



Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum

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Editorial

This year's Newsletter brings information about the 5th International Symposium of the CIB as well as news of the changes in the Administrative Council. Once more ca. 100 Benedictine Women from all over the world met in San'Anselmo, Rome, to share thoughts on their common Benedictine values. It was again a fruitful and enriching encounter between the different cultures and traditions. This Symposium was prepared by the Moderator and Administrative Council whose term ran from 2002 - 2006: Abbess Máire Hickey from Dinklage, Germany, Sr. Judith Ann Heble, Sacred Heart Monastery Lisle, USA, Sr. Sonia Wagner, Good Samaritan Benedictines, Australia, M. Theodora Ntuli, Prioress General of the Twasana Benedictines in South Africa, Abbess Jolanta Rzoska, Zarnowiec, Poland and M.Dolores Hong, Tutzing Missionary Benedictines, Seoul, Korea. With the closing of the Symposium the term of the Administrative Council came to an end. Abbess Máire made it clear that she would not be available for a further term. Her leadership of the CIB over the past nine years has been very much appreciated and in many different ways gratitude and respect was expressed for her work of establishing the CIB during her term of office. An appreciation of her contribution is to be found in this Newsletter as well as information about the new Council and a variety of articles covering these events.

New Leadership Team for the CIB

At the meeting of the Conference September 15, 2006, a new administration was elected. The new Moderator for the next four year term is Prioress Judith Ann Heble of Sacred Heart Monastery, Lisle, IL USA, President of the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses (CBP) and Assistant Moderator for the past four years.



Moderator Prioress Judith Ann Heble with her predecessor Abbess Máire Hickey.

Assistant Moderator is Abbess Vera Lucia Parreiras Horta of Salvador, Brazil and the other two elected members of the Council are Prioress General Theodora Ntuli of the Twasana Benedictines in South Africa and Sr. Teresa Paula Dias Perdigao, of the monastery Roriz in Portugal and President of the Benedictine international congregation Regina Apostolorum.

The new Moderator and Administrative Council met the same day and nominated two more members, as is possible according to the statutes of the CIB. The two nominated members of the Council are: Prioress Zoë Davis of Turvey Abbey, Great Britain, and Sr. Clare Condon, Prioress of the Good Samaritan Benedictines, Australia.

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**Do you have questions about the structure and workings of
the CIB?**

**Ask your delegate for a copy of the CIB Handbook,
now available in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.**

The 5th International Symposium of the CIB (Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum) San'Anselmo, Rome, 5th - 15th September 2006.

The theme of this year's Symposium was RB 64,19 - Wisdom leadership: *"...so that the strong have something to yearn for and the weak have nothing to run from..."* This topic related directly to the interests and situation of the participants who were for the most part all *superiors* of their communities, Prioresses and Abbesses chosen to represent their region, one of the 19 regions all round the world, from USA and South America, English and French speaking countries in Africa as well as several Asian countries, where the largest Benedictine communities are in Korea and the Philippines. Oceania was well represented because the Australian Good Samaritan Benedictines sent, in addition to their delegates, two of their sisters to act as Facilitator and Liturgist with special responsibility for the environment. Although the Symposia are always primarily orientated towards Benedictine superiors, this was the second time that *never community members* were invited, one from each of the 19 regions, giving the younger generation the chance of discovering by experience the energising effect of meeting with women from all over the world from different cultures and traditions but who nevertheless have the same goal and the same rule of life as oneself.

What the Symposium meant to me.

A reflection from a younger sister.

In September, I along with 17 other younger members of Benedictine monasteries from around the world had the special privilege of attending the CIB Symposium in Rome. In the Dialogues of St. Gregory, St. Benedict is described as seeing before he died the whole world in a ray of light. As we gathered together at San Anselmo, I felt that we were a part of that vision. During our days together we had the opportunity to hear talks from respected scholars and leaders related to wisdom leadership and these were very valuable and informative. Perhaps even more valuable was experiencing the lived experience of leadership from all the Abbesses and Prioresses at the Symposium. To hear their love for their communities and for monastic life, to hear their commitment to the future, and to hear their appreciation of we newer members was a profound experience. It was also important to have the opportunity to share our experiences and to form bonds with each other.

