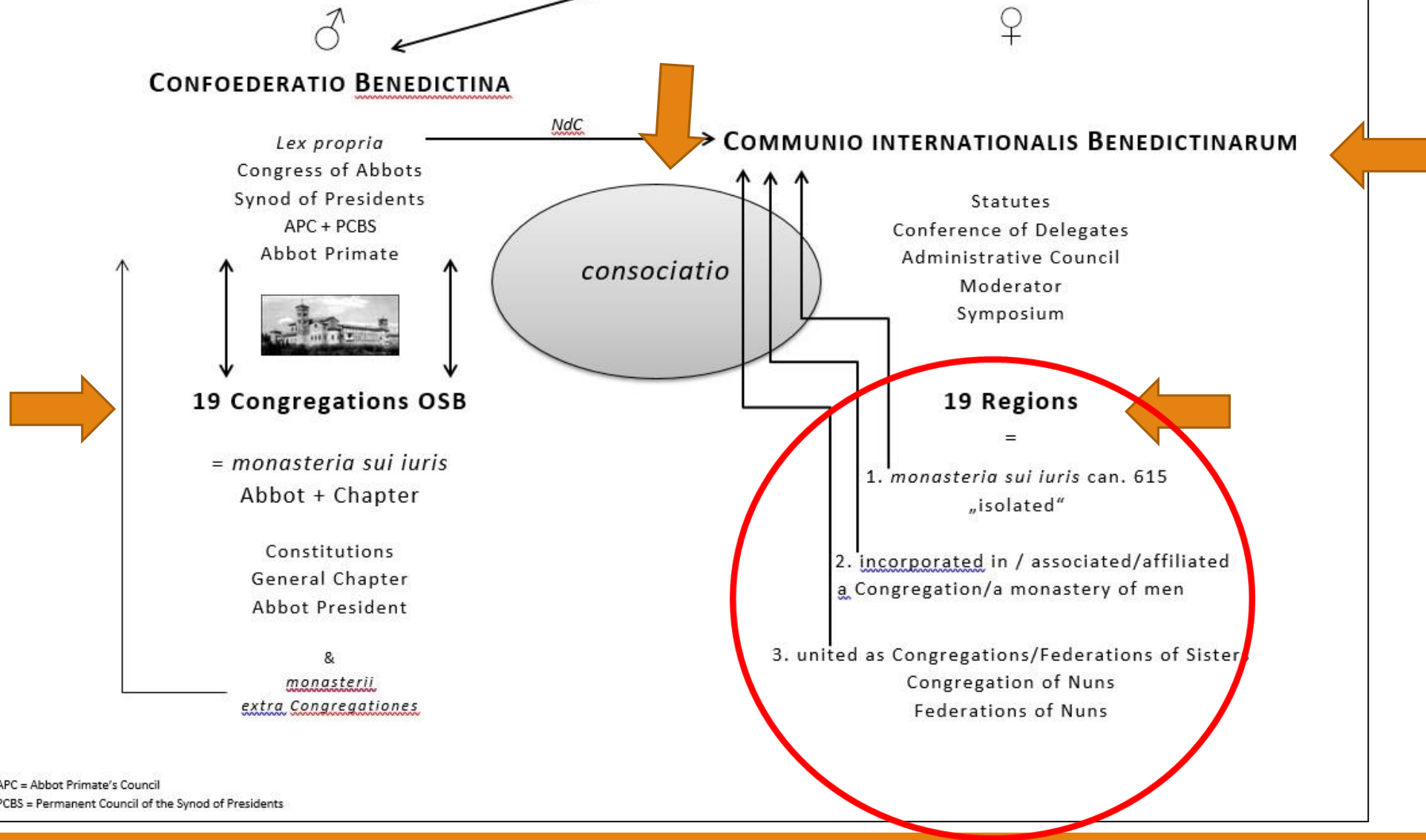
What is the relationship of the CIB, the Benedictine Women communities to the Benedictine Confederation?

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“The *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* (C.I.B.), respecting the autonomy of each monastery, congregation and federation, brings together in a sisterly bond all women’s communities **consociated with the Benedictine Confederation,** and functions under the aegis of the *Ius Proprium* of the Confederation.”

