

STATUTES
COMMUNIO INTERNATIONALIS BENEDICTINARUM
Approved by the Conference and Ratified by Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, OSB
September 4, 2009

PREAMBLE

I. NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE C.I.B.

- A. The Nature of the C.I.B.
- B. The Purpose of the C.I.B.
- C. The Means by which the C.I.B. Achieves Its Purpose

II. THE STRUCTURES OF THE C.I.B.

- A. The Conference of the C.I.B.
 - 1. The Nature of the Conference
 - 2. The Members of the Conference
 - a. Regions and Delegates
 - b. The Election of the Delegates and Substitutes
 - c. Exceptional Norm
 - d. Co-opted Delegates and Substitutes
 - e. AIM Representation at the Conference
 - 3. The Meetings of the Conference
 - 4. The Elections Held at the Conference
 - a. The Election of the Moderator and Assistant Moderator
 - i. Term of Office
 - ii. Discernment Process
 - iii. Election Process
 - b. The Election of the Members of the Administrative Council
 - i. Term of Office
 - ii. Election Process
 - iii. Appointment of Members of the Administrative Council
- B. The Administrative Council
 - 1. The Functions of the Administrative Council
 - 2. The Leadership of the Administrative Council
 - a. The Moderator
 - b. The Assistant Moderator
 - 3. The Support Staff of the Administrative Council
 - a. The Secretary
 - b. The Treasurer

III. THE ROLE OF THE ABBOT PRIMATE IN THE C.I.B.

IV. AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES

Preamble

The one common charism, embraced by those who have lived according to the Rule of St. Benedict for 15 centuries, has been implanted and inculturated in all parts of the world to this day. This revered and ancient tradition continues to flourish and be a source of vitality in the church.

The *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* respects and fosters the unique and faithful expression of this charism in each of its monasteries.

I. THE NATURE AND THE PURPOSE OF THE C.I.B.

A. The Nature of the C.I.B.

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.¹

B. The Purpose of the C.I.B.

The purpose of the C.I.B. is:

1. To promote mutual support and exchange of ideas and experience among Benedictine women on an international level and to foster the development of women's monasticism.
2. To continue to develop the *consociatio*² 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.

C. The Means by which the C.I.B. Achieves Its Purpose

The principal means by which the C.I.B. achieves its purpose are:

1. The meetings of the Conference, under the leadership of the Moderator and the Administrative Council;
2. The holding of a Symposium at least once every four years, in order to enhance a worldwide network among Benedictine women through liturgy, prayer, ritual and reflection upon an agreed theme.

¹ *Ius Proprium*, n. 14,15; *Normae de consociatione cum Confoederatione, praesertim n. 7-9*. The 'Catalogus Monasteriorum O.S.B. Sororum et Monialum' lists all communities belonging to (consociated with) the Confederation.

² The Latin word *consociatio* is a combination of two words, *socius*, meaning "ally" or "colleague", and *cum*, meaning "with". It indicates a collaborative relationship between equals. (R. Yeo).

II. STRUCTURES OF THE C.I.B.

A. The Conference of the C.I.B.

1. The Nature of the Conference

The Conference of the C.I.B. is a representative body of all Benedictine women throughout the world and provides a liaison between the communities belonging to the C.I.B. Under the leadership of the Moderator and Administrative Council, the Conference promotes the purpose of the C.I.B. The Conference is the decision-making body of the C.I.B.

The tasks of the Conference are:

- to discuss, develop and promote goals and projects relevant to the purpose of the C.I.B.
- to facilitate the exchange of ideas and advice among the Regions.
- to elect the Moderator, the Assistant Moderator and the Administrative Council.
- to vote on Amendments to the Statutes.

2. The Members of the Conference

a. Regions and Delegates

The Conference of the C.I.B. is formed of Delegates from Regions determined by the Administrative Council on the basis of geographical location, regional structures and statistical information provided by the *Catalogus* of the communities of Benedictine Women.

The list of Regions and Delegates is to be regularly reviewed and revised according to changing circumstances and developments. The list of the Regions is given in the C.I.B. Memorandum. A current listing of the Delegates and Substitutes for each Region will be presented to the members of the Conference at the annual meeting.

