

**CIB MODERATOR'S REPORT**  
**Symposium, September 6, 2018**  
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In preparing this report, I decided to do it in two parts. The first part will be a *communio* photo journey to the various places where the CIB Administrative Council and Conference have met over the past four years by highlighting our efforts as a Conference to promote solidarity. The second part will be a report on some of the significant items that the Conference has been dealing with in their meetings.

**PART I:**

These are the goals that the CIB Conference set for itself four years ago. Both the Administrative Council and the Conference have been processing these goals at each of our meetings, using them as the direction for our activities.

**GOAL 1: PROMOTION OF SOLIDARITY**

**We will be in solidarity with Benedictine *moniales* and *sorores* all over the world. In solidarity with weaker communities, we will promote mutual help through greater bonding, sharing of personnel, and spiritual and material support.**

**GOAL II: REVERENCE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE AND CREATION**

- A. We recognize the sacredness and dignity of all peoples especially in war-torn countries where Benedictine communities are located, where moral crises are deeply felt, where migrants and refugees look for shelter and where violence and all forms of abuse take place.**
- B. We promote reverence for God's creation in the world and encourage eco-friendly practices.**
- C. We commit ourselves to promote peace wherever we are.**

Each time the Conference met, we witnessed significant efforts in the communities we visited regarding reverence for creation and attention to peace efforts. At each of our meetings, a special prayer service was prepared by a member of the Administrative Council on one of the themes to keep them before our eyes and to hold them in prayer.

**BELGIUM 2015**

Even during a cold and icy spell, January 8-10, 2015, the CIB Administrative Council experienced heartfelt *communio* as we met at Monastère Notre-Dame D'Hurtebise in Belgium. Mother Thérèse-Marie Dupagne, Assistant Moderator, is the Prioress there and she and her community welcomed us with open arms.

We were able to share with the community something of the history of our own communities and the countries from which the six of us came. We felt the prayers of the entire Region 5 who were in solidarity with us by holding us in special prayer during the days of our meetings.

Of particular note was being able to join the Hurtebise community and the members of the Reliance program for dinner and discussion. Reliance is a group of lay women and men who are connected to the life and ministry of the Hurtebise community by their desire to deepen their spiritual life in the spirit of the Rule of St. Benedict.

We also traveled to the community of Abbaye Paix Notre-Dame in Liège where we experienced their joy and hospitality. We shared with them something of our communities, participated in their prayer life and toured their ancient monastery. It was enriching to experience how monastic life is lived in our various cultures.

For me personally, I was pleased to spend a couple of days at Monastère de l'Alliance in Rixensart. There I met a long-time friend and former CIB translator, Sister Marie-Claire van de Elst. We enjoyed sharing stories of the early years before there was a CIB and delighted in the changes that occurred in the CIB over the years. May Sister Marie-Claire now rest in peace for all of her service to the CIB. Special thanks to her community for sharing her gifts with us.

*Communio* has something to do with sharing in the culture of the people. You cannot go to Belgium, without enjoying Belgium chocolates and waffles. Thank you Region 5 for showing us *communio* in so many ways in such a short time!

## **FRANCE 2015**

What does *communio* look like? I now take you to France – Region 3.

From September 8-23, 2015, our Sisters in France hosted the meeting of the CIB Conference. This was coordinated most ably by Mother Marie-Caroline LeCouffe, the CIB Delegate and aided by Sister Antje Eichhorn-Eugen who translated from French to English for us.

To orient us to Region 3, we were given most helpful presentations on the history of the Benedictine communities in the different areas of France and the challenges facing Benedictine women today there.

Most of our time was spent at Notre-Dame de Jouarre Abbey. The community was most welcoming to us and the accommodations were more than adequate to meet our needs. We enjoyed their beautiful liturgies and a special dinner with the community including all the French delicacies.

Our journeys in France took us to nine different monasteries. In the various areas we visited, the Abbesses and Prioresses of the area joined us. One of the techniques we

used in meeting with them was to share pictures of our community members, our works or ministries and our chapels. This was a most meaningful way for us to introduce ourselves to one another. Pictures say more than words. Groups also proposed different ways that they would remember one another. We ended each of our gatherings with a blessing for those who came to be with us in the various parts of France.

We were pleased to meet Soeur Marie-Laure of the Community of Jerusalem in Paris and Soeur Mireille Galliez, the prioress general of the Protestant deaconesses of Reuilly à Versailles, as they described more recent efforts to live monastic life. Soeur Mireille is with us here at our Symposium.