## Structure of the Confoederatio Benedictina (OSB)

1893 Leo XIII. Summum semper



APC = Abbot Primate's Council  
PCBS = Permanent Council of the Synod of Presidents

# Keyword: CONSOCIATIO – *Ius Proprium*

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**Fundament:** *Lex Propria* ## 14 & 15 «Institutes which are Consociated with the Confederation»

# 15. a) “The Confederation and the monasteries and Institutes which are consociated with it offer each other mutual support, especially support of a spiritual nature”

**HOW:** (1) through affiliation to, membership in a monks Congregation, a single monastery of monks  
(2) by decree of the Abbot Primate: as single monastery, as Federation, Congregation (Nuns, Sisters)

**EFFECTS:** *Norms of Consociation*

- ## 7-9 CIB; Membership; «CIB advises the Abbot Primate in the affairs of Benedictine women as occasion arise»
- ## 10-21:
  - mutual help
  - spiritual help from Monks to consociated women
  - Representatives of the CIB taking part at the Abbots Congress
  - the Abbot Primate gives and receives information
  - at request the Abbot Primate can act on behalf of them by the Holy See; can advice them

# Keyword: CONSOCIATIO

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Up to 1982: AGGREGATION

Since 1982: CONSOCIATION

1. New way to describe the **relationship** between the Confederation as a unity to which others are affiliated and the individual monastery, the institute that is being **consociated**.

2. from a canonical point of view it is a rather vague term

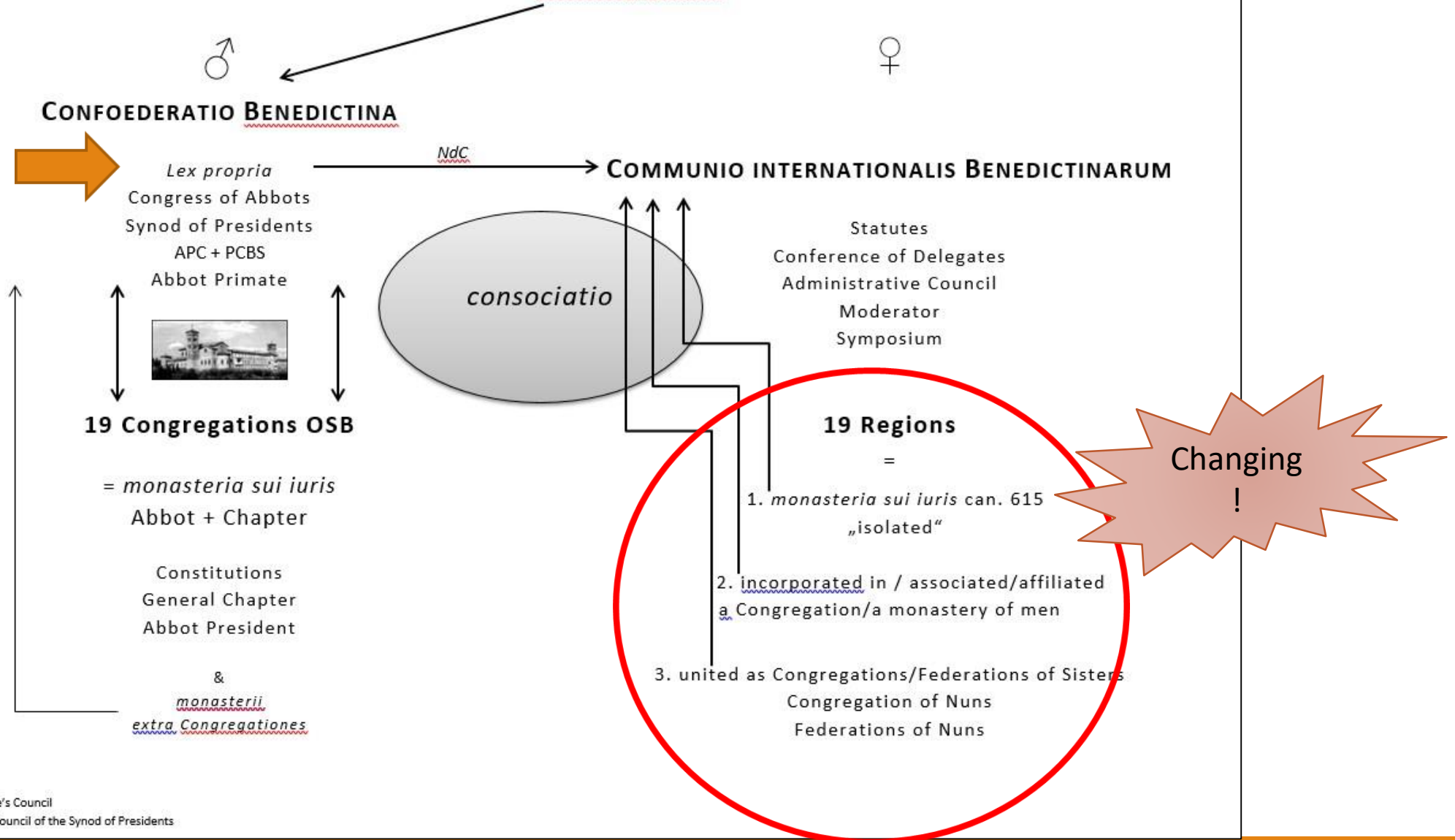
- this has the advantage, that it can provide for a wide range of possibilities
- from a rather loose form of association to a form with high commitment and engagement
- it can be limited solely to the spiritual benefit (on both sides) or to have a form that grants the superior of the consociating institute certain powers over the institute that is being consociated.