Each Region is represented on the C.I.B. Conference by an elected Delegate. An elected Substitute will represent the Region if the Delegate is impeded and will replace her if she ceases to be a Delegate.

b. The Election of the Delegates and Substitutes

- i. Delegate and a Substitute are to be elected by the Major Superiors³ of the Region.
- ii. The Delegates and Substitutes must be or have been Major Superiors. Should the Benedictine Women Superiors of a Region

³ “Major Superior” means Abbess, Conventual Prioress (Moniales and Sorores), Prioress General, President of a Federation (Sorores) or Provincial of a Congregation (Sorores).

choose to elect a former Superior no longer in office, ratification by the Administrative Council is required.

iii. A Delegate or Substitute who ceases to be a Major Superior remains a Delegate or Substitute until the Region holds new elections, or she chooses to resign.

iv. The Superiors of a Region determine the guidelines for holding an election in their Region.

v. Immediately upon election, the name of the Delegate and Substitute should be communicated in writing to the Moderator.

vi. If an election is not possible in a given Region, the Moderator will designate a Delegate and a Substitute after having consulted with the Administrative Council.

vii. The term of office of the Delegate and Substitute are determined by the Region. A Delegate and Substitute may be re-elected indefinitely.

viii. A Region should hold elections at least every six years.

c. Exceptional Norm

Exceptions to the rules given in 2b require the approval of the Administrative Council.

d. Co-opted Delegates and Substitutes of the C.I.B.

The Administrative Council may co-opt⁴ extra Delegates to the Conference to ensure adequate representation of groups and Regions (especially in developing regions) and international Congregations. The decision to co-opt extra Delegates must be confirmed by the Conference. Co-opted Delegates will have active and passive voting rights.

The co-opted Delegate names a Substitute who is then approved by the Administrative Council. The term of office for a co-opted Delegate and Substitute is the term for which they were elected as Superiors of their Congregation(s).

If a co-opted Delegate or Substitute is not representing an international Congregation, she serves until the next election of Administrative Council members.

e. A.I.M. Representation at the Conference

The Administrative Council may invite an A.I.M. representative to attend a meeting of the Conference as an observer without voting rights.⁵

⁴ Co-opt means "to elect into a body by the votes of its existing members." (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary).

⁵ A.I.M. means Alliance for International Monasticism.

3. Meetings of the Conference

The Conference of the C.I.B. meets on the occasion of the Symposia of the whole C.I.B., the Abbots' Congress, and whenever it is deemed appropriate by the Administrative Council. Normally the Conference will meet annually. One-half of the Delegates to the Conference shall constitute a quorum. An absolute majority⁶ of those Delegates present and voting is necessary for the Conference to make a decision.

Expenses incurred by membership of the Conference are normally met at the regional level.

4. The Elections Held at the Conference

a. The Election of the Moderator and Assistant Moderator

A person eligible for the position of Moderator or Assistant Moderator must currently be a major superior or have had experience as a major superior during the last seven years. She must presently be a delegate or a substitute in the C.I.B. Conference or have had experience in one of those positions within the last seven years.

i. Term of Office

The term of office of the Moderator and the Assistant Moderator is four years with the possibility of re-election.

Should the Moderator cease to be a Major Superior she may remain in office as Moderator. When the Moderator is unable for any reason to complete her term of office, the Assistant Moderator assumes the role of Moderator until the next election. The remaining members of the Council may appoint a replacement for the Assistant Moderator.

Upon election the Moderator ceases to be the Delegate of her Region. The Region elects a new Delegate. The Moderator, however, is a member of the Conference with voting rights.

ii. Discernment Process

The election of a Moderator and Assistant Moderator is preceded by a process of spiritual discernment approved by the Administrative Council. A facilitator may be appointed by the Administrative Council to direct and implement the process of discernment and election. This process includes the following:

⁶ Absolute Majority means more than half of the Conference Delegates present and voting (See can.119).

- Identifying immediate and future needs and goals of the Conference of the C.I.B.
- Surfacing desirable leadership qualities.
- Recognizing and listing of potential leaders for Moderator and Assistant Moderator.

iii. Election Process

The Conference nominates a number of candidates for the offices of Moderator and Assistant Moderator. Each person nominated informs the Conference of her decision to accept or decline the nomination.

