



Secrétariat Central à la Formation - ocso -

Abbaye Notre-Dame du Val d'Igny, 31 janvier 2016.

## Newsletter 7

To the Superiors, the Regional Secretaries,  
the Brothers and Sisters interested by ocso-formation.

### Seminar of new superiors in Rome, from 15 to 27 January 2016:

The meeting of 39 superiors of communities of our Order had as its theme: *The abbatial service today, pastoral and canonical aspects*. Among the speakers there was Dom Eamon, Dom Timothy, Dom Patrick, Dom Armand, Dom Bernardus, Dom Isidoro, Dom Bernardo, Mother Giovanna, Mother Danièle and other members of the Council of the Abbot General.

Mother Giovanna offers us his lectures in sharing. In this Newsletter only her conference on the Constitution 47 is published (see **Annex 1**: 8 pages, in English). In the next edition, the conference on the Constitutions 49 and 50 will follow.

### Meeting for English-speaking formators in Penmaenmawr, 14 to 19 September 2015:

Father Graham, the Canadian Regional Secretary, made us a summary of the meeting at which he participated. The theme was: *The challenge of formation in the modern world*.

“On September 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> 2015, the Contemplative Novice Directors of the United Kingdom met in Penmaenmawr, Wales as they normally do every two years. Together, they choose and invite the speaker. This time around it was Father Ronnie McAinsh C.Ss.R.; missionary; formator as of 30 years, with experience of contemplative communities; distinguished psycho-therapist; the London Provincial of his Order. Present were Catholics and Anglicans: Dominicans, Benedictines, Carmelites, Poor Clares, Bernardine Cistercians, even a few (five) O.C.S.O.'s!

Father Ronnie presented religious life as the following of Jesus as proposed in the Gospels (PC 2) and as a commitment to growth, and an interpersonal meeting ground: a reality bathed in the gaze and the power of God the Father. Each aspect of a person (for example the emotional, intellectual, sexual or spiritual) exists on its own level and has its own principles. Growth and healing can and, in his experience do occur on every level. For most, growth is hampered in day to day life, as Carl Jung once observed. Why? All people hide, even when we say we are being open. Our fallen condition plus our individual histories mean that we flee God's gaze, and owing to that, other gazes, too. The turn-around occurs above all on a supernatural level, accepting God's love and the love of others. Tenderness is redemption. Owing to the richness of human potential this perspective entails, what is being formed is not a Cistercian, for example.

Rather, a woman or a man is being formed for Cistercian life. Formation is above all God's work. At its truest, formation consists of both persons ('formator' and 'formee') listening, and the formator mirroring God's love. Lectio divina is a similar healing experience.

For Fr. Ronnie, formation is not especially about psychology. Psychology can however free up the process of acquiring and embracing the natural identity the person arrives at the monastery doors with. That means taking on board the parts of our lives where our natural identities have been compromised, by a lack of trust or love for example. When trust exists, personal initiative flows. We become more ready for adding new identity to the mix, thus religious life. Again, the whole is essentially spiritual: unblocked from what prohibits commitment, the image of God in someone reaches and grows towards God. Formation attains its goal to the degree a person becomes someone explainable only through Christ. In terms of specific tools, psychological assessment Fr. Ronnie compared to finding the jewel amid all the rest; the jewel in the 'mud' of any person's life. In other words, it is not primarily about finding problems, though it can reveal problems our ordinary filters miss. As to maturity, which entails real self-acceptance, there are no objective criteria for judging it. It is a question of balance. Humanly, it requires intimacy; even in community it requires some degree of privacy. The biggest interior obstacle to growth for religious Father Ronnie sees as being: repressed anger. There, too, a jewel is waiting to be found. A dimension related to anger, sexuality, means for celibates accepting the mark which is there on all that is them and on all of life, discovering a path for chastely and fully expressing it; giving life, while tending towards a universal love.

It would be impossible to gather all of Father Ronnie's thoughts here, particularly as the session was his own résumé of a much broader pool of material. A few additional notes:

- 1.) For Fr. McAinsh, the formator should *not* always be available.
- 2.) He mentioned that the majority of formators leave religious life, a reflection in part of the arduousness of the task.
- 3.) He said there seemed to be not more but *less* tenderness in religious life, Post-Vatican II. Why? Because people have wanted so to 'get it right'.
- 4.) Finally, Ronnie believes in an ongoing refinement (through dialogue) of the vision of formation in the local community: one's own, local Ratio Institutionis."

## Europe Mediterranean Region :

### Session for formators in Valserena:

A session on *The anthropology of the Rule of Saint Benedict from a pastoral and experiential perspective*, given by Dom Guillaume and Mother Monica, will take place from 2 to 7 may 2016.

### Spiritual sharing from a community retreat:

In Valserena, Monsignor Mansueto Bianchi, preacher of the retreat of the community from 19 to 25 October 2015, had taken the theme *The Gospel of Saint John*.

At the threshold of the year of the mercy, the conference on Jn 8, 1-11 is shared us: "Jesus teaches that Sin on the other should be the Epiphany of ours, then in defeat and within the limits of the other, I recognize my defeat and my limit. From the sins of the other we learn mercy. Mercy, it is the heart that embraces, approaches misery».