3. CON-SOCIATIO: equality - mutuality

In this sense it became the keyword in establishing the CIB under the umbrella of the Confederation in 2004.

## Structure of the Confoederatio Benedictina (OSB)

1893 Leo XIII. Summum semper



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# Situation of the Benedictine Women (2014)

(All information without guarantee)

**37 Federation/Congregations of *sorores***

**5 (8?) Congregations of *moniales*:**

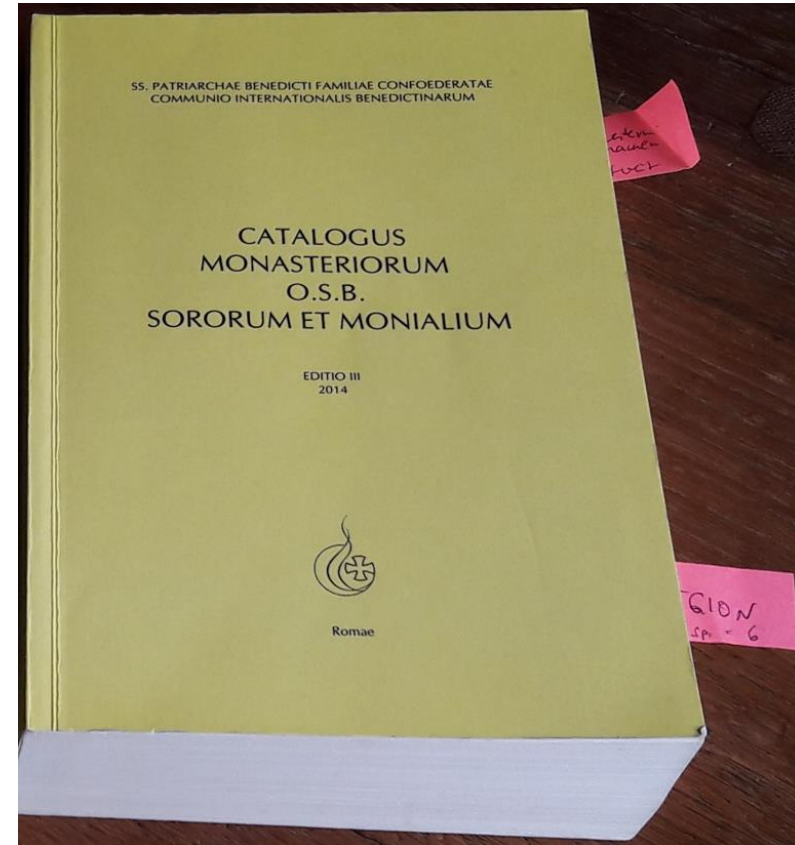
**20 (16?) Federations of *moniales* (125 monasteries?)**

**72 (??) monasteries of *moniales*, which are incorporated (43?) or affiliated (29?) to a Monks Congregation:**

**64 (??) *Monasteria extra Instituta et singularia*: 6 *sorores*, 58 *moniales***

**= 13725 Benedictine Women**

**19 Congregation of monks = 6679 monks [2020]**







# How the CIB developed

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A SHORT HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

# Vatican II as starting point

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1893 LEO XIII. *Summum semper* - founding of the Benedictine Confederation

1952 *Lex Propria* Aggregation of monasteries of women mentioned

1966/67 Abbots Congress

? own confederation of Women?  
? a secretariate for the Benedictine Women?

→ premature

→ **Commission of Nuns & Commission of Sisters**



# The 1970ties:

Since 1973: women as observers to the Abbots Congress (1977; 1980...)

for the women:

- chance to meet and to get to know each other

for Abbot Primate:

- Working with the Commission of Nuns and
- regular contact with several General Prioresses (Sisters)