Those who accept nomination then engage in an exchange of views with the Conference with regard to its future development and the role of the Moderator and Assistant Moderator.

The Moderator and Assistant Moderator are elected in separate secret ballots by an absolute majority⁶ of the Conference Delegates present and voting. If no one receives an absolute majority in the first two ballots, a third ballot is cast containing only the names of the two leading candidates. After a third ballot, if a tie remains, the one who is the senior in age is considered elected.

b. The Election of the Members of the Administrative Council

i. Term of Office

The term of office of the members of the Administrative Council is four years with the possibility of re-election.

An Administrative Council Member who ceases to be a Major Superior or Delegate may complete her term of office on the Administrative Council even if the Region elects a new Delegate. She or her replacement has one vote.

When a member of the Administrative Council is unable to complete her term of office, the remaining members of the Administrative Council may appoint a replacement.

ii. Election Process

Two members of the Conference are elected to the Administrative Council. The Conference nominates a number of candidates for the Administrative Council. Each member nominated informs the Conference of her decision to accept or decline the nomination.

Those who accept nomination then engage in an exchange of views with the Conference with regard to its future development and their role as an Administrative Council Member.

Each Administrative Council Member is elected in separate secret ballots by an absolute majority⁶ of the Conference Delegates present and voting. If no one receives an absolute majority in the first two ballots, a third ballot is cast containing only the names of the two leading candidates. After a third ballot, if a tie remains, the one who is the senior in age is considered elected.

iii. Appointment of Administrative Council Members

Within one month of the election, the Administrative Council may appoint one or two further Conference members to the Administrative Council. The members of the Administrative Council should be, as far as possible, representative of the various forms of monastic life.

A member of the Administrative Council appointed as a replacement during a term serves until the next election of members to the Administrative Council.

B. The Administrative Council

1. The Functions of the Administrative Council

The Administrative Council under the leadership of the Moderator, prepares the Agenda for the meetings of the Administrative Council and the Conference, plans the Symposia and communicates with the Abbot Primate on matters relating to Benedictine women.

Expenses incurred by the Administrative Council are normally covered through the Solidarity Fund.

2. The Leadership of the Administrative Council

- a. **The Moderator:** A Moderator, elected by the Conference, is the coordinator of all of the activity of the C.I.B. The Moderator summons and presides over Conference and Administrative Council meetings and directs the work of the Secretariat. The Moderator is the liaison with the C.I.B. Conference, the Abbot Primate and the *Confederatio Benedictina*.
- b. **The Assistant Moderator:** An Assistant Moderator is elected to the Administrative Council by the Conference. When the Moderator is unable for any reason to complete her term of office, the Assistant Moderator assumes the role of Moderator until the next election.

3. The Support Staff of the Administrative Council

- a. **The Secretary:** A Secretary, appointed by the Administrative Council, communicates with all the members of the C.I.B. Conference, takes the minutes of the Conference and Administrative Council meetings,

ensures the circulation of minutes, documents and information, supervises the archives and performs other tasks determined by the Moderator.

- b. **The Treasurer:** A Treasurer, and, if needed, up to two assistants appointed by the Administrative Council, administer the funds, raise money as directed by the Administrative Council, present the accounts to the Administrative Council annually, and whenever requested, perform other tasks determined by the Moderator.

III. THE ROLE OF THE ABBOT PRIMATE IN THE C.I.B.

As a symbol of unity for all Benedictines, the Abbot Primate fosters collaboration between the communities of the C.I.B. and the communities of monks of the Confederation, and he promotes unity between the C.I.B. and the Confederation.

The Conference and the Administrative Council will invite suggestions from the Abbot Primate for the agenda, ask him to attend their meetings and keep him informed of developments within the C.I.B.

The Abbot Primate ratifies amendments to the Statutes.

IV. AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES

Proposals for amendments to these Statutes may be made by the Administrative Council, the Conference or the Abbot Primate.

Amendments require the consent of the Conference by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting and ratification by the Abbot Primate.