The conference: in **Annex 2** (4 pages, in Italian). For those who would be interested in the whole retreat, the transcribed text (in Italian) is available on request at [formation.ocso@orange.fr](mailto:formation.ocso@orange.fr).

## The logo of the Jubilee of Mercy:

Don Claudio DOGLIO presented the logo of the Year of Mercy in a biblical course he gave last December, in the context of the *Diocesan School of Theology* at Savona, in Italy:

"The logo of this Holy Year was directed by Father Marko Ivan Rupnik, Jesuit, who works in Rome, but which is of Slavic origin, expert in iconography, Byzantine art lover and great expert in mosaics. He has done many interesting works with a team of young collaborators who return to the ancient art of mosaic. With the wisdom of the iconographic images, Father Rupnik suggested the figure of the risen Christ.



Christ is represented in the mandorla, this form reminiscent of transcendence and eternity, and the concentric circles of blue colours from lightest to darkest, gradually tend to the fullness of God, there where we can see the face of mercy, Jesus. The basic scheme is that of the descent into hell. Christ, dressed in white, poses the feet on both doors. In the logo they are simplified into two black tables that are intersecting, these are the gates of the underworld, doors out of entrapment in the descent of Christ living among the dead, which opens wide the doors and allows the man to get out.

In the byzantine tradition the icon of the *Anastasis*, the Resurrection, shows Christ taking Adam by the hand and pulling him out. Father Rupnik changed something, he put Adam on the shoulders of the Christ, which keeps him by the hands and feet, he holds Adam as in the traditional image of the good shepherd who carries the sheep on his shoulders, because this lost sheep is Adam.

Christ, the beard, is represented with juvenile traits, while Adam has the features of the old man: this is the old sinful humanity. Adam carried on the shoulders, more that the parable of the lost sheep, reminds the other parable of the Samaritan. (...) Christ is the Samaritan of humanity, the divine stranger who took charge of the man who fell into the hands of robbers. Humanity, hurt by the original fault, is half dead, she needs help. The religious institution human, penetrated the OT is unable to help the man, she passes and continues her own path. It is Christ who is responsible for the man to cure. Such is the image of mercy, Christ takes care of sinful man to make him become a saint.

A particularly interesting aspect of this representation is that the two faces are very close. The face of Christ and Adam's face are close one to the other, they are cheek to cheek and they touch by an eye. If we look carefully at the picture, we see that the two faces have three eyes, one eye being in common. It reminds that God looked at the world with a human eye, he made man, he switched to our side, he saw things as we see them, but to allow the man to see reality with the eye of God. This is the transformation that happens through the Incarnation and the Passover of Christ. God became man so that man might become God.

Thus the Holy Year logo reminds merciful Christ not only as the one who heals the sick, but in a theological sense more deep, as the one who took charge of the sinful humanity and so his attitude becomes our attitude. »

Sister Maria-Francesca, the Regional Secretary, offers us the transcript of the recording of the biblical course in its entirety in **Annex 3** (130 pages, in Italian): *Corso Biblico Diocesano 2015, Anno Santo della Misericordia. La misericordia di Dio secondo le Scritture, Conversazioni bibliche di Don Claudio Doglio.*

## French speaking Regions:

### Sessions of the STIM :

The session from 7 to 13 April 2016 of the common cycle takes place at the Abbey of Orval: there will be given suites of courses of *Sacramental Theology*, by Father Michel Malleve, *Philosophical and Biblical Anthropology*, by Ms. Anne-

Marie Pelletier (see the presentation of these courses in the *Newsletter 6*) and *Patristic Theology*, by Marie-Anne Vanier (see *Newsletter 4*).

About the STIM –Bac cycle, the session from 18 to 27 February 2016 will take place at Pierre-qui-Vire Abbey: *Basic Theology: Henri de Lubac*, by Sister Marie-Thérèse Desouche; *General introduction, Book of Wisdom*, by Father Maurice Gibert (sj); *Saint Paul (Galatians)*, by Father Marc Rastoin (sj) of the Centre Sèvres in Paris).

#### Internoviciates sessions:

In the current research of collaboration for initial formation, each French Region lies independently towards others.

For the **East Region**, a first session of biblical formation, from 21 to 24 September 2015, took place in Val d'Igny. Six Brothers and a Sister from the Novitiates of Oelenberg, Acey and Val d'Igny attended to a course given by Father Jean-François Baudoz: *Introduction to Sacred Scripture*. A second session is scheduled from 22 to 25 February 2016.

#### Interesting Internet sites:

\* On the site [www.clairvaux-2015](http://www.clairvaux-2015) , along under «Clairvaux interactive tools», see: *Reconstruction in 3D of the Abbey from the 12th to the 18th century*, a commented eight-minute film that traces the architectural evolution of the Abbey of Clairvaux in 1115-1792.

\* On the site [www.enseignemoi.com](http://www.enseignemoi.com) it is possible to listen to the biblical texts read (in French or in English), consult a concordance and find more information with a possibility of free download of recordings.

\* interesting for biblical works: [www.lexilogos.com/Bible.htm](http://www.lexilogos.com/Bible.htm) .

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**Newsletter 8 :**

**March 31, 2016.**