



Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum

www.benedictines-cib.org

September 2013 -Brazil

Bem-vindo ao Brasil; Bienvenido a Brasil; Bienvenue au Brésil;
Benvenuti in Brasile; Willkommen in Brasilien;
Welcome to Brazil

The CIB Delegates, Substitutes, Observers, Guests and Staff arrived at the Mosteiro da Encarnação in Mogi das Cruzes, Brazil on September 2nd and 3rd to begin the 2013 Conference Meeting. M. Michela Porcellato welcomed the Delegates in the newly built Chapel at the Camaldolese Monastery where we joined in the celebration of the first Mass. We hope you enjoy the articles about our Pilgrimage in Brazil.



Participants Left to Right: Row 1: M. Christina Chulla, S. Maria de Lourdes, hosts at the Mosteiro da Encarnação; S. Mary John Manazan, Region14 & Administrative Council; S. Judith Anne Heble, Moderator; M. Vania Maria Miranda Toscano de Britto, Region 11; M. Magdalena Shetunyenga, Region 18 & Administrative Council; M. Teresa Paula Dias Perdigão, Co-opted Delegate; S. Clare Condon, Region 15; Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, M. Martha Lúcia Ribeiro Teixeira, Region 11. Row 2: M. Michela Porcellato, Region 1; S. Scholastika Häring, guest; M. Franziska Lukas, Region 6; M. Metilda George, Region 19 & Administrative Council; S. Anne Shephard, Region 9; M. Blandine-Marie Kuegah, Region 17; S. Rosann Ocken, Region 16; M. Martyna Wysocka, Region 7; M. Zoë Davis, Region 4 & Administrative Council; S. Roberta Peluso de Oliveira, guest; Back Row: S. Patricia Crowley, Region 9; S. Cristina Lavinhati, staff; M. Thérèse-Marie Dupagne, Region 5 & Assistant Moderator; S. Mary Jane Vergotz, secretary.

Not pictured: M. Marie-Caroline Lecouffe, Region 3; M. Angela Strobel, Co-opted Delegate and AIM Secretariat Observers: S. Gisela Happ and S. Placid Dolores.



We are grateful to Benedictine Women and Men who opened their hearts and their homes to the CIB Conference Members during our pilgrimage to Brazil. Thank you for sharing Benedictine Hospitality throughout our visit.



FROM THE MODERATOR

I believe it was back in 2009 on a boat in the Adriatic – while the CIB Delegates visited Region 8, Croatia – that Mother Escolástica Pimentel, of the Monastery of Our Lady of Glory in Brazil, struggled to tell me in the few words of English that she knew, that she wished to invite the CIB Delegates to Brazil. The following year, we met again in Rome for the 2010 Symposium. Mother Vania Maria Miranda Toscano de Britto, of Olinda, Brazil, Substitute from Region 11, was with her. Together we were able to set the dates for the 2013 journey to Brazil. As things happened, however, Mother Escolástica would no longer be the Delegate. No stranger to the CIB, Mother Martha Lúcia Ribeiro Teixeira was elected by Region 11 to be the Delegate and, along with Mother Vania, would



M. Teresa Paula Dias Perdigão, M. Magdalena Shetunyenga, S. Mary John Mananzan, S. Judith Ann Heble experience the beauty of Sugar Loaf Mountain in Rio de Janeiro.



Abbot Primate Notker Wolf presides at the first Mass at the new Chapel at Mosteiro da Encarnação.

coordinate the September 1-17, 2013 event that would prove to be a memorable experience for all who participated.

We spent the first week at Mosteiro da Encarnação, São Paulo, Brazil, the monastery of a small group of Camaldolese Nuns. It was indeed fortunate that Mother Michela Porcellato, Region 2 Substitute was in attendance. This is the Congregation of which she is Abbess. Within walking distance up the hill, is a small community of Camaldolese Monks, Mosteiro da Transfiguração. During that week, we joined the nuns and monks for the Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist in the sisters’ new chapel – actually opened the day before we arrived. We were also

pleased to attend the Sunday Eucharist at the monks’ chapel with a number of lay people from the local area.

Mosteiro da Encarnação was a perfect location for our meetings as it had a comfortable conference center to accommodate us. Three days were devoted to the business of the CIB Conference. On each of the three days of the meeting, the members of the Administrative Council prepared meaningful prayer and *lectio* sharing experiences enabling us to go into depth on the themes of “listening”. We were welcomed to our annual meeting by the Abbot Primate. The Primate challenged us once again to get in touch with our founders. He asked us some very challenging questions: Do we still have fire in our hearts? Do we still have a vision? Where will be our next foundation? The Abbot Primate also shared with us the development of the strategic plan that is being used at Sant’ Anselmo. In addition to the ordinary business of the



S. Marcelina Kusmierz, Abbess Escolástica Ottoni de Mattos S. Clare Condon, M. Therese-Marie Dupagne and S. Patricia Crowley.