1980 Symposium of 1500 year of the Birth of Benedict and Scholastica

1973 Norms of Aggregation

1980 Norms of Consociation



1973

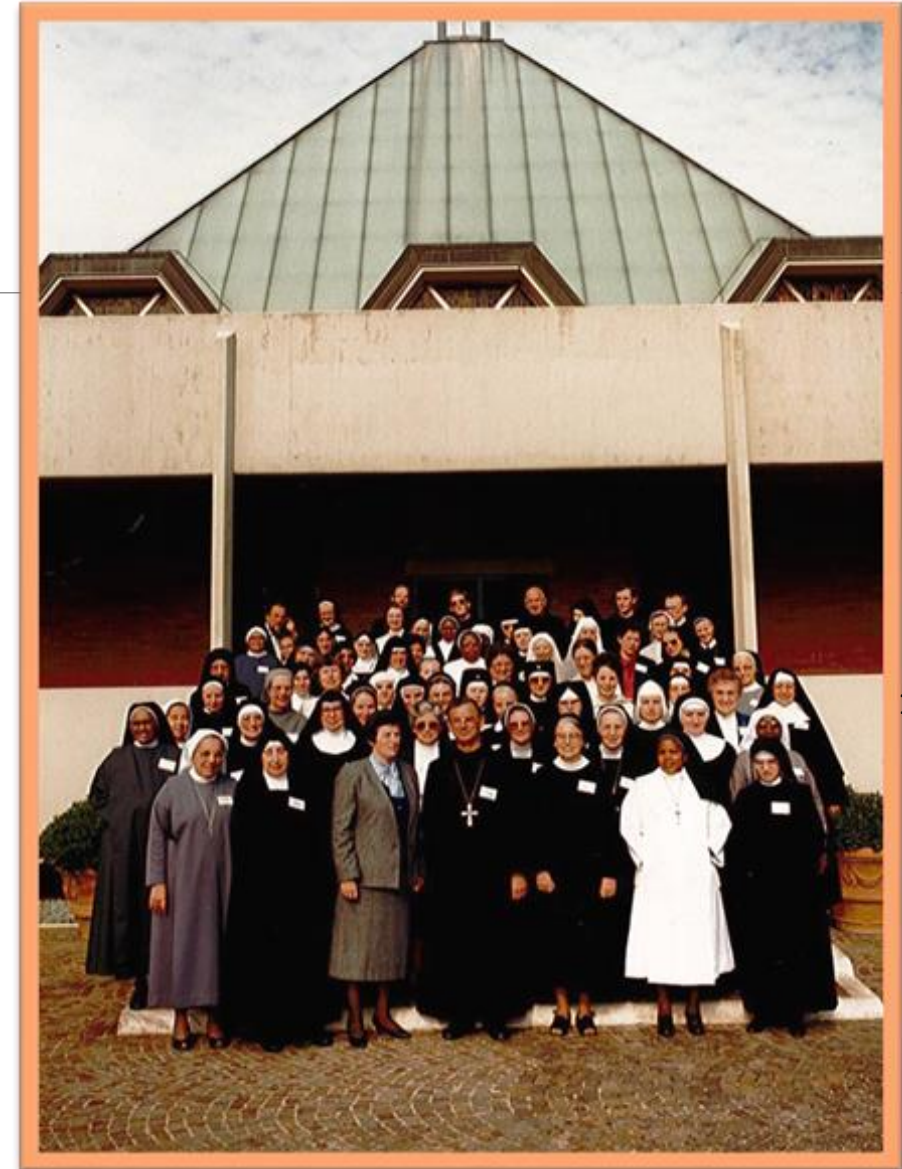


1977

# The 1980ties:

- 1983 Commission of Sisters met for the first time
- 1984 joint meeting of the two commissions
- 1987 First Symposium**  
NB: a Symposium of Sisters with invited Nun
- 1988 (one) Commission of Benedictine Women

1990 Preparation for the 2° Symposium of Benedictine Women (1993)



1987  
1° Symposium

# The 1990ties:

further developement & probation:

**1992 1. Statute** of the Commission of Benedictine Women – first meeting in a large group

- **Executive Committee**, appointed by the Abbot Primate
- **Commission** «dependent» on the Abbot Primate

1995 unforeseen death of Abbot Primate

**1997 1. Moderator:** Máire Hickey

1998 3° Symposium - women organizing for themselves

1999 1. meeting of the Commission outside Rome, outside Europe



1992



# around the millennium

meetings in a short distance of Time

2000 Colloquium of Benedictine Women

Triple Jump of the founding of the CIB:

1. 2001 name: *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum*
2. 2002 1. statute of the CIB
3. 2004 change of the *Lex Propria* of the Benedictine Confederation



# 2004 -2021

## 2009 2<sup>nd</sup> Statute of the CIB

Symposia 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018

## Annual Meetings of the Conference

(Rome/Assisi; 2003 Australia; 2005 Poland; 2007 Philippines; 2009 Croatia; 2011 Westafrica; 2013 Brazil; 2015 France; 2017 South Korea; 2019 Mexico; 2021 Cyberspace 😊)