We were able to meet and to hear from the Bishop of Pontoise. He gave us a presentation on the Church of France and the many challenges that it faces. The bishop urged us to understand Islam, to respond to the current refugee crisis, and to evangelize the youth in new ways.

An interesting experience for many of us was the visit to the dual communities of monks and nuns in Le Bec-Hellouin, France on September 12-13, 2015. At the women's community, Sainte Françoise-Romaine monastery, we prayed together and had meaningful sharing time with those gathered.

We were also welcomed by the monks of the Notre-Dame du Bec Abbey where we were welcomed by the Abbot and enjoyed an historic tour of the place, celebrated the Eucharist with the dual community, and of course, a wonderful French dinner was prepared for us.

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, we were honored to meet some of the staff people at the Fondation des Monastère in Paris. This foundation supports Benedictine communities in France. Through the efforts of AIM, in collaboration with our Region 3 Delegate, Mother Marie-Caroline LeCouffe, the Fondation gifted us with €20,000 for this Symposium.

We also traveled to Vanves for Vespers and Mass at Sainte-Bathilde Monastery. We were warmly welcomed by Mere Marie-Madeleine Casseau to a delicious dinner prepared by this international community. Vanves is the location of the AIM offices where we were warmly greeted by Sister Gisela Happ and Sister Placid Dolores both of whom were happy to show us around. Being in the AIM space in Vanves gave us a deeper appreciation for all that AIM has done for the CIB over the years in making it possible for many of you to attend CIB meetings.

Abbot Jean-Pierre Longeat of Ligugé and Mère Fabienne Hyon of Sainte -Thierry, spoke to us on the international connections of French monasteries in other countries. We were apprised of the situation with the community on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, the status of the little community in Bethlehem and the ministry of the Sisters in Tabgha.

From September 17-20, 2015, we journeyed to Sainte-Croix Abbey near Poitiers, France. Though a very small community, they extended a gracious welcome to us. Mère Martina Ravaillant, former abbess at Sainte Croix, gave us an inspiring presentation on the history of St. Radegunde. She also toured us around Poitier where we were able to pray before the tomb of St. Radegunde. A highlight of our time at Sainte-Croix was the veneration of the Holy Cross as ritualized by the community.

Both Mère Martina and Mère Fabienne were no strangers to us. Mère Martina was a Delegate before there was a CIB. Mère Fabienne was a previous Delegate to the CIB. It was good to meet up with them again.

We also had the privilege to go to Solesmes where we were graciously welcomed by Abbess Clara of Sante-Cécile and Abbot Philippe of Saint-Pierre. After celebrating the Eucharist with the Sisters, we experienced an interesting presentation on the role of Dom Prosper Guéranger and his influence on the foundation of the community. After a wonderful dinner with the community, the CIB Delegates had occasion to meet with the Sisters of the community. Later we walked to Saint-Pierre where one of the monks explained the evolution of Gregorian Chant and another gave us a most informative tour of the beautiful sculptures outside the church. After having practiced how they do Gregorian Chant, we then joined the monks for Vespers.

In Ligugé, we joined the monks and a large number of lay people for the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist at the Abbey of St. Martin. We enjoyed an interesting tour of the archeological ruins of this ancient abbey followed by a splendid dinner in one of the guest rooms. Abbot Jean-Pierre Longeat joined us and gave us an insightful report on the current activities of AIM.

The final part of our journey took us to two of the communities – one of nuns and one of monks – at Saint Benoît Abbey of Fleury. Quiet reflection time was afforded us to pray in the crypt built in the basilica to accommodate the remains of St. Benedict, reputed to have been transferred there from Montecassino in 672. After Vespers with the monks, we enjoyed a most festive dinner along with members of the Subiaco Congregation of the English province who were holding their meeting in Fleury.

Some of us were privileged to stay nearby at Monastère Notre-Dame in Bouzy-la-Forêt where Mother Marie-Caroline's community is located. This little community saw to our every need and prepared a delightful farewell luncheon for all of us with many special French dishes. After blessing the community and many hugs of farewell, we were on our way back to Jouarre to pack and leave for home.

One memory that remains with me was the beauty of the liturgies we celebrated with the different communities – regardless of their size. The Sisters were always careful to be sure that we had translations to assist us in praying with them. Their hospitality to us was a living testimony to that which exists in their communities. That is *communio*. We are one OSB family with bonds of love and appreciation holding us together as a *communio*. This was lived out in so many different ways across the country of France.