JOURNEY CONTINUED

CIB Conference, the current plans for the 2014 Symposium were reviewed, with the Delegates receiving their formal invitation for their Region indicating the number of participants who will be able to attend.

On September 5, 2013, Abbess Escolática Ottoni de Mattos welcomed us to Santa Maria Abbey in São Paulo, the first female monastery in Brazil. We were greeted by another twenty nuns and sisters from communities in Brazil, twelve of whom were abbesses/prioresses. They took the time to journey to São Paulo to join the CIB Conference Delegates in celebrating the Eucharist, Midday Prayer and a wonderful meal. A presentation was given by Sister Roberta Peluso de Oliveira on the social situation of Brazil and the challenges the communities face living their monastic life in that environment. After a shared *lectio* session on the day's Gospel, each one had the opportunity



M. Martha Lúcia Ribeiro Teixeira and M. Vera Lúcia Parreiras Horta

to introduce her community to the others at her table through the use of pictures that each one brought: of community members, chapel, and a work or ministry in which the community is engaged. Planners were careful to place translators at each table so that all could “meet” the community being presented. The day was a wonderful experience of “communio” with our sisters in Brazil.

On September 7th, we joined Abbess Martha Lúcia, Delegate of Region 11, and her community at Our Lady of Peace Monastery, Itapeccerica da Serra for Eucharist, a most substantial and delicious breakfast, and tours of their



The Delegates enjoy a fiesta with the Sisters in Olinda

building, each one receiving a lovely ceramic item crafted by the sisters of the community.

The Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing at Santo Amaro College in Rio de Janeiro and at the Priory in Olinda offered us rooms in their monasteries and welcomed us for prayer, Eucharist and meals with the community. We were able to see their schools in session and were entertained with a Popular Dance Frevo by the AGS students at Olinda. The sisters invited the CIB Delegates onto the floor to “learn” the steps to some of the easier Brazilian folk dances. It was a delightful evening filled with food, fun and sharing.

Abbess Vera Lúcia Parreiras Horta and her community welcomed us to Mosteiro do Salvador where we stayed for two days. We were pleased to join the community in prayer, Eucharist and meals. Mother Vera Lúcia was once the Delegate to the Commission of Nuns and Sisters, later the CIB, representing Brazil. It was good to see her, to meet her community and to see what wonderful work the sisters are doing among the poor. We toured the school that is built on the sisters' property providing poorer children with the opportunity to learn ballet and karate. The children were delightful and anxious to perform for us. Mother Vera Lúcia toured us around Salvador – a city of noticeable contrasts: the poor and the rich; favelas on one side and skyscrapers on the other. A memorable event was the celebration of the Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross on September 14th. Students and parents went out of their way to come for the Mass on a Saturday to meet us.



JOURNEY CONTINUED

At the end of the Eucharist, young boys carried a large cross in procession while young girls reverently tossed flower petals toward the cross. Following the Mass, the parents hosted a reception for us with special delicacies that they brought for the occasion. It was obvious that the people of the surrounding area love the sisters at Salvador. The people were honored that the CIB had chosen to come to be in their location. Actually, the honor was ours. The people were so warm and welcoming and we were pleased that we had the opportunity to meet them.

Since summer was arriving in Brazil, we were able to enjoy two delightful outdoor barbecues: one with the community of the Monastery of St. John at Campos do Jordão and the other at the Virgin Monastery high up in the hills in Petropolis. In both communities we celebrated Midday Prayer or the Eucharist with the community. A small community of nuns at Monastery Monte in Olinda also welcomed us for Midday Prayer, tours and a hearty lunch.

As a testimony to the collaborative relationship between the monks, nuns, and sisters in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Olinda, Brazil, four communities of monks – all named Monastery of St. Benedict – also welcomed us to

their monasteries where we not only enjoyed a most festive meal, but were able to join them for Midday Prayer. They were generous with their time in giving us an extensive tour of their ancient monasteries.

Two Bishops likewise welcomed us. Archbishop of Olinda and Recife, Fernando Saburido, OSB, celebrated the Eucharist with us at the Olinda Cathedral. A church packed with attendees lent itself to a most vibrant liturgy. After Mass he took the time to share with us the challenges the Church faces in this part of Brazil. Bishop D. Gregório Paixão, OSB celebrated the Eucharist with us at the Virgin Monastery in Petropolis. He toured us through the Cathedral going out of his way to recognize scores of school children who had come to visit the cathedral.

