



Secrétariat Central à la Formation - ocso -

Abbaye Notre-Dame du Val d'Igny, 30 novembre 2015.

## Newsletter 6

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

### Latin American Region:

#### Courses of the Father Juan María de la Torre to the communities of Mexico:

Thanks to the initiative and the generosity of Dom Juan Javier, Abbot of San Isidro, during the first half of August the **Father Juan María de la Torre** gave a course to the community of Jacona - Mexico - where he developed, the first week, the **Beginnings of Cîteaux**, four Sisters from El Encuentro could take part on the meeting; in the second week, he spoke on *Saint Bernard*, three Sisters participated in this occasion.

From 17 to 22 August he gave, for the community of El Encuentro, a course on **Guerric of Igny**, with the participation of two Brothers from Jacona. And from 23 to 29 August, he preached the annual retreat to the Sisters with the theme: *The following of Jesus through the monastic values*.

These courses of Fr. Juan Maria were directed to the community, for the youngest up to the eldest.

Acquired formation over the years of Fr. Juan María and his generosity to communicate it, has much enriched and stimulated us to mimic his discipline and "searchers" constancy, for each one according to his possibilities and interests, because the formation of Fr. Juan María is very broad. Including the Cistercian heritage, he has written a book *Cistercian Presence*, of 680 pages, he wrote also some introductions to the works of St. Bernard, and worked on, Patristic, Sacred Scripture, etc. In Spanish-speaking communities his books, articles, conferences, etc., on these and other topics are well known and appreciated.

It has been a privilege to have him among us and to rejoice in his wisdom and witness of life.

### From our Sisters of the Spanish Saint Bernard Congregation :

#### The beatification of the martyr Sisters from Fons Salutis :

Mother Maria Angeles shares with us the story of the pilgrimage that the Sisters of the Congregation of Saint Bernard of Spain did from Burgos to Algemesi, 14-17 November, in Thanksgiving for the gift of life and the holy death of their Mothers Micaela Baldoví and Natividad Medes, who had been beatified with the Brothers de Viaceli October 3.

Different communities were present for this pilgrimage, those of San Felices, Las Huelgas, San Bernardo and Villamayor. Father Francisco Rafael de Viaceli came from Cóbreces to join the group of 18 Sisters.

A vigil of prayer, on 14 November, in the Basilica of Saint Jacques of Algemés, opened the beautiful celebrations of these three days.

The day after the celebration of the Eucharist of Thanksgiving took place in the parish of Marie Auxiliatrice, with a procession to the tomb of the two Blessed. The Auxiliary Bishop of Valencia presided over the celebration, Dom Alexandro de Viaceli, P. Francisco and all priests of Algemés concelebrated.



After the Eucharist, the procession moved towards the monastery of Fons Salutis. Arriving at the Church, the nuns have surrounded the tomb of their two Sisters, adorned with the palms of martyrdom and red roses, and intoned the *Magnificat*. After the final prayer by the Bishop, the celebration ended on the lyrics to the song: "give us the faith, Lord, give us the faith, that one that is ready to shed his blood.

**Annex 1:** The Chronicle of this pilgrimage, by Mother Pilar de Las Huelgas, 9 pages, in Spanish.

#### [Some news of the Internoviciate RE-CCSB:](#)

For the third time the Internoviciate met from August 26 to October 26, 2015 in the Monastery of Assistance and Mother Maria Angeles kindly share us echoes of the evaluation report.

The number of the Sisters of the Monastery has considerably increased since the last meeting. For the young Sisters in formation this was cause of a true emulation between the generations. The space available for the Internoviciate remains sufficient. The Divine Office has benefited from the increase in the number of the Sisters of the Monastery, the community can now maintain a monastic rhythm. Thus, with some adaptations, we could celebrate together most Offices. Elder and young were able to participate in the various liturgical functions and all the Hours were sung in two choirs.

*Lectio*, which remains closely linked with the spiritual accompaniment is made this time around Cistercian Anthropology: texts of Saint Bernard (*De Gratia; De Gradibus*) and William of St. Thierry (*Golden Letter* and a few *Meditations*). For the monthly retreat in October, we attended the mass of Thanksgiving for the beatification of the martyrs of Viaceli, which allowed the young Sisters to feel that they belong to a great spiritual family.