**Moderator:** 2006-2018 Judith An Heeble; since 2018 Lynn Mc Kenzie

- Observers at the Abbots Congress
- Meetings with the Conference of Presidents 2016; 2019

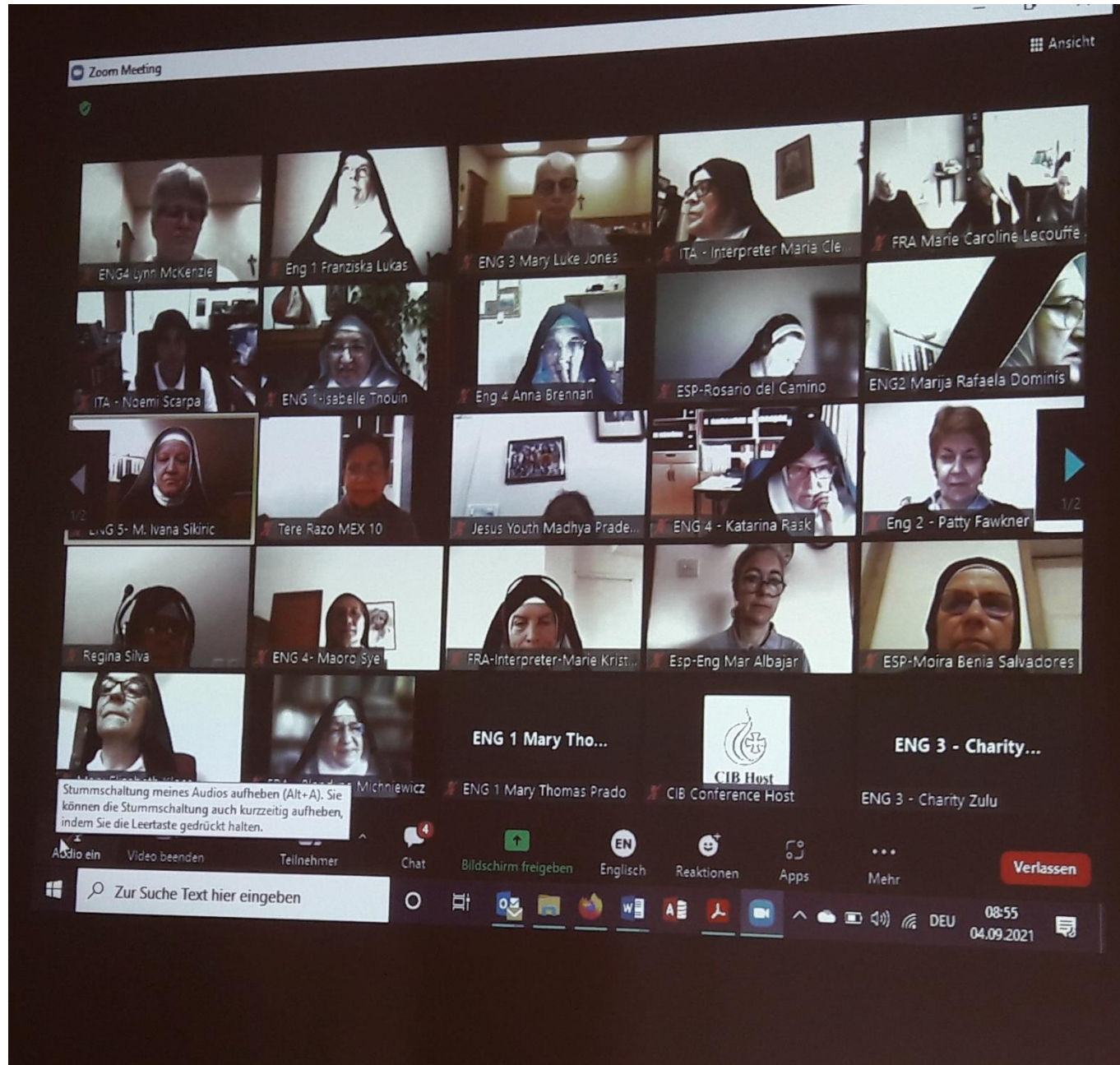


Croatia  
2009



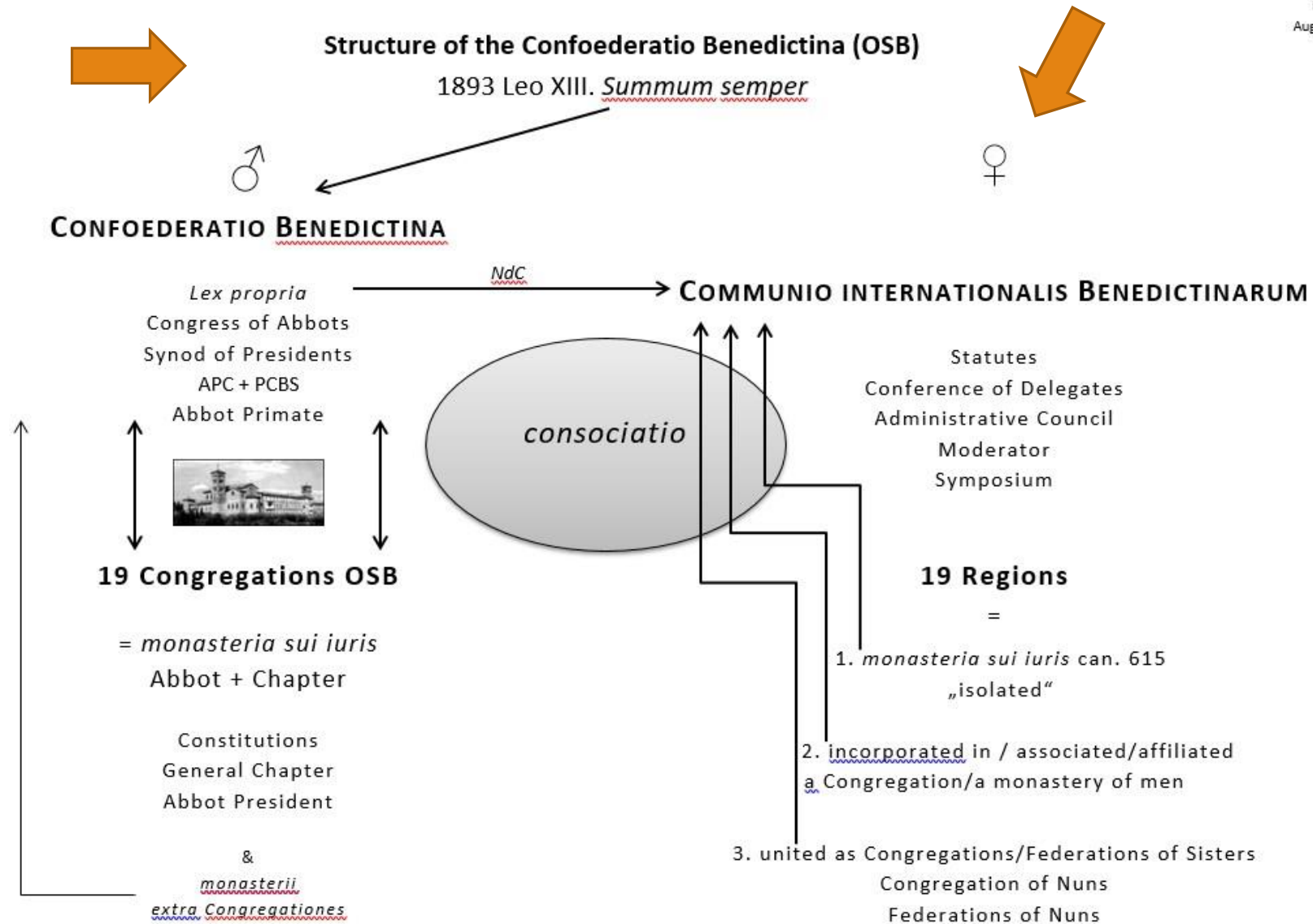
present  
Administrativ  
Council

2021



observations from a  
canonical point of view for  
further reflection

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# Level of the Benedictine Confederation

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1. Question that rose from time to time:

## **Full membership in the present Confederation?**

- different juridical status of the monasteries of men and women
- imbalance in the numbers (2/3 women, 1/3 men)
- a mixed institute of men and women