## SPAIN 2016

What does *communio* look like in Region 2 – Spain? From January 20-22, 2016, Mother Maria del Mar Albajar and her Sisters welcomed the Administrative Council to Monastir de Sant Benet in Montserrat, Spain. We certainly experienced their warm Benedictine hospitality in Spanish style throughout our stay, especially being able to join them for the Eucharist and prayer. Two visits with the community members were arranged for sharing on the CIB as well as our own communities.

You cannot go to Montserrat without visiting Sant Maria de Montserrat Abbey. The prior shared his knowledge of the history of the Abbey and toured us through the Abbey and its surrounding areas. It was a joy to view the 12<sup>th</sup> century figure of the Black Madonna enthroned on a high altar in the basilica. We were privileged to pray Vespers with the monks and to hear the boys' choir from their school as they sang with the monks a lovely and solemn rendition of the *Salve Regina*.

We also met with some local abbesses who were considering forming a Congregation. The Administrative Council members who belonged to a Congregation or Federation shared the benefits their communities have gained by belonging to a Congregation or Federation.

## ITALY 2016

Does *communio* look different in Region 1 – Italy?

Little did we know when we planned the 2016 meeting of the CIB Conference at Monastero San Giuseppe in Assisi, Italy, that it would be in conjunction with the devastating earthquakes in the Region of Umbria in Central Italy. Later we were informed that thirteen monasteries were affected by the earthquake, including the beloved homestead of Ss. Benedict and Scholastica in Norcia. Our deepest sense of *communio* was called for as the Delegates quickly developed a way to invite CIB communities throughout the world to have a year-long method of holding each of the communities affected in special prayer each day. In a spirit of networking among the Regions, a CIB account was established in Assisi for the collection of monies not only from our communities but also from our oblates and friends. I am pleased to report again, that we were able to collect €162,502.00 to help our Sisters with the relief effort. This project was ably coordinated by Mother Mariangela Yator of Assisi along with the Presidents of the two Italian Federations that had communities affected. A year later in South Korea, Mother Mariangela shared pictures with us of the earthquake damage to some of the communities.

Though we had but three days in Assisi, September 1-3, 2016, we experienced warm and gracious hospitality, thanks to the careful coordination by Mother Mariangela Yator and her little community. You cannot go to there without taking the time to tour the lovely area of Assisi, and, of course, the Church of St. Francis. I was also pleased to

meet up with a long time Delegate to the CIB, the former Abbess Giacinta Soverino of Assisi. She certainly exhibited *communio* as she served us during the meals.

We had the privilege of hearing of the work of MID (Monastic Inter-religious Dialogue) from Rev. William Skudlarek who came to Assisi to meet with us. He urged us to remember that in friendship and dialog you “make” peace. He also presented a proposal for the dialogue between Catholic and Buddhist Nuns that would be taking place.

Rev. Cassian Folsom of Norcia gave us an interesting presentation on “Searching for Saint Scholastica” along with an explanation of the project for the renovation of the Church of St. Scholastica in Norcia. I do not know the extent of the damage to this Church since the earthquake nor where the renovation project now stands.

Close to Assisi, in Bastia Umbra, we were delighted to be invited for a lovely evening with the community of Monastero Delle Benedettine di Sant’Anna. There we joined the community for prayer and a delicious dinner. Also, on our way back to Rome, we were hosted for a wonderful time with the nuns of Monastero Santa Maria delle Grazie in Orte. This community has a large number of young Indonesian Sisters who were most gracious and joyful as they shared their musical talents with us.

## **LITHUANIA 2017**

Attentive to more isolated communities, the Administrative Council scheduled its meeting January 11-13, 2017 in the heart of winter at the Benedictine Monastery in Kaunas, Lithuania. *Communio* certainly existed even if it was bitterly cold and snowy outside. Prioress Juozapa Strakšytė and Sister Celina Galinytė were no strangers to us. For the past three symposia, they had been our special guests. Over the years, the Delegate from Poland, Region 7, had stayed in communication with these communities in the former Soviet Bloc countries. I am happy to report to you, that during our meeting in Lithuania, the Administrative Council recognized Lithuania, along with the Ukraine as part of Region 7. Welcome to the CIB! They are with us, no longer as guests, but as CIB participants.

We joined the community in their Church for prayer and Holy Mass. You may be interested to know that the Mass is broadcast by radio throughout Eastern Europe to enable the people there to participate in worship.