Sr. Phoebe Schwartze, Sacred Heart Monastery, Richardton, ND, USA

Saying good-bye to M.Máire Hickey



Abbot Primate Notker in his appreciation of M.Máire found warm words of thanks and spoke of her gentle, quiet, respectful but clear and determined leadership.

He compared her with a train chugging on through a hilly and wooded landscape, winding its way, often unseen, but constantly reappearing, never rushing anyone but never letting the goal out of sight.

M. Máire is a person intensely conscious of the leading of the Holy Spirit. It has been a great privilege to me to work at her side and to see at close hand the way she stepped back and allowed the Spirit of God to work. Her initiatives were always to give the Spirit more room, to listen more closely to His promptings and to carry out to the end, at whatever cost, whatever His leadings seemed to be. And so I also had the privilege to share her joy at seeing something wonderful unfold before our eyes. It was like seeing a child being born, new life coming into being, a gift of God. Thank you M.Máire for leading the way. Sr. M.

SPEAKERS

Rev. Fr. S.M. Selvaratnam, OMI, born in Sri Lanka in 1941, has training in Audio-Visual Education, Psychology and Counseling. He is a member of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and is a certified clinical supervisor with the NACC. He is now director of a counselling centre in Sri Lanka as well as being clinical supervisor at the International Institute of St. Anselm's, Kent, United Kingdom..

Abbess Joanna Jamieson OSB, born 1935, completed Post Graduate Studies at Glasgow School of Art, entered Stanbrook Abbey, England 1956, solemnly professed 1961, served as infirmarian and novice mistress, elected abbess 1983.

Sr.Aquinata Böckmann OSB

Sr.Aquinata Böckmann, born in 1937, profession in the Community of Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Tutzing, 1962, Doctorate in Spirituality at the University of Münster, 1972, professor at the Monastic Institute, S.Anselmo and at the University Regina Mundi in Rome since 1974.

She conducts seminars on the Rule of St.Benedict and gives retreats to Benedictine men and women in various parts of the world.

Prioress Cecilia Dwyer born 1945, entered Saint Benedict Monastery, Bristow, USA 1963, served as teacher, musician, liturgist and formation/vocation director and for several terms as prioress since 1987. She says of herself: "the Liturgy of the Hours is the food of my soul."

On the following pages there are some reflections on the experience of the Symposium by participants from Africa, Asia, Oceania, USA and Europe, superiors and newer members. In order to reflect the variety, these articles are being printed in the original language.

**NOS IMPRESSIONS SUR LA SYMPOSIUM
CIB 2006, M. Eulalie Mazuya**

Nos impressions sur l'organisation, l'initiative et la participation à cette rencontre sur la CIB sont très positives d'autant plus que c'est notre première fois d'y prendre part.

La rencontre était si fraternelle et a levé l'équivoque sur le sens et l'objectif de la CIB.

Il n'y a pas eu perte de temps, l'horaire était bien adapté et respecté. Certes, tout travail humain n'est pas exhaustif, l'importance était la participation active de chacune. L'organisation était bonne, une rencontre si enrichissante qui est le fruit d'une préparation lointaine. Ce qui a fait preuve du choix des ces deux intervenants et de partage de nos deux mères sur leurs expériences de vie d'un bon guide. Tous étaient à la hauteur et bien clair dans leurs exposés. Leurs rapports nous donnent un grand piste et un modèle pouvant nous aider à assumer avec amour le service que le Seigneur attend de nous : « Le leadership religieux est un bon guide qui a des relations influentes visant un changement, une transformation ; et selon la règle de Saint Benoît, il construit la communauté en marchant ensemble vers un même but.»

La simplicité, l'ouverture et la spontanéité ont enrichies nos échanges qui nous ont amené à un contact facile entre nous et une bonne solidarité. Par là, nous encourageons et félicitons cette initiative d'inviter les jeunes professes perpétuelles qui nous ont partagé leurs expériences réelles dans la confiance.

Pour l'avenir, il est nécessaire de faire connaître la CIB et diffuser les informations à toutes les bénédictines. Nous profitons l'opportunité pour dire merci de nous avoir invité à cette rencontre de la CIB qui est bénéfique pour nos communautés du Congo et celles de notre région en général.

***Mère Eulalie MAZUYA,
Prieure du Monastère Saint Sauveur,
Lubumbashi, /RD CONGO, Region 17***

For the future it will be important to make the CIB known and to pass on information to all Benedictine women's communities. I take this opportunity to say thank you for the invitation to take part. I am sure that the CIB is very valuable for our communities in the Congo and in the whole of our region.