If the communities we visited are any indication of the life and commitment of all of the communities in Brazil, I would have to say that Benedictine life is alive and well in Brazil. Of course, none of our experiences would have been possible without the hard work of Abbess Martha Lúcia, Mother Vania, Delegate and Substitute of Region 11, and their most able assistant, Sister Cristina Lavinhati, who coordinated all of the details of our journey to Brazil. We were truly blessed in untold ways!



Mosteiro do Salvador

Muito Obrigada! Deus te abençoe!
Sister Judith Ann Heble, OSB
CIB Moderator



Mosteiro de São Bento, Rio de Janeiro



Mosteiro de Nossa Senhora do Monte, Olinda



SEEKING TO BRING BEAUTY INTO THE WORLD

Meeting Claudio Pasto, the renowned Brazilian artist and architect, during the CIB Conference Meeting in Brazil was a once-in-a-life time experience. Claudio acted as our personal guide as we explored the interior of the remarkable Basilica of Aparecida.

In 1999, Claudio was asked by the then Cardinal of Aparecida, Aloisio Lorscheider, to “think about the completion of the interior of the Basilica of Aparecida”, which is located halfway between Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The Basilica had been commissioned in the 1940s but never completed internally. After 14 years of extraordinary creativity, imagination and theological reflection, an interior of supreme post-modern beauty has emerged.

As he gently and evocatively introduced us to these works of art, Claudio shared his own faith and spirituality and a profound knowledge of Scripture and Church history based on his own study and his daily practice of lectio divina. Through the medium of line and colour, he has given future generations an exquisite story and catechesis of the Christian faith.

So what was it that made this experience so significant for me? The Basilica is a place of pure beauty; it’s described as a “theophanic place, a God place”. As the brochure says: “it is a mystogogic place for its forms and colours, its materials, its celebrations, songs and prayers; its very walls lead us to the centre of the Mystery that we celebrate and contemplate, Jesus Christ, in order to nurture us wholly: spirit, body and soul. The structure of the Basilica differs from the world outside for it is a sacred place and its main function is to manifest the gratuity of life, gift of God. This space unites Heaven and Earth”.

This experience of mine was a contrast to so much of what is happening in our world at present. Much of this is ugly, dark, violent and polluted. I recall just a few examples. In Australia, there is the rejection and demonization of refugees. In Brazil, there is the extreme poverty of so many citizens, the trafficking of homeless children and the street violence in cities like São Paulo. We read about political corruption in so many so-called Christian countries. In Syria, there is the genocide and hatred that has resulted in civil war. In Japan, there is the contamination of the Fukushima nuclear plant. And in so many of the world’s cities, there are the grey and dark concrete jungles where



Sister Roberta Peluso de Oliveira, Abbot Primate Notker Wolf with artist, Claudio Pasto.

the din of constant noise and the drive to survive leaves little time or space to experience simple beauty.

Claudio Pasto also came to the monastery where we were meeting. He came to share with us the design of the sisters’ new church, a small church which is the centre of the community’s prayer and life. Again, his design and artwork are simple and beautiful, but profound. Here he showed as much devotion to his art as he did in creating the beauty of the basilica – a sign to me that one humble human being, gifted by God, can make a difference to the lives of many by seeking to bring beauty into being.

In Claudio Pasto’s art there is no place for the ugly, the dark, the violent or the polluted. In our own lives, we too can be a source of beauty for others. This experience led me to reflect on the power of one person to change the world, one encounter at a time.

In this world of ours there are millions more people devoted to beauty, goodness, gentleness and love. Theirs and our voices need to be heard. We need to constantly offer an alternative to ugliness, darkness, hatred and violence. Perhaps then the world can be healed and made whole: spirit, body and soul, and become what it is meant to be – the sacramental sign of pure beauty that is God.

*Sister Clare Condon, SGS
Delegate, Region 15*



MEMORIES OF BRAZIL

As I write this piece, memories of Brazil are still vivid: color, music, coastal cities with lovely bays, and urban areas with lots of traffic, older churches (1500s on...) with monasteries attached, newer simpler monasteries, and all with newer younger members. My impression of Brazil is one of a proud country that boasts of its diversity, its history, its people. What we know in our press is of great poverty and countless street children, of demonstrations, of papal visits, of preparations for the 2016 Olympics and the world soccer events. All of that is so, but there is so much more to this country and its peoples. I want to share a bit of this here regarding politics, Catholicism, and monasticism in this vast country.