Living, praying and eating in close proximity to one another, we soon became friends of everyone in the community. That’s *communio*! We had time to share something of our monasteries and the Kaunas community shared with us.

We had occasion to visit the city of Vilnius and some of its historic sites. The small community of Benedictine nuns there welcomed us for prayer, dinner and dialogue about the CIB and our communities.

On January 14, 2017, we traveled to visit the community of monks of the Solesmes Congregation in Palendriai. We joined them for Mass and then met together to share photos about our communities and the workings of the CIB. We had a wonderful exchange.

After lunch in their guesthouse, we made a deeply touching pilgrimage to the Hill of Crosses. The thousands and thousands of crosses are a true testament to the faith of the Lithuanian people at a time of war and deportations during the Soviet occupation.

We hold special memories of our last meal with the Kaunas Monastic Council. The Sisters were eager to educate us on the history of the Benedictine presence in Lithuania and their years of struggle during the Soviet era.

*Communio* stretches everywhere – even to what seems a remote part of Europe. The *communio* these Sisters shared with us rightfully makes it possible for them to be an integral part of the CIB. They always were.

## **SOUTH KOREA 2017**

From Sept 5-19, 2017 we made an historic journey to Region 13 – South Korea in the midst of escalating tensions between the United States and North Korea. Our time there would not have been possible without the detailed planning of the three local superiors in South Korea: Sisters Maoro Sye of Daegu, Enosh Cho of Busan and Rose Marie Hwang of Seoul. They remarkably collaborated together to make this happen in a timely and most efficient manner so that we might have a truly memorable experience.

South Korea is home to a large number of Benedictines no doubt the fruit of the outpouring of the blood of the Korean martyrs. The Missionary Benedictines Sisters of the Daegu and Seoul Priors and the Olivetan Benedictine Sisters of Busan are a tribute to the role that the Korean martyrs play in their faith-lives. We knew from the joy on their faces that they were grateful that we came to be in *communio* with them and that they were not isolated in their struggles at this time of tension and uncertainty in the political situation clouding the horizon of this beautiful land. In turn, they demonstrated for us the real meaning of *communio*.

It was enriching to be exposed to the Korean culture in a variety of ways: their native dress, the different foods beautifully arranged in the dining room, the custom regarding the removal of shoes in and out of rooms, the reverent bowing of everyone we met – including the smallest of children, and, most importantly, the beauty of the Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist in their native language. In each of the communities we enjoyed meals with special Korean foods and we were entertained by the large numbers of Sisters in formation. Their creative performances were delightful and we received many memorable gifts from them.

To help apprise us of the rich history of the Church in South Korea, we were privileged to hear a presentation from Dr. Jeong Sook Kim (Therese Kim), a professor at

YOUNG NAM University and an oblate of the Sisters at Daegu Priory. We had video presentations on the history of the founding of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters and the Olivetan Benedictines in Korea, and a moving account of the Korean Martyrs and the significance they continue to hold for the people. We also visited some of their ministries particularly their nursing homes and their kindergartens where the children were delighted to meet us, to perform for us and to gift us with little items that they had made.

We also visited three communities of monks. Some of the monks came to meet us at the bus when we arrived and joyfully welcomed us to their monasteries. We prayed with the different communities, toured their many departments, farm, a pear orchard ready for harvest and enjoyed dinner with them. Abbot Blasio Park of Ss. Maurus and Placidus Abbey gave us a most interesting presentation on the history of Benedictine life in Korea.

We had the special privilege of visiting the Unmunsa Buddhist Temple now the largest training center for Buddhist nuns in South Korea. One of the younger English-speaking nuns served as our tour guide around the huge complex of the Temple. To culminate this special time at the Temple, we were honored to meet Abbess Jin-Gwang in their tea room and enjoy refreshments and conversation with her. We had the opportunity to ask her questions about how they live the monastic life and her role as abbess.

Our final days were spent with the Missionary Benedictine Sisters at the Seoul Priory. Sister Dolores Hong, a former acquaintance of mine from the early days of the CIB, toured us around Seoul in record fashion. From a high elevation in Seoul we could view the beautiful city and upon facing the North pray for a peaceful resolution to conflict.

While in South Korea, I was delighted to renew acquaintances with some former Delegates of the CIB: namely, Sisters Cecilia Jong and Angela Choi of Busan and Lumen Choi of Daegu.