**MY IMPRESSIONS OF THE CIB
SYMPOSIUM 2006, by M.Eulalie Mazuya**

I have very favourable impressions of the CIB Symposium, of the organisation involved, the ideas behind it all and the way that everyone was included and actively took part. This impressed me the more, since it was my first time to take part.

The sisterly atmosphere took away all my reservations about the point of such a meeting.

The schedule was balanced and respected by all and the time well used. For sure, nothing that is human is perfect, but the important thing was that everyone actively participated. The organisation was good and it was clear that it had been prepared well in advance. This was evident in the choice of the two speakers and the invitation to the two monastic leaders to share their experiences. All four were excellent and very clear in what they had to say. Their papers offered a wide spectrum as well as modelling for us how to take up our ministry in love in the way God expects from us: "A religious leader is a good guide who has influential relationships in view of change and transformation; and - as mapped out in the Rule of St. Benedict - is someone who builds up the community by encouraging all to journey together in the same direction."

The simplicity, openness and spontaneity enriched our sharing and helped us get to know each other and bond easily. I would like especially to congratulate the organisers for inviting the younger sisters who had recently made perpetual vows, and who trustfully and openly shared with us their authentic experiences.





**Sr. Scholastika Deck OSB,
St. Lioba/Freiburg Germany,
Region 6**

CIB-Symposium 2006

Das erste Mal dabei: Wie würde es sein? Ich kam mit diffusen Erwartungen und es war alles noch interessanter, noch bunter, noch eindrücklicher, als ich es mir je hätte vorstellen können. Und das alles in Rom! Äbtissinnen und Priorinnen mit unterschiedliche Erfahrungs-Hintergrund, aus Prioraten mit mehreren hundert Schwestern und aus kleinen klausurierten Gemeinschaften, aus Abteien mit jahrhundertelanger Geschichte oder ganz jungen Kommunitäten, aus blühenden Klöstern mit vielen Berufen und aus Klöstern, die kaum Überlebenschancen sehen, aus armen und aus reichen Ländern. Es waren alte erfahrene Äbtissinnen (bzw. Priorinnen) dabei und junge mit wenigen Amtsjahren; da waren die amerikanischen Mütter und die englischen, die französischen und die afrikanischen, die italienischen und die asiatischen u.a.; dazwischen noch die jungen Schwestern aus den Regionen. All diese Menschen waren zusammen, lebten und beten gemeinsam in verschiedensten Sprachen, tauschten sich aus über das Gehörte und teilten miteinander ihre Erfahrungen.

Und in all dieser Vielfalt scheint dann mit der Zeit – zumindest schemenhaft – das Gemeinsame auf wie eine Art Essenz! Die prägende Kraft des nediktinischen Lebens wird erfahrbar und damit auch die prägende Kraft der Regel des hl. Vaters Benedikt, dessen Geburtsort wir zu unserer Freude gemeinsam besucht haben. Es war eine reiche – und hilfreiche – Erfahrung, noch weit über das so wichtige Thema „Wisdom of Leadership“ hinaus. Es ist gut, dass es die CIB gibt und es ist gut, wenn dieses Netzwerk benediktinischer Frauen noch stärker und noch dichter wird.

CIB Symposium 2006

It was my first time. What would it be like? I arrived with vague expectations but the experience was more interesting, more colourful, more impressive than I could ever have imagined. And in Rome too! Abbesses and Prioresses with varied backgrounds, some from priories with several hundred sisters, others from small enclosed communities, some from abbeys with hundreds of years history behind them and others from new foundations. They came from strong, flowering monasteries with many new members as well as from monasteries that see little chance of a future. They represented monasteries from poor and rich countries alike. There were older, experienced abbesses/ prioresses as well as young ones newly in office; there were the American mothers and the English mothers, the French and the African, the Italian and the Asian etc. and mixed between were the new members from the 19 regions. All these people were together, lived and prayed together in different languages, exchanged opinions on what they heard and shared their experiences with one another.

And within this diversity with time one caught a glimpse - at least an outline - of what we had in common, as it were the essence! One recognised the formative power of the Benedictine way of life and the formative power of the Rule of St. Benedict, whose birth-place we visited together, to the joy of all. It was a rich - and helpful - experience, far beyond the very important theme “Wisdom Leadership”. It is good that we have the CIB and it would be very good if this network of Benedictine Women spreads out and grows stronger.