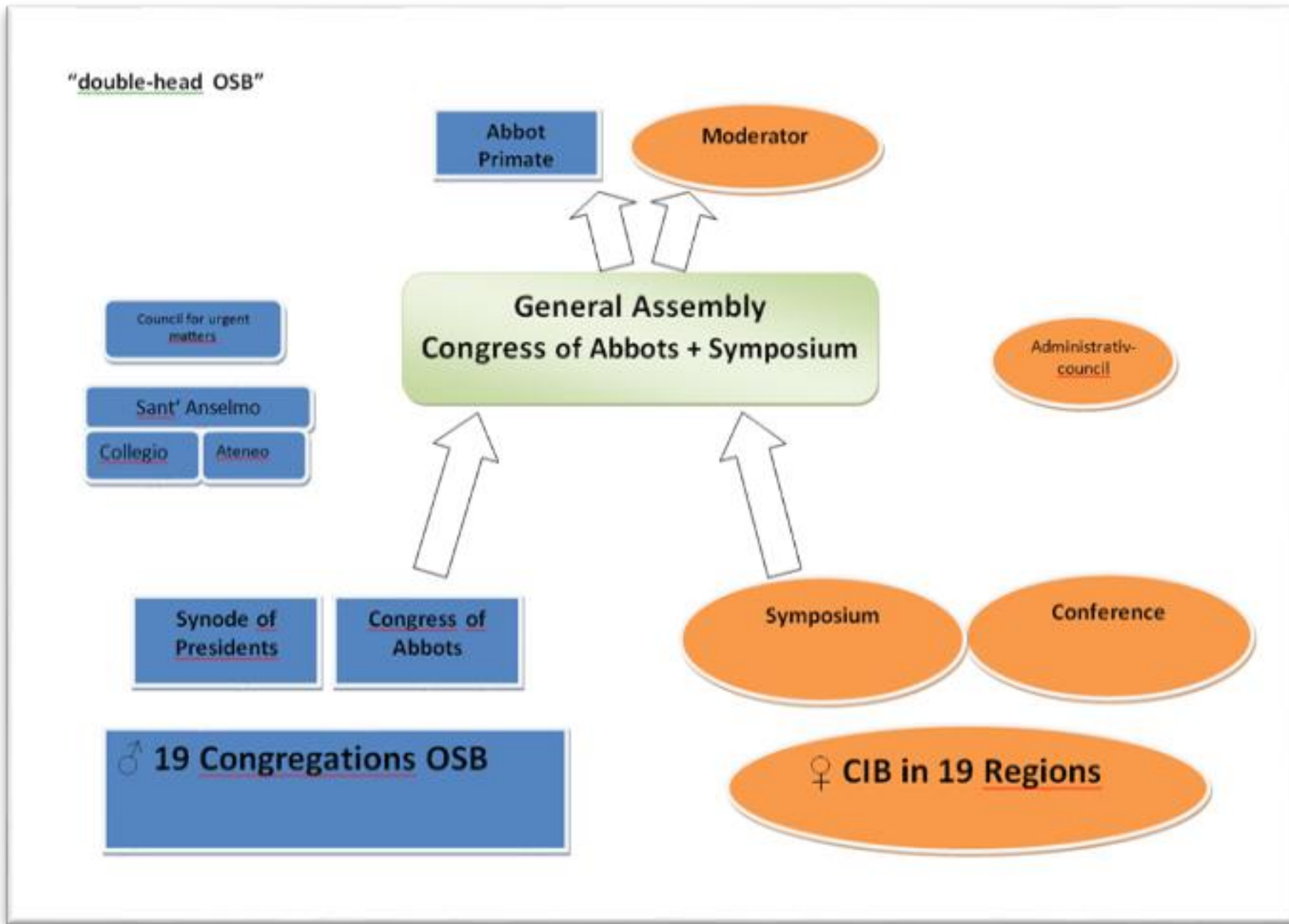
## **Right to vote in the election of the Abbot Primate?**