The Korean peninsula remains in need of prayer for peace. On September 14, 2017, while riding on the bus, we joined with Benedictines for Peace of Erie, Pennsylvania in a Holy Hour for peace in Korea and for nuclear disarmament. This was a most memorable expression of *communio* uniting us all over the world for peace as we chanted "seek peace and pursue it".

Prior to going to South Korea, I took a few days to visit the Benedictine Nuns at St. Mary Monastery in Thu Duc, Vietnam, also in Region 13. These Sisters were active participants in several of our symposia of the past. I was able to meet Mother Marie Bernard Chu Th! Thùy and invited her to come to this Symposium. With a little urging from her Sisters, she is here with us.

Whether in Belgium, France, Spain, Lithuania, Italy, Vietnam or South Korea, *communio* looks and feels the same: always hearts wide enough to welcome all who come. The language and gestures in which it is expressed may be different, but the warmth and joy



in the eyes of our Sisters were the same, no matter where we were. We experienced obvious signs that strangers can come together in God's love. Thank you, Sisters, for welcoming us as Christ when we came to your monastery. Not only have you enriched our lives, but you have expanded our hearts to embrace a wide and richer expression of Benedictine life.

## **Part II**

I will now share with you some of the items that the CIB Conference has been dealing with at their meetings over the past four years.

### **COLLABORATION**

We had been discussing the need for better collaboration between the CIB and our brothers in the Confederation. The opportunity came from the Planning Committee in preparation for the 2016 Abbots' Congress. The CIB was asked to submit what we thought were the qualities that the next Abbot Primate should possess along with what challenges that he would face as Abbot Primate. All of the Delegates had the opportunity to participate. We presented our ideas at the Abbots' Congress prior to their discernment and election. On September 10, 2016, when the Church bells began to ring, we knew that an Abbot Primate had been elected. The CIB was pleased to be included in the joyful celebration of Abbot Gregory Polan as the next Abbot Primate.

The days of the Congress were filled with enriching presentations and the opportunity to network with Benedictines from around the world. It was further noted by many of us that at this Congress in particular we experienced a deep sense of hospitality from our brother abbots.

During the Congress, the CIB was significantly represented. I gave a 4-year report to the Congress on the workings of the CIB. Workshop sessions were also facilitated by three of us. Mother Andrea Savage presented what her community had done in their planning and building of a new Abbey. Sister Araceli Escurzon facilitated a workshop on formation. Abbot Richard Yeo and I facilitated together a workshop on the institutional development of the relationship between the CIB and the Confederation.

Shortly after the Congress, the newly elected Abbot Primate, Gregory Polan, joined in a first meeting of the CIB Delegates with the Synod of Presidents on how we might collaborate together in the future.

The following January, Abbot Christian Meyer of Engelberg Abbey in Switzerland joined the Administrative Council in Kaunas, Lithuania to continue the conversation about collaboration. Our time with Abbot Christian was most helpful. The discussion was open and free given the pastoral approach of Abbot Christian. Abbot Christian presented the suggestion of the Permanent Commission of the Synod of Presidents (PCSP) in which it stated that the CIB Conference members who represent the region where the Synod is being held should be invited to participate in some aspect of the Synod meetings. Specifically they were suggesting that the Moderator of the CIB

should regularly be invited to be present, as an observer, at all the sessions of the Synod. It was further suggested that a half-day of the Synod be devoted to a meeting between the Synod members and those Abbots, Abbesses, Priors and Prioresses who live in the region where the Synod is being held and who wish to be present. Someone from these women and men Benedictines would give a presentation on Benedictine life in the region followed by more general dialogue together.

That first meeting took place in September, 2017 at St. Meinrad Archabbey in the USA. Unfortunately, neither the Moderator nor the Delegate from that Region of the CIB could be present as we were having our own CIB meetings at the very same time in South Korea.

I suggest that the next CIB administration meet with the Abbot Primate to coordinate calendars well in advance so that future meetings of the CIB and the Synod of Presidents would be able to be scheduled.

The Abbot Primate and I agreed that since the Synod of Presidents would be meeting at Monte Cassino this year while we are here in Rome, that the Presidents be invited to stop by and meet with us for some part of this Symposium. We are pleased that some of them chose to do just that and join us here.