S. Mary Jane Vergotz, S. Judith Ann Heble, S. Anne Shephard, S. Patricia Crowley, S. Rosann Ocken and S. Cristina Lavinhati enjoy the Sabbath in Olinda.

Brazil is a relatively new democracy (about 60 years old) and according to one of our guides, its people are learning (as we in the USA after more than 200 years of experience) that democracy is messy and the each individual does have many opportunities to voice his / her opinions and votes. They, as we, also recognize that those opportunities to express our opinions do not always result in desired changes – at least not quickly!

Catholicism is so evident in the many churches and places of pilgrimage, in the joy of people remembering recent papal visits, in the presence of a Eucharistic chapel open for prayer at the base of the large statue of the Christ of Corcovado overlooking Rio de Janeiro, in the religious

artifacts in many souvenir shops, and in so many other ways. Without a doubt, the secularism of our era is also quite alive and well in Brazil! We had an opportunity to talk with two bishops: Dom Gregorio in Petropolis, an exemplary pastoral man of the gospels, and Dom Fernando in Recife / Olinda, a man who has fully imbibed the spirit of Vatican II as he tries to rebuild his diocese in the manner lived by Dom Helder Camara. The latter is interred in a simple tomb in the cathedral where we celebrated our final Sunday liturgy. That church structure has not been visibly repaired but the Church is definitely alive in its people!

...and monasticism? It seems to be alive and well and of manifold expressions in structures

and in ways of living out the Benedictine call. A couple of common threads might be noted – a genuine and warmly hospitable spirit loving this opportunity to welcome our little CIB delegation, beautiful traditional chanting of the Liturgy of the Hours, and a vibrant presence of young monastics. While realizing the differences in the ways we live out our lives as monastic communities, I found myself rejoicing in this diversity and the opportunity to be present to one another as people sincerely seeking and experiencing the presence of God in each other.

***Sr. Patricia Crowley, OSB
Delegate Region 9***

HISTORY OF CIB

Sr. Scholastika Häring of Dinklage presented an overview of her research on the historical development of the Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum at the Conference Meeting in Brazil. She has a license in Canon Law and is completing this research for a PhD at the Faculty of Theology at Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule Vallendar in Germany.





MONASTERIES VISITED

Monasteries Visited

MOSTEIRO DA ENCARNAÇÃO Mogi das Cruzes	MOSTEIRO DAVIRGEN Petrópolis
MOSTEIRO DA TRANSFIGURAÇÃO Mogi das Cruzes	MOSTEIRO DE SÃO JOÃO Campos do Jordão
MOSTEIRO DE SÃO BENTO Salvador	MOSTEIRO DO SALVADOR Salvador
MOSTEIRO DE SÃO BENTO Oinda	MOSTEIRO DE NOSSA SENHORA DO MONTE Oinda
MOSTEIRO DE SÃO BENTO Rio de Janeiro	ACADEMIA SANTA GERTRUDES BENEDITINAS DE TUTZING Oinda
MOSTEIRO DE SÃO BENTO São Paulo	COLÉGIO SANTO AMARÉ BENEDITINAS DE TUTZING Rio de Janeiro
ABADIA DE SANTA MARIA São Paulo	BISHOP D. GREGÓRIO PASSÃO Petrópolis





M. Martha Lúcia presented the CIB Candle to M. Michela Porcellato in preparation for 2014 CIB Symposium in Rome. M. Thérèse-Marie Dupagne and S. Patricia Crowley watch on the left and M. Franziska Lukas and S. Judith Ann Heble on the right.

2014 CIB SYMPOSIUM

“LISTEN ... WITH THE EAR OF YOUR HEART”

Presenters:

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Professor Maria Pina Scanu

LISTENING IN RULE OF BENEDICT

Sister Aquinata Böckmann

LISTENING TO THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Sister Mary John Mananzan

Calendar 2014

September Sant' Anselmo, Rome

September 3rd

Arrival of Symposium Planning Team

September 7th

Arrival of Administrative Council & Symposium Participants

September 8th

Administrative Council Meeting
Arrival of Symposium Participants

September 9th

CIB Conference Meeting
Optional Trip to Monte Cassino
Arrival of Symposium Participants

September 10th

Opening of Symposium

September 10th-17th

Symposium Sessions

September 14th

Free Day
Vespers at St. Paul Outside the Walls

September 18

Morning – CIB Conference Meeting
Afternoon – Administrative Council Meeting
Evening - Reception for newly elected Administrative Council

September 19

Departure Administrative Council and Conference Members

September 20

Departure of Planning Committee