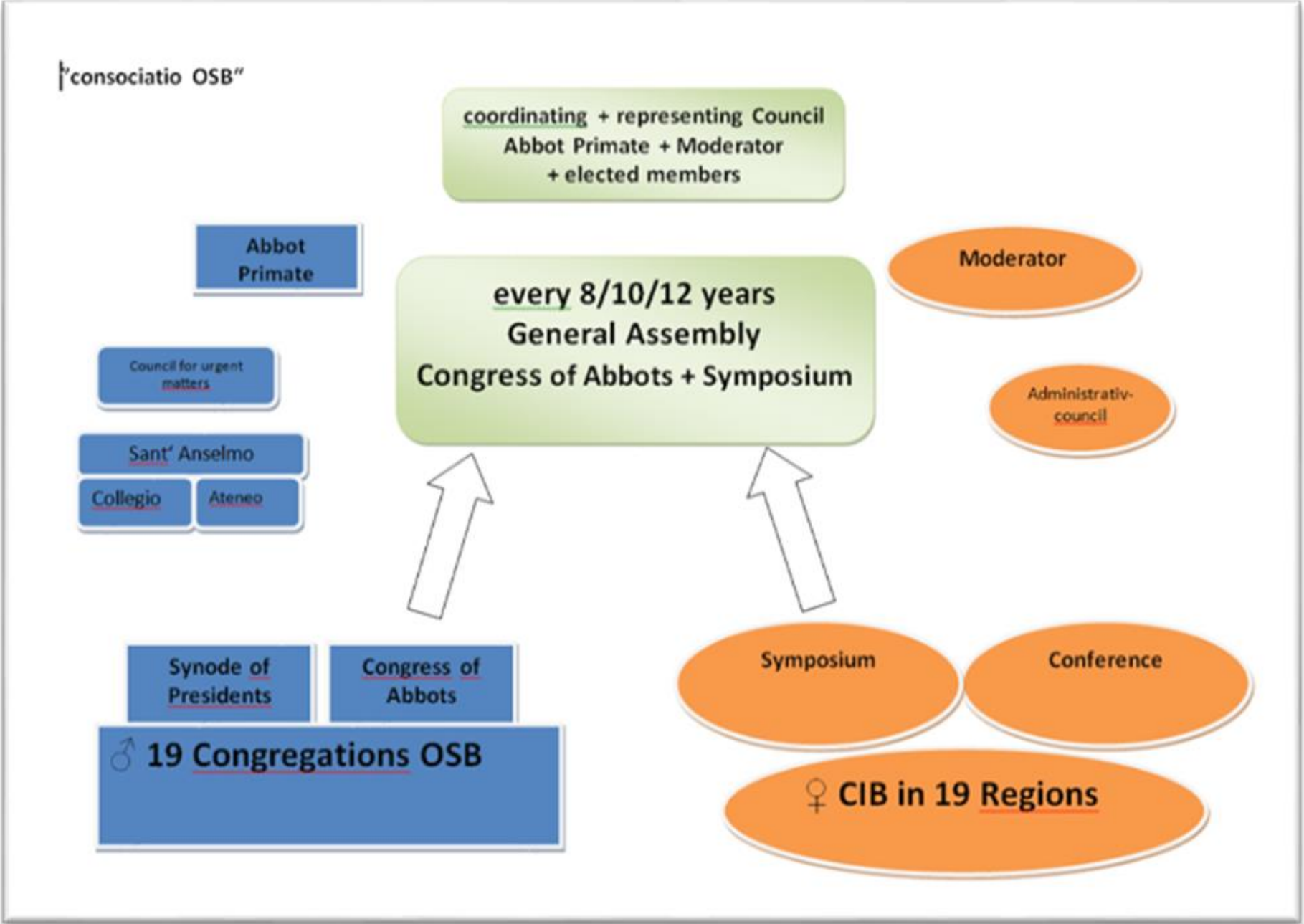
## **Is *con-sociatio* wanted from both sides?**

- **Observation: only the Abbot Primate is responsible for the relation with the women**

2. Two schemes, how consociation could be implanted differently:

double-head  
OSB





# Level of the Benedictine Women, the CIB

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## 1. A own confederation for Benedictine Women?

- *moniales & sorores*
- different juridical status of the monasteries
- monasteries, which are incorporated in the men's congregations

## 2. The CIB as canonical recognized body *sui generis*, that can represent before the Holy See?

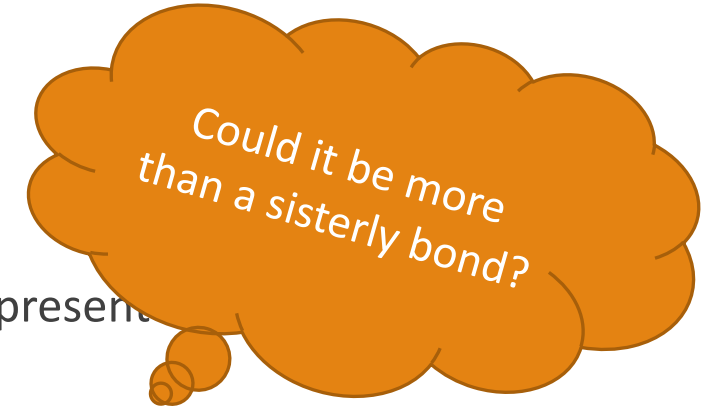
## 4. Role of the Moderator?

## 5. Is the subdivision according to regions still suitable for the future?

## 6. What impact will the recent changes for the monasteries of *moniales* have on the CIB?

## 7. Does the CIB want / need a fixed place (e.g. in Rome? elsewhere?)

## 8. What are the affairs the CIB wanted to deal with?



# CIB - an orientation about what the CIB is, how the CIB began and developed and some canonical observations for further reflection



# Question for discussion

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**When I think on the level of the Confederation**

**What is my vision? What are the challenges to reach it?**

**When I think on the level of the CIB, the Benedictine Women?**

**What is my vision? What are the challenges to reach it?**

**What are the questions, topics which we want to discuss further?**

**What are the questions, topics which we have to discuss further?**