Sr. Clare Condon, Glebe Point, Sydney, Australia, Region 15.

The 5th Symposium of the CIB was my first as Superior of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict. As a newcomer, the theme *Wisdom Leadership* was just what I needed - the input was interesting, stimulating and challenging. What was most significant for me was the sharing of ideas, thoughts and hopes around our tables and with the larger group.

The diversity of language, culture and life experience added incredible richness to the experience. In our diversity of life styles as Benedictine women, there is a sense of great unity and communion. I look forward to working towards the fulfillment of the conference goals for the next four years.



**A vision of a new future
by
Sr. Maria Roberta Crocetti**

Together with young sisters from all over the world, I felt myself called to be a bridge of hope between the past and the future.

Je suis arrivée à Rome pour participer comme jeune sœur de la Région d'Italie. . Ici je me suis trouvée aussitôt dans une réalité tout à fait nouvelle pour moi. Dans un premier moment je me suis sentie éperdue par le « mur » de la langue, mais j'ai pu toucher vite la possibilité d'une profonde communication et unité au-delà de la langue, des différentes traditions, des cultures et au-delà de l'histoire de chaque région et communauté. J'ai vu dans cette œuvre de l'Esprit Saint la collaboration de beaucoup des sœurs qui ont travaillé avec créativité pour que tout pouvait être à service de la communion, à partir par la liturgie, jusqu'aux moments de copartage et d'allégresse. Dans ces jours j'ai pensé beaucoup de fois à l'image des Dialogues de S. Grégoire : S. Benoît qui voit tout le monde dans un rayon de lumière. Chacun de nous était là en portant toute sa communauté et la réalité monastique de sa région dans une unique recherche de Dieu et un même désir de vraie vie évangélique en acceptant les défis de notre temps.

Dans ce regard globalisé, ou mieux de communion, j'ai vu le monachisme bénédictin comme un humanité en marche, dans un horizon ouvert où nous sommes dans nos communautés, parties petites, mais précieuses d'une histoire qui est en train d'être construite maintenant, bien avec nous, dans formes souvent beaucoup différentes, mais au même temps bonnes et nées dans l'esprit de S. Benoît et de sa Règle. Dans cette expérience j'ai trouvé comme une clef de lecture de l'histoire du présent.

Regardant à travers ce regard « mondial » on voit un changement en cours, un temps de transition où on prend et on redonne la richesse de la tradition où on la traduit dans une forme qui soit une source vive, toujours un lieu de rencontre avec l'amour de Dieu. Ce chemin de conversion défie la peur et la dépression, surtout dans notre Europe et dans l'Italie.

Avec les jeunes sœurs de tout le monde je me suis sentie appelée à être un pont d'espérance et de confiance entre le passé et le futur, à garder la certitude que la vie monastique est un bien remis à nos humanités, un bien que Dieu même garde, alimente et porte en avant.

I came to Rome to participate in the Symposium as the young sister from Region 1 (Italy and Malta)... I found myself in a situation which was completely new for me. At first I felt overwhelmed by the "barrier" of language, but I quickly discovered that it was possible to communicate and to sense a unity on a deep level beyond language, beyond the different traditions and cultures, and beyond the historical development of each region and community. I recognised the work of the Holy Spirit in the way many sisters had collaborated and worked with a lot of creativity, from the liturgy, to ways of sharing and to time of joy and playfulness, all this in the service of the Communio. During these days I often thought of the picture from the dialogues of St. Gregory in which St. Benedict sees the whole world in one ray of light. Each of us represented our own community and the way we lived the monastic life in our region, and yet all of us were equally searching for God, all had the same desire for a life that truly follows the gospel, all of us were faced with the limitations of our times.

When looking from this global perspective, or better, when pondering on this COMMUNIO, I recognised Benedictine monasticism as representing the whole of humanity on the move, with a wide open horizon, each of us in our own different way in our own community, seemingly insignificant, but together part of a history which we are writing together in the spirit of St. Benedict and his rule. I discovered a key to this experience in looking at modern day history. Meditating on this "global perspective" one recognises that there has been a change of course, that in the present day we are in a time of transition. No matter whether one is drawing from tradition, recognising and enjoying its riches, or whether one is passing tradition on to others in a way that it can be recognised as a source of life, which ever one chooses, I recognised that both ways are occasions for experiencing God's love. This road of conversion is a challenge to fear and depression, especially here in Europe, in Italy.