In matters of intellectual work there were some adjustments. Instead of having only one course of 50 minutes each day, there were two courses of 40 minutes, with a variety of teachers. The subjects of the courses were: *Introduction to liturgy* and *Catechism, Liturgy of the Hours* and *RB*.

Manual labour has been reduced to 1 hour  $\frac{1}{4}$ . For the human formation, the subject *Who am I ?*, has been very appreciated to deepen self-knowledge. A few sessions that dealt with self-image and customizing process have completed this course. The share of relaxation was more reduced, but promenade, sport or other activity of the Sunday could be maintained.

There has been much progress in interpersonal relations. All already knew from the previous Internoviciate and there are no more mutual adaptation problems. The young Sisters were able to adapt from the first days, nevertheless the desire to return to their monastery was more intense than the previous times.

Some important visits, received during this time of formation, were part of this process. So Mother Maria Angeles, Abbess President, who remained with the group the first days of the meeting, and Dom Santiago, Councillor to Spanish language of the Abbot General. Then we had the visit of the Abbot General, Dom Eamon and his Secretary Father Simeon, during their stay, one afternoon the Bishop of Toledo, D. Braulio with Dom Isidro, Abbot of Huerta are passed.

Thus, if there were less "formal" meetings, there were more meetings that we have supported and encouraged.

## French-speaking Regions:

### As part of the celebrations around the 9th centenary of Clairvaux:

various conferences have been organized by the Department of the Aube, in France, between April and November 2015. Among them, a beautiful speech by a historian, **Alexis Grélois**, on the theme *The Cistercian nuns in the Middle Ages*, was given to the Abbey of Val d'Igny, October 6.

With skill and humor, Mr Grélois, who has devoted his doctoral thesis to *The integration of women in the Cistercian order in the 12th-14th centuries*, brushed a broad synthesis of the Cistercians since the experiments of the first half of the 12th century up to the institutionalization of the Cistercians to the end of the 12th and the 13th century, turning the "golden age", then the crises of the 14th and 15th centuries. The conference gave us a high colour image, not only of the "monastic family" of Bernard de Fontaines, but also of these nuns of whom Heriman de Tournai said they were "eager to defeat not only the world but also their sex, adopted violently or rather freely, spontaneously, the Order of Cîteaux, that many young and robust men were afraid to embrace".

**Annex 2:** Transcript of the conference, 15 pages, in **French**.

### Session of the common cycle of the STIM:

The session will take place at Lérins, from 5 to January 13, 2016. Program: *Philosophical and Biblical Anthropology*, by Ms. Anne-Marie Pelletier; *Fundamental Moral Theology*, by Sister Catherine Fino (continuation of the session of September 2015); *Sacramental Theology*, by Father Michel Malleuvre; and *Ecclesiology*, by Father François Daguët (also a continuation of the session of September 2015).

Excerpts from the presentation of the two new courses by the respective teachers:

- *Philosophical Anthropology: Biblical and philosophical reflection on human:*

What does mean living in an authentically human way? How to be self, face to the other? Face to God? What is love? What is happiness? How to stand in time which bears us and doesn't stop continues to escape us? What is being free? (...) The world of the Ancient Near East, contemporary of the Bible, was the matter of what he called the "wisdom". The Greek world made them resonate in the space of the philosophy that he inaugurated. (...) These issues are joining us with a particular emergency, (...) even redoubled for the one who engages in the monastic life (...) in a world where anthropological landmarks are often uncertain, scrambled, on some points even in frontal opposition to some of the great values of monastic life. (...) These are questions that this course should help to support, by dialogue between the biblical tradition and knowledge that the human sciences deliver today, by involving the contemporary reflection as well as the capital of experience of the generations preceding us.

- *Sacramentary Anthropology: Baptism, Eucharist and Reconciliation:*

This course presents the essential elements of the Catholic doctrine of the three studied sacraments. It will also highlight differences of theological approach and practice of the churches, and ecumenical problems they pose.

#### Interesting sites:

\* Father Graham, Secretary of the Canadian Region, pointed out us the interesting chapter of a book available online: Father Columba Stewart, osb, Benedictine Monasticism and Mysticism, 2013.

**Annex 3:** The text from Father Columba.

\* The text of the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (text of the OT in Hebrew) is available on the Internet for download.

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**Newsletter 7 :**

**January 31, 2016.**