### ***VULTUM DEI QUAERERE AND COR ORANS***

Prior to the meeting of the Conference in September of 2015, the CIB Administrative Council met with Abbot Richard Yeo regarding the question that had surfaced at the 2014 Symposium, that is, whether or not the CIB should pursue becoming a canonical entity. He shared with us the history of the solidarity we experienced in the development of the CIB. Sister Scholastika Häring and Sister Lynn McKenzie were invited to be present with us. Subsequently, they shared the information with the Conference Delegates when they met. Both Abbot Richard and Abbot Primate Notker Wolf advised us to wait in light of instructions coming from the Vatican. Rather, they suggested that we use our energies to communicate the need for communities to work together to form federations or congregations. *Vultum Dei Quaerere* was subsequently published on June 29, 2016.

We were most fortunate that two of our Sisters who are canonists, Sisters Scholastika Häring and Lynn McKenzie began studying the document and sharing insights about it together. They were prepared to give a presentation at the meeting of the CIB Delegates in Assisi in September, 2016. The Delegates were free to discuss it at great length. Needless to say, the new legislation of VDG for cloistered monastic communities was received with appreciation, but also left the Delegates with many questions. Because VDG said that further instruction would be forthcoming from the Vatican, it seemed timely that the questions and suggestions the women had be presented to someone at the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

On September 8, 2016, Sisters Scholastica and Lynn met with Father Hank Lemoncelli, OMI of the Vatican Congregation to share some of the concerns of the women that had surfaced. These Sisters subsequently met with the Delegates on September 9, 2016 to share the results of their meeting.

We are all well aware that the long-anticipated instruction, *Cor Orans* was published just a few months ago on May 15, 2018. Sister Scholastica and Sister Lynn will meet with all of us on September 8<sup>th</sup> after we return from our audience with the Holy Father. I am sure that you will find their insights most informative and helpful.

## **CANONICAL STATUS**

Over the last three years when the CIB Delegates have met, we have taken the time to have conversation about the implications of becoming a canonical entity. We have not made any decisions. We have just taken the opportunity to talk about it. As in any *communio*, all are not in agreement. But we did have some deep listening sessions and questions about the pros and cons of the CIB becoming canonical.

I think that this is something the next administration of the CIB might wish to pursue discussing.

## **FUTURE OF CIB**

In early 2016, the Administrative Council suggested that we survey all of the CIB Delegates as to how best to make our CIB Conference meetings more effective in a way that would enhance the purpose of the CIB, that is, to promote mutual support and exchange of ideas and experiences among us. The responses were collated and distributed to the Delegates in time for discussion at their meeting in Assisi in September. Though we did not come to any conclusions, we did have good conversation regarding some future planning questions that the next CIB Administration may wish to consider.

Perhaps the restructuring of some communities as stated in *COR ORANS* may have an impact on the structuring of the CIB in the future. Due to monasteries closing or merging in some of the Regions, how long can we count on the Solidarity Fund to support those who made need financial assistance to attend meetings of the CIB? We cautioned ourselves to monitor the financial situation of the CIB and plan accordingly.

There was a request for a list of specialists or resource persons who may be of assistance to Regions or the Conference. We created a preliminary list while we were in South Korea. Much more detailed work needs to be done with the list to keep it up-to-date and to have it be more user-friendly.

We also discussed how to involve Regions who do not attend the meetings and how to better connect all Regions with the CIB. I have been personally involved this past year with helping two of the Regions determine the selection of a Delegate and Substitute.

The subject of language is sometimes a source of contention. We were urged to be sensitive to this and to try to make what we say understandable to all. That is challenging, given the fact that translators of the different languages are not always available to help out in this respect. It remains a constant challenge but something that always needs attention.

It was stated that it is always good to hear from each Region as to the challenges they face. We have been doing this at each of our meetings

Future planning and visioning will need to continue within the CIB so that we will foster the development of Benedictine monasticism into the future. Discernment will certainly be necessary as the future unfolds.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for trusting me to be the CIB Moderator for the past twelve years. I have been involved in this international experience for the past twenty-one years. It is now time for someone else to provide the leadership of the CIB. Though there are many unknowns facing us, the CIB is in a good space to respond in new and creative ways. I will miss being involved and meeting you, particularly in your monasteries. My life has been enriched in untold ways. I shall carry this experience forever in my heart. Thank you for teaching me the true meaning of *communio*. I will not say “good-bye” – just THANK YOU. I ask you to keep me in your prayer. You are daily in mine. May your own call to monastic life continue to deepen and embrace the richness of the Benedictine charism wherever you meet it.

Again, THANK YOU. May Christ “bring us all together to everlasting life” (RB 72:12) – that final *communio*.