Together with young sisters from all over the world, I felt myself called to be a bridge of hope between the past and the future, called to preserve the conviction that the monastic life is a great gift for the whole of humanity, something precious which God keeps and nurtures and guides into the future. It seemed to me that we were

Il m'a semblé que nous sommes dans une réconciliation en acte entre la tradition glorieuse des siècles passés et les petites « bourgeons » de vie qui maintenant sont en train de poindre. J'ai vu ça aussi à propos de l'identité de la guide. Il a été encourageant rencontrer dans celles qui tiennent la place de Christ pour nous, les tracts du service, de l'écoute, de la confiance et de la recherche de soi-même avant et avec l'aide donné à la communauté pour un chemin fécond, libre et libérant, joyeux pour toutes ensemble. Ces réalités ont parlé nous la langue du Evangile et de la Règle.

Je conserve après moi particulièrement fort le moment de la rénovation de la Profession Monastique de tous nous dans l'Eglise de S. Scolastica. La désolation de la structure et ensemble le signe de offrir nous même, fait dans le diverses langues, a été pour moi comme la prophétie d'une nouvelle vie de communion bénie par Dieu.

acting out reconciliation between a glorious tradition of past centuries and the small "buds" which are at the point of bursting into life. I saw this too in the question of leadership. It was encouraging to meet women who take for us the place of Christ, to recognise their sense of service, their ability to listen, to experience the trust they showed and to see their own search to understand themselves, and to realise that the helps they give to the community for a fruitful and liberating spiritual journey, bringing joy to everyone, all belongs to their own spiritual journey. Experiencing all this I knew that it was the language of the Gospel and of the Rule.

The strongest moment that I personally cherish was the renewal of vows, which we made together in the church of St. Scholastica. The delapidated state of the church on the one hand and we on the other, witnessing to our wish to offer our whole lives, doing this in the different languages, this was for me like a prophesy of a new life in communion with each other blessed by God.

*Sr Marie-Thérèse Hautier
Monastère de l'Alliance
Rixensart
Belgique*

For Benedictines a Symposium is a wonderful chance to celebrate together. From one Symposium to the next we have moved forward in our ways of doing this.

CIB-liturgy

Un symposium, c'est l'occasion de rencontres, d'échanges. Un temps pour recevoir des informations, des réflexions, des partages d'expérience. Mais pour des bénédictines, c'est aussi un temps favorable pour célébrer ensemble. De symposium en symposium, nos manières de faire progressent, s'ajustent pour répondre à cet immense défi : comment célébrer et se rejoindre dans nos différentes sensibilités culturelles?

Cette fois-ci, j'ai beaucoup aimé le rituel d'ouverture de nos rencontres : des symboles simples, la lumière du cierge pascal, la vasque d'eau baptismale. Porter la lumière à chaque groupe, se signer : des gestes simples. Des refrains simples lancé par la schola des jeunes sœurs polonaises. Le rituel du début de l'après-midi s'est ainsi répété chaque jour dans sa sobriété éloquente.

Un autre temps fort fut le renouvellement de nos vœux dans l'église de ste Scholastique à Norcia : debout parmi les gravats de ce lieu délabré, et si porteur d'histoire, chaque groupe linguistique, tour à tour, a renouvelé ses vœux. Pendant ce temps, les sœurs tout autour en étaient à la fois les auditrices, les témoins et, je crois, priaient silencieusement pour celles qui s'exprimaient.

La finale du symposium, le 14 septembre, a donné lieu à la remise d'une petite croix par M. Maire et sr Agnès : encore un geste tout simple, mais j'ai admiré la manière dont chacune recevait cette croix, avec foi.

Voilà trois moments forts qui m'ont touchée. La liturgie au quotidien, les laudes en latin et les Vêpres en anglais, l'Eucharistie en langues variées, tout était préparé avec soin et a permis de vivre une liturgie paisible, priante. Merci à toutes celles qui y ont contribué!

The Symposium Liturgy

A Symposium gives the opportunity to meet people, to share with others. There is a place for receiving information, for reflecting and for sharing one's experiences. But for Benedictines it is also a wonderful chance to celebrate together. From one Symposium to the next we have moved forward in our ways of doing this, making adjustments in answer to the enormous challenge of how to be united and celebrate together in the face of our different tastes and cultures?

This time I loved the opening ritual for our meeting. The symbols were so simple: the light of the pascal candle and the font with baptismal water. To bring the light to each group and to sign oneself with the sign of the cross, these were such simple gestures. The refrains sung by the schola of young polish sisters were simple too. Similarly at the beginning of each afternoon a similar ritual was repeated with eloquent sobriety.

Another very strong element was the renewal of vows in the church of St. Scholastica in Norcia. Standing between the rubble in this delapidated place so charged with history, each language group, one after the other, renewed their vows. The other sisters stood waiting, they listened, were witnesses, and I believe they prayed quietly for those whose turn it was.

At the closing ceremony, on September 14, there was space for M.Maire and Sr. Agnes to hand over to each person a small cross: again a very simple gesture, but I admired the way each person received her cross, accepting it in an act of faith.

These are three occasions which touched me. The daily liturgy, lauds in English and Vespers in Latin, Eucharist in a variety of languages, everything had been prepared with great care, a fact which made it possible to experience the office as peaceful and prayerful. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this.





LITURGY - PILGRIMAGE
COMMON EXPRESSIONS
OF
FAITH



Renewing my vows in Norcia
 by Sr. Austin Chang OSB Taiwan
 Region 13

It was a great opportunity for me to be able to participate in the 5th International Symposium of the CIB in Rome, 5th - 15th September 2006. I met Benedictine sisters from all over the world. It was a very exciting experience for me.

I want to say something about the renewal of vows that took place when on a pilgrimage to the birthplace of St. Benedict. In 1982 I made my first vows in Taiwan. And now here I was in 2006 renewing my vows at Norcia near Rome. When I made my first vows I was just alone at that moment. After 24 years, I renew my vows together with over one hundred Benedictine sisters from all over the world. That was a really beautiful and touching moment for me.

We used different languages, German, Italian, Spanish, France and English, to renew our vows in the beautiful birth-place of St. Benedict. Even though I don't know the other languages, I still tried to follow with my heart to make my vows. It was an amazing moment. We were all united in the same spirit of Benedict. I used my imagination to see young Benedict and his sister Scholastica as they might have been here as children close to nature. Maybe they shared secrets and had fun together. But most of all, they must have prayed together. I can imagine Our Father in Heaven enjoying their childish but sweet dreams of the future. And here we were, in that future.....

An opportunity to encounter our heritage
 by Sr. Phoebe Schwarzer OSB, USA
 Region 9

On our free day there was an expedition to visit the Catacombs of Priscilla. As we walked together among the places where our ancestors in faith prayed and were buried and saw their drawings on the walls, many of us felt a connection with the earliest history of our Church. We were deeply moved to celebrate Mass together at the Catacombs.

Our pilgrimage day to Norcia was an opportunity to connect with our Benedictine roots. We prayed together on the buses and then celebrated Mass together at the Basilica of St. Benedict. Under this church are the ruins of the home where tradition says Sts. Benedict and Scholastica were born. We also had the opportunity to visit the beautiful town of Norcia and to look out on the Umbrian mountains that would have been the scenery that formed part of the Saints' background. In the afternoon we went to the church of St. Scholastica, said to be where the family of Sts. Benedict and Scholastica had their summer home. In the church there are ancient frescos of the two saints. There we renewed our vows and sang the Suscipe together. It was another very profound experience for us.

While each of us newer members have different memories and different moments that are special to each of us, I know that it was a great privilege for us to have the opportunity to be at the Symposium and to learn from each other and from all our wisdom leaders.

Following in their footsteps, by Sr. Michaela Hedican OSB

Walking into the chapel at S'Anselmo for the first meeting of the Symposium was an experience of being immersed in the richness of our Benedictine heritage and at the same time of being carried to the corners of the world where beginning Benedictinism is flourishing. Filled with gratitude and hope, I settled into my table where an experience of a "world-wide" Benedictine community (seven different countries were represented) awaited me. The great versatility of the Rule and the commonalities bonding those of us who seek God as followers of Benedict was highlighted for me whether I was conversing with Benedictines from Korea or Canada, Uganda or England.

The time we spent at the basilica of Saint Paul-Outside-the-Walls gave me the sensation that I was stepping into the great stream of Benedictine history.



Sister Michaela Hedican, Prioress of Saint Bede Monastery Eau Claire, WI, USA, Federation of St. Benedict, Region 9, reading during Vespers in St. Pauls Outside the Walls with the Benedictine community of monks.

The earliest account of a monastic community residing at Saint Paul-Outside-the-Walls dates back to the 6th century. The richness of Benedictinism in the abbey and the basilica was touching and its vibrancy was attested to by the international community residing there. Learning the history of the abbey and the longstanding relationship of the Benedictines and the Vatican was fascinating and inspiring. Abbot Edward shared with us that Pope John XXIII announced the conveying of the Second Vatican Council one Sunday when he joined the monks for Vespers. Our being able to pray Vespers with the monks was an experience of stepping ever deeper into the ancient and ever moving waters of our Benedictine tradition.

Celebrating Eucharist at the Church of St. Benedict in Norcia and renewing our profession at the Church of St. Scholastica provided an experience of touching the heart of our Benedictine beginnings. Despite the Church of St. Scholastica being in need of repair and reconstruction it was a witness to the enduring framework provided for us by the wisdom of Benedict and the example of Scholastica.

To follow in their footsteps is an awesome privilege that was strengthened and sustained for me by the pilgrimage with my Symposium sisters to the holy ground of our Benedictine birth.

GOALS AGREED ON BY THE CONFERENCE FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

- 1) Develop a profile for the 21st century through ongoing formation.**
- 2) Question ourselves whether we, as Benedictine Women, have a word for the world.**
- 3) Search for better ways of disseminating monastic material between Benedictines of different regions.**
- 4) Review the structures of the CIB within the next four years.**

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THE CIB CONFERENCE

The present delegates of the 19 regions who form the Conference are:

M. Giacinta Soverino, Assisi, Italy, delegate for Region 1, M. Concepción Fanjul Camporro, Alba de Tormes, Spain, delegate for region 2, M. Véronique Dussud, Brou sur Chantereine, France, delegate for region 3, M. Zoë Davies, Turvey, England, delegate for region 4, M. Thérèse-Marie Dupagne, Hurtebise, Belgium, delegate for region 5, M. Johanna Domek, Cologne, Germany, delegate for region 6, M. Jolanta Rzoska, Zarnowiec, Poland, delegate for region 7, M. Anastazija Cizmin, Croatia, delegate for region 8, M. Isabelle Thouin, Ste. Marthe-sur-le-Lac, Canada, Sr. Judith Ann Heble, Lisle, USA and Sr. Esther Fangman, Kansas City, USA, delegates for region 9, Sr. Josephine Markiewicz, Mexico, delegate for region 10, M. Vera Lucia Parreiras Horta, Salvador, Brazil, delegate for region 11, M. María Teresa Ferrari, Rafaela, Argentine, delegate for region 12, M. Dolores Hong, Seoul, Korea, delegate for region 13, M. Celeste Nidea, Vigan, Philippines, delegate for region 14, Sr. Clare Condon, Sydney, Australia, delegate for region 15, M. Inviolata Anton Omari, Ndanda, Tanzania, delegate for region 16, M. Henriette Wendbala Kalmogo, Koubri, Burkina Faso, delegate for region 17, M. Theodora Ntuli, Twasana, South Africa, delegate for region 18 and M. Benita Vadakkepurakal, Ashirbhuan, India, delegate for region 19. The statutes also allow the possibility of co-opting another member and naming a substitute for her. M. Irene Dabalus, Casa S. Spirito, Rome was until Oktober 2006 the co-opted member. During the voting this year she passed her active and passive voting rights to her substitute, M. Teresa Paula Simoes Dias Perdigao, Roriz, Portugal, President of the Congregation Regina Apostolorum. M. María Teresa Ferrari, Rafaela, Argentine (Region 12) was unable to come and was represented by her substitute, M. Estella Maria Armelin, San Luis, Argentine.

The next meeting of the Conference will take place September 2007 in Manila, Philippines.

Below: Conference meeting, September 15th 2006. Right: the new Moderator, Sr. Judith Ann Heble, congratulates the other members of the Administrative Council. From left to right: M. Theodora Ntuli, Sr. Judith Ann Heble, Sr. Teresa Paula Simoes Dias Perdigao, M. Máire Hickey, M. Vera Lucia Parreiras